

The Early Church Fathers Writings

Volume 71

THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS WRITINGS

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Cyril of Alexandria: Isaiah, Part 2, Hosea and Joel

c. AD 412 – 444

S E R M O N I N D E X

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS VOLUME

How this book is arranged

This is the seventy-first 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 Cyril of Alexandria, Isaiah, Part 2, Hosea and Joel, from the period about AD 412 – 444.

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

The translations

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

In this volume

Cyril was patriarch of Alexandria from AD 412 until his death in AD 444. He led the party against Nestorius at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431, taught that the Word of God is one with his own flesh, and made peace with the Antiochenes in AD 433. He also wrote long commentaries on Scripture.

This volume completes the Commentary on Isaiah, with Discourses 20 to 30, and begins the Commentary on the Twelve Prophets with Hosea and Joel. The prophets stand in the order of the Greek Bible, which is also the order Cyril follows.

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

Commentary on Isaiah

*Discourses 20 to 30: the later chapters of Isaiah, the servant of
the Lord, and the promises to Zion.*

Commentary on Isaiah, Discourses 20–30

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

c. AD 376–444

Cyril wrote his Commentary on Isaiah in five books, which the English text divides into thirty discourses. He explains each passage first as history, for what happened to Israel and Judah, and then as prophecy of Christ and of the Church. The commentary is the longest that Cyril wrote on the Old Testament. This volume holds Discourses 20 to 30.

DISCOURSE 20

¹ And it came to pass in the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of the Assyrians came up against the fortified cities of Judah, and took them. And the king of the Assyrians sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem to king Hezekiah, with a great force, and he stood by the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway of the fuller's field. The account of the history is clear to all who are more eager to learn; nevertheless I will speak, summarizing as much as possible. When Ahaz was reigning in Jerusalem, and then Pekah son of Remaliah, and Rezin the king of Syria were besieging Judah, and had determined to lay their hand upon Jerusalem itself, the aforementioned [king], being weak for resistance, sent an embassy, and indeed called for aid Tiglath-Pileser king of the Assyrians, and with many gifts persuades him to come to his aid and to check the aggressions of the kings who had conspired against him, I mean, of Samaria and of Syria. When this was done, his enemies perished. For the Assyrian took both Damascus and Syria, and from then on, Ahaz came under his hand, and under tribute and taxes. He was one of the very worst. For he was an idolater and God-hated, and had perhaps surpassed all others in his perversities against God. When Ahaz had ended his human life, Hezekiah reigned in his place, being his son, but a God-loving man, and one who embraced the boasts of the highest righteousness and piety.

² This one, it says, rebelled against the king of the Assyrians. For he did not endure to allow his own kingdom to be under tribute, as Ahaz had indeed. For this reason Sennacherib the king of the Assyrians, as one who was owed to have all of Judah under tribute, and their very kingdom, was kindled to anger, and having ravaged Samaria, he set his army against the cities throughout Judah, and having taken many, he then sends Rabshakeh against Jerusalem itself, not for the present to move weapons in the manner of war, but rather with threats and promises of clemency to entice the common people. And there went out to him Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Somnas the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder. And Rabshakeh said to them: Say to Hezekiah: Thus says the king, the great king of the Assyrians: Is battle array made by counsel or by words of the lips? And now in whom do you trust, that you disobey me? Behold, you trust in this broken reed of a staff, in Egypt, upon which if anyone should lean, it will go into his hand. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt, and all who trust in him. The gates being evidently shut, and the most warlike people standing by the walls, performing the duty of ambassadors, the chosen men of the king, and the leaders among the priests, went out to Rabshakeh.

³ But he, being of Persian cruelty, and having a mouth speaking great things, according to what is written, acted insolently against the glory of God. And he names Hezekiah by a bare title, not adding king; nor any other of the things that are most fitting for such eminences. But the king of the Assyrians, he does not simply say this, but even calls him great. And he says that, Is battle array made by counsel or by words of the lips? For since the Jews, having the law through Moses, were considered wiser than the other nations; and indeed they said, Blessed are we, O Israel, for the things that are pleasing to the Lord are known to us; Rabshakeh brings this boast to nothing, saying that in the face of imminent war and battle, it would be completely useless to help them, both the knowledge of laws, and prudence and mere counsels, and that which is, as it were, skillful in words. And since some of those who had reigned in Judea had called on the hand of the Egyptians for aid, although doing this wrongly, the Assyrian thought that now too Hezekiah did not trust in God, but in certain others, or rather in those of the Egyptians who held the land. For this reason he calls it a reed staff. For

the hope in them is somehow fragile, he says, and always easily broken, and it harms rather than having the strength to help those who use it;

⁴ just as a reed staff, upon which if one should rest, he will surely break it, and it will injure the one who trusted in it. But if you say: 'We trust in the Lord our God,' now make a wager with my lord the king of the Assyrians, and I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able to set riders on them. And how can you turn away the face of one governor? Again he speaks rashly, and lifts up his horn on high, and speaks injustice against God. For if indeed, he says, you trust in him, make a wager with my Lord, that is, arm yourselves and stand for battle. And I will add two thousand horses for you, and this will suffice, he says, as proof that you will overcome the hand of the Assyrians if you find men to ride them or who even know how to ride horses in battles at all. Then how, when you are not able to fulfill even this, will you overcome one governor? For the rule of the Assyrians is divided, and it has subject kings under the one greater than all, who were also named governors. Servants are they who trust in the Egyptians, for horse, and for rider. And now have we come up without the Lord against this land to war against it? The Lord said to me: Go up against this land, and destroy it.

⁵ He completely cuts off the hope in the Egyptians, all but saying that those who trust in it are already ranked among servants. For they will be easily captured, he says, having trusted in horse and rider. Then he utters something bitter and, as it were, from his inherent wickedness, affirming that the battle against Judea is not undertaken without the Lord. For if indeed, he says, as you yourselves say, the God among you is great and most mighty, and champions the land, how have we come up against it? For if we have overcome the strength of the defender, he is not great, but rather small and weak. But if he is great and powerful, we are not hindered wishing to ravage Judea; we did not come up against it without the Lord. And Eliakim, and Somnas the scribe, and Joah said to him: Speak to your servants in Syriac, for we hear; and do not speak to us in Judean. And why do you speak in the ears of the people on the wall? And Rabshakeh said to them: Has my lord sent me to your master, or to you, to speak these words? Is it not to the men sitting on the wall, so that they may also eat? The common folk are always somehow easily terrified, and far too ready for despair, especially when war is at hand, and when slaughter is expected, and conflagrations throughout the city.

6 For this reason, and very prudently, those conversing with Rabshakeh say that he should not speak in Judean, but rather use the Syrian tongue. For they did not want words full of barbarian madness to be injected by him into the hearing of the common people, even though King Hezekiah was urging them to valor, and stating clearly that the Lord was with them, and that for those who trust in God, hope is unshaken, while human affairs are easily shaken, and are as nothing at all, I say, compared to His power. But Rabshakeh understands, and is not ignorant of the reason for being prevented from speaking in Judean. For this reason he says that the purpose of his mission was not to them, nor indeed to the king, but rather that he might converse with those on the wall. But he acts insolently again, and belches out words from an unclean heart, saying that for this reason they are sitting on the wall guarding the city, so that, starving and having become in want of both bread and water, they might be brought to this point of necessity, as to make for themselves food and drink of things utterly detestable and perhaps fit for dogs. And Rabshakeh stood, and cried out with a loud voice in Judean, and said: Hear the words of the great king, the king of the Assyrians. Thus says the king: Let not Hezekiah deceive you with words that will not be able to deliver you;

7 and let not Hezekiah say to you, 'God will deliver you,' and 'this city shall not be delivered into the hands of the king of the Assyrians.' Do not listen to Hezekiah. Thus says the king of the Assyrians: If you wish to be blessed, come out to me, and each of you will eat from his vine, and from his fig trees, and you will drink water from your cistern until I come and take you to a land, like your land, of grain and wine, and of bread and vineyards. He now directs his words to those seated on the battlements, who were eager to resist those wanting to besiege the city; again and again he calls the Assyrian a great king, and belittles the hope placed in God, and calls Hezekiah a liar and a deceiver, for saying that they should rather depend on God, and in no way fear the assaults of men when He is their defender. Then he makes promises to those who desert to him, that they will be in their own lands for a time. For this is the meaning of, 'Until I come and take you.' They will enjoy their own fields, and he soothes, as it were, the terror of captivity, and conceals the harshness of the matter with deceitful words, adding, 'Until I come, and take you to a land like your own land.' For he compares the land of the Assyrians to the land of the Judeans, all but saying:

⁸ Even if you leave Judea and come to be with us, you will no less find your own land. For the land of the Persians and Assyrians is a land of grain and wine, and of bread and vineyards. Let not Hezekiah deceive you, saying: 'God will deliver you.' Did the gods of the nations each deliver their own country from the hand of the king of the Assyrians? Where is the god of Hamath and Arphath? and where is the god of the city of Sepharvaim? Were they able to deliver Samaria from my hand? Which of all the gods of these nations has delivered his land from my hand, that God should deliver Jerusalem from my hand? And they were silent, and no one answered him a word, because the king had commanded not to re- to be judged. Rabshakeh is again barbarous in his opinion, and is heavy with his words against God, and is greatly proud that the Assyrians have taken as many cities of the nations as possible, with none being saved by the falsely-named gods within them, but he was ignorant that those were wood, and stones, and the artful work of a human hand, and nothing else. But the God of Judea, or rather of the whole world, is a living and true God, not recently made, but rather the maker even of the ages, and creator of all things, and Lord of hosts.

⁹ Therefore Rabshakeh thinks it will be the clearest proof for the Jews, that they will be completely and entirely captured, even if the great God should help them, that none of the gods among the Greeks was able to save a city, or a country in which it was honored. For this reason he says: Where is the god of Hamath, and of Arphad? And he adds, were they not able to rescue Samaria from my hand? But, O most wretched one, I would say, they themselves also worshipped the golden calves, and the land was captured as God withheld his help. And, as I said before, if none of the gods among the Greeks has saved his own, this means nothing with respect to the God who is truly, and by nature, and great. For they obtained by human art the lot of at least being seen only. But He rules over all things, and has an invincible hand, being the Lord of hosts. But no one answers Rabshakeh, as the king commanded them to be silent, and very prudently. For uncultured words, and a barbarous spirit, and for the tirades against God, it was necessary to weep rather than to argue back. And this, I think, the blessed David teaches when he says: "I set a watch on my mouth, while the sinner stood against me. I was dumb, and was humbled, and kept silence from good things.

¹⁰ And Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, the steward, and Shebna the scribe of the host, and Joah the recorder came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn,

and they reported to him the words of Rabshakeh. And it came to pass, when King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes, and put on sackcloth, and went up into the house of the Lord. At the boasts of Rabshakeh, and the unbridled tirades concerning God, those sent to him tore their tunics, and reported to the king the things outrageously proclaimed out of Persian madness. And he tore his garment, and changed into sackcloth, that is, a garment of mourning, and went up, it says, into the house of the Lord. And what was the reason for tearing their garments? It was a custom for the Jews to do this at blasphemies against God. And so the Savior was handed over to the leaders of the Jews, and the judge of the world was judged by them. But He was silent, not answering the voices of those who spoke falsely. Then the high priest says to him: "I adjure you by the living God, that you tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God? Jesus says to him: You have said so. Nevertheless, I say to you, From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest tore his garments, saying: He has blasphemed.

¹¹ And the God of all things also said through one of the prophets to those of the blood of Israel, that "Rend your hearts, and not your garments. For perhaps they thought to be pious, and to please God with the highest honors, by tearing their tunics at the blasphemies against him, even if they took no account of the things decreed through Moses. Hezekiah put on sackcloth, that is, a garment of mourning, and he goes up into the house of God, and very fittingly. For it is fitting to mourn, and for those in the height of evils to weep and be afflicted, and to place hope of salvation in God, and to sit before him, and to frequent holy places, where one might most fittingly make supplications to him. And he sent Eliakim the steward, and Shebna the scribe, and the the elders of the priests clothed in sackcloth to Isaiah son of Amoz the prophet, and they said to him: Thus says Hezekiah: Today is a day of affliction, and of reproach, and of rebuke, and of wrath, because the birth-pang has come to the one giving birth, but she does not have the strength to give birth. If perhaps the Lord your God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, which the king of the Assyrians sent to reproach the living God, and to reproach the words which the Lord your God heard, and you will pray to the Lord your God for these who are left.

¹² Those prominent in the priesthood and crowned by law with the highest honors, along with the others, he commanded not to be in sacred

garments and those more fitting for the liturgy, but rather to go clothed in sackcloth, that is, in garments of mourning, to the blessed prophet Isaiah, and to report that a day of affliction and reproach had befallen them. For, it says, God all but reproaches those dwelling in the holy city, as having neglected the gentleness according to the law; and he rebukes them for having sinned, and thus brings upon them things from his wrath. And they clearly affirmed that their affairs had come to such a state as to make Israel resemble a woman giving birth, but who has come to her last extremity for being unable to bear the child. And he wishes that the God of all would, through the mediation of the prophet, listen to the words of Rabshakeh, which he has heard by himself. For nothing of existing things escapes his notice, as many had already been destroyed in other cities, and their houses burned. Pray, he says, for these who are left. Hezekiah is exceedingly pious, calling upon him who is honored by God, clearly the prophet, to become a helper. It is therefore beneficial to fall down before God through the leading saints. For on their account he grants his favor, and often pities even the tear of those who are accustomed to be slothful. And Isaiah said to them: Thus you shall say to your lord:

13 Thus says the Lord: Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the envoys of the king of the Assyrians have reproached me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him, and having heard a report he will return to his own land, and he will fall by the sword in his own land. God gives courage, and not after a long time, but straightway and immediately, to the one trusting in him, and has shown his hope to be beneficial, and that it is not without reward to run to the house of the Lord, and together with prayers to shed a tear from distress. Thus is the Master of all appeased, being philanthropic. But since Rabshakeh, shearing off the hope of being saved from those of Israel, even if the all-powerful God should choose to save them, impiously said: Let not Hezekiah deceive you, that God will deliver Jerusalem from my hand. Have the gods of these nations each delivered his own land from my hand?

14 For this reason and very appropriately he frees them from terrors, and does not allow them to be dismayed by cold and old-womanish words and by barbaric foul-mouthedness, but rather he strengthens them for a much-desired hope, saying that the arrogant tyrant would be carried back to his own land unwillingly, by a malevolent spirit terrifying and driving him unbear-

ably into fears for his own kingdom, and that he would fall by the sword, having been in no danger at all in a foreign land, nor yet having boasted in the slaughters of his enemies, nor being rich in the splendid rewards of valor against his foes; but while spending his time in his own land, he has fallen there in his own land, this happening contrary to hope and unexpectedly. For where one would think he would be spending his time freed from terrors, there he has fallen, and by those from whom it was likely he would be saved while in danger. And who these were we shall know from what follows. And Rabshakeh returned, and found the king besieging Libnah; and the king of the Assyrians heard that Tirhakah king of the Ethiopians had come out to besiege him; and when he heard it, he returned and sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying: Thus you shall say to Hezekiah king of Judah: Let not your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying: Jerusalem will not be given over-lem into the hands of the king of the Assyrians.

15 Or have you not heard what the kings of the Assyrians have done, they have destroyed all the land? Did the gods of the nations rescue them, whom my fathers destroyed, both Gaza and Haran, and Rezeph, which are in the country of Teman, Where are the kings of Hamath, and Arphad, and of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena and Ivvah? When Lachish had perhaps been captured, and had come under the barbarian hand, Libnah was besieged after it, there Rabshakeh is said to have overtaken the Assyrian; but he was greatly disturbed. For Tirhakah, king of the Ethiopians, had marched out against him. Then, fearing lest, his country having been seized, he might be cast out from his most illustrious thrones, he leaves Judea, and hastens rather to his own land; nevertheless, he did not abandon his inherent cruelty. But being inflamed, as it were, to unrestrained anger, perhaps because those of Israel, that is, those who inhabited the holy city, were not willing, having been persuaded by the words of Rabshakeh, to desert to him, the miserable one again speaks rashly against the glory of God; and he commands some of his own men to go quickly to Hezekiah and report to him the things from him. And these were blasphemies against God, saying clearly: since the gods of other countries or nations have perished along with those who worship them, not even the God of the Hebrews himself would be able to deliver them, and snatch them from the hand of the Assyrians.

16 Then he enumerates the cities that have been sacked, which it was likely could do much, from which others have suffered. By these same things

he terrifies them, as men about to die, and those who have trusted in Him, the God who rules over all. And Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers, and opened it before the Lord; and Hezekiah prayed to the Lord, saying: Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, who sits upon the Cherubim, You alone are God of every kingdom of the world. You made heaven and earth. Hear, O Lord; look, O Lord, and see the words which Sennacherib has sent, to reproach the living God. Out of very great piety toward God he spreads out the letter, not as if God were ignorant of the greatness of Sennacherib's arrogance, but rather crying out against the barbarian madness, and making God himself, who has authority over all things, a witness, as it were, of that man's insolent speech. But see how he refers to the words of Sennacherib, raising his supplication. For the one, for his part, mocked the glory of God: "Let not your God deceive you," he says, "in whom you trust, saying: Jerusalem will not be delivered into the hands of the king of the Assyrians. But the other confesses the greatness of his authority, calling him Lord of hosts, and God of Israel, and over all creation, both heavenly and rational. "For you are," he says, "the one who sits upon the Cherubim.

¹⁷ And he confesses that even if some are called kings on earth, nevertheless the one who is king by nature and in truth, and who has all things under his feet, would be himself and alone the creator of earth and heaven, and who by his nod established the things that once were not. And he exhorts him to hear and to look, that is, not to overlook and to pass by such bitter blasphemies; but to punish the sinner with justice. For he has reproached the living God, he says, that is, the one who is in no way like those of the nations, to whom that man, comparing him, impiously grew insolent. For truly the kings of the Assyrians have laid waste the whole world, and their land, and have cast their idols into the fire. For they were not gods, but the works of men's hands, wood and stone, and they destroyed them. But you, O Lord our God, save us from their hands, so that every kingdom of the earth may know that you alone are God. I have heard, he says, the barbarian saying: "Did the gods of the nations, each one, deliver his own land from my hand? And if someone should say this, I approve and I am persuaded. For they have conquered all the earth, and have burned the cities, the falsely named gods being able to offer no help; for they have saved no one.

¹⁸ For how, or from where, could things made of wood and stone and the works of art of stone-working, and being the artistic creations of craftsmen;

For this reason they have perished along with their own worshipers. But You, save us, O Master. For this is also a proof, and it persuades all under heaven, that they must be firmly disposed to the fact that You alone are God. For just as the capture of the lands of the nations testified against the falsely named gods, that they are nothing at all; so also Jerusalem's escape from his hand, being under Your care and Yours alone, both testifies and will make clear to all everywhere the proclamation of Your strength and undefiled glory, and that You alone are God both in heaven and on earth. And Isaiah son of Amoz was sent to Hezekiah, and said to him: Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I have heard what you prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of the Assyrians. The one who saves is not far, but near and, as it were, at the heels of the prayer is the fulfillment of the requests. For the prophet is sent; having been silent for a time about the barbarian, and not having announced God's verdict on him; "Thus says the Lord," he says, "the God of Israel.

¹⁹ He strengthens the one who has believed, and does not declare one of the falsely named gods to be the one who sent him, but rather, making him courageous, he names the Lord, and the God of Israel. And he praises and accepts, as it were, saying: I have heard what you prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of the Assyrians. For it is as if he says, "I accept your zeal, I know your love for God, I have made the blasphemy against me unbearable; you came in tears, and as one grieving on my behalf, and I have made your grief the reproaches directed at me. Most praiseworthy, therefore, is the zeal of the saints, and when the glory of God is blasphemed, when they grieve, God is gladdened. This is the word that God has spoken concerning him: The virgin daughter of Zion has despised you and mocked you; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head at you. Whom have you reproached and provoked? Or against whom have you raised your voice? And you did not lift up your eyes on high to the Holy One of Israel; for you reproached the Lord through messengers. He then makes clear the verdict against the barbarian; and says that the virgin daughter Zion, that is, Jerusalem, will make a mockery of him and will shake her head. And we say that he names Zion, that is, Jerusalem, a virgin and a daughter; a virgin, as being undefiled and not having the stain of abominable idolatry;

²⁰ and a daughter, because he has assigned to her the disposition due from a father to his own children. And she has despised the Assyrian, that is, she

has shaken her head at him in a certain way; for she smiled at the vanquished, and has made his misfortunes, as it were, a song and a harmonious melody. Then he says to him: Whom have you reproached and provoked? Or against whom have you raised your voice? For was it one of the falsely named gods whom you grieved with such ardent words? And yet how was it not necessary, he says, to raise the eye of the mind on high, and to consider who and how great is the God of Israel? It was necessary, from the very sight of created things, to see correspondingly the magnitude of the Creator's power. It was necessary to behold the height of his glory, and to think nothing of more earthly things concerning him. But remembering none of these things, he says, you have reproached the Lord. For you said: With the multitude of my chariots I have gone up to the height of the mountains, and to the ends of Lebanon, and I have cut down the height of its cedar, and its beauty, and I entered into the height of a part of the forest, and I set up a bridge, and I have made waters desolate, and every gathering of water. He explains the pomp of Persian arrogance, and its senseless puffing up, and the magnitude of its boasting.

²¹ For he compares to Lebanon, as we have already said, both the land of the Jews, and perhaps that of the Samaritans, which the ten tribes inhabited. For Lebanon is a mountain in Phoenicia, flourishing and thickly wooded with cedars, trees lifted very high up. The land of the Jews is understood in this way: high, because God was its defender, yet thick, because those in it were seen to be beyond number. But the Assyrian tyrants took Samaria, and ravaged with it not a few cities of Judea. You, therefore, he says, O Assyrian, having an arrogant spirit, and attributing the outcome of events to your own powers, said that With the multitude of my chariots I have gone up to the height of the mountains, and to the ends of Lebanon, that is, against the kingdom itself among those of Israel. I cut down the height of his cedar. Whose? Of Lebanon, that is, of Judea. And by the height of the cedar he means their kingdom, and he entered into the height of a part of the forest. For as I said, many cities of Judea were destroyed along with that of the Samaritans. And you said that I have made a bridge, and I have laid waste waters, and every gathering of water.

²² For the Persians and Assyrians, attributing to their own powers the ability to accomplish everything, in their running through the lands, they would bridge rivers, and they would often carry on, being so numerous, as to

be able to exhaust springs, and gatherings of waters, and sometimes not even rivers would suffice for the thirsty men and horses together. And the Greek chroniclers, as many as have made mention of the Persians in their own writings, say that they also bridged the Hellespont itself; and even if a river, they say, was found in the midst of their passing through either a country or a city, the tyrant would command, saying: 'Let it be consumed by drinking.' Therefore, the God of all remembers the arrogance of the Persians, and rebukes those accustomed to boasting. Then after this he shows that they were not rather able to succeed, in those things wherein they have thought so arrogantly; but rather his decree, brought against the transgressors, created in them the reputation of being able. Have you not heard of old what I have done? From ancient days I ordained it, and now I have commanded it to lay waste fortified nations, and those who dwell in fortified cities. I have lifted my hands, and they withered, and became as a dry flower on the rooftops, and as grass. Do you not blush, he says, attributing to your own powers all these things which you think you have accomplished?

²³ But, O you who have a vain brow for nothing, have you not heard of old what I have done? For if you should wish, he says, to investigate the words of my prophets, I have already said beforehand that these things would happen. For I from ancient days ordained, that is, I determined and decreed; and I have now brought to pass, as the time called for it, the things foretold, so as to lay waste fortified nations, that is, not weak, and easily captured. I lifted my hands, and they withered. For I, who formerly by forbearance still held them together to exist and stand, withdrew my protecting hand, and like grass they were dried up, and in the manner of a plant they were withered, and like some dry grass were given as food to fire. This indeed he says to him elsewhere also; for since the impious one, having accomplished what was ordained by God to happen, has become greatly proud of himself, he heard God saying again: "Shall the axe be glorified, without him who cuts with it? Or shall the saw be exalted without him who draws it? For just as such instruments do not move themselves to their work, perchance, but rather await the hand of the one who wields them; so also you, he says, have become an instrument of divine wrath, and you did not yourself work with your own powers, but you were rather like an axe, and a saw, appointed to serve the wishes of the one moving you.

24 But now your rest, and your going out I know; and your anger with which you were angry, and your bitterness has come up to me. You are boastful, therefore, he says, having become a minister of the divine judgments, and perhaps you think that by yourself, and alone, you have prevailed over so many nations and countries, so as to burn and capture them. But I know your rest, and your going out, and your coming in. And by rest, I think, death he calls going out and coming in, the way into anything whatsoever of things to be done. For nothing at all escapes the mind that knows all. And adding, that Your anger, with which you were angered, and your bitterness have come up to me, he all but says, You will not have blasphemed without punishment. For I will in no way overlook the malice and bitterness of your unholy thoughts, but, as if provoked to grief, I will inflict upon your rages the fitting justice for them. And I will put a muzzle in your nose, and a bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the way in which you came.

25 Since the Assyrian, having a most beast-like irrationality, was mocking God, and as if leaping into unbridled savagery, was uttering blasphemous cries against the glory of God, for this very reason and quite fittingly, as if speaking of a beast, he says that I will put a muzzle in your nose, and a bridle in your lips, all but leading him by the infliction of plagues, and by the greatness of his misfortunes, as by a kind of bridle, checking his outrageous undertakings. Indeed, he says that the Assyrian will return to his own land. For he returned when he heard that Tirhakah, king of the Ethiopians, had come out against him. And yet, Why on earth, someone might say, when his entire army had fallen, was not only he himself saved, but did he also return to his own land? For it was necessary, it was necessary for him, having been stripped of the multitude under his hand, to escape by providence the hand of the consuming angel, so that he might lament his own misfortune and know against whom he had blasphemed, and report the paradox to all others. And this is the sign for you. Eat this year what you have sown, and in the second year the remnant, and in the third year sow and reap, and plant vineyards, and you shall eat the fruit. And those who have been left behind in Judah will be for an escape; they will grow a root below, and will produce seed above.

26 Because from Jerusalem will be those who are left, and those who are saved from Mount Zion. The zeal of the Lord of Sabaoth will do these things. Saying that the Assyrian will turn back to his own land, and will de-

part from the country of the Jews, he defines the time in which this will be, and says: Eat this year what you have sown, and the things that follow this. It is not yet clear to all whether the sign was given to Sennacherib, or rather to Hezekiah and those around him. But we shall speak the meaning of what is written. Then this must be applied to them, or to these. If we say the sign was given to Hezekiah, we understand it thus: For Jerusalem was being besieged, and while a very great army of the Assyrians was attempting to burn and capture it, there was a very great collection of provisions, and fruits stored up, and the things by which it would be possible for those who were being saved in Jerusalem to survive. You therefore, Hezekiah, he says, and all the people with you, eat this year what you have sown; and in the second year, the remnant. And in the third year, sow and reap, and plant vineyards. For having settled in Samaria for two whole years, and having ravaged it all, the Assyrian. When the third had scarcely begun, he went away as a fugitive, especially since those with Rabshakeh around Jerusalem, and who were besieging it, had perished.

²⁷ Therefore in the third year, he says, let there be at last a respite, and for farmers what is sufficient and for vineyard keepers, if they should choose to plant them; peace evidently awarding it and security. And that those who have been saved and left over from the war will be in a firm state of good cheer, he indicates by saying, as of plants, that they will stretch a root downwards, and will cast seed upwards. And that they will dwell securely, and firmly, and outside of all fear, the having a root in the depth gives one to understand. And that the matter of prosperity will be extended to them even to the end, the making of seed above allows one to understand. And he adds, that the zeal of the Lord of Sabaoth will do these things. For since the Assyrian has blasphemed, and comparing him to the falsely named gods, dared to say, God will not deliver Jerusalem from my hand? All these things it will happen, he says, when the Almighty has been moved to zeal. But if one applies against Sennacherib the saying, "Eat this year what you have sown, and in the second year what is left over," we say that those who are accustomed to wage war, either on countries or cities, when the siege is at times delayed and the battle for them extends over time, they also take up farming, so that they might have provisions.

²⁸ And in this same way, it will be fitting for what was said to be understood also in his case. Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of

the Assyrians: He shall not enter into this city, nor shall he shoot an arrow at it, nor shall he bring a shield against it, nor shall he surround it with a palisade; but by the way that he came, by it he shall return. He recapitulates in a way the sense of what was said, and the course of the matter to its end, summarizing it in a few words, he makes clear. For he will not engage in war, he says, but before battle, before brandishing weapons, before drawing and shooting an arrow, before raising a shield, before encircling it with a palisade, he will return by the same road, and will run home, he says. But it should be known that by 'palisade' in these verses he means the multitude of stakes fixed in the trenches, sharpened to a point, so that none of those who fall might be saved. Thus says the Lord: I will defend this city to save it for my own sake, and for the sake of David my servant. He cuts down the pride of those saved by the mercy of God, and does not allow those who inhabit the holy city to think arrogant thoughts.

²⁹ For it was indeed very likely that they would think and say that they were honored by God because of the fairness of their character, and the spiritual good order of the righteousness within them. Therefore He saves as God, and He benefits those who are saved, not allowing them to be caught in the waves of arrogance. For He said He would defend the city, clearly the holy one, not because of its inhabitants in any way, nor bestowing the favor on any of those still living at that time, but for His own sake, and for David, whom He also calls His own servant, and for His own sake, because He is good and merciful, and it was necessary, I suppose, to bring upon those who mock His divine glory the punishment most fitting for them. Again, for David's sake, because to the memory of the saints He often grants forgiveness for the things in which their descendants sometimes transgress. And the angel of the Lord went out, and killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand from the camp of the Assyrians; and when they arose in the morning, they found all the bodies dead. And Sennacherib king of the Assyrians turned back and departed, and dwelt in Nineveh; and while he was worshipping in the house of Asarach his patriarch, Adrammelech and Sarasar his sons struck him with swords; but they escaped to Armenia, and Achordan his son reigned in his place.

³⁰ The fulfillment of what was expected has been usefully added to what was promised, so that the God of all might not seem to be a liar. For the multitude of the Assyrians was consumed, not captured by the hands of the

Jews, not with anyone drawing a bow against them, nor having taken up a spear for battle, or unsheathed a sword, not of mighty horses, but when an angel began the battle, he laid them low with ineffable power, and showed a multitude of dead greater than number. Therefore, the general, that is, Sennacherib, though exceedingly bold, is struck by the miracle, and was with difficulty brought home, and having returned completely stripped of the army he had dragged along, he dwelt wretchedly, it says, in Nineveh. Then what was remaining [ἴσ. εἶτα λοιπὸν] of the promises made by God has been brought to fulfillment. For he has fallen in his house while worshipping a certain patriarch, clearly one of his fathers or grandfathers according to the flesh. For it is the custom of those who have once gone astray, not only to unclean spirits, but also to whatever dead they might choose to attribute this thing. For having once fallen from the straight path, they make their flight to anything that seems good to them without examination. But his sons he says those who killed him are;

³¹ for when a divine decree was brought against some, those who suffered this would be in danger in every way and entirely, and that they will encounter their own people as exceeding enemies. Not having kinship by blood as a pledge of safety, not the disposition and diligence owed to fathers by their children, but through those by whom it was likely for them to be saved when in danger, through these very ones they are cast into the depths of destruction. And these things, I think, as far as they pertain to the outward appearance of the history, have been said not ungracefully. But I think it is necessary to say something of the innermost doctrines for the exhortation of the spiritual. For the holy city, that is, Zion, or rather Jerusalem, would be a type of the Church of Christ, the truer Zion; this city, the enemies of the truth sometimes, or rather for the most part, besiege, that is, the inventors of unholy heresies; and they do not besiege it alone, but in a way also hiring the powers in the world, the intelligible Sennacherib, that is, clearly, Satan, inspiring them to this, and as it were sending forth those under his hand and those accustomed to serve his perversities, who, when they come to fight against the leaders of the truth, speaking foolishly against the glory of God, will in sum achieve much of no account. For the besieged will be silent, and for what reason, the blessed Paul will teach, saying:

³² "Do not engage in word-wrangling, which is useless for anything; and again, "A heretical man, after a first and second admonition, reject, know-

ing that such a one has been perverted. For to those who have once completely inclined to deceit and trickery, and are held fast by falsehood, even the word of those who are accustomed to help is perhaps superfluous. For it is written: Speak into the ears of those who listen. Therefore, when the enemies of the truth either promise honors and rests, just like Rabshakeh the scoundrel, or threaten dangers and battles, one must approach God and lay claim to help from above alone. For the right hand from above, which is all-powerful, will suffice, both to save those who are accustomed to walk uprightly, and for the destruction of those who oppose. For he will drive them away, using certain ineffable strengths, and will thus deliver the holy and blameless Zion, that is, the Church, from war. For the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And it came to pass at that time, Hezekiah became sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came to him and said to him: Thus says the Lord: Set your house in order, for you are going to die, and you will not live. And Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, saying: Remember, Lord, how I walked before you in truth, with a true heart, and I have done what is pleasing in your sight.

³³ And Hezekiah wept with a great weeping. Hezekiah was indeed one of the most distinguished for love of God, and had a famous reputation for this. For he tore down altars, destroyed sanctuaries, burned the things in the shrines, cut down groves, and never ceased to worship God with sacrifices according to the law. And he prevailed over the barbarians neighboring Judea, so as to make many subject to tribute and taxes. And he built up cities, and having become altogether full of the highest renown, he was justly admired. But, as the children of the Hebrews say, he was carried away a little from what was fitting, and thought great things of himself, and fell into the snares of arrogance. For this reason, God extended to him the rod of love; "For whom the Lord loves," it says, "he disciplines, and he scourges every son whom he receives. For he strikes as a loving father, moving them to better things, and turning away those caught in baser things. For just as the most severe and skillful of physicians melt away the decayed parts of bodies with fire, or cut them with iron, not being accustomed to do this out of hatred for the sick person, but rather being overcome by concern for him; in the same way, I think, The God of all things cuts away the harm of the sicknesses in us with measured displeasures, so that we may not be condemned with the world, according to what is written.

³⁴ King Hezekiah, therefore, had fallen into a sickness, and indeed the evil had come to its end; for he was in extreme danger through the voice of the prophet, who says that he will die, and that it is fitting for him to set his house in order. And this was not from one who was ignorant that he would live and escape the terrible danger of the sickness by mercy from Him, but from one who was calling and inciting him to prayer, so that by asking he might receive the mercy from Him. For He pities those who are loved, and grants to the genuine the finding of the things they long for, and accepts the words of their supplications. Which indeed has been done. For Hezekiah prayed, saying: Remember, Lord, how I have walked before you in truth, with a true heart, and have done what is pleasing in your sight. The confidence of the just is good; for they all but ask for a requital for what has been done and the fruits of their genuineness. And the God of all things is delighted with those who have lived lawfully, and readily assents to those who maintain an exceptional life, when He sees them weeping and weaving toil with their prayer. And the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying: Go and say to Hezekiah: Thus says the God of David your father: I have heard the voice of your prayer, and I have seen your tears;

³⁵ behold, I am adding to your time fifteen years, and from the hand of the king of the Assyrians I will save you, and I will defend this city. And this will be the sign to you from the Lord, that God will do this word that he has spoken. Behold, I am turning back the shadow of the steps which the sun has gone down, the ten steps. And the sun went up the ten steps which the shadow had gone down. Not a long time passed, but immediately God assents, and accepts the prayers of the just man. For as it is written in the books of Kings, before the blessed prophet got outside the king's court, the word of God came to him. Having returned therefore immediately, he makes the words from Him clear. For he said that He had heard his voice, that is, had accepted the prayer, and had looked upon his tear; and He immediately grants him the ability to escape the terror of death, and He signifies the measure of the life that was added, so that looking to the end, and being disposed that he would in any case altogether die, he might make the disease of arrogance unacceptable to his mind. And He promises that, just as He had already promised, He would indeed make him stronger than the hand of the Assyrians, and would defend Jerusalem.

³⁶ And He did these things, removing every kind of despondency, and winning back with good things from his gentleness one who had been very greatly grieved. For the one who struck will bind you up. For the God of all things is good and merciful. And He confirms for faith that the things promised will come to pass, by the sign concerning the sun, according to the turning back of the shadow that then happened on the ten steps. And they say that Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, by some contrivance and art had prepared some steps to be made in his own house, which were, as it were, a clock, and were accustomed to measure the course of the sun by the descent of the shadow that came upon them. Therefore, that Hezekiah was about to return to life, God made manifest by the sun's shadow going backward, and by the day being extended to an unusual measure of hours. And nothing at all is impossible for the Master of all things, but whatever He should choose, He accomplishes by only nodding His assent. "PRAYER OF HEZEKIAH KING OF JUDAH, When he was sick, and arose from his sickness. I said in the height of my days, I will go to the gates of Hades; I will leave behind the remaining years. I said: I shall no longer see the salvation of God on the earth, I shall no longer see a man of my kindred. I left the rest of my life;

³⁷ it went out and departed from me, like one who takes down a tent he has pitched, my spirit was with me, like the web of a weaver who is near to cutting it off. On that day I was delivered up, until morning as to a lion, so he crushed my bones; for from day until night I was delivered to him. It is necessary to say this before all else: for the Seventy have put, in these words, the phrase "in the height of my days," while other interpreters have rendered it "in the midst of the days. But I think, and very prudently, that the words of the Seventy have been set down. For the holy city had been besieged by Rabshakeh and those with him surrounding it with the multitude of Assyrians, greater than could be numbered. But God promised through the voice of Isaiah that he would do marvelous things, and would save those in danger, and would remove the tyrant from Judea, and that he would die upon reaching home. Therefore, when all these things had come to pass, at the time the God of all had said, the boasts of Hezekiah's kingdom were about to be lifted on high. Therefore I said to myself, he says, that in the time of glory, that is, in the very heightening of my days, I will be in the gates of Hades, and I will leave behind the remaining years.

38 Then he adds to these things by which it happens that those seized by sickness converse with the ultimate terrors, and see death not far off. These things are: I shall no longer see salvation from God, nor indeed see a man of my kindred; I have let go the rest of my life, it has departed from me; and I have become like a tent being taken down, and like the web of a female weaver, that is, one who works, or rather, one who weaves, and is finally near to cutting it off. Then he says that, In the whole night and day my bones were delivered up as to a lion crushing them. And who is the lion? Either the burden of sickness, and death, all but roaring like a wild beast in appearance, and threatening its attack, that is, the unleashed terror of expecting to die. For fear and despair together crush the soul, and shatter all its strength. Like a swallow, so will I cry, and like a dove, so will I meditate. For my eyes failed from looking to the height of heaven to the Lord, who delivered me, and took away the anguish of my soul. O Lord, it was also announced to you concerning it, and you have raised up my breath, and being comforted, I lived. For you have chosen my soul, that it might not perish, and you have cast all my sins behind me.

39 Raising songs of thanksgiving, he promises to imitate the things which birds are accustomed to utter well, and to make his hymns unceasing. He says that by raising the eyes of his mind to God, he has been saved, and has escaped both the anguish of his soul, and death itself. For you have raised up my life, he says, I both lived and you preserved mine, so that it might not perish, and you have cast all my sins behind me. This is not the attitude of one sick with arrogance, but of one who has already come to know his own nature, and who knows precisely that we are all liable for many sins, and if God did not wish to save by mercy, no one will boast of having a pure heart, nor will he dare to say he is clean from sin. Therefore, in the blessings which might come to us from God, let him be glorified by us as one who has forgotten those things for which it was fitting to be justly punished. For wise, he says, are those who know themselves. For those in Hades will not praise you, nor will the dead bless you, nor will those in Hades hope for your mercy. The living will bless you, in the way that I also do. For from this day I will beget children, who will declare your righteousness, O Lord of the of my salvation, and I will not cease blessing you with a psaltery all the days of my life.

40 The things spoken through the voice of the psalmist would have a meaning equal to what has been set forth: "What is the prof- it in my blood

when I go down into corruption? Shall dust confess to you, or declare your wonders? For those who have once died, and have become captives of the gates of Hades, will perhaps cease even from giving glory. They would add absolutely nothing to what they have done, but rather will remain in the state in which they were left, and will await the time of the universal judgment. Therefore the living, he says, and having the authority to do this good thing, when they are well-treated, will bless you in the same way I also do. He promises to beget children, who will declare the righteousness of God. And some say that a choir is announced, and that in the divine temple he will establish the most melodious singers. But others, applying their mind still more to the ineffable things, say that Hezekiah, being high-minded, thought perhaps to have both an unending kingdom and life itself without end; being disposed to think that the things written concerning Christ, as concerning a son of David, were spoken of and looked to himself. From which they say, although he was in the fourteenth year of his reign, he is not seen to have been concerned with the need to beget children;

⁴¹ having learned, therefore, the end of his own life, he takes thought for those who will succeed him, and that he says children, and adds that They will declare the righteousness of the Lord, and his word has indeed missed the truth. For Manasseh became impious and a sinner, but as far as it concerned the intention of his father, he too was pious and a messenger of the glory of God. And Isaiah said to Hezekiah: Take a lump of figs, and mash it, and apply it as a poultice, and you will be well. And Hezekiah said: This is the sign, that I will go up to the house of God. It is written in the fourth book of Kings that the cause of Hezekiah's illness was a painful and hard-to-treat ulcer, so as to defy even the skills of the physicians. But since God once granted life to the just man, and commanded the disease to be driven away, he was to be delivered by means of things through which it was likely, or rather undoubtedly the case, that the wound would tend towards an increase of pains. For the hand of the Almighty is always a worker of wonders; and the manner of assistance comes through unexpected things; clearly, that is, from Him. Mash, therefore, he says, a lump of figs, apply it as a poultice, and you will be well. And from this, as I said, one was to expect to be harmed, that is to say, for the wound to derive some benefit.

⁴² But since it was God who was commanding, Hezekiah, being all-wise, takes the matter as having the power of a sign, and says that, If I am indeed

healed by a lump of figs, this will be for me a sure and true sign that I will go up to the house of God, to sacrifice to Him, clearly, and to pray, as the illness ceases, and every pain has been, as it were, put to rest in me. At that time Meodach son of Ladam, the king of Babylonia, sent letters, and envoys, and gifts to Hezekiah; for he heard that he had been sick unto death, and had recovered. And Hezekiah rejoiced over them with great joy; and he showed them the house of Nechotha, and of the stacte and of the incense, and of the myrrh, and of the silver and of the gold, and all the storehouses of the vessels of the treasury, and all that was in his treasuries; and there was nothing that Hezekiah did not show them in his house. After Sennacherib had been killed by his own sons, the sacred Scripture says that Nechordan his son had reigned in his place. But as it seems, when that one was out of the way, Meodach the son of Laadan inherited the thrones of the kingdom. This one is said to have sent to Hezekiah both gifts and letters, and envoys; and it is necessary to say what the reason for this is.

⁴³ For he heard, it says, that he had been sick unto death and had recovered; but not only this... That Hezekiah was weakened, I say, but then inclined back to run up again to strength, astounded the Babylonian, but certainly that was the truly great and extraordinary sign; by an ineffable and God-befitting nod the sun was commanded to run back and to walk backwards, so that the shadow also went up the ten steps. But the Babylonians and Chaldeans, who are called wise, being very skilled, even if they claimed to be so regarding the course of the sun, and the risings and settings of the stars, were not ignorant, as is likely, of the backward turning, and the unusual length of that day. And it was indeed very likely that the power of the sign had been rumored among those throughout all the earth, and that it was given for confirmation of the promise of God which was made, I say, to Hezekiah. And in another way we say that Merodach had marveled at what paradoxically happened to those with Rabshakeh who besieged Jerusalem, whom the striking hand of an angel destroyed in one night, so that in the morning all the bodies were found dead. Therefore the ambassadors came, since Merodach marveled at the righteousness of Hezekiah on account of these very signs from God that are beyond description.

⁴⁴ But he, although it was necessary to make a brilliant narration to those who had arrived from Babylon of the timely assistance of the all-powerful God, and the magnificent work of the paradoxes, so that, marveling even

more greatly at the divine excellence and the invincible authority of the Master of all, through the words by which they were initiated by him, they might return to their own land, having been enriched with the knowledge of God; for it was thus possible also to benefit others by proclaiming what they had learned; this he did not do, but was rather carried away into human vainglory, and he does not manage his own glory from the things for which he was honored by God, but from the wealth of the kingdom, and up to these things he defines for himself the power of his inherent good repute. For he showed them, it says, the house of Nechotha; and Nechotha is interpreted as of the spices, and of the stacte, and of the myrrh, and of the silver and of the gold, and all the houses of the vessels of the gaza, that is, of the abundance. For gaza is said to be a Persian word, and it signifies wealth, or abundance. And Isaiah the prophet came to king Hezekiah, and said to him: What do these men say, and from where have they come to you? And Hezekiah said: From a land far away they have come to me, from Babylon. And Isaiah said: What have they seen in your house?

⁴⁵ And Hezekiah said: All the things in my house they have seen, and there is nothing in my house that they have not seen, but also the things in my treasures they have seen. And Isaiah said to him: Hear the word of the Lord of Sabaoth: Behold, days are coming, and they shall take all the things in your house, and whatever your fathers have gathered until this day, it will come to Babylon, and they will leave nothing at all behind; and God said: that they will also take from your children whom you have begotten, and they will make them eunuchs in the house of the king of the Babylonians. The prophet was sent from God, but at first, having met with Hezekiah, he pretends to speak as if he had arrived on his own accord. In this way, then, he says: What do these men say? And his speech was made with much skill. For the Babylonians had arrived, perhaps, as I said, being eager to learn the cause of the backward turning of the sun, and for what reason this so renowned sign had happened. But he, although it was rather necessary, as I said, to relate to them the divine excellence, and that creation yields to His nods, showed the house of the incense, and of the treasure. Therefore the prophet inquires both for what reason they came, and what their message was. But he, in response to this, said absolutely nothing?

⁴⁶ but that they came from Babylon, and from a faraway land, this very thing and this alone he says; perhaps being very proud, that even those very

far away, and separated by the long distances lying in between, not moderately lay claim to friendship with him of those who had been diligent. When the prophet therefore asked what they had seen, and the king said that nothing remained unseen by them, he says that days will come in which all the things in his treasuries, gathered both with diligence and with the care of those before him, will be moved to the Babylonians; and he added to this that also from the children who would be born to him in due time, as in the longer successions of the family, those who are obviously skilled in these things will make **spadones**, that is, eunuchs, in the house of the king of the Babylonians. And he says that such things happened, or rather the book of Kings testifies, in the days of Jechoniah, when Nebuchadnezzar, having taken all of Judea by force, and having burned down Jerusalem, and in addition the divine temple, carried Israel away captive, among whom were those with the divine Daniel in the house of the king of the Babylonians, who they say became **spadones**, that is, eunuchs. What then, and for what useful purpose, was this matter of such a prediction?

⁴⁷ For by this God shows either that for those who had come from Babylon, it was surely better, and wise, to make a necessary account of the paradoxical things that had happened through the divine excellence and magnificence, or rather, to all but provoke the eye of the Babylonians by showing them the hidden things in the treasuries. And Hezekiah said to Isaiah: Good is the word of the Lord which he has spoken; let there be peace and righteousness in my days. He was at a loss for a defense, and having no helping word for his own failings, he says that the word of God is good, although it had announced things for which it was fitting that an unbearable tear should be poured from his eyes. Then he seeks the thing that was spoken [it is written: peace] in his own days, all but saying farewell to those who would come after him, and completely sparing no thought for his own country, city, and family. But it would have been better for him to lament over the things foretold, and to ask for mercy from God, also for those after him, not to ask for temporary and limited prosperity. But the mind of man is too weak, and we stumble in many things, as it is written, and no one among us could ever be keen-witted and wise, but often even a God-loving heart and an admired mind falls into that which is not right. Comfort, comfort my people, says God;

⁴⁸ priests, speak to the heart of Jerusalem, comfort her, for her humiliation is filled; her sin is absolved, for she has received from the hand of the Lord double for her sins. The discourse has passed on to the things in Christ, and henceforth makes a clear proclamation of the grace through him; yet it is not seen to have proceeded unreasonably, nor indeed to have been introduced at an unfitting time. For perhaps some of those who have not very accurately studied the things in the divine Scripture might say: In what way does the prophet here make the prophecy concerning Christ neighbor to the words of Hezekiah? And we shall make our defense to this by saying that: because the discourse, having mentioned the last capture of the land of the Jews, and of Jerusalem itself, as now being at the right time and necessity, has necessarily introduced the consolation that came from God after this. And I will briefly state the precise clarification of what we have just said. For there have been very many attacks against Jerusalem, and the country of the Jews has often been sacked; on the one hand by the hand of the Assyrians; on the other hand also by neighboring Barbarians, and indeed also by certain others who ravaged it. Then the last capture took place, the one by Nebuchadnezzar in the time of the reign of Jechoniah, when Israel was also carried away captive into the land of their captors.

⁴⁹ And in the time of the reign of Cyrus he was released from captivity and returned to Judea, and rebuilt the temple, and they dwelt not divided, until the coming of our Savior. Since Therefore, having made mention of the final captivity, when the Babylonians, having come [or, having] with all that was in the treasures of the kings of Judea, returned to their own land, he necessarily makes the prediction of the consolation that came after this, that is, clearly, the one through Christ, to those who minister the divine Gospel, commanding, and saying: "Comfort, comfort my people, says God. For a consolation for salvation, especially first for those of Israel, was the coming of Christ, and the oracles through him, as he says clearly: "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. O therefore, he says, you priests, O ministers of the new things, and of the oracles through Christ, speak to the heart of Jerusalem, that is, make the word of consolation acceptable to those who hear. For the law was burdensome to all, teaching both shadows and types; not instilling into the mind and heart the instruction concerning necessary things for the hearers, but, as it were, it with difficulty placed a certain external knowledge, which is in letters only.

⁵⁰ But the saving, and evangelical proclamation is spoken, with the Holy Spirit showing the depth of each one's mind, and sending in spiritual insights, and implanting the words of the saints, and somehow kindling them, as it were, in the inmost recesses of the mind. Such a one was the blessed David, psalm-singing and saying: "In my heart I have hidden your words, that I might not sin against you. But the Savior also addressed the holy apostles, that You place the word in your hearts, clearly the one from him, and saving. That the evangelical proclamation is spoken into the mind and heart by the holy mystagogues, with the Holy Spirit cooperating toward this, or rather, accomplishing everything, the proof would follow from the holy Scriptures. For somewhere God said through one of the holy prophets: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not remain in my covenant. And I disregarded them, says the Lord, because this is the covenant that I will make with them in those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and on their hearts I will write them. And the blessed Paul also writes to some:

⁵¹ "You are our epistle, known and read by all men, being made manifest that you are an epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of a fleshly heart. But it seems to some that instead of the ministers of the divine proclamation, the holy angels have been named priests in these things; for whom it would indeed be most fitting to be able to speak in hearts. Comfort her, therefore. What then should you say? that the God of all has ceased from the wrath that was upon them. "Her humiliation is accomplished. For sufficiently, he says, has she been humbled, and her sin is pardoned. "For she has received from the Lord's hand double for her sins. Did not God then punish beyond what was due, and did he not impose penalties equal to the crimes, but far beyond them, and as it were, double? Then how is the matter not incredible? And how will he speak the truth, saying: The Lord will not take vengeance twice for the same thing in affliction? how then must one understand what is said? for it is as if a child-loving father and one having the greatest compassion, having afflicted a sinning son (of the sons? a little, thinks perhaps that the emotion shown towards him was even beyond meas-

ure; and the cause of this is fondness, and the disposition owed to children from a father;

⁵² thus he says that Jerusalem, who is being comforted, has received from the Lord's hand double for her sins, although she was condemned for a very long time, with terrible, and unbearable things, yet moderately, and not punished in proportion to the things done by him. "For the Lord is truly compassionate and merciful, long-suffering, and of great mercy, and true, and he has not dealt with us according to our iniquities; nor has he dealt with us according to our sins. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and all the crooked things shall be made straight, and the rough way into a plain, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God, for the Lord has spoken. Saying that Israel has been redeemed, and that Jerusalem has been delivered from her own trespasses and having commanded her to be comforted, he indicates the time of consolation, as if coming and running on the very heels of what has been said; and this is the time of our Savior's advent, whose forerunner the divine Baptist has entered into the wilderness of Judea, crying out and saying: "Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the paths of our God. For this reason, having foreknown this in spirit, the blessed Zechariah, who was the father of this John, also prophesied, saying:

⁵³ "And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways. And concerning him the Savior said to them: "He was the lamp that burns and shines. And you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. For the Sun of righteousness, and the true light, is Christ. But the sacred Scripture compares the blessed Baptist to a lamp. For in comparison to the divine and ineffable light, to the unutterable and exceeding great brightness, the measure of the human intellect would rightly be compared to a small lamp, even if it were full of light and wisdom. What then is the meaning of, "Prepare the way of the Lord," and that one must indeed make his paths straight? He clarifies by adding: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and all the crooked things shall be made straight, and the rough way into a plain. For there are certain highways, or paths, that are scarcely passable, and these are rough and difficult to travel, so that in some places they

rise to mountains and hills, and in others they descend, and hang over deep cliffs.

⁵⁴ But if it should happen somehow that the high and steep places sink, and the hollow and deep places are filled up, then indeed, then in every way and altogether the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough and ravine-like places into smooth plains, and as if having the road level. When is this? This has happened spiritually through the power of our Savior. For long ago for all people, so to speak, the excellent life was difficult to travel, and the path of the evangelical life was unpracticed, because the mind of all was mastered by worldly and earthly desires, and was borne along by the unfitting movements of the flesh. But since, having become man, that is, flesh, according to the Scriptures, he abolished sin in the flesh, and cast down principalities and powers, and the world-rulers of this world, he has shown to us the way to piety to be smooth and most easy to run, having nothing steep, or raised on high, nothing hollow below, but rather smoothed into plains. All the crooked things have become straight. And not only this, but "and the glory of the Lord, he says, shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God, for the Lord has spoken. But he says that glory will be revealed, how or in what manner?

⁵⁵ For the only-begotten Word of God was, and is, since indeed he is also God, and ineffably begotten of God the Father in the excellencies of the Godhead, far above all rule and authority, and thrones, and dominions and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come; and he himself is the Lord of glory, and we too have known his glory, although formerly not knowing it, when, having become like us as a man, according to the economy, showed himself equal in strength, and equal in work, and equal in glory to God the Father, upholding all things by the word of his power, and easily performing the divine signs, rebuking creation, raising the dead, and effortlessly accomplishing the other wonders. Therefore the glory of the Lord was seen; and all flesh has seen the salvation of God, that is, clearly, of the Father. For he sent us his Son from heaven as Savior and Redeemer. For since the law perfected nothing, and the sacrifices in types did not have the power to wash away sins, we are perfected in Christ, and being freed from every stain, we have been honored with the spirit of adoption. And the grace for this, as far as concerns the purpose of the one

who saves, would go to all flesh, that is, to all people. For in these things, 'flesh' must be understood as 'man'.

⁵⁶ But if some should appear to have been deprived of salvation, even so the word of the prophet would be true. For the purpose of the one who honored, and willed to save, and not the indifference of those who were called is examined. And he necessarily adds, 'For the Lord has spoken,' lest anyone think he is speaking falsely, or from his own heart, or perhaps spouting forth what seems good to him. But that he has foretold what has seemed good to God, and what will in every way and entirely come to pass. A voice of one saying, 'Cry out.' And I said, 'What shall I cry?' 'All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withered, and the flower fell off; but the word of God remains forever.' That it is not possible in any other way for those who truly love him and who yearn to attain him to see the salvation of God, except only by choosing to think, and to do the things that seem good and are pleasing to him, he makes it clear.

⁵⁷ For it is necessary, I think, for those who wish to live in a manner befitting saints, and to choose the pure and excellent life, and to bind on as a kind of crown the glories of the life in Christ, to consider as nothing the distraction in this life, to cast as far away as possible the glory among men, which is temporary, and to hold that human affairs are in truth like grass and herbs, and to have in mind and heart the word of God, that is, the Word from God and the Father. For he dwells in our hearts through faith, and having been enriched by his divine Spirit, we have him in ourselves. For this possession is worth acquiring, and is the cause of life forever. For the Word of God, remaining forever and living, preserves and gives life. But if someone should wish to understand 'the word of God' as his commandment; we say that this too is not moderately beneficial. For it also preserves those who practice it for a long life, according to what was said by the Savior himself: "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death forever. Go up on a high mountain, you who bring good tidings to Zion; lift up your voice with strength, you who bring good tidings to Jerusalem. Lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God! Behold, the Lord comes with strength, and his arm with dominion.

⁵⁸ Behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. As a shepherd he will shepherd his flock, and with his arm he will gather the lambs, and he will comfort those that are with young.' To those who minister the divine

and saving proclamation, I mean the holy apostles and evangelists, or even, to put it simply, those who at various times have presided over the rational flocks and have the office of mystagogy, in what manner they might be lovers of God, and renowned, and filled with the highest glory he shows in these words. For it is not fitting, he says, for one evangelizing the glory and salvation of God everywhere to do this fearfully, and timidly, and striving to be unnoticed; but rather, as those who have become exalted, and are seen by all, and with great boldness as if having leapt upon a mountain, to use in a way a piercing voice, and one free from fear. Which indeed the divine disciples themselves, beseeching, said to the ruler of all that this might be theirs God; And now, Lord, look upon their threats, clearly meaning those of the Jews, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness. Lift up therefore, do not be afraid, he says. Announce to the cities of Judah, Your God, behold the Lord comes with strength, and his arm with dominion.

⁵⁹ And by adding "Behold," he does not allow hope to be stretched out to a long time for the arrival, but shows the Redeemer as being about to come after a short while, or rather, as having somehow already come to the very door. For he has commanded them to stretch out their hand, as it were, and to reveal with a finger the one who was foretold. And that it will not be like one of the holy prophets nor indeed in the measure of supplicants, but in despotic authority, and in power and lordship most befitting God, he made clear by saying, "He comes with strength, and his arm with dominion. For the divine prophets used to beseech that something might come from God, and indeed that it might be for the peoples under their hand. But the Savior and Lord of all, not lifting up a prayer, nor indeed receiving anything by request and then giving it, but as a true Son, has distributed the good things from the Father with the dignity befitting one who is free to those who have believed in him, and he worked all things using his own power and indeed authority. And that the mystery of the economy will not be fruitless for the one who became as we are, and endured the cross, and death on it, he shows by saying: "Behold his reward is with him, and his work before him," and he calls "reward" the fruit of having died according to the flesh.

⁶⁰ For he said, "Truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it brings forth more fruit. And again: "If I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself. For as Paul says: "He endured the cross, despising the shame. Therefore God has

highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The divine David also, having foreknown this in spirit, sings and says to him: "All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord. Therefore the economy is not without reward nor fruitless. And it followed and happened as if in his eyes as he shepherded his own flocks, and with his arm, that is, with his strength, gathered the lambs. For those who believed in him were created anew for a newness of life like newborn and young sheep, having clearly received the rebirth from above and through the Spirit. Therefore they long for the spiritual milk, being nourished as infants at first, but advancing also to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Therefore the lambs were shepherded, and some who were with young, that is, those having in the womb, were also comforted.

⁶¹For the Gentiles would rightly be understood as lambs just appeared and newly born. And one might say that those having in the womb are those already traveling with the word concerning him, as from the legal teachings and prophetic proclamations. For Christ has saved not only those from the Gentiles, but also those of the blood of Israel, to whom he says he was especially sent, who are also comforted, confirming by faith the accurate knowledge of the mystery that has come to them. Who has measured the water in the hollow of his hand, and the heaven with a span, and all the earth with a handful? Who has weighed the mountains with a scale, and the valleys with a balance? Who has known the mind of the Lord, and who has been his counselor, who will instruct him? Or with whom did he take counsel, and who instructed him? Or who showed him judgment? or who showed him the way of understanding? Through things unattainable and impossible for all men, or rather, perhaps, even for the powers above and in heaven, he attempts to show the transcendent and incomprehensible nature of the wisdom in God. For the mystery of Christ has been wondered at, and in ineffable words is the reason of the economy seen. And it seems to me that it is opportune to use the words of Paul and say: "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

62 For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or are these things not kindred to what has been said, one might say, and very reasonably so? For a deep depth, and an incomprehensible thing appears in the divine considerations. And just as it is utterly impracticable and impossible for the whole of the water to be measured by a human hand, and the heaven by a span, and all the earth by a handful, and for the weight of the mountains to be made manifest by a weight and a balance, just how great it is, in this same way, one could not comprehend the mind of the Lord. And He Himself will confirm this, saying through one of the holy prophets: "For my ways are not as your ways, but as the heaven is distant from the earth, so are my ways distant from your ways, and your thoughts from my mind. For of whom, he says, did I ever have need to counsel or instruct me, or to show him judgment, that is, justice, or righteous judgment, or the way of understanding. For if he is wisdom itself, and he himself makes every mind wise, and is the giver of the light of understanding to the rational creation; how could he need another, or in what way could anyone find fault with what he might purpose? But from this the prophet works a great benefit for his hearers. For some of the unbelievers already dare to say:

63 For what need was there for the Word of God to become like us, and to endure flesh, and the stain from it, when He wished to save those on earth, even though, he says, it is not difficult for Him as God to accomplish what He wills by a nod. Then how has He not become man in vain? And having come round through strange thoughts impiously to the unseemliness of the economy, they fight against the glory of the mystery. Therefore the prophet in these things cuts short their foolish empty counsels; and he says that the wisdom in God is incomprehensible, and the mind in him, even if he is wisdom itself and the highest and purest mind, so that for the rest it would be unacceptable, or rather the argument of the unbelievers would justly be laughed at, having dared, I know not how, to censure the economy of the Only-Begotten in the flesh as not having been well done. But it seems to some that: Who has measured the water in his hand, and the heaven with a span, and the rest, applies to God who rules all things, as being able to measure out the water, and heaven and earth, mountains and valleys, and having knowledge of all things absolutely, even the impossible, grasping all that has come into being, and holding as nothing the things of so great a size and mass of created things and those conceived in immeasurable multitude.

⁶⁴ Indeed, if anyone should choose to think thus, he would perhaps do no wrong.

DISCOURSE 21

¹ If all the nations are as a drop from a bucket, and were counted as the turn of a scale, and will be counted as spittle? And Lebanon is not sufficient for a burning, and all the four-footed animals are not sufficient for a whole burnt offering, and all the nations are as nothing, and they were counted as nothing. To whom have you likened the Lord, and to what likeness have you likened him? Has a craftsman made an image, or a goldsmith, having melted gold, gilded it? For a craftsman chooses a rot-proof wood, and wisely seeks how he will set up his image, so that it may not be shaken. Will you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not known the foundations of the earth? The prophetic word, having recounted to us the economy of the Only-Begotten in the flesh, and having sufficiently marveled at the ineffable wisdom, through which we have also been saved, and having come to know the Master by nature and in truth, we have been deemed worthy of his grace, gathered indeed as lambs by his arm, and having become under him as under the exceedingly good shepherd; for he has laid down his life for his own sheep.

² And indeed, having shown that it is impossible to perceive, that is, to measure perhaps the mind, and having confessed him to be the highest wisdom and beyond all things, he has necessarily introduced the address to those from the nations, that is still worshipping creation rather than the Creator, making arguments, and leading them away from the ancient, ancestral, and inherited error, and transferring them to better things and bringing them back to knowledge befitting a human being. Therefore, he points out the immeasurable superiority of the God who rules over all, and the surpassing dignity of His inherent magnificence, and that all things are small to Him, and would be reckoned as equal to nothing in comparison, I say, to the immensity of His inherent power and glory. For this reason he says: If all the nations are as a drop from a bucket, and were reckoned as the turn of a scale, and will be reckoned as spittle. These are small and entirely worthless things. For what is one drop falling from a bucket? What would be the turn of a scale, bringing what seems to be lesser to equality? And what is spittle, that is, human sputum? But Lebanon, he says, would not be sufficient for him for burning, nor all its four-footed beasts for a whole burnt offering.

Such things are entirely contemptible; and even if all things were offered to Him for a whole burnt offering, they too should be cast behind the glory of God.

³ And if all the nations, he says, are as nothing, and were reckoned as nothing, to what likeness have you likened Him? For what will be like Him, and of equal weight, either in nature, or in mass, or even in renown? Is it by the arts of a carpenter, and the skills of a woodworker? Is it by goldsmiths, or has he been formed in an image after any of the created things? or, he says, was a man-like statue made? By no means. For there could be nothing equal to Him. For since He is God by nature, and there is no other like Him, He will certainly in every way be supreme over all. Having shown therefore that He is beyond everything that has been made and called into being, he then derides the making of idols, and says that a carpenter selects rot-proof wood, and seeks wisely how he will set up an image of it, so that it might not be shaken; so that it would be by the skill of the carpenter, that, for those who are deceived according to the measure of his inherent understanding, he should construct a god according to what seems good to them, supported with the greatest security, so that it might not be shaken and shattered by falling. So then, the worshippers of idols were in want of gods, when there was no carpenter's skill on the earth;

⁴ but the man-made things would not have been preserved, if the craftsman had not wisely sought the means by which they could stand and have an unshaken base. Someone might say, I think, and very rightly so, the words through the voice of David: "The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the works of human hands. And he adds to this: "May all who make them, and all who trust in them, become like them. Having thus derided the construction of idols, he turns his discourse to the shame and correction of those who are deceived, and shows that their transgression in this is without excuse, saying: Will you not know? Will you not hear? Instead of, have you not known? have you not heard? Has it not been told to you from the beginning? Have you not known the foundations of the earth? By foundations of the earth he means its last and furthest parts. You have known, therefore, he says, from one end to the other. You have heard, and it was told to you from the beginning. But what was told? That the God who is by nature and truly, is one and only; but pieces of wood and stones, and nothing else, are what are crafted by men for us as gods. For the God-breathed Scripture has not been

silent; but rather from of old the knowledge of the truth has been proclaimed, through patriarchs, through the law and prophets.

5 For it was not when the only-begotten Word of God, having become like us, a man, shone upon those on the earth, that for the first time in the final accusations the error came to be. But the charge of idolatry was ancient, as I said. For the choir of saints has not ceased to decry it, and to show it to be abominable, and to make manifest the Creator and Lord of all. He who holds the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are as locusts. He who establishes the heaven as a vault, and spreads it out as a tent to dwell in. From from the beauty of the created things, their Creator is analogously perceived, at least by those who are of a sound mind. For it is possible for the wise to be able to perceive, and very easily, who indeed, and how great is the maker and craftsman of this universe, from the excellence and the ineffable and God-befitting economy, by which creation, not being, came to be, and having come to be, is preserved, being held together by the power of the one who made it for well-being and existence. For to what could he be likened? says the Lord.

6 How is he not beyond all understanding, who alone grasps all the earth in his hand, and holds it so that it is well established, and has raised up the heaven over it like a vault, and has stretched it out like a tent, so that those for whom it clearly came to be might dwell in it? For as the prophet himself says somewhere: He did not make it in vain, but to be inhabited. Is then the multitude of those inhabiting the earth, though immeasurable, a great thing to God, he says? Not at all. For indeed, in comparison to the majesty and excellence of God, they would be as grasshoppers. Or also in another way. For he holds the circle of the earth, that is, its entire compass, and those who inhabit it are as nothing to him, though they graze in it like a swarm of locusts, and go beyond all number. And this too is wonderful, and great for the praise of the all-powerful God. He that brings the princes to nothing to rule; he has made the earth as nothing. For they shall not sow, nor shall they plant, nor shall their root take root in the earth. A wind blew upon them, and they were dried up, and a storm shall take them up like dry sticks. It is the custom of those who are deceived, and do not know God who is by nature and truly so, not only to worship the hordes of demons, and to say to the wood:

7 You are my God, and to the stone, You have begotten me, but also most foolishly to deify men who have become distinguished on the earth. And so Sennacherib, having returned from Judea to his own land, was said to worship his own patriarch. For they offered sacrifices also to the dead, and calling them heroes, they registered them as gods. It was necessary, therefore, since the multitude of idols was clearly discredited, to proceed to this very argument, to persuade the deceived to consider human things as absolutely nothing; but even if some of those on earth have become illustrious and admirable at times, or sit on the highest and royal thrones, or have been deemed worthy of other preeminence at times, in no way to think that they are gods, but rather to understand that, both the ability to have power and to rule are given to some from nowhere else except from God. And that the matter is free from all difficulty for the all-powerful God, he shows clearly, saying that rulers are given to rule as nothing by him. And he leads up to something even greater and says, He made the earth as nothing. And that it lies in the power of God whether any memory is preserved or not of those who have become illustrious and distinguished on earth, he declares, saying: For they shall not sow, nor shall they plant.

8 For if God did not wish it, clearly, he says, they will have no fruit on earth, nor even a root or a memory, but as if a wind had swept down upon them, they will go to nothing, like dry sticks. For all human things are small and easily scattered, and altogether easily overturned, and wither away like grass. Therefore, we must worship God alone who is by nature and truly so, and let there be no account of things invented by skilled craftsmen, nor indeed of men to whom the name of gods has been ascribed by some. For this is worship of the dead, and nothing else. Now therefore, to what have you likened me? and he said, I will be exalted, the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has shown all these things; who brings forth his world by number, he will call them all by name from his great glory, and in the might of his strength nothing has escaped you. The all-wise Paul rightly cried out against the ignorance of those who are deceived, and of the multitude of idolaters he makes the condemnation most just. For though it was possible for them even from creation itself to know the creator and artificer of all things, they were carried away into false worship, and have worshipped those who are not gods. But he spoke thus concerning the God who rules over all:

9 "For his invisible things from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood through the things that are made, both his eternal power and divinity, so that they are without excuse. Because, knowing God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks, but became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened; and claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for a likeness of a mortal image, and of birds, and of four-footed animals, and of reptiles. Therefore, since, he says, I hold the circle of the earth, and have stretched out the heavens like a tent, and I make rulers to rule for nothing, and I liken those on the earth to locusts, to whom have you likened me? instead of, To whom likening me would you not be outside of what is fitting, nor would you sin against the truth? Do you think you exalt me by saying I am the heaven, or by wishing to make me like one of the elements? But nothing of created things is like me, who am in every respect whatsoever unchangeable. For no one could be of equal standing in respect of substance with the one who calls into existence the things that once were not. For that I am not like the gods among you, who received their origin from human art, see from the created things themselves.

10 Lift up your eyes on high, see the firmament, the choir of the stars, consider who has shown all these things, who is it that brings forth his host by number, that is, clearly, of heaven. And he calls the stars the host of heaven, which he says he knows in himself, not only as seen in their multitude, but indeed also each one, and as it were by name. This is worthy of God, and exceptional; and so the prophet makes much of this matter in his wonder, and says to him: From your great glory, and in the dominion of your strength nothing has escaped you. For as the sacred Scripture says, The drops of rain are numbered by him. For nothing at all would escape the ineffable wisdom, the mind that knows all things. For you should not say, Jacob, and what has Israel spoken? My way is hidden from God, and my God has taken away my judgment, and has departed. Having stated very well that those who are wandering will be called in due season and, being enriched in mind and heart with the light of truth, will acknowledge the creator and artificer of all things, and that they will be wise and sagacious, and from the beauty of created things will behold in proportion the one who by ineffable power brought this whole universe into existence, and having woven for them a

sufficient initiation through the things already said before, he transfers his discourse to those from the blood of Jacob, that is, Israel.

¹¹ For since they stumbled at the stumbling stone, and not having accepted the provider of salvation, they have become somewhere far from intimacy with him, the shadow according to the law no longer being accepted, and the worship and service in spirit and truth, that is, the evangelical one, not rather having been brought in, they were murmuring, saying: 'My way is hidden from God,' that is, he does not watch over the legal way of life. For living thus, just as, of course, the commandment given through the all-wise Moses has also commanded, he no longer deems us worthy of his oversight. 'And he has taken away my judgment and has departed,' that is, he has abolished the law. And they call the law 'judgment'; and the blessed David will teach this, saying to the God of all: "You have established judgment and righteousness in Jacob; that is, You have ordained the law through angels, that is, through the mediation of Moses; and Moses also said concerning Israel, that 'There he gave him ordinances and judgments.' 'He has taken away my judgment,' therefore, that is, having all but cast away the worship according to the law, he both took it away from us and departed. For he no longer cares for the chosen, and the firstborn Israel has come to nothing. And now have you not known, unless Have you heard?

¹² An eternal God, the God who made the ends of the earth, will not hunger, nor will he grow weary, nor is there any searching out of his understanding. For of old, O Israel, you were instructed through the law, you learned through the prophets the manner of the economy that was to be after the law. For the law has been given as an oracle, having shadows and types of the good things to come, and having in its letter the power of the mystery of Christ, as in birth pangs; for in many ways through the commandment according to the law Christ was prefigured, and the mystery concerning him was enigmatically written down; and he himself will confirm it, saying to those from Israel who chose to disobey: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since, he says, he accuses, saying, He does not look upon my ways according to the law; for this is the meaning of: My way is hidden from God, and that he has taken away our judgment, that is, the law, and departed; as one who is surely somehow ignorant of the one who watches in God, he says such things: Let it be, he says, even if you did not know now, if you have not heard? that is, if you would

not hear? It is as if he were to say: I accept the pretense economically. You did not know, unless you were to learn, that is, without hearing. Hear therefore, an eternal God.

¹³ The God who made the ends of the earth will not hunger, nor will he grow weary. You brought, he says, the sacrifices through blood, sheep, and you offered oxen fulfilling vows; you honored with incense and smoke, with turtledoves and pigeons; but know this and be not ignorant that the eternal God made the ends. By "ends of the earth" he means its limits, so that through this the whole may be understood. He will not hunger, nor will he grow weary. I say that this is similar to what was said to them through the voice of the Psalmist: "Shall I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? For how, he says, do you bring me sacrifices? As to one who is hungry, and accustomed to grow weary from famine? Away with this evil counsel. For the eternal God who knows not how to perish, will neither hunger nor grow weary; for none of human things will touch him. But neither is there any searching out of his understanding. For at times there is an accusation, he says, saying: If I now make unacceptable the commandment through Moses, that is the shadow in the law, why did you legislate at all in the beginning? if the new things are better than the old, that is, the evangelical decrees, why were these things also established by the law itself? But do not say this, he says. For you are not able to find the incomprehensible understanding, that is, the wisdom of God.

¹⁴ For the commandment was given through Moses; and for what things then, and for what reason Paul will teach, saying that "The law entered in, that the trespass might abound. And again: "For the Scripture has confined all under disobedience, that he might have mercy on all. Therefore the indicator of sin was appointed, and as it were a conviction of the weakness of all, so that, since it does not know how to justify sinners, but rather condemns them, finally the grace of the generosity through Christ is necessarily introduced, justifying the ungodly, and freeing from their trespasses those held fast by them. Therefore, there is no searching out of the understanding of God who manages all things wisely, who both pre-appointed the law for the conviction of sin, and sent the Son from heaven, that he might justify by faith those in sins. Giving strength to the hungry, and to those who are not in pain, sorrow. For the younger men shall hunger, and the young men shall grow weary, and the chosen shall be without strength. But they that wait for

God shall renew their strength, they shall grow wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not hunger. Understand for me then in a general sense, that the eternal God, the God who made the ends of the earth, is himself the one who gives strength to the hungry. For indeed God, being also eternal, has never been in need of food.

15 But he himself rather gives righteousness to the hungry, a spiritual manliness; he likewise also gives sorrow to those who are not in pain. And you will understand this in two ways. For indeed from very great insensibility, and from not knowing what is pleasing to God, neither yet to those who know that by stumbling against him they will fall into terrible and inescapable punishments, he gives for their aid to be grieved henceforth for whatever they may have stumbled in. For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation, not to be repented of, that is, to those who crucified Jesus, and perhaps were even rejoicing at this (for so were disposed both the leaders of the Jews, and as many as dared to say: "His blood be on us and on our children;") giving sorrow, having prepared them to commune with calamities and the evils of war; and that they have slipped from intimacy with him, they have become destitute of all strength and spiritual nourishment. For this reason, as if interpreting what was said, he adds, saying: For the younger men shall hunger, and the young men shall labor, and the chosen shall be without strength. For insofar as it concerned the nations being dissolved, and being so weakened, and cast under the feet of the devil, and carelessly doing what seemed good to the unclean spirits, they were certain brave and younger men; but intellectually, that is, and spiritually, they were held by hunger and labor.

16 But those who knew through the instruction in the law how to do good, and who once fulfilled the given commandment, but these, he says, will hunger, and will labor, that is, they will be without strength for anything good. For if a famine of the divine words befalls some, it certainly reveals them to be weakened, and paralyzed, and knowing how to trample on nothing good. But that the nation of Israel was destroyed by famine, with those who believed in our Lord Jesus Christ having been delivered from the evil, God proclaims beforehand, and long ago speaking through one of the prophets: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will bring a famine upon the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord; and they shall run to and fro from

the east to the west seeking the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. For how were they not to become strengthless and to labor, and to be destroyed by an intellectual famine, clearly because they did not accept Christ, although he said clearly: "I am the living bread, who came down from heaven, and gives life to the world; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever? And since through much folly, although it was possible to partake, they did not eat the bread of life, they are wasted by famine, while the Gentiles feast.

¹⁷ For it is true that, as Solomon says, "The Lord will not let the righteous soul suffer hunger, but he will overthrow the life of the ungodly. But these things the Jews happened to suffer. For they acted impiously against the author of life. But those who wait for God, that is, those who serve Christ, and think his thoughts, and are zealous to do right, will renew their strength. For they have not remained in those weaknesses in which they were once wandering, and yoked to Satan, and to worldly pleasures, but they will have another, Christ clearly supplying them with the ability to prevail over every loathsome pleasure, and to be borne out of the snares of sin. For it is written: "The Lord is my strength and my song. They will be renewed thus, he says, as if eagles also. And the blessed David will teach this, saying: "Your youth will be renewed like an eagle's. And they will run, and not grow weary. For zealous and youthful they will traverse the paths of piety toward God, with Christ giving them life-giving things, and not allowing them to grow weary. For he fills the hearts of those who love him with strength from above, so that even if it should happen to fall into temptations and labors, while practicing virtue, they become stronger than to be weary, knowing well that patience is much to be prayed for, and if it is in some, it surely shows them to be fully approved.

¹⁸ "For patience works proof, and proof hope, and hope does not put to shame those who are accustomed to live thus. The blessed David encourages to manliness, that is clearly, in all good things, saying: "Be of good courage, and let your heart be strengthened, all you who hope in the Lord. Be renewed to me, O islands. For the rulers will exchange their strength; let them draw near, and speak together, then let them announce judgment. The islands are understood in different ways. For there are many in the seas, and sometimes cities are also called thus, and villages having a wide circle of unplowed and untilled land around them; they say that those of the Idumaeans and Moabites are such, as lying in the desert. And these were impious idolat-

ers, and not far from the land of the Jews. We say, therefore, that wishing to signify the reception of the Gentiles, and as from the midst transferring the power of the matter to the whole, he addresses the cities of those who are wandering, saying: Be renewed to me, O islands, that is, having cast away from your own hearts the oldness and rottenness from wandering and sinning, be renewed through repentance. Take counsel for better things, receive the grace that renews unto newness of life, that is, clearly, the one through Christ.

¹⁹ It is likely also in another way that the Churches are here named islands, which are placed, so to speak, in the midst of worldly circumstances, and are washed over by the waves of those who rise up against them, yet they have a secure foundation, and remain unshaken. For they are founded upon a rock, and Christ is in her. These, therefore, which are named as islands, that is, the Churches. And through them is signified the multitude called through faith, once a lover of sin, abominable and unclean, but rotten and wrinkled, it has passed through Christ to a newness of life, it has become a virgin, pure, not having spot, or wrinkle, but rather holy, and blameless. Therefore be renewed to me, he says. Moreover, he affirms most strongly that the rulers will exchange strength. Here he names as rulers the heralds of the truth, who became one after another after the call. And Peter and Paul declare, and the rest of the list of the apostles, to whom it is more fitting to apply also the saying, They will grow wings like eagles. They will run, and not be weary. They will walk, and not be hungry. For the Acts concerning them reveal such wonders. For certainly not like the first, that is, the teachers of the Jews, have the disciples of our Savior become. But as in another power, a spiritual one clearly, they were much better, and incomparably superior in their boasts according to virtue. Let these rulers, therefore, draw near, and speak together.

²⁰ But you will understand 'let them draw near' in terms of time. For if the time should reveal them, they will speak together. It is as if he should say: All will say the same thing to those being initiated. For as speaking from one spirit they do not contend with one another's words, but rather they will make the proclamation concerning the divine dogmas in harmony, and will announce the hidden mystery of Christ. For this, I think, is the meaning of, Then let them announce judgment. For since those of Israel called the law through Moses 'judgment,' for this very reason and quite fittingly, contrast-

ing with it the evangelical and saving proclamation, he calls it 'judgment' through these words. For the truly just judgment, and the power of the legislation pleasing to God, is not revealed more in the shadow according to the law, but in the preaching of the holy mystagogues, the new rulers. Who, having learned the judgment from Christ, that is, the will of God the Father, have announced this to us in the same words. Who has raised up righteousness from the east, has called it to follow his feet, and it shall go? It is not fitting to marvel at the God who has dominion over all things from the mere and only magnificence in His works, but also through the ways in which He does good, He makes a demonstration of the serenity within Him.

²¹ For He has saved those on the earth, and has delivered the human race, which had been utterly lost, from death, and corruption, and the greed of the devil. For He has abolished him, together with the powers with him, and has justified through faith, having driven away the sin that tyrannized over us. But all these things were accomplished through Christ; "For He became for us from God the Father righteousness and redemption, and sanctification. And we have been enlightened through Him, and we have partaken of mercy and love, and simply of everything that knows how to save. And this one of the holy prophets proclaimed to us beforehand, saying: "And to you who fear My name the sun of righteousness shall arise, and healing is in His wings. Who then, he says, caused righteousness to rise like a sun from the east? that is, Christ. Who called it? that is, caused it to arrive, and to appear in such a way, as to walk in the footsteps of the one who called, instead of, as it were, following in the track of God the Father? For thus the Lord lived on earth, fulfilling the works of the Father, and showing Him to us in His own nature. For He was and is equal in power to Him, and by these very deeds He has fully convinced those on earth that in every respect He is co-equal with the one who begot Him. And so He said clearly:

²² "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me. But if I do, even if you do not believe Me, believe My works. Following then everywhere the will of the Father, or rather being Himself the will of the Father, He addressed the Jewish people saying: "You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. And even if I do judge, My judgment is just, because I seek not My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. Do you see then how He, as it were, walks in the footsteps of the Father. Therefore He also said: "I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me; and, "He who has seen Me has seen My Fath-

er. He will set before the nations, and He will astonish kings. And He will cast their swords to the ground, and their bows as discarded twigs. And He will pursue them, and the path of His feet will pass in peace. Who worked, and did these things? He called her, who calls her from ancient generations. For before the coming of our Savior, those on the earth, differing in nothing from irrational beasts, appeared to be living with great ignorance, and were possessed by ignorance and darkness, and had been enslaved to the world-rulers of this age, and having submitted the neck of their own mind to the desires of the devil, they were being carried down the paths of wickedness to destruction. But Christ shone upon them.

²³ For He is the expectation of the nations. And having freed them from those who formerly oppressed them, He made them free, and sons of God, having washed away all filth in them; for He has justified them through faith, and by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit He made them radiant and enlightened. Therefore, He has given to the nations the righteousness that is, as it were, in the order of the sun and has been raised from the east, Israel obviously having been cast out because of its impiety toward Him. When this happened, and so great a multitude was saved, the kings were astonished. For astonishment, as it were, has fallen upon the world-rulers of this age, and they have feared the divine and unbearable judgment, that which, I say, has come upon the nations. But those who were formerly terrible and strong and fought against the divine glory, and were accustomed, as it were, to brandish weapons against it, and to bare swords, and to draw the bow of madness, have fallen to the earth, and having abandoned their instruments of war, have become like dry sticks. And again, the word concerning these things has been made by way of a comparison to our own affairs. For the evil powers have been defeated and every manner of their wickedness has been rendered powerless, with Christ plundering their goods. "For the enemy will not prevail," he says, "against him, nor will the son of iniquity proceed to harm him.

²⁴ For it was necessary, it was necessary, with evil and wicked powers having been destroyed beforehand, and the enemy of all having been cast down to the earth, then indeed, then, and at a very opportune time, for the redemption of the nations to take place. For Christ pursued them, that is, He turned them to flight. For it was not possible to resist God, and as He was bringing their ancient tyranny to an end, not in every way and by all means to suffer those things which it was fitting to be brought upon them by him

for having destroyed the land. Therefore, the enemies having been driven out. For the way, he says, of his feet will pass in peace; for nothing has become an obstacle to the one ordering our affairs, Christ, the Savior of us all. But as if walking through a smooth and level road, he has accomplished the salvation of us all, with no enemy hindering or resisting. For they have fallen. Who then, therefore, has effected all these things, or who has called righteousness? Is it not I, he says, who have now and in the last time shown it, but who have called it from ancient generations. For the mystery of Christ is not recent, but rather was predestined before the foundation of the world, God having foreknown what was to be.

25 For as soon as Adam fell, or rather before he slipped into this, the Creator foresaw also the healing that would be for him in due time, that is, clearly, the one through Christ. He predestined the manner, and do not be surprised, that even we ourselves who are justified through faith in him, he is found to have gathered beforehand. For those whom he foreknew, he says, and predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, these he also called. When therefore we have been predestined according to foreknowledge, how not much more he himself through whom we have been saved and called? I am God, the first, and unto the things to come, I am. The nations saw and were afraid, the ends of the earth drew near, and came together, each one judging for his neighbor, and to help his brother. He says that he is the first God, not as though a second came into being after him. For how or from where? For he is one and God of all, having no beginning of being, but rather having called all things into being. He therefore is first and alone, and God without beginning, the creator of all, and for endless ages to come he will not be in another manner, for he is and is alone.

26 And since the nations have seen Christ and the righteousness that came to us from him, and all have seen his glory with the eyes of the mind, they have feared, he says, those from the ends of the earth to the ends, that is, those throughout the whole world. And they were gathered and drew near, no longer remaining far off, and as if being alienated through sin, but as if having become near through spiritual kinship, and brought together into one faith and unanimity. For I think this is what it means, that "They drew near, and came together. But having tasted of the Lord, and understood that he is good, and having marveled at the beauty of the truth, they have not kept the gift for themselves alone, but indeed doing good, each one

has also fittingly judged to help his brother and friend, he says. And he will say: A craftsman grew strong, and a smith striking with a hammer, forging at the same time. At one time he will say: It is a good joining. They strengthened it with nails, they will set it up, and it will not be moved. He makes the manner of the help clear. For each of those who have judged to help his neighbor and brother, having been initiated, he says, and having known the truth, will also admonish others, saying: A craftsman grew strong and a smith striking with a hammer, forging at the same time. But in what way did he grow strong?

²⁷ For having composed idols and carved them into a god, the one having skill in carpentry, and indeed also a smith striking, having made a hammered statue, brought it to the deceived into a depraved mind, and of his own labors, or rather inventions, he made worshippers those who were made in the image of God. Then he mocks the making of idols, and as it were imitates the words of those who work them, crying out to one another, that "It is a good joining. For the makers of idols, having fashioned a hand perhaps or a foot, or even some other of the body's parts, having worked them, they finish them through joints, and fitting limbs to limbs, and making them strong with nails; then setting them up and securing them so that they stand, and are not shaken. But these things are a mockery and nothing else, and of the vanity of those who worship them, and proofs of their extreme foolishness. For to know indeed that also from small parts and the idol was completed from parts joined together, and to have for its coming into being, and indeed, permanence in standing, and security in nails; then to worship them, and call them gods, how is this not truly full of all folly? But you, Israel, are my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, whom I have loved, whom I took hold of from the ends of the earth, and from its high places I called you, and I said to you:

²⁸ You are my servant, I have chosen you, and I have not forsaken you. Do not be afraid. For I am with you. Do not wander. For I am your God who has strengthened you, and I have helped you, and I have secured you with my righteous right hand. Having initiated very well those from the nations, and having prepared them to know that he is both God and the creator of all things, and that all things are subject to him and to his divine commands, and came to be in the beginning, and having been brought into being are fixed in goodness, and have an unshaken permanence, he then necessarily

encourages the ministers of the evangelical ordinances, through whom they were to deliver the word of instruction to those from the nations. And he declares them wise and most daring, and brings to remembrance the virtue of the holy fathers, and he wishes them to know the love shown to them. For this reason he says: But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, whom I have loved. But Jacob and Israel, and the seed of Abraham the beloved, would be none other than those of Israel who have believed in Christ, of whom, as it were, a kind of first-fruits the divine disciples have become. And that the fathers had become chosen and beloved he says, all but saying:

29 You who are from a noble root, and one so honored and beloved by me, you who are of the blood of Abraham, emulate the renown of your paternal virtue, and become imitators of their love for God. Indeed he says that he took hold of Abraham, and called him from the ends of the earth, that is, from its high places, because from afar and from the land of the Chaldeans he was summoned to Judea. For he heard God saying: "Go out from your land, and from your kindred, and from the house of your father, and come to the land that I will show you. Then he says as if concerning all of Israel, that I said to you: You are my servant. For he has been named firstborn. And he became chosen, as I said, and was not forsaken by God. He heard: Do not be afraid, and in addition, Do not wander. For I am your God who has strengthened you. For he was taught through the law that God is one, and the Lord is one, and that one must worship him alone, and that he has been helped by him and through his right hand, which is his creative power, that is, the Son. And he has become secure in himself, and superior to every plot. For he has conquered nations, and has inherited their land. Behold, all those who oppose you will be turned back and put to shame.

30 For they will be as if they were not, and all your adversaries will perish. You will seek them, and you will not find the men who acted insolently toward you. For they will be as if they were not, and those who war against you will not be, because I am your God who holds your right hand, who says to you: Do not be afraid, worm Jacob, few in number Israel. I have helped you, says God, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, and praised forever. This is also a fulfillment of what was said above. For you, Israel, my servant, he says, and Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, whom I have loved. Behold, they will be put to shame, and turned back, all who oppose you. For

there have been very many at various times, who have unholily plotted against the holy initiators, and who have attempted to bring forth in opposition to the salvific proclamations the things from their own wickedness. But they have become as nothing, and the adversaries of piety have perished. For to act against the ministers of the divine proclamation would be nothing other than to fight against the dogmas of piety. Therefore they will not be, he says, but you will seek them, and you will not find those who have acted insolently toward you. For they will be as if they were not. And this is what is sung through the voice of the blessed David:

³¹ "I saw the wicked one highly exalted, and lifted up like the cedars of Lebanon, and I passed by, and behold, he was not; and I sought him, and his place was not found. For many of those who are accustomed to think lofty things rise up against the company of the holy mystagogues. But they will be utterly rooted out of the earth, as the holy Scripture says. And those who think lofty things will endure a terrible and unexpected tribulation. For it is written: "He who makes his house high seeks destruction. Therefore, he says, those who war against you shall not be; and he does not at all say that no one will stand against the holy apostles. But there will surely be the going into a brilliant calm. For it is not true. For countless many have warred against them, but they would not even be found as existing, being humbled, clearly, and falling under the movements of divine wrath. For this reason he restores them to manliness, saying: I am your God, who holds your right hand, that is, who helps you, and makes you stronger than every temptation; I am the one who says to you, Do not fear, Jacob, you few of Israel. For with respect to the multitude of those warring against them, or their powers, Israel was completely few in number, and I do not mean the whole nation, but those taken by him for the apostolate.

³² But the one saving them was great, strong, and mighty for aid, having an invincible hand. For when God redeems, who is able to do harm? Behold, I have made you like the wheels of a cart, threshing, new, like a saw. And you will thresh mountains, and grind down hills, and make them like dust, and you will winnow, and the wind will take them up, and a whirlwind will scatter them. The children of the Egyptians, having brought sheaves from the fields to the threshing floor, then letting oxen upon them, and leading them around in a circle, grind down the ears of grain with their hooves. And they separate and divide the grain from the chaff, those indeed in other cities and

countries using carts and saw-toothed wheels. This very thing they have practiced to accomplish. Behold, therefore, he says, O Israel, I have made you like the threshing wheels of a cart, new, saw-toothed. And what is being threshed? Is it then ears of grain and wheat, and the things mixed together from the fields onto the threshing floor? By no means, but mountains, and hills. And who might such as these be in turn? First, the wicked and opposing powers. For the Savior of all has given us to tread upon snakes, and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy.

³³ Then he seems to compare to mountains and hills those who are accustomed to think lofty things, and who have an arrogant mind, and are lifted up on high, and are in worldly positions of power, and who set themselves against the holy mystagogues, and are accustomed to stand in the way like mountains or hills, so as to make the path most difficult for them, I mean, the path of fulfilling the course of the apostolate in time. But even those who are thus, he says, you will grind down, you will make them fly up like chaff scattered by the gusts of the winds, and as it were giving a whirlwind, so as to scatter them. For thus they will go to nothing. But you shall rejoice in the holy ones, Israel. And the poor and the needy will rejoice. For they will seek water, and there will be none; and their tongue has been parched from thirst. I am the Lord God, I the God of Israel will hearken, and I will not forsake them. Therefore, the enemies of the divine proclamation, and those who cut off your path, O Israel, he says, will go to destruction. But you will rejoice in the holy ones, Israel, that is, you will delight when you see many having become holy, and numbered among the sons of Israel.

³⁴ "For not all who are from Israel, these are Israel, nor because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children, but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. And that it was a custom to rejoice and be glad with the holy apostles over those who were accustomed to prosper, clearly through faith in Christ, Paul will also make clear when writing to them and saying: "My joy and my crown. And I for my part would say that each of the holy disciples was disposed in the same manner, and very rightly. For the cause of the highest gladness for them was the conversion of those who had gone astray, and the restoration to the better of those who did not know the truth. Therefore you will rejoice in the saints, Israel. And who these are he points out, saying: The poor and needy will rejoice, that is, the Gentiles. For they were in need of every good thing, and completely without a share in the gifts

from God. For those who are completely ignorant of him must necessarily lack the boasts of virtue. Therefore the poor and the needy will rejoice. How, or in what way? For they will seek water, and there will be none, he says, and their tongue has become parched from thirst. The phrase, "they will seek," in these words, he says, is used instead of, "they sought. But since they did not find it, their tongue was parched with thirst.

³⁵ For indeed among the Greeks there were many scholars and seekers, and investigators of the truth; but there was no one among them who knew how to teach these things. There was no life-giving water. There was no one who could satisfy with the doctrines of truth those who loved it. Therefore their tongue was parched with thirst. But I will hearken to them, says the God of Israel, and I will not forsake them. For He pitied the multitude of those who were wandering, and did not leave it in want of heavenly gifts, but rather filled it, and in what manner, he makes very clear through the following. But I will open rivers on the mountains, and springs in the midst of the plains; I will make the desert into marshes, and the thirsty land into aqueducts. I will put in the waterless land the cedar, and the box-tree, and the myrtle, and the cypress, and the white poplar; that they may see and know, and understand, and perceive together, that the hand of the Lord has done all these things, and the Holy One of Israel has showed it. He says that the land of the Gentiles is desert and waterless. A desert, on the one hand, because it was in a way stripped bare, and devoid of the most flourishing plants, that is, spiritual ones; and on the other hand, it was seen to be the nurse of thorns alone, and the mother of wild trees, and whatever is useful for fire to consume.

³⁶ This is what the Gentiles once bore for fruit, but to those who had long been thirsty he says: I will open rivers on the mountains, that is, holy men who have been enriched with the divine word from above, and who pour it out like river streams for the thirsty, and as it were, gush forth. So that the desert, once its appearance is changed, appears as marshes, and forests, and the thirsty land as in aqueducts. And aqueducts, in turn, would be the mystagogues who have appeared from time to time in every country and city, and the teachers of the Churches; who, just as from the springs and rivers of the divinely-inspired Scripture, having taken the word into their mind and heart, transfer it to others, like certain aqueducts watering the most flourishing gardens. And in what manner the desert will be changed

into marshes, and of what kind of trees it will be the nurse, he teaches, saying: "I will put in the waterless land the cedar, and the box-tree, and the myrtle, and the cypress, and the white poplar. And all these are fragrant and incorruptible woods. And to the saints belongs both fragrance, spiritually through a holy way of life, and the fact of not being corrupted by being given over loosely to worldly desires, but standing firm and steadfast, God rooting and sustaining them with his help. For the Lord upholds the righteous, as it is written.

³⁷ There will be, he says, rivers, and springs, and aqueducts, both on mountains and plains, and as it were, everywhere. And the desert will become a marsh, so that those who are called through faith may see with their very eyes, and may recognize also through good thoughts, and indeed may learn from the magnificent work of the things that have happened, and the unexpected change, that such great and famous things are not wont to be accomplished simply or automatically. For rather the hand of the Lord has shown them, that is, a divine power and authority, namely the Son, through whom all things, and in whom all things have already come to be, and have been wonderfully wrought by the Father. For not falsely-named gods, nor indeed worldly elements; nor even the one thought to be the God of this age, was a worker for him, but the Holy One of Israel has shown. Your judgment draws near, says God; your counsels have drawn near, says the king of Jacob. Having very well spoken of the calling of the nations as it will be in due time, and having promised to make the desert into marshes, and the thirsty land into aqueducts, and to make it lush with cedars, and box-trees and the other plants, and saying that his own hand will be marveled at, as the creator of such great things, he again addresses the makers of idols, and the craftsmen of such things, and says that their judgment is near.

³⁸ By judgment he means, either the punishment due to them, or the shame, and disgrace. For by a holy vote of God, and by a just judgment they would be punished as having deceived the world under heaven, and having introduced counsels that are not true. For they taught those on the earth to say to the wood, "You are my father, and to the stone, You have begotten me. For this reason he also says their counsels have drawn near, that is, have come to an end, with God shaking off the error, and scattering the mist from ignorance, and not by one of those among them, we mean of course the falsely named, but by the Lord, and God in truth, and the king of Jacob, that is, of

those of the blood of Israel. And through these things he brings to remembrance the signs that have happened, at the redemption of those from Israel, through which the power of his inherent God-befitting authority, or incomparable excellence, is very well discerned. Let them draw near, and announce to you what will happen, or what the former things were; tell us, and we will apply our mind, and we will know, what the last things are, and the things to come. Tell us, announce the things to come at the last, and we will know that you are gods. Do good, and do evil, and we will marvel, and we will see at the same time, that from where are you, and from where is your work;

³⁹ from the earth they have chosen you as an abomination. It is a proper and extraordinary characteristic of the divine and ineffable glory to know all things, and to be completely ignorant of nothing, neither of things that have happened before, nor of things present, nor of things to come. And so indeed through the all-wise Moses he makes clear to those on the earth the things before the establishment of this world, and the things in the beginning, saying: "In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth. But the earth was invisible and unformed, and darkness was over the abyss; and he recounts the creation of the whole world most accurately. But also our Lord Jesus Christ, who long ago spoke those things through Moses, announced to us the things at the last times; for as his disciple says: "We expect new heavens, and a new earth, and his promises. And it is possible to hear him saying clearly: "Shall anything be hidden from me?" - "For the word of God is truly living, and active, and sharper than a two-edged sword, and piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and there is no creature hidden from his sight, but all things are naked and laid bare to his eyes. But since he is God, he saves and does good, and fills with all gladness, that is, spiritual gladness, those who worship him;

⁴⁰ but he afflicts and subjects to punishments those who are accustomed to despise him, and do not endure to do good. But one could see nothing of this in those things made of stones. For what does lifeless matter know? Or how could they do good to someone, or be able to do evil, things that are not even able to defend themselves, but have received from others even just to stand and be seen? Let them come, then, he says, those who are thought by you to be gods; let them announce what will happen, let them say the former things, and the last things, and the things to come. For then, he says, we will

know that you are gods. But you are not able, he says, to announce it. Therefore, at least do good and do evil. But if you are able to do none of these things, then we will see, that is, it is easy to see, from where you are, and from where your work is; for you are an abomination made from the earth. For the idol would be, let's say, from wood, or stone of a bright and choice, that is, of another material; but all these things are from the earth. But I think one must marvel at the worshippers of idols, if they have not even learned that from them, namely, where their affairs will ever end.

⁴¹ For they did not know, or have not foretold, that they will be burned down with their own temples, and will lie as a laughingstock at times even to those who were formerly deceived. But I have raised up one from the north, and one from the rising of the sun; they will be called by my name. For the swarm of unclean idols, since they were nothing else but only wood and stones, have deceived the deluded. But they announced to them absolutely nothing either of the first things or of the last things, nor indeed have they done good to any, or have they been able to do harm. But I, He says, since I am a good God, have willed all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. I have saved the world under heaven, I have raised many who were lying as if dead. And who these might be, he teaches, saying: The one from the north, and the one from the rising of the sun, that is, the people from the Gentiles. For in relation to the land of the Jews, which is most southern, the land of the Gentiles is more northerly, and it has obtained the region toward the sun's rays. Therefore, the one from the north, and from the rising of the sun, would be the people from the Gentiles, who are called by the name of Christ. For we have been named Christians, and we are.

⁴² For he has acquired us with His own blood, and we have been bought with a price, and we are not our own. For one died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised. Therefore we say to our own Savior and Redeemer: "Lord, besides you we know no other, we call upon your name. We are therefore called by his name, and this was what was spoken through the voice of the prophet: But to those who serve me a new name shall be called, which shall be blessed upon the earth. But it seems, he says, that 'the one from the rising of the sun' means Christ, because it is written concerning him: "Behold a man, whose name is the East. And again, as God the Father says concerning him: "Who

has raised up righteousness from the east? "For Christ has become for us righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption besides. Let the rulers come, and as the potter's clay, and as a potter treading clay, you will be trodden down. For who will announce the things from the beginning, that we may know also the things to come? And we will say that he is true. There is no one who foretells, nor one who hears your words. For with God's assent, the multitude of idols was about to be burned down, and to be thrown aside like clay under the feet of the believers.

⁴³ For they have been trodden down, and are like dust, or like potter's clay, and are nothing other than this. For their origin was from the earth. But that all these things were about to be brought to an end in due time, with saints leading the way, and ministering vigorously to the commands of God, he shows by saying this: 'Let the rulers come,' that is, let the leaders of the peoples be revealed, who incite those who believe in me to error, and arm them against the lifeless gods. For who among them, He says, will announce the things from the beginning that we may know, or also the things to come, so that when the things spoken have come to pass, we may agree that they have spoken truth? But there was not, He says, among the falsely-named gods, that is, among the unclean spirits, one who foretells; nor among men one who hears your words. For of old, in both countries and cities, in the temples of idols there were false prophecies, and false sayings of demons, and tripods and cauldrons, and an innumerable multitude of those accustomed to deceive; and many went to receive oracles from them. But when the Word of God shone upon us, the idols in the shrines fell, and the deceiving demons have fallen silent; or rather, they were even sent down into Hades, and have been cast into Tartarus.

⁴⁴ But those who formerly honored the sayings from them have been called to the knowledge of the truth, and this he teaches by saying: "Nor indeed the one who hears your words. I will give a beginning to Zion, and I will summon Jerusalem to the way. For from the nations, behold, there is no one, and from their idols, there was no one announcing; and if I ask them, From where are you? they will not answer me; for they are the ones who make you, and in vain those who lead you astray. He promises again the manifestation of the Savior, through whom the world under heaven has been saved, and the multitude of those who were wandering has been called to the knowledge of truth. For so that we might have the guide, the one who

knows how and is able to lead us to the way of salvation, the only-begotten Word of God became man, being by nature a king; inasmuch as He is also understood as God and from God the Father, who indeed rules over all things, and has creation lying under his feet; He is said to have been appointed king over us. For it is written concerning Him: "Behold, a righteous king will reign, and rulers will rule with judgment. For Christ has reigned over the world under heaven, and He makes this clear to us by saying: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

⁴⁵ And yet, although He exercises authority over all things as God, because of the economy with the flesh He says that what He had as God has been given to Him. Therefore, having become king, He has appointed over us as rulers the holy apostles, who also ruled us with judgment, that is, with righteousness. I will give, then, he says, to Zion, that is, to the Church, or to the multitude of the believers, the saving beginning, that is, Christ. And I will also summon Jerusalem, which is again the entrance of the Church. For we have been summoned, being empowered through Christ, and we have been taught the endless path that leads to life. For from the nations, he says, behold there is no one, and from their idols there was no one who could proclaim. For there have been very many wise men and orators among the Greeks; but there was no one among them who could teach the way to piety. And the temples among them were full of idols, but not even in the idols, that is, in the falsely named gods, was there one who could announce the pursuit of what is profitable, or direct to the way of righteousness. But rather I say this: Not even if they were asked, he says, 'From where are you?' would they be able to answer. And those who do not know themselves, for they are deaf and senseless matter, how could they become guides for others?

⁴⁶ Or how could they show anyone at all what leads to benefit? For they are, they are the ones who make you, fashioning the falsely named gods, and again they are leading you astray who worship them. Jacob my servant, I will help him; Israel my chosen one, my soul has accepted him. I have put my Spirit upon him. He will bring forth judgment to the nations. He will not cry out, nor will he raise his voice, nor will his voice be heard outside. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, but he will bring forth judgment in truth. He will shine forth, and will not be crushed, until he establishes judgment on the earth; and in his name the nations and peoples will hope. He foretold, saying, 'I will give a beginning to

Zion,' and he clearly shows what kind this is. For he has been appointed over the spiritual Zion, that is, over the Church, as ruler and guide, not ascending to the beginning of the matter at that time, when he is also said to have been brought to this. For the Word from the Virgin was and is always king, and Lord of all things. But since He became man, He makes the measure of humanity his own. For thus it was true, and was to be believed by us without doubt, that He became like us.

⁴⁷ Therefore, even if He is said to have received power over all things, the receiving belongs to the economy with the flesh, not to his pre-eminence, in which He is understood as Lord of all. And He calls him Jacob and Israel, as having come, according to the flesh, from the blood of Jacob, who was also renamed Israel. And He says, 'I will help him,' and calls him chosen. For the Father worked together with the Son, and as His own power He accomplished the mighty works. And He is also truly chosen, because He is also beautiful in appearance beyond the sons of men, and acceptable as beloved; for God was well pleased and Father in him. For He said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. But that He is anointed according to his humanity, and is said to have partaken of the Holy Spirit, although He himself gives the Spirit and sanctifies creation, He will make clear by saying: I have put my Spirit upon him. For when he was baptized, he says, the Spirit came upon him from heaven in the form of a dove and remained upon him. And if at the time of his baptism he receives the Spirit in the measure of his humanity, this would be along with the other things. For it was not insofar as he is God that he was sanctified by receiving the Spirit; for he himself, as I said, is the one who sanctifies;

⁴⁸ but insofar as he appeared as a man according to the economy. He has been anointed, therefore, to bring forth judgment to the nations. And by judgment he means in these things just judgment. For he has justified them by condemning the avaricious Satan. And he himself taught us this, saying: "Now is the judgment of this world. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. For he condemned to destruction the one who had taken advantage, as I said, of the world under heaven, but by a holy judgment he has saved those who were deceived. But he will not cry, he says, nor lift up, nor shall his voice be heard outside. For the Savior and Lord of all sojourned with great humility and without ostentation, and as it were silently, wronging no one; but in

silence and tranquility, so as not to break a bruised reed, nor to quench a smoldering flax, that is, not to set his foot even on the most insignificant and those accustomed to suffering harm very readily. What then will he do, and what will he accomplish for the nations? He will bring forth judgment unto truth. In these things he seems to be calling it the law. For it is written concerning Israel, and of God who rules all things, that there he gave him ordinances and judgment; and again, Judgment and justice in Jacob you have made.

⁴⁹ The judgment, therefore, that is, the law that is in shadows and types, he will bring forth into the truth of the evangelical decrees, through which he showed the way of the life that pleases him, and transformed the worship in letter according to the law into truth. And the wretched Jews have provoked him, daring to grieve him with the death of the flesh. Nevertheless he shone forth as a light, and was not crushed, that is, he was not conquered by corruption, the madness of those who plotted against him did not prevail. For death has been loosed, and he rose again in a manner befitting God, and has trodden down his enemies, and his suffering has become for those throughout the whole world under heaven an occasion of salvation. Therefore, he will not be broken, until he establishes judgment on the earth. And do not suppose that he is setting a certain time at which he will be broken, that is, after establishing judgment on the earth; but rather he says this, He will overcome those who oppose him, and he will prevail to such an extent as to establish judgment in all the earth. For the Gospel has been preached in all the earth, and his decrees have, as it were, been fixed. For it is written, "Righteousness is forever, and your law is truth. Indeed the nations, he says, have hoped in his name.

⁵⁰ For having recognized that he is truly God, even if he appeared in the flesh, they will make him their hope, and as the Psalmist says: "In his name they shall rejoice all the day. For we are called Christians, and in him we have all hope. Thus says the Lord who made the heaven, and established it, who made the earth firm, and the things in it, and gives breath to the people upon it, and spirit to those who walk on it: I the Lord God have called you in righteousness, and will take hold of your hand, and will strengthen you. And I have given you for a covenant of the people, for a light to the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out from bonds those who are bound, and from the prison house those who sit in deep darkness. False prophets and

false seers, very many have there been at times in Israel. And it happened for this reason that even those sent from God, and true prophets, were disbelieved, and accustomed to speaking in the Holy Spirit. And the paradox is this, that Christ Himself was reviled, as neither sent from God, nor truly being holy, and performing wonders in the excellence of divinity. And so the teachers of the Jews, although seeing Him performing miracles, at one time said that He cast out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons; at another time they would say to one another:

51 If this man were from God, he would not break the Sabbath. And in response to these things, Christ often tried to make a defense and to assure them that he was not like those who were merely and only in the appearance of having been sent from God. For He said: "The thief comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life. And again: "I am come in my Father's name. Therefore, that He might also have the Father in heaven as a witness, He said both usefully and necessarily through the holy prophets, that I am the Lord God who fixed the heaven, who showed the earth to be most firm and unshaken, the living and life-giving, and giving breath to all. I, the God and Lord of all, have called you in righteousness. For He did not become a deserter, he says, like those false prophets who speak from their own heart, and not from the mouth of the Lord; but I have called you, that is, according to my good pleasure I have brought you forth in righteousness. I will take hold of your hand, and I will strengthen you; instead of, I will work with you, and I will show all things powerful. And we do not say that the Father knows the Son to be weak and feeble, nor indeed in need of assistance.

52 For He is the Lord of hosts, and the invincible right hand of the Father, through whom all things were brought into existence. But again He makes the statements, as to one of us, in that He appeared as a man, and seems somehow on account of His humanity to be strengthened by the Father. For thus it is said that He raised Him, and gave glory to Him, and showed Him to be superior to the plot of those who murdered Him. For if He humbled Himself, and willingly descended into emptying, it is altogether necessary that the measure of the emptying be seen, and the humility be understood through the events themselves. But see how, speaking as of a man the words, I will take hold of your hand, and I will strengthen you, He immediately shows that He is God by nature and truly Son, and light from

light. For I have given you, He says, for a covenant of the race, for a light to the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind. For the only-begotten Word of God came into this world with flesh, and to those of the race, that is, of the blood of Israel; for from them He appeared according to the flesh, being born of a woman; He has given the new covenant, which was long ago foretold through the voice of prophets. He has also become a light to the Gentiles. And this is also worthy of God.

⁵³ For indeed to be a lawgiver, and to show the shadow of the all-wise Moses to be ineffective, and to add the new to the old with most God-befitting authority, and indeed to be able to enlighten those in darkness, and to open the eyes of the blind; for the divine and heavenly light has shone upon the Gentiles; how would this not have clear proof, that He is both God, and from God by nature? And that Christ, going to the spirits in hades, preached, and appeared to those imprisoned in the house of guard, and released all from bonds, and necessity, and punishment, and judgment, He previously declared by saying, to bring out from bonds those who are bound, and from the house of guard those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord God, this is my name. My glory I will not give to another, nor my praises to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare. And before I declare it, it has been shown to you. For properly and truly and alone would He be God, and be called by us the Creator of all things. And as the all-wise Paul says: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many, and lords many; but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him;

⁵⁴ and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. Since to us great and has introduced himself as the bringer to completion of wonderful things, He says he will not bestow his glory upon lifeless idols, nor indeed to any other of created things, that is, the virtues befitting God, but will keep them for himself alone. For it was fitting that the glory of the Godhead should not belong to any other, or to one essentially different from them, but to the ineffable and transcendent nature itself and alone. But though saying he would bestow his glory upon no one, he has given it to the Son; for he has been glorified, just as the Father is also worshipped both in heaven and on earth. How then has he given it, as to one not different from them, according to the principle of consubstantiality, even if each were set

apart in his own hypostasis? For the nature of the most high Godhead is one, in three distinct hypostases, understood and worshipped by those accustomed to think rightly. Saying: The things from the beginning, behold, have come. And new things, which I will announce, and before announcing them, they have been revealed to us; he does not permit the word of the Savior to be disbelieved by us in any respect at all. For just as, he says, the things spoken from the beginning concerning his advent were brought to completion, so also will come forth into truth;

⁵⁵and whatever new things he may say, will be revealed before they become manifest. And what are these? For our Lord Jesus Christ promised us life in the age to come, that is, the life in incorruption, and sanctification, and righteousness, the kingdom of the heavens; the glorious participation in spiritual goods, the fruits of gentleness, the rewards of piety, the crown of love for him; may it be that we too obtain these things through his grace and love for mankind; through him and with him to God the Father be the glory with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE 22

¹ The Lord has appeared among us, being God, according to the Scriptures, and has been drawn by him to the grace that is through faith, the flock of the wandering. For he was the expectation of the nations, and God the Father called through him those in mist and darkness to the light of truth. And he made this clear to us by what went before, saying briefly: "I the Lord God have called you in righteousness, and I will take hold of your hand, and I will strengthen you, and I have given you as a covenant of the race, for a light to the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out from bonds those who are bound, and from the prison house those who sit in deep darkness. For our Lord Jesus Christ has been set by God the Father as a covenant for the race according to the flesh, I mean of those from Israel, to whom God also long ago promised through one of the prophets, saying: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers. For the divine Moses was a minister of shadow and type, existing in suppliant measures. But Christ, as Son and Lord, has become the giver of a new covenant.

² And I say new, which reforms man into a newness of holy life, and through an evangelical way of life renders him an acceptable and true wor-

shipper; "For God, he says, is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. Therefore he has been set as a covenant of the race, and for a light to the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, and to bring out from bonds those who are bound. For the arch-evil Satan darkened the hearts of the nations; "For they became futile in their thinking, and professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed animals, and of reptiles. But the true light, that is, Christ, rose for us as a spiritual morning star, and as the sun of righteousness, spreading the ray of the true knowledge of God, the one from he scattered the darkness of diabolical deception that had come upon those on earth; he freed from bonds those who were caught in inescapable chains of their own transgressions. That therefore those who of old worshipped the creation rather than the Creator, those who had darkness in their minds, those who were persuaded to worship the works of their own hands, those who were far from God, will be called through faith in Christ, and will come to know the King and Lord of all, the word of the prophecy shows very well.

3 For it commands those who have received mercy through God to glorify him, and so it says: Sing to the Lord a new hymn, his beginning, glorify his name from the end of the earth; you who go down to the sea, and sail on it; the islands, and those who dwell in them. The hymn is new, and fitting for the newness of the events. "For if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, according to what is written, and the old things have passed away, and all things have become new. For the blood-descendants of Israel were redeemed from the greed of the Egyptians, with the all-wise Moses mediating at that time, and they were delivered from brick-making, and from the empty toils of earthly pursuits, the work of the savagery of their masters, and from the inhumanity of the ruler; they were brought through the middle of the sea, they ate manna in the desert, they drank water from the rock, they crossed the Jordan with dry feet, they were brought into the land of promise. For us all these things are new, and incomparably better than the old. For we have been delivered not from a carnal, but rather a spiritual slavery, and instead of earthly pursuits, we have been freed from the pollutions of the love of the flesh;

4 we fled not Egyptian taskmasters, nor a tyrant who was impious, and savage, yet a man like us, but rather the wicked and unclean demons who push us into sin, and the one who is set over their hordes, that is, Satan. We have crossed as it were a sea, the surge of the present life, and the turmoil in it, and its truly vain distractions. We ate the spiritual manna, the bread from heaven, which gives life to the world; we drank water from the rock, delighting in the streams of Christ, spiritual streams, that is. We crossed the Jordan, having been deemed worthy of holy baptism, we entered the land promised and fitting for the saints, of which the Savior himself makes mention, saying: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Therefore, for new achievements, the hymn had to be new from his dominion; that is, from those who have come under him and are ruled by him; and the hymn, that is, the doxology fitting for him, was to be not only in the land of the Jews, but indeed from one end of the earth to the other, that is, the whole world under heaven. For of old God was known in Judea, and his name was great in Israel alone. But since we have been called through Christ to the knowledge of truth, heaven and earth have become full of his glory. For thus also the Psalmist says somewhere, that "The whole earth shall be filled with his glory.

5 Who then are they who command his name to be glorified from the end of the earth, who establish singers for him, and persuade them to lead the chorus, and call them together into a spiritual company, those who go down to the sea, and sail on it, the islands, and those who dwell in them? He is referring, as I think, to the holy apostles. For they did not preach Jesus and the grace through him in Judea alone, but also crossing the sea they evangelized the lands of the gentiles. Indeed they reached as far as Illyricum, and beyond, so that even the islands in the sea did not remain without hearing the sacred proclamations, nor yet those who inhabited them. And historically you might approach what has been said in this way. But you will understand, if you please, the words of the prophecy also in another way. For the God-inspired Scripture often compares this world to the sea, that is, human life, according to what is sung in the Psalms: "This sea, great and wide; there are creeping things, of which there is no number, living things small with great. He maintains that our life resembles the sea, perhaps because of the instability of the things in it, and the up and the down, and the great confu-

sion. But those sail through such a sea who are not submerged by it, but swimming up, as it were, and freeing themselves from worldly distractions.

6 These, having obtained help from God, and always mindful of the gifts through Christ, glorify him, and the islands, that is, the Churches, saved, so to speak, in the intelligible sea, and receiving those who are tempest-tossed by an evil spirit, these glorify Christ, that is, those who dwell in them. For when we say, or name, Churches, we mean the holy worshipers who are in them. And yet that must also be known; for as many villages or cities as are lying in the midst of a great and wide desert are also called islands. Be glad, O wilderness, and her villages, the courts, and the inhabitants of Kedar. The inhabitants of Petra shall rejoice, they will shout from the tops of the mountains. They will give glory to God, they will declare his virtues in the islands. The blessed prophets, weaving their discourses about the coming of our Savior, make mention in many places of the calling of the gentiles. For Christ was, as I said, the expectation of the gentiles. But they apply the discourses concerning such things not simply to all the nations and peoples throughout the whole world. For it was not likely, with an innumerable multitude filling the world under heaven, to choose to speak so sparsely as to make mention of all both by name and by race, but often taking the lands bordering on Judaea, and which were very idolatrous, then saying that these would be called in due time, they made a declaration of the whole from a part.

7 Since, therefore, the wide desert lying to the south, which the nations of the Saracens and Arabs inhabited, was bordering on the land of the Jews, they say that those who dwell in it will obtain in due time the grace and salvation through Christ. And the names for the villages, or rather the towns, which are, I say, in the desert, are courts, and Kedar, and Petra, lying in the land of the Arabs even to this day, and so named. But most superstitious, as I said, are those of whom this account is given, that is, their inhabitants, and they have completely turned aside into apostasy from God. For they have served the unclean spirits. But since they were about, as I said, to come to share in both the calling and salvation which is through the evangelical preachings, and the faith which is in Christ; for this reason and very fittingly, the prophet, as having beautiful feet—for he proclaims good tidings in these things—so to speak, raises his voice on high, and says: "Be glad, O wilderness, and her villages, the courts, and the inhabitants of Kedar; the inhabitants of Petra will rejoice. And this matter is a great and admirable

demonstration of the power and pre-eminence of our Savior, who easily softened such hard and unadmonished hearts, and persuaded them on the one hand to depart from the ancient deceit, and on the other hand to choose the better things, and to conform to the truth.

8 And this he has foretold to us through the voice of Ezekiel, saying that "I will take away their heart of stone from their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh, that is, a tender one, so that they may know me, that I am the Lord. Therefore, that they also would be called, he signified, saying: Be glad, O wilderness, and the things that follow this. But who those might be, who cry from the tops of the mountains, giving glory to God, and declaring his virtues in the islands, is worthy to see. Therefore it does no harm, for them to be understood as the called, those who inhabit Petra, so high and lofty a country and city, no longer indeed hymns and they weave odes to the falsely-named gods, but they rather glorify the God who enlightened them, and drew them into the net of truth. That is, those crying from the tops of the mountains, would be said to be, and quite correctly, the divine disciples. To whom the prophet also says somewhere else: "Go up to a high mountain, you who bring good tidings to Zion; lift up your voice with strength, you who bring good tidings to Jerusalem. Lift it up, be not afraid. For they proclaimed with great boldness, and they did not wish to be hidden from anyone, but they were conspicuous to all everywhere, like a city set on a hill;

9 and their word was not in a corner, and secretly, but with great boldness, as I just said. For this the Savior Himself also commanded them, saying: "What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light, and what you hear in the ear, proclaim on the housetops. Therefore they gave glory to God, and they declared His virtues in the islands. For the word of the holy apostles and evangelists is seen to have become the announcer of the Savior's glory. For at one time they make discourses concerning His ineffable divinity, and they hymn His supermundane virtue, not placing Him among created things, but beyond everything that is called into existence, and in natural identity with God the Father; and at another time, in turn, they relate His divine signs which are beyond wonder and reason. For to raise the dead from tombs, and to use the sea as dry land, making it walkable for his own feet, and to rebuke the winds, and by a word to crush Satan, achieves for Him a glory befitting God. The Lord God of hosts will go forth, and will crush the war; He will stir up zeal, and will cry out against his enemies with strength; I have been

silent, shall I also be silent forever and forbear? I have endured like a woman in labor. And now the word proceeds in great order, and has a disposition that is not unwonderful.

¹⁰ For the ministers of the decrees of our Savior were about to proclaim his virtues to all everywhere, and with great boldness to make discourses concerning these very things. But it was necessary to understand, that in every way and altogether there would rise up against their so venerable zeal and eagerness the enemies of the truth, and those who plot in many ways against the glory of the Savior, namely, corrupt and superstitious men, and instruments of diabolical malice, and champions of his wickedness, or perhaps with them also the very hordes of demons, since indeed their glory was being shaken down, and the dominion procured by greed. For they have held dominion by deceit under heaven. That they will therefore be inconsumable to their enemies, and that no one will prevail over them as God is their defender, the prophet demonstrates in these things, saying, that the Lord of hosts will go forth, and will crush the war, and he says, "will go forth," as of one of the kings on earth falling irresistibly upon the phalanxes of the enemy together with the armies under his scepter. And that the Lord of hosts will in every way prevail, he has revealed by saying, that he will crush the war.

¹¹ For the power from God is not easily encountered by anyone, or rather, it is bearable by none of the things that exist, when it rises up against and falls upon them, whether we think of wicked powers, or the apostate and destructive Satan himself, or certain earthly ones, who care for those things instead; but they will be taken, and this indeed without toil and without a struggle. "For the high hand, who will turn it back? according to what is written. That therefore for those who oppose the choir of the holy apostles, the war was and is until now not against only holy angels, but indeed also against the Lord of hosts Himself, the prophet has fully assured us, saying that He will go forth, in order to crush the war. He will stir up zeal, he says, that is, indignation, or that from Himself against enemies, according to what is written in the words of Zechariah: "I have been jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy; that is, from those who contend for His glory, and it is clear that of the of those who worship him, of whom we say that the most holy Paul was one and elect, who indeed also says: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine,

or nakedness, or peril, or sword?; again, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

¹² In this way, we say, the holy martyrs also became zealous, who became stronger than Satan, and have fought against his power, for the sake of piety toward Christ. For they have kept the faith, and the genuineness of their love for him; Therefore he will stir up zeal, it says, and will cry out against his enemies with strength; putting "will cry out" instead of "will shout. And this cry is most fitting for the victors, dancing in a way over the vanquished. Then he says: I have been silent, shall I also be silent forever, and restrain myself? I have been patient like a woman in labor. From this one might see very well that at that time, when the multitude of nations was in error, with Satan plundering them, and blackening them with the darkness of sin, and carrying them away also from even knowing who the God of all is by nature and in truth, the God who is above all wished to help them; but he delayed the matter, and clearly persevered, waiting for the fitting time for his aids; and this was when his only-begotten Word was incarnate and became man. For then, then he waged war against those who had conquered us, and rescued us from their wickedness, and he took hold of and saved us, and brought us under his own yokes. Therefore, in the past time, when those on earth were being plundered, and Satan was devouring everyone like a lion; I have been silent, he says;

¹³ shall I also be silent forever, and restrain myself? I have been patient like a woman in labor. See then how much forbearance the God of all showed for those on earth; and yet, as the Psalmist says, with no one doing good; but with all having turned aside, and to a man, and being utterly corrupted, almost. And having birth pangs over this, and if he were to endure and be susceptible to grief, he would have suffered, and for our sake he has kept this, as I said, for the fitting time for his aids. I will displace, and dry up at the same time, and I will make rivers into islands, and I will dry up marshes. What "I will displace" might signify in these things, it is necessary to investigate. For either it says this, that "I will cast out those who now rule over those on earth, and I will cause them to be outside the dominion that they have procured over all," according to what was said by Christ: "Now the ruler of this world will be cast out; or you will understand "I will displace" instead of, "I will cause those who see my achievements to wonder," and the ways of my economy, and the excess of my ineffable power; just as indeed the

prophet Habakkuk was astonished at these very things, saying: "O Lord, I have heard your report, and was afraid; I considered your works, and was amazed.

¹⁴ Or if it seems so to anyone, you will understand "I will displace" in another way. For those now wandering, those in darkness and diabolical mist, I will transfer to a knowledge of truth, and to the divine and intelligible and heavenly light. those now polluted, and having a loathsome and unpurified mind, I will change to an incomparably better disposition, so as to depart from their ancient filth, and to choose rather to do good. And the phrase "I will dry up at the same time" signifies again something of this sort, which indeed the force of what follows will make clear. For "I will make," it says, "rivers into islands, and I will dry up marshes. Who might be the rivers made into islands, and the marshes that are dried up? We say, then, that they are the poets and orators among the Greeks, who have become heralds of polytheistic error. For they have deified creation, and introduced innumerable gods into life. And they were like certain rivers, watering the deceived with a turbid overthrow, as it is written, and with the streams of elaborate words inundating the mind of those who admire them, and through this holding them fast to error, and setting before them as a kind of nourishment of their own the sweet and charming quality of fine speech. Therefore, they would reasonably be compared to rivers and marshes, that is, to thickets, or rather groves, that have obtained the most abundant and flourishing grass.

¹⁵ God therefore promises to turn such rivers into islands, that is, to show them to be dry and waterless, and to make the marshes as if dry, which indeed has happened. For henceforth the fine speech of their eloquence is ineffective. And absolutely no one adheres to them, but kicking away, as it were, the unsound and profane, and the old-womanish little myths of those who lead astray, those who were once led astray seize upon the wisdom that is in Christ. For Paul writes: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? Therefore we say the rivers turned into islands are the words of the wise among the Greeks that contribute to Hellenic deceit. Or rather, in what has been said before, we have granted that other islands are the Churches of Christ, which receive those who are sailing—intellectually, that is, and spiritually—and who put in at safe anchorages, as it were, with the teachers in them, escaping the wicked spirit that always storms upon those who go down

to the sea in ships and do business in great waters. The sea, as I said, must be compared to the surge of this life of ours, and the turmoil of earthly affairs. And the marshes are also dried up, that is, the pastures of the things once under the hand of Satan, so that henceforth they might be under the Chief Shepherd of all, I mean, Christ.

¹⁶ Who does not, like those false shepherds, lead his own flock away into thorns and thistles, but rather pastures them among lilies; for intellectually, the divine and holy things, and His own ordinances, are most fragrant. And I will lead the blind in a way they have not known, and in paths they have not known I will make them walk. I will make darkness light before them, and the crooked things straight. These words I will do, and I will not forsake them, says the Lord God. For when the Lord of hosts came to shatter war, and the enemies were overthrown, and the rivers were turned into islands, and the marshes were dried up, according to the arguments of contemplation we have just made, those who were in the rank of captives, and subjected to the depravities of the devil, being blind—for the apostate blinded their hearts—are henceforth led by Christ, clearly into ways which they did not know before. And these are surely the evangelical ordinances and the life according to understanding and virtue, and the beauty of a holy life. For the divine Paul also addressed those from the Gentiles: "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Therefore their darkness became light; that is, matters have changed to the complete opposite. For the ignorant have become wise; those who once went astray have known the straight ways of all righteousness;

¹⁷ those who knew nothing of good things have been shown to be experts in all virtue, and curators of the studies that lead to piety. The crooked things have become straight for them, that is, the difficult and impassable things have become passable, and fit for horses, level and cleared. Something of this sort is also hinted at in the preachings of John the Baptist. For every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough way into smooth paths. For hills and hollows show that the road is uneven. But when there is no bank, nor indeed a hollow, the road is surely straight and easy to travel, and free from all difficulty. The blessed prophet Isaiah himself also says this somewhere else: "For the way of the pious," he says, "has become straight, and the way of the pious has been prepared. For truly the way of the evangelical life is

not rough and difficult to travel, but rather smooth, and as it were level for those who love the excellent life. He promises, therefore, these words, or rather the God brings promises to completion, and does not abandon them, that is, is with them always, according to, "Behold, I am with you all the days, until the end of the age. But they shall be turned back. Be utterly ashamed, you who trust in graven images, who say to the molten images, "You are our gods.

¹⁸ Very opportunely he shifts his words to the nation of the Jews, who, having the law through Moses that leads them to the knowledge of God and to the need to desire to accomplish those things for which it was likely they would be well-pleasing, have turned to apostasy, and having entered the mire of polytheism, they went down into the pit of destruction. And for this reason they have struck against, and very rightly so, the God who bestowed upon them all forbearance and love. So then, the word having proclaimed that the Gentiles will be called in due time, and will tread paths they did not know, and darkness will become light, and crooked things straight, it reveals the ignorance of those of the blood of Israel, saying: But they have turned back. The word "they" must be taken emphatically; that is, those who were instructed in the divine law, and came under my hand, and had Moses as a mediator, who heard explicitly: "The Lord your God, the Lord is one; and you shall have no other gods besides me. These, while the multitude of the Gentiles was in good hope, turned back, having unholyly returned to the defilements in Egypt, and having taken up the blame for the ancient deceit. And for them the true proverb has come to pass: "A dog returning to its own vomit, and a sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Our Lord Jesus Christ also said something of this sort, showing Israel relapsing into its ancient impiety.

¹⁹ "For when," he says, "the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding it, it returns to the place from which it came out. And when it comes, it finds it empty and swept. Then it takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. For they had served the gods of the Egyptians, but the demon was cast out when they were called to the knowledge of God, I say, through the law; but they have fallen sick with the slander of having gone astray, and even more grievously, when, knowing the God by nature, they became apostates,

honoring gods who are not gods. Be utterly ashamed, then, he says, you who trust in graven images, and attach the revered name of the divinity that is above all, that is, the glory, to things hewn by hand and made by hand. You who are deaf, hear, and you who are blind, look up to see. And who is deaf, but my children? and who are blind, but those who rule over them? And the servants of God were blinded. You have seen many times, and you have not kept watch; your ears were open, and you did not hear. He very rightly calls deaf and blind those who have served idols. For as the all-wise Paul writes:

20 "The god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that the light of the Gospel of Christ might not shine. The power of the word would be most fitting for those from Israel, to whom it was indeed given to be enriched in their mind with the divine light, as the law sent forth to them the radiance of the knowledge of God, they foolishly loved to walk in darkness and to be let down into the snares of deceit. And they are blind in another way as well. For with nothing preventing it, one can see the Creator of these things by analogy from the beauty of created things; for as the all-wise Paul writes: "For his invisible attributes, since the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood through what has been made; both his eternal power and divinity; they have slipped into such ignorance, that they say to the molten images: "You are our gods. For that the prophet's word is not now about the multitude of the Gentiles, but about those of the blood of Israel, he has shown by saying: And who is blind, but my children? and deaf, Or are they their rulers? For the multitude under their hand have been blinded, having fallen into this through the indolence of their guides. For they themselves were the cause of their ignorance, and the guides of their wandering. And their rulers were fickle; that is, those who had been appointed to lead.

21 For although they saw the glory of God, and had passed through long experience, they turned to apostasy. For they did not wish to obey God, who said clearly: "You shall have no other gods but me. But since, being knowledgeable of my ordinances, they, along with those under their yoke, went off to apostasy, he is, as it were, astonished, saying: "The servants of God were blinded. And what was the occasion of their blindness? Willingly, he says, you were led astray to this. For although it was possible for you who had seen many times to be on your guard, and for you who knew how to hear, that is, to understand the things written, you did not guard against suffering the

sentence, nor indeed did you practice well-doing, widening, as it were, your hearing to the sacred laws. Therefore, the accusations against the Jews are without excuse. For although it was possible for them to know the truth, having received the law as a guide to this, they have become equal to those who have no eyes and whose ears are set uselessly on their head, because of their unwillingness to listen to the sacred laws. The Lord God wished that he might be justified, and might magnify praise. I delivered them, he says, from the greed of the Egyptians; I freed them, contrary to expectation, who were serving strangers; I instructed them through the law toward the knowledge of God; I gave them Moses as a director of good order.

22 For my purpose, I the Lord of all, was to make Israel a worker of righteousness and a steward of the best works, so that, having been brought to an awareness of the gifts given to him by me, he might magnify praise, that is, he would unceasingly glorify me, clearly the one who is the author of all their prosperity, and has become the provider of what they have been enriched with. But not having been brought to an awareness of any of such things, they have rendered evil things instead of good to the Master, and having loosed their neck from his yokes, they have been enslaved to Satan, and wallowing in the mire of polytheistic error they have become abominable, and hated by the God who loves virtue. This is clearly what he also said somewhere else about them, as about a vine: "I waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced thorns. And I saw, and the people became plundered. For the snare was in the storehouses everywhere, and in the houses at the same time where they hid them, they became plunder, and there was no one to rescue the spoil, and there was no one to say: Give it back. He brings them to the remembrance of what happened to their fathers, because of their being caught in the snares of accursed polytheism. And he has done this not in vain, but that he might make more prudent those who fear suffering the same things as their ancestors.

23 For since, he says, they have become blind and deaf, having rejected the worship of God, they kindled reverence for wood and stones. Therefore I saw this, and the people became plundered and ravaged. For when God visits the crimes of the intolerably impious, then he also brings punishments that are in proportion to the accusations. Therefore the people were ravaged, and became plunder for their enemies; and for what reason? For the snare was in the storehouses everywhere, and in the houses at the same time they hid

them. But whom? Molten gods, clearly. For the leaders of the Jews, feigning piety, and submitting their neck to the lawful ordinances as far as outward appearance was concerned, hid the disease of apostasy in their mind and heart, worshipping gods that are not; and shutting these up in the store-houses of their own homes they made offerings of sacrifices secretly. For it is written in Ezekiel: "Son of man, dig. And I dug indeed in the wall. And I saw, he says, and behold every likeness of reptile and beast, and all the idols of the house of Israel inscribed on it all around. And he said to me: Have you seen, Son of man, are the things which each one does in his secret chamber a small thing to the house of Israel? See, then, how each of them, having in his secret chamber the snare that was set for him, that is, idolatry lying there, feigned reverence for the laws. For this reason he says:

24 They became plunder, and there was no one to deliver them, a spoil, and there was no one who said, 'Give it back.' For when God did not defend them, who delivered them from so heavy and incurable a disaster? and when He did not rebuke the plunderers, who would have said to them, 'Give it back'? For God no longer sought them as His own inheritance, but rather gave them over as having become estranged from him by their turning to those who are not gods. And by these things he seems to indicate the time of captivity, which those of Israel endured, having fallen into the hands of enemies. For until the seventieth year there was no one to deliver them, nor to say to the plunderers, 'Give it back.' And very providentially, after the calling of the nations was mentioned, the reasons for which those of Israel were cast out from their fellowship with God have been clearly stated, so that God might be seen everywhere to have used a just decree. For it was necessary, necessary for those who honored impiety towards God to be outside of his forbearance and love; but for those who out of ignorance were caught in the pits of sin, and who fell into the devil's hand, to be pitied by the Creator of all, being called to the knowledge of him, and to the light of truth.

25 For this, somewhere, he is also found saying through the all-wise Moses: 'They have made me jealous with what is no god, they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will provoke them to anger.' And the divine Psalmist also says somewhere that, "They provoked him to anger with their carved images, and with their practices they made him jealous; and the Lord God saw, and looked upon them, and utterly despised Israel. And if it is

necessary to apply some spiritual contemplation to what has been said, let us be on guard against having a diabolical snare in our mind and heart, and the wicked idols in the fantasies of our thoughts, which call us to licentiousness and to perverse pleasures, so that we may not belong to Satan, and a spoil for demons. For it is written that, "If the spirit of the ruler rise up against you, leave not your place; for yielding pacifies great offenses. Who among you will give ear to these things? listen to the things that are coming. It is the custom of the divinely inspired Scripture to speak of 'hearkening,' in the sense of not receiving the word on necessary matters carelessly or negligently, but rather soberly, so as to have what was announced stored up in the mind and heart. Such as what is said through the voice of the Psalmist:

26 "In my heart I have hidden your words, that I might not sin against you. For it is also written in the forty-eighth psalm: "Hear this, all you nations; give ear, all you who dwell in the world. For 'to hear' is common to all who have once received a sound in their ear, or any other noise; but 'to give ear' is to house in the mind, as I said, something of what has been decreed. Therefore, the prophetic word in these things seems to seek those who listen more reasonably, or rather, more prudently, so as to speak of what happened in the past for the security of those to come. For as Paul says: "These things happened to them as a type, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. For we must not read the narratives about him in vain, but receive these things for the benefit of the soul, and strictly refuse to be caught by the same offenses, so that we may not fall into their misfortunes. Who gave Jacob up for spoil, and Israel to those who plunder him? Was it not God, against whom they sinned, and they were not willing to walk in his ways, nor to listen to his law? And he brought upon them the anger of his wrath, and war prevailed against them, and those who burned them round about; and they did not know, each one of them, nor did they take it to heart.

27 He seems to name both Jacob and Israel very emphatically in these words. And what we might understand the power of the emphasis to be, we will state briefly. For at times those from Israel served the Egyptians; but they were redeemed by God with Moses mediating, but with a mighty hand and a high arm, as it is written. For with countless and unbearable plagues he afflicted the oppressors. But when they ran out of the land of the Egyptians, they crossed the sea on foot, they ate the bread of angels, they drank water

from a rock, they were brought into the land of promise, they conquered kingdoms, they prevailed over their enemies, they had a terrible and irresistible hand and on this account, renowned glory. And their weapon was the God of all, who stopped the course of the sun and moon over Gibeon, and sent hailstones from heaven upon the foreigners, and raised his own people to the summit of all glory. Who then, he says, has given the renowned Israel, the enviable Jacob, the unconquered by enemies, the strong and most warlike, and the one always accustomed to conquer, over to plunder, and to the spoilers? How did he who knew not how to be conquered grow weak? How was he brought under, and come under the feet of his adversaries, he who was high above all, and raised an unbreakable horn?

²⁸ But since it was necessary for us who come after them not to be ignorant of the reasons for the handing over of so glorious and chosen a people, he necessarily added: Was it not God, against whom they sinned, and they were not willing to walk in his ways, nor to hear his law? The question about these debatable matters contains a clear confession of the fact. For it was certainly God who gave him up, and who brought upon him the wrath befitting his crimes. For this reason, then, war prevailed against them. And this was unusual for those from Israel, for they had always prevailed with God as their shield-bearer. But since they have transgressed against his divine laws, they have been bereft of their former boasts. They have fallen into inactivity, they have been brought down into weakness; around them have been those who set them on fire, and as if with a fire consuming them with the magnitude of the things brought upon them, that is, burning their cities, according to what is clearly stated elsewhere: Your cities are burned with fire. Yet they did not know, he says, each one of them, nor did they take it to heart; in this they endure a charge of insensibility. For those would be perfect in understanding who refuse to offend God, and keep their foot away from suffering anything from his wrath, by submitting their neck to him tenderly.

²⁹ But as for those who, having even come to suffer because of human failings, if they should not perceive the things brought upon them, such people would be far from all good hope. And that those from Israel became liable to such charges, one might observe from Jeremiah saying to the God of all: "O Lord, your eyes look for faithfulness, you have scourged them, and they were not willing to receive correction. We remember that after Jerusalem was captured, and Israel was carried away captive, the prophet Jeremiah

spoke to those who were left behind the things from God, saying not to go down to Egypt. Then their women shamelessly said, or rather, not having even been brought to a sense of the wrath, that, The Lord has not sent you. And to this they added things from utter madness. For since, they said, we stopped sacrificing to the queen of heaven, all these evils have come upon us. True, then, is what was said, that They did not know, each one of them, nor did they take it to heart, when war prevailed against them, and those surrounding them completely burned them. And now thus says the Lord God, who made you, Jacob, who formed you, Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name. You are mine. And if you pass through water, I am with you, and the rivers will not overwhelm you; and if you pass through fire, you shall not be burned;

³⁰ the flame shall not burn you; for I am the Lord the God, the holy one, Israel, who saves you. And now it is necessary to marvel at the merciful God. For being good by nature, and the Creator of all, even if there should be some necessity for some to fall under the movements of just wrath for the sobering up from their crimes, He turns to mercy, and not for long, and He who strikes binds up, and takes away the scourge, and reclaims those who repent, and raises us who have slipped, and to those caught in suffering He gives a saving hand, drawing them out of every misfortune, and transferring them to well-being. For observe how He comes as it were to a forgetfulness of the sins that have been committed, and promises to make the crimes disappear with God-befitting amnesties, setting before them as it were another beginning of a time that brings them to cheerfulness. And so we say that which is said in the book of Psalms is of such a kind: "Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the provocation. For just as there the 'Today' defines a beginning of other times, so also here the 'Now' has the basis of an amnesty for what has already been said before. And it leads up to the beginning of a way, and of other things that will be from God.

³¹ Therefore He does not allow them to be withered away by cheerfulness forever, nor indeed does He make His turning away endless, but He removes all fear, and gives courage, that one will obtain every good thing, as God transfers the nature of their affairs to that which is incomparably better. For I have redeemed you, he says; and in what manner the all-wise Paul will make clear when he says concerning the Savior of us all, Christ, that it pleased God the Father to sum up all things in him, both the things in the

heavens, and the things on the earth. For in him is the redemption of all, both the forgiveness and amnesty of past things, and the manner of spiritual kinship, I mean that toward him, accomplished through sanctification, bringing us up into the communion of God the Father. For this reason he says: I have called you by your name; and what is it? that is, You are mine. For we are said to be of Christ, and this is the good name that has been called upon us. But it must be known that it is also stated in another Scripture: I have called you by my name; however, by positing and saying, You are mine, he dissolved the alienation, which those held fast by sins are accustomed to endure. For they are not of God, although He has dominion over all, but the disposition toward evil things removes them from kinship with him.

³² In this way we say that those who are in defilements are not of God. Therefore, You are mine, would be an emphasis of spiritual kinship. And he promises him invincible aid, so that he becomes unconquerable by any temptation. For rivers, and water, and flames signify the manifold assaults of temptations. For it is written that "All who want to live piously in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. And Christ himself said somewhere to those who had believed in him: In the world you have tribulation. But if you pass through water, he says, I am with you. For with Christ present, nothing could harm those who are his. But they will attain to such spiritual strength, that they will take no account of anyone who has the power to overwhelm them. But even if a persecution should ever come on like the flow of a river, even if it has the sharpness of fire, and of flame, even so to conquer, provided one knows that it is God who saves. For it is a custom in the divine Scripture to compare the assaults of temptations to both rivers and waters. The Savior himself will also show this by speaking as in the form of a parable, or rather, an example: "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock, and the rain came down, and the rivers came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it did not fall.

³³ For it had been founded on the rock, and the rock is Christ. I have made Egypt and Ethiopia your exchange, and Syene for you, since you became honored in my sight. You were glorified, and I have loved you, and I will give many men for you, and rulers for your head. Do not fear, because I am with you. The meaning of the things set forth is quite hard to reach, but I will make the narration as possible with God guiding, for He Himself gives

wisdom and knowledge. Therefore, before Christ, who is the true light, shone upon the world, the whole earth had gone astray, and was darkened by the deep and most intense shadow of ignorance, and there were very many forms of worship everywhere, according to regions and nations. But more superstitious than the others were the Chaldeans, and the Phoenicians, and all who possess the land of the Egyptians, as far as Syene and Ethiopia. For they dwell in a land bordering that of the Egyptians. But the chosen lot of God was Israel alone, and the portion of the Lord, according to what is written. But since they have acted impiously toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and have become slayers of the Lord, they have no longer remained God's lot at all; but they have slipped from their kinship with Him, and the Gentiles have been received, and have become the exchange for Israel; even those who were formerly the most superstitious of all others, and had in this an indelible stain.

³⁴ And I said that the Egyptians have become terrible and bitter, especially concerning the inventions of idols, and deep in false worship, and proud of devising superfluous things concerning both the worship and the invocations of idols. Therefore, "of you the beloved," he says, "who was allotted to me as a portion, I have made Egypt an exchange, and Ethiopia," that is, again Egypt; for it is the custom in the divine Scripture to call the Egyptians Ethiopians. For so he said through one of the holy prophets, "And you, Ethiopians, are the slain of my sword. Therefore I received in your stead, he says, those who are in terrible pollutions, and have an impurity that is all but irremovable. But from the time you became honorable, you were glorified in my sight. For Israel did not remain in perpetual turning away and dishonor. For he himself also will be called through faith in Christ, and will be a sharer and partaker of the glory of the saints. For "you were glorified," he says, "and I loved you. But the saying, "I will give many men for you, and rulers for your head," seems to make clear that when those from Israel are called from time to time to the knowledge of Christ, there will be very many who know how to initiate them, wise and most eloquent men. For acting for your sake, he says, "I will give many men. And I will give rulers speaking for your head;

³⁵ and the head of the believers is Christ, to whom every initiation looks from those who are brought from time to time to lead the peoples, that is, by a vote from him. Therefore, "for your sake," would signify "for the sake of

what is useful and leads to your benefit as you learn the august and great mystery of your head," that is, of Christ. Or you will understand in another way the saying, "I will give many men for you, and rulers for your head." For you have become," he says, "cast off and banished, and entirely foreign to my friendship and kinship. For this reason, I also received in exchange for you those of the nations who have reached the extremes of diabolical wickedness. But from the time you became honorable in my sight, that is, by believing and finding glory in this, I loved you. And I loved you so, that if the time should come, or the need for many men and rulers to be given for your head, I would give them. For the saying is hypothetical, and having the greatest possible emphasis that Israel has been honored by God, it yet gives firm courage, as God is with them in every good thing, in every way and in every case; "For I am with you. And this is sufficient for them for all prosperity;

³⁶ for with God present, evil things will be out of the way, and every kind of good cheer and delight or rather joy is brought in to us in its place. I will bring your seed from the east, and gather you from the west. I will say to the North, Bring; and to the South, Do not hinder; bring my sons from a land far off, and my daughters from the ends of the earth, all who are called by my name. He appeared to those on earth in a form like ours, That is, the only-begotten Word of God, having become man, in order that He might drive together Greeks and Jews, who through many and various slips had been brought down into apostasy, I mean, from the Creator of all things, to the true and blameless knowledge of God, and might gather them into spiritual unity through faith and sanctification, with the intimacy with Him being well accomplished, He might then declare them to be worthy, and thus might join them through Himself to God, even the Father. For that Christ became incarnate also for this reason, it is not at all difficult to perceive through the holy evangelical Scriptures. For Lazarus was miraculously brought back to life from the dead; but the multitude of the unholy Jews, or the God-hated workshop of the Pharisees, were sitting in council and said: "What are we doing? For this man performs many signs.

³⁷ If we let him go on like this, the Romans will come and take away both our nation and our country. But one of them, Caiaphas, said to them: You know nothing at all, that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish. Then to these things the divine evangelist immediately added: "He did not say this of his

own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who were scattered abroad. For as far as it concerned the creation of man in the beginning, and the purpose for him of the one who brought him into existence, all were his children. But Satan, as I said, scattered all into manifold sin, and beguiled them away from intimacy with him, bringing them down into error; but Christ gathered all together. For he came to seek that which was lost. This, to be sure, is also signified by the preceding words. For he promises to the assembly gathered from both gentiles and Jews, that is, the church, to gather all from east to west, and from the North, and Libs, that is, the South, so that from this you might understand [it means] from every region under heaven. For east and west, north and south, would certainly signify this very thing to us; saying:

38 Bring, to the North, and to the Libs, Do not hinder, he somehow gives us to understand that he does not permit the resistance of savage and wicked spirits to be brought spiritually against those who come to him. Just as also long ago, like some cruel and arrogant tyrant, the accursed Satan lorded it over those on earth together with his own shield-bearers, not allowing them to look up to the truth, that is, to go to God through repentance. But this too has ceased through Christ, who smoothes the way to salvation for those who have been called, and causes every obstacle in their path to be removed from the way. And by naming sons and daughters running from the four regions, he makes manifest the time of Christ's coming, at which the grace of adoption has been given to those on earth through sanctification in the Spirit. That the call was not of one nation, but became common and one for all, he indicated by saying, All, who are called by my name. For we have been named Christians, that is, the people of God. For thus somewhere Peter also writes to those called through faith and says: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood; a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, who once were not a people, but now are the people in the Lord.

39 For in my glory I have prepared him, and formed him, and made him. And I brought out a blind people, and their eyes are likewise blind, and they have deaf ears. All the nations were gathered together, and rulers will be gathered from them. All things have become new in Christ, and the most

holy Paul will confirm this, writing: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away. And he also writes to those called to newness, clearly meaning the spiritual kind: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may prove you, what is the will of God, the good, and perfect, and acceptable. For we were renewed in Christ, having returned through sanctification to the ancient beauty of our nature, that is, according to the image of the * having cast off the oldness from sin, and all wickedness; and we have put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and we have put on the new, which is renewed in the image of him that created him. But in Christ has come the re-creation and what is called the new creation, which we have not received from corruptible seed, but through the living and abiding word of God. Therefore, the people gathered from the four corners under heaven and called by my name, not someone else, but I rather in my glory have prepared, and formed, and made;

⁴⁰ and one might say the Son is the glory of God and the Father, for through him and in him he is glorified, and according to that which was clearly spoken by him, I have glorified thee on the earth. For we are assured, as I said, that those who have believed in him have been formed through him, having the beauty of the divine nature shining forth in their souls in conformity to him. The divine Psalmist also said something of this kind: "The generation to come shall be declared to the Lord, and a people that is being created shall praise the Lord. Adding to these things, that I have also brought out a blind people, he makes clear the truly admirable pre-eminence of his own power beyond all expression. For those who formerly had in their mind and heart the mist and deceit from diabolical wickedness, he has rendered brilliant and illuminated, like a morning star, and the sun of righteousness rising upon them, and has declared them to be sons, no longer of night and darkness, but rather of light, and indeed of day, according to the voice of the most wise Paul. Therefore, that he brought out a blind people is not unclear to any of those who exist; but as if someone were resisting such words and saying: And yet, one might still see their eyes as blind, and indeed that they have deaf ears, he makes a defense, saying: All the nations were gathered together, and rulers shall be gathered from them.

⁴¹ For you do not simply receive the words of prophecy, O you people; the time for the events has not yet arrived; however, all the nations will in every

way and entirely be gathered together in due time. For 'were gathered', instead of 'shall be gathered', he says, as this is the custom in the divinely-inspired Scripture. For it sometimes sets down things that will in every way and entirely happen as if they have already happened. For instance, it is said as from the person of Christ through the voice of Isaiah: I gave my back to the scourges, instead of, I will give. And through the one who Psalms: "They parted my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots," which also happened at the time of his sojourning. Therefore, he says, all the nations will be gathered together, and not only this, but there will also be rulers from them, that is, leaders of peoples, and mystagogues, and those who once were wandering, and lying in deep darkness, will be agents of the divine light for those initiated by them. The Melodist said something of this sort concerning the church from the Gentiles: "As her darkness, so also is her light. For just as she was sick with an immeasurable and deep darkness in the time of error, so again she has become exceedingly brilliant, and preternaturally whitened. For it is true that, as the divine Paul says: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Who shall declare these things?

⁴² Or who shall declare to you the things from the beginning? Let them bring forth their witnesses, and let them be justified, and let them speak truth, and let them hear. Having once made mention of the nations, that is, of those called through faith to the knowledge of the truth, he weaves a certain manner of initiation for them, denouncing not a little the deceit of demons, and showing that the making of idols is absolutely nothing; for to know all things from the beginning to the end would be fitting only for him who is God by nature. For all understanding is from him, and he is of all knowledge a fountain, and in him are all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge, according to what is written. But if anyone is found to have knowledge of future things, he is seen to have received the gift from a revelation from him. He is conversing, therefore, as I said, with those from the nations, and indeed he says: I have announced and spoken to you all future things, and that you will be called in due time to the knowledge of the truth; but who else will announce these things to you, or is seen to have declared them? Let them bring forth their witnesses, and let them be justified, and let them speak the truth, and let them hear. For I, he says, have spoken through prophets;

43 I have proclaimed future events in due time, through holy men, and I have as witnesses of my foreknowledge of the future those who ministered to my words. But who would testify for the demons, or for the lifeless idols, that they had spoken such a thing through them? For there are very many orators and poets among the Greeks, but absolutely none of them said, as from their own gods, that these things would happen to them in due time; nor indeed would one find any of the wise men among the Greeks who had foretold that Satan would in due time be cast out from the glory he had acquired for himself through greed, or that the world under heaven would be enlightened through faith in Christ, and the nations would be called to the knowledge of him, or that the darkness of idolatry would depart, and the truth would prevail under heaven. Let them, therefore, bring forth their witnesses, and show that they spoke the truth. And if this should happen, let them hear them, that is, let them follow them, and agree that the herd of demons also abounds in the knowledge of future things. But there is no one who has testified for them, nor indeed a messenger of future things. Therefore, those who considered them to be gods have admittedly been deceived; for they are profane, and impostors and buffoons.

44 Be my witnesses, and I am a witness, says the Lord God, and the servant whom I have chosen, that you may know, and believe, and understand that I am. And before me there was no other god, and after me there will be none. Having said that nothing could testify for the unclean demons, that is, for the works of human hands, to know the future, he converses with his own prophets, and says: Be my witnesses. For I have spoken through you, and my Spirit has shone in you the knowledge of future things. Therefore, I will bring forth witnesses of my own glory and divine pre-eminence. And I will testify for myself, and the Servant whom I have chosen. Similar to this is what was said to the Jews through the voice of our Savior: "If I bear witness of myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I am from and where I am going. And again: "I bear witness of myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness of me. For the voice of God is worthy of belief for whatever he may wish to say concerning his own glory and pre-eminence. Secondly, it follows logically, both the vote of the saints, and the understanding which ascribes to him all that is fitting to the nature that is beyond all things. For this reason, having taken the holy prophets as witnesses, he proceeds to what is greater and admittedly true, himself, I say, and his own Son.

⁴⁵ For, as I said, the voice of God is sufficient for all belief for those of sound mind. "These things I have spoken to you, he says, not in vain, but that you may know, and believe, and understand that I am. For through knowledge comes faith, and through faith comes understanding. For if you do not believe, you will not understand, he says; but believe that before me there was no other God, and after me there will be none. For neither was there another God before him, but he himself is the beginning of all things and beyond all mind, and after him there will be none. For he remains the same, and has an unchangeable nature, and an unshakable pre-eminence over all things, and a perpetual kingdom. For he who has no beginning of being, to what end will he run? I am God, and besides me there is no savior. I have announced, and I have saved. I have reproached, and there was no stranger among you. You are to me witnesses, and I am a witness, says the Lord God, that [or, yet] from the beginning, and there is no one who can rescue from my hands. I will do it, and who then will turn it back? Bear witness, he says, that I alone am the God of all, with none having been before me, nor indeed will there be any after me.

⁴⁶ For I alone am the one who saves, and this I proclaimed to you long ago, and what was spoken I brought to completion. For I saved in Christ; I reproached, and there was no stranger among you. For from time to time those of Israel forgot the sacred ordinances, those given, I say, through the all-wise Moses, and were lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Then, making pretexts for indolence, they were sometimes endangered by enemies being sent against them. But in the time of affliction, they would attempt to call upon the one who always saves for aid. And this I reproached them for, saying through the voice of Jeremiah: "And in the time of their evils they will say: 'Arise, and save us.' And where are your gods, which you made for yourself? Will they arise and save you in the time of your affliction? Therefore, I have reproached you of the blood of Israel many times, and you have learned by experience that there was no god among you, that is, a strange one. For none of them has saved you. Therefore, I alone am the one who saves. Therefore, bear witness, and I will be a witness to myself, says the Lord God. That is, according to that: "Everyone therefore who confesses me before men, I also will confess him.

⁴⁷ Bear witness, therefore, that I am still from the beginning, that is, the one from the beginning until now who both foretells the things that will

be, and is able to save without effort those who thirst for fellowship with me. Saving in such a way, that absolutely no one is able to snatch from my hands one who has once been taken. For there is no one, he says, who can rescue from my hands. I will do it, and who will turn it back? For I have made the calling of the nations, he says, that is, I have saved those who were wandering. And who will change this, or rather, alter it so that it is not so. For that no one will snatch from the hand of God those who have been saved by him, the Savior himself will confirm, saying: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand. This is clearly what is written: "There is no one who can rescue from my hands. Thus says the Lord God who redeems you, the Holy One of Israel: For your sake I will send to Babylon, and I will stir up all who are fleeing, and the Chaldeans shall be bound in ships.

⁴⁸ Through the things just said to us, having woven a not ignoble exhortation for those called from the nations to the knowledge of him, and having shown that he alone has the knowledge of things in the beginning, and in the middle, and at the end, and indeed that besides him there is absolutely no other who is able to save, and through these things having established in them a firm faith, he shifts his words to those of the blood of Israel, and attempts to assure them that he is all-powerful, and a worker of wonders, and that the natures of things yield to his commands; and the very elements of the world serve him, and whatever he himself may wish, this is indeed accomplished in every way, with no one standing in the way. For it was necessary, it was necessary for those of Israel to have the greatest possible enlightenment and exhortations and reminders that would establish them in steadfastness of mind, since they had slipped into what is not lawful, and having inclined to other gods, they have sacrificed to idols, and to the host of heaven, as it is written; therefore, he makes for them the prediction of things to come, and reveals beforehand the misfortunes of the Babylonians, very artfully, showing that they themselves will be captives by them; but also proclaiming beforehand that they will suffer the most shameful things of all on account of them, as I said.

⁴⁹ Since, however, concerning the greatest matters the [discourse] to the message was for them, he necessarily shows the incomparable glory of his

own power, and indeed the excess of his strength, saying: Thus says the Lord God, who redeems you, the Holy One of Israel. For in order to bring them to a remembrance of old things, I mean of the redemption which happened out of Egypt, when also a great multitude of wonders testified to his glory, for this reason, having named himself Lord God, he also confirmed that he is the redeemer. And so much for these matters. But what then is to be? For your sake I will send, he says, to Babylon. For the Babylonian took Israel captive, and having raised it up from its homeland, or rather having burned the whole land of the Jews along with the famous temple, he removed it to the mountains of the Persians and Medes. But when the seventieth year of hardship was being completed for those who had fallen into this, God pitied them, and indeed he raises up against the Chaldeans Cyrus the son of Cambyses with the allied Persians and Medes; these took by force the land of the Chaldeans, that is, of the Babylonians, although long fearing them and avoiding their overpowering hand. And tradition has it that Cyrus, having seized some of the magnates in it, then binding them with iron, sent them out through the Caspian Sea to impassable and uninhabited lands.

⁵⁰ And Cyrus was roused up against the Babylonians by God who urged him on and had granted him the ability to prevail. For He said somewhere to him through the voice of Isaiah: "Thus says the Lord to my anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, that nations might hearken before him. And again: "I will go before you and level mountains; I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut asunder the bars of iron; and I will give you the treasures of darkness, hidden, unseen, I will open for you. For since the Babylonians, using terrible and unrestrained wrath against those of Israel, have offended God, for this reason they themselves have been given to the Persians and Medes, who also used unbearable inhumanities against them. At any rate, it was said to Babylon through one of the holy prophets: As you have done, so shall it be to you; your recompense shall be returned upon your own head. For your sake, therefore, he says, O Israel, I will send to Babylon, but whom will I send? Or surely the renowned Cyrus and the army under him? And "I will send" means "I will send against. And I will also stir up against them all who formerly fled, yielding to them and fearing them as fighters and stronger men. And the Chaldeans will be bound in ships. For as I have already said, they themselves were also resettled into remote and impassable lands, having sailed across the so-called Caspian Sea.

51 But it must be known that another reading is also offered. For the Chaldeans, it says, will be bound not so much in ships, but in collars. And the Savior and Lord of all has also saved spiritually all those on earth, having abolished the hordes of demons, and having raised up his invincible and transcendent power against them, that is, Christ. For thus he redeemed us when we were captives, and made us free who were, as it were, serving his will, and having removed us as from a barbarian land, he brought us back to the spiritual Judea, which is the Church that he acquired for himself, having freed it from every spot and defilement, declaring it holy and blameless. I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One, who has appointed Israel your king. Great and exceptional things are often disbelieved when they are foretold to happen. For this very reason and very appropriately, the God of all, whenever he promises some such thing, to build the faith of the hearer, making his own glory manifest, names himself both Lord of all and God. For what could stand against one who is of such nature and glory? Therefore, when I foretell to you, he says, I myself am not one of the falsely named gods, who being nothing at all, could not do anything small or great; but I am rather the Lord God, the Holy One among you, that is, revered, and set apart from all others, and by irresistible nods achieving whatever I wish.

52 I am the one who appointed Israel your king. This must be understood in two ways; for either it says this: As I am the one who showed myself by many signs, and by strength and authority beyond description, to be your king; or else something else must be supposed to be indicated by this: Our Lord Jesus Christ is called Israel and indeed Jacob in the divine Scriptures, just as also David; because according to the flesh He is from the seed of those who were so named. I am therefore, it says, the one who appointed him from the blood of Jacob and Israel to be your king. And the saying has the greatest possible economy. For since it made mention of a partial redemption; for, as I said, Israel was brought back from Babylon to Judea, it necessarily raises the promise to something incomparably greater, and makes mention of the redemption that will come through Christ, and no longer a partial one, and for one nation, as before, but rather a more general one, going out to every nation under heaven. And that the mystery of Christ is not unwonderful, on account of the excess of the economy, and the greatness of his gentleness toward us, no one who has once known it would doubt.

⁵³For being God by nature, and the Only-Begotten who shone forth from God the Father, He came to an emptying, and took the form of a servant, in order that, having freed those lying under the tyranny of the devil, He might bring them under His own scepters. The saying, therefore, in these things, mentions a partial redemption that will come in due time, which is given only to those of the blood of Israel, and a universal, and most general one, clearly through Christ, by which God the Father has saved those throughout the whole world. Thus says the Lord: Who makes a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty water, who brings out chariots, and horse and a strong host. But they lay down to sleep, and they will not rise again; they were extinguished like a quenched flax. Good and profitable things, even if spoken many times by both God and men, would in no way be troublesome to the sound-minded, but rather necessary for salvation. For this reason also the all-wise Paul writes to some: "To say the same things to you is not troublesome to me, but for you it is safe.

⁵⁴For since from excessive carelessness the human mind is sometimes corrupted into forgetfulness of the things gifted to each by God, for this reason the divine word brings us to remembrance of them in many places, not allowing us to grow entirely cold towards carelessness, but rather rekindling us to the love of God, and to the desire for every good thing. Therefore, since Israel was redeemed, while very many wondrous things were accomplished on its behalf, then, forgetting these things, they turned to apostasy, and have inclined to gods that are not, God necessarily brings them to a remembrance of His own power, saying that He had given a way in the sea, and in the mighty water a path. For they were brought across through the midst of the sea, departing the land of the Egyptians, and they also crossed the Jordan on foot. And this we say is the path in the mighty water. And astonished at these things, the divine David sings: "What is it to you, O sea, that you fled? And you, O Jordan, that you were turned back? And again, speaking of God: "Who turns the sea into dry land, they will go through the river on foot. Therefore, He has given a way in the sea, and in the mighty water a path. And He brought out chariots, and a horse, and a strong host.

⁵⁵For Pharaoh pursued those of the blood of Israel with chariots and horses, and using the irresistible hand of his allies, yet in no way did he conquer, or harm the redeemed. For they lay down to sleep, it says, and they will not rise again, but they were extinguished like a quenched flax. For they were

drowned in the waters, and have perished together with their horses, and like easily flammable flax they have been consumed by the divine wrath, and they were effortlessly extinguished, that is, they have passed into nothingness, and as it were have been reduced to ashes. For flax is indeed ready for destruction by fire, but it is also extinguished by the touch of a hand, and a most inactive travails with flame. But if someone should say, Since they pursued Israel by the private will of the ruler of the land of the Egyptians, how is the God of all said to have led out the horses, and chariots, and the army under them? We say that it was said to Pharaoh by the God who rules over all: "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show in you my power, and that my name might be declared in all the earth. And let these things, then, be said again historically.

⁵⁶ But we say that the evil one persecutes those who have chosen to live well, and who renounce slavery under the devil, and who depart from earthly pursuits, and who, as it were, wish to depart from all impurity, but God miraculously saves them, making the surge of the present life passable for them, and carrying them across by ineffable power, and not allowing the distractions of the present life to overwhelm them, but preparing them to be beyond the waves of the flesh, and taming for them, as it were, a certain sea, the manifold temptations that occur; so that having been in a desert land, they might be strong enough, that is, in a pure and leisurely state of mind, to eat the bread from heaven, and drink water from the rock, that is, to be in communion with Christ, and to be carried across the Jordan, and so to drive into the land of promise, the spiritual man will surely understand what I say. Remember not the former things, and consider not the things of old. Behold, I am doing new things, which now spring forth, and you will know them. And I will make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the waterless place. The beasts of the field will bless me, sirens, and daughters of ostriches, because I have given water in the wilderness, and rivers in the waterless place, to give drink to my chosen race, my people whom I have acquired, to declare my virtues and mighty deeds.

⁵⁷ Just as in the things before, he briefly set forth for their knowledge the future redemption for those of Israel, which was partial, but leading the narrative of events up to what is better, he made mention of the salvation through Christ as incomparable, saying he would show our king, Israel; so also here, having usefully made mention of both the Red Sea, and the

streams of the Jordan, and the crossing of those from Israel, he returns again to the mystery of Christ. For this reason he says: Remember not the former things, and consider not the things of old. For the introduction of things incomparably superior sometimes gives the lesser thing to oblivion, and the brilliant things somehow blunt those that are not so by nature, even if they come first in time. Such a thing also the all-wise Paul says, that "Now we know in part; but when that which is perfect has come, that which is in part will be done away. For great and beyond all speech are the things accomplished by God through the all-wise Moses, but transcendent and sublime are those through the might and pre-eminence of our Savior. For through him, and by him, the multitude of nations throughout the whole world has been saved. For this reason, he all but commands to forget the former things. But the mind should rather apply itself [alt. be fixed upon] to those things that are incomparably superior, and have a brilliant glory. I will make, therefore, he says, a way in the wilderness.

⁵⁸ And indeed, in these things the wilderness is understood as the multitude of the nations, formerly dry and fruitless, and as it were, thorn-bearing, because there was in it absolutely no one who was pious, and well-pleasing, and who knew how to do good wisely. For as the psalmist says: "They have all gone out of the way, they have together become unprofitable, and there was none among them that does good, no, not one. In this wilderness, therefore, a way has appeared, leading those who come through it to the true knowledge of God, and to a holy and undefiled life, and to all knowledge of every good thing. And we say that this way is either the divine and evangelical and saving proclamation, or perhaps even Christ himself. For we have heard him saying clearly: "I am the way. But not only has a way come to be in the wilderness, but rivers also have been shown forth, able to inebriate those in it with intelligible and soul-profitting streams. And we say that also these ministers of the evangelical and apostolic decrees, of whom the divine David also makes mention, saying: "The rivers have lifted up their voices. For as he himself somewhere says again: "Their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.

⁵⁹ And in addition to the named rivers, one might also understand the leaders of the peoples, who know how to initiate into the mysteries rightly and blamelessly, and are able to irrigate with words of piety those who approach Christ through faith. But he calls the multitude of the nations water-

less. For there was not among them a teacher of truth, possessing the stream of salvation. "For professing to be wise, they became fools," according to the voice of the blessed and divine Paul; "And they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed animals, and of creeping things. A way, therefore, having been revealed, he says, in the desert, and the waterless land having received rivers, the beasts of the field will bless me, sirens, and daughters of ostriches, because I have given water in the desert, and rivers in the waterless land, to give drink to my chosen race, a people whom I have acquired to declare my virtues; and beasts of the field seems to signify those who have been made beast-like in a way from excessive ignorance and live wildly. And thus lived the nations. And by sirens and daughters of ostriches he means those among them who know how to speak well, and are practiced in elegant speech. But it is a custom for the divinely-inspired Scripture to call sirens the most talkative of sparrows, and those accustomed to cry out something melodious and rhythmical.

⁶⁰ And somehow the teachers of the Greeks' superstition have become such, both poets and prose writers. For there is in them the sweet and the grandiloquent, as far as it pertains to words. But they teach nothing of what is necessary. But all these will glorify me, he says, as having given the spiritual water, and shown rivers in the waterless land. So that they may give drink to my chosen race; and what is this, if not those surely, to whom. the all-wise Peter also addressed, saying: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the virtues of him who called you out of darkness to his marvelous light, you who were once not a people, but are now a people in the Lord? Not now have I called you, Jacob, nor have I made you to labor, Israel. You have not brought me the sheep of your whole burnt offering, nor have you glorified me in your sacrifices, nor have you served in your sacrifices. Nor have I wearied you with frankincense, nor did you acquire for me incense with silver, nor have I desired the fat of your sacrifices. But in your sins, and transgressions and injustices and such like things I have stood over you. Through the things already examined before, that is, read before, he made the prediction of the covenant in Christ and of the gifts from him.

⁶¹ For he said he would make a way in the desert, and rivers in the waterless land; for this reason he would be blessed by all the beasts of the field; and

the doxology might be understood as a type of spiritual sacrifice, and the fruit of the new covenant in Christ. But in the present text he tries to assure Israel that he was redeemed from Egypt, and was delivered from servitude there, and was freed from such grievous labors, not in order that he should bring calves to him, and make his approach through blood and smoke. For such things are refuse before God, and are shadow rather than truth. He says therefore, Not now have I called you, Jacob. And the 'now' is to be understood as, not when you are sacrificing, that is, I have not called you while you were sacrificing oxen and slaughtering sheep, lest you should perhaps think that you have received the redemption as a kind of requital for your offering, but rather while you were in sins, and liable to defilements—for you served the gods of the Egyptians—I deemed you worthy of mercy and love. The gift, then, is of gentleness, and the grace is the fruit of loving-kindness, and the redemption is as from love. For, he says, the sheep of your whole burnt offering are nothing to me, nor indeed in your sacrifices have you glorified me. The For what is wholly unacceptable and offered in vain, how could it be for my glory?

⁶² But you have not served in your sacrifices. For he who practices some of the good things, he says, and becomes an accomplisher of the boasts that lead to virtue, who has submitted his neck to my commands, and is a worker of the sacred ordinances, would be said to serve God who is over all. But the one who perfumes the holy tent with incense, and offers oxen or sheep, or has achieved some of the best things, will not carry away the glory of genuineness; For such a one has done nothing at all of what pleases me; therefore, to serve is not in sacrificing, but in being willing to submit one's neck, gentle and as it were intangible, to his will. For as far as it concerned what seemed good to me, he says, I would not have made you weary with frankincense, nor would you have acquired for me incense for silver, nor indeed did I desire the fat of your sacrifices. This resembles what was said to them through another prophet: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat, for I did not speak to your fathers concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices on the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt. And somewhere else again the same prophet Jeremiah said: "To what purpose do you bring me frankincense from Sheba, and cinnamon from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, and your sacrifices have not pleased me. And indeed, also through the voice of the Psalmist:

⁶³ "I will not take calves out of your house, nor goats out of your flocks. And he makes the worship in shadows rejected everywhere, drawing them away from the types, and as it were driving them together towards justification in Christ, and teaching them to partake of the evangelical way of life, through which alone it would be possible to please God, and what is truly blameless and sincere for worship, it is clear that it is the spiritual one. "For God is Spirit, he says, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, and I will not remember them. But you, remember, and let us be judged. You tell your transgressions first, that you may be justified. Observe for me again, how God has not granted to the power of the worship according to the law the ability to deliver some from the impurity that is in them. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins, and in these matters the shadow of the law is useless. For no one is justified by the law, according to the voice of the divine Paul. For he writes, and says concerning both himself and the other apostles, that is, of those who have believed from the circumcision: "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles; but knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ;

⁶⁴ we also have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified in him. Do not therefore think, he says, that you will ever be able to show yourself free from the charges of wickedness through sacrifice and smoke. But know rather that I am he who blots out your transgressions, and I will not remember them. For we have been justified not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his great mercy, of him who is willing to not remember our faults. For this alone saves those upon the earth, who have a mind that is inactive and easily led away to anything whatever of the things condemned by the law. For diligently, he says, the mind of man is set on evil things from his youth. For this reason, and very fittingly, the divine David makes mention of human failings, saying: "If you, Lord, should mark iniquities, who shall stand? For with you there is forgiveness. Therefore, the God of all pities, and indeed using favorable decrees and amnesties befitting God, he puts those who have been caught by them outside of accusation and their failings. However, he does not allow those who have been shown mercy to be ignorant of the grace of him who justifies them. And we will find this to be beneficial and a matter of great concern to the saints. For so the blessed

David psalms and says, at one time, that "The I know my iniquity, and my sin is ever before me;

⁶⁵and again, that "I will declare my iniquity, and I will be sorry for my sin. I therefore, He says, will not remember the accusations. But you remember, and let us be judged; But you confess, and have a firm amnesty. For it is written that, "A righteous man is his own accuser in the first instance. And again; "Do not be ashamed to confess your sins. The arrogant Pharisee did not keep such a commandment, whom the Savior portrays praying in the synagogue in the evangelical parables, then being very sick with ignorance, and saying from a vain conceit: "God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, or even as this tax collector; I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess. This man did not bear to speak of his own sins. He is condemned therefore as a boaster and a liar, for no one is clean from filth, and we all stumble in many things. But the tax collector knew and confessed his own sins. For he stood beating his breast, and saying: "God, be merciful to me a sinner. He was justified therefore, having confessed his failings, and not hiding the filth of the abomination that was in him, so that he might be cleansed. Your first fathers, and your princes have transgressed against me. And the princes have defiled my holy things; and I have given Jacob to destruction, and Israel to reproach. Having said:

⁶⁶I am he who blots out your iniquities, and I will not remember them, he understood that perhaps some would rise up against what had been said, and would indeed say: If you have honored Israel with an amnesty, if a very great calm has come upon it, if it has been cleansed from filth, and has washed away the defilements of ancient accusations, how or for what does he demand justice, being consumed by the swords of enemies; then having been taken captive, and having left the land that bore him, and having come under the hand and yoke of his captors? For he was given to the warriors who came from Babylon. He therefore defends the saying, "Let us be judged," saying, and he states, that they themselves have become, and are the cause and originators of this for their own heads. For your fathers, he says, and your princes have transgressed against me. And in saying these things, he does not simply accuse our forefathers. But he seems rather to want to imply something of this sort. For indeed those chosen for sacred ministry, wise and learned in the law, and accustomed to instruct the people under their hand, would be called fathers of those under their yoke, and rulers and leaders.

Therefore, when some of the absurdities are committed not by the common herd, but rather by those who were likely able to correct even the faults of others, the matter is grievous, and the judgment difficult to escape, and is then owed to the impious.

⁶⁷ Therefore, those who are placed in the rank of fathers, he says, and who were allotted to rule you, have transgressed against me. And in saying, "against me," he shows that the things committed by them improperly and unholily were not done against one of us, but against the very glory of the God who is above all. I mean something like this: for when someone wrongs some of his neighbors, either by encircling them with greed and arrogance, or in some other way, he sins indeed, but against a fellow human being, and not at all against God. But he who rejects the worship due to him, and subjecting himself to the deceits of demons and worshipping them, raises himself against God, and as far as it is in him, he removes him from the thrones of the Godhead, and tries to shake him from the pre-eminence and glory that befit him alone. The people of Israel have done this at times. For they have worshipped idols, and indeed, having bid farewell to the sacred ordinances, they were willing to raise a stiff and haughty neck to God. He therefore accuses them, and says: The priests did not say, Where is the Lord? And those who held to the law did not know me, and the prophets were impious against me. And again: Why do you speak to me? All of you have transgressed, and all of you you have acted impiously against me, says the Lord Almighty. The rulers, therefore, he says, have defiled my holy things.

⁶⁸ For they have dared to erect the pillars of demons not only in Jerusalem, but they would even be caught having impiously done this in the divine temple itself. For the God of all said concerning the synagogue of the Jews: Why has the beloved wrought abomination in my house? calling an abomination the statue and image skillfully made in the form of God. But holy things are defiled in another way as well, if the things commanded to be performed reverently and holily for the glory of God are despised by some, and if some consider the transgression of his divine law as nothing. Therefore, since your fathers, he says, have transgressed against me, and the rulers have defiled my holy things, I have given this to the enemies so as to destroy Jacob, and with reproaches for these things I have clothed Israel. But now hear, my servant Jacob, and Israel whom I have chosen. Having recalled the former things, and having stated very well the reasons for which the apostate

Israel was given over to destruction and reproach; he again promises them forgiveness, and wishes to renew them to a complete and blameless obedience. Having passed over, as it were, the time of ignorance, during which the one who had become a lover of God, the one having the law, has been exposed, he again sets another time for them, saying Now; I say that this is like, "Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

⁶⁹ For during the time that has already passed, he says, the outcry against you has been very great and certainly just; for you cast yourself into apostasy, you have offended not moderately, thrusting aside the law that tutors, turning to what is not right, and immersing yourself in the crimes of disobedience. But let those things be passed over, he says. Now hear, that is, Lower your haughty spirit. Know your own Master; come under the yoke of obedience, considering that you were named my servant. And I made you chosen from all, that is, from the nations that are on the earth. For when the Most High divided the nations, when he scattered the sons of Adam, he set the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the angels of God. The people of the Lord became his portion, Israel the lot of his inheritance. Therefore, he shames, and as it were, convicts those who have transgressed and offended not moderately, those who have been in the order of children to him, and who are in the lot of the chosen.

DISCOURSE 23

¹ Thus says the Lord God who made you, and formed you from the womb, He will still help you. Having accused those of Israel of apostasy, and of departing from love for him, and of attaching themselves to gods that are not; for he said, that your fathers, and your rulers transgressed against me, and the rulers defiled my holy things; he very providentially adds these things as well; for he does not allow them to be carried off to apostasy, or despair, nor indeed to slip away entirely from the hope in him. But he again promises them gentleness, and wins them back through his accustomed philanthropy, and leads them back to repentance. And he gives them to understand that he has not turned away completely from the sinners, nor indeed will Israel be destroyed root and branch, as he has compassion, and smoothes the way of salvation very well for those who believe in him; and by calling himself Lord and God, who made and formed from the womb, he seems to indicate that Israel has gone astray, having placed the name of divinity upon others, and having foolishly ascribed the glory of lordship to gods that are not. And that

he did not know the Maker, and the one who brought into existence the man upon the earth who once was not, he again indicates, by affirming himself to be the former and maker, and, as it were, indicting for ingratitude those of the having leaped away from love for him.

² For it is among absurdities that the highest honors should be offered by us to our parents according to the flesh, with the divine law also decreeing this, but that the creator of all things should not be all the more honored and revered by us with praises befitting him through complete submission. He says something like this also through one of the holy prophets: "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. And if I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear?" says the Lord Almighty. For he is at once both Lord, as having the whole creation under a yoke and servitude. For the divine Psalmist said somewhere to him, that "All things are yours. And again, Father, as a molder, and maker, and one who has brought things into being. Therefore, we must pay to God, as if in the order of a debt, both the submission befitting sons and the fear suitable for servants. Therefore, when God says that he is the molder and maker, he refers to the thoughts of the need to honor him, as one who has become the provider of being itself, and the cause of existence for those who once were not. And by saying to the sinners, 'He will yet help,' he gives courage that although they are entangled in many and inescapable charges, a remnant of gentleness and love for mankind has been preserved.

³ And nothing would prevent them from also being saved, if they should choose to turn to better and more fitting things, and to what is in accordance with his laws. Fear not, my servant Jacob, and beloved Israel, whom I have chosen. For I will give water in thirst to those who walk in a waterless place. I will put my Spirit upon your seed, and my blessings upon your children. And they shall spring up as grass among the waters, and as a willow on the flowing water. This one will say, 'I am God's,' and this one will cry out in the name of Jacob. And another will write, 'I am God's,' in the name of Israel. In these things, he seems to name Israel and Jacob the choir of the holy apostles, understood as one person. For all are one in Christ. For observe how he says he is beloved and chosen, although how is it not clear to all that he would never have named beloved and chosen those who have rejected faith in him. But since being of the blood of Jacob, who is also Israel, they have become honored and chosen vessels, and have been called to the sacred min-

istry of the evangelical proclamations, he thought it necessary to crown them with such brilliant words, as indeed they would be as luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of life, and initiators of those under the sun.

4 Fear not, therefore, he says, that is, be courageous, and be strong, have a patient and youthful mind, and mocking the uprisings of persecutors, have firm faith in God. For very many are those who contend with the sacred proclamations, and an unholy multitude will rise up, opposing your words. But be superior to cowardice, he says, and to hesitation and unmanliness. For I will give water to those who walk in a waterless place. For it is sweet and saving for those walking in a thirsty land to happen upon springs of water. And we say it is most desirable, and even more so, for those who labor for piety to be irrigated by the divine and intelligible streams, that is, by the consolations through the Spirit, through which the human mind, having grown somewhat weak, might be restored to courage. And the water in these things, which God promises to supply to those walking in a waterless place, we say is the Holy Spirit. For the Savior himself said, as the Scripture said: "Rivers of living water will flow from his belly. And making clear the power of what was said, the all-wise evangelist added immediately: "But this he said concerning the Spirit which those who believed in him were about to receive.

5 For water is life-giving, and brings up plants and grasses to growth, and it imitates in some way the energy of the Holy Spirit, through whom all things hold together and are maintained in well-being and the intelligible creation is enriched with an increase in every good thing whatsoever, and as it were leaps up, going toward spiritual growth. And that the promise of water to those who walk through a waterless place signifies the life-giving power and energy of the Holy Spirit, the intelligible consolation through him, the following will make clear. For I will put, he says, my Spirit upon your seed, and my blessings upon your children. And we say that the seed and children of the holy apostles are those who through them have been called to the knowledge of the truth, and to the spiritual rebirth, by which they beget them not from corruptible seed, but through the living and abiding word of God, and through the energy of the Holy Spirit himself. For the divine Paul writes to those called through him, and says: "For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you have not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel. And we will find them everywhere

calling those who believed in him through them, children. Therefore I will put, he says, my Spirit upon your seed, and my blessings upon your children. And we say that blessings are those things supplied by God to the saints, the manifold variety of spiritual gifts.

6 For to one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, and the things that follow these. And the all-wise Paul writes somewhere that "Every one of you has his proper gift from God. Then what the benefit of the blessings would be, he clarified by adding that They shall spring up as grass among the water, and as the willow by the running water. For grasses and plants, which are in waterless places, sprout very slowly, and having sprouted, immediately wither. But those things are very flourishing beside which lies a flow of streams and a current of water sustaining them to live, and the willow plant is an evergreen thing, always growing beside springs and rivers. Therefore, being intoxicated, he says, with the intelligible streams, those who have been enriched by these things will confess that they know me only, and they will inscribe God as the one who called them. And by saying that this one will say, I am of God, and this one will cry out, and another will write, he indicates the multitude of those running to him through faith in Christ. For not one people will be called, but rather the whole multitude of the nations, at least throughout the world, and all will confess that they have become God's, and they will inscribe him as Savior and Redeemer, and they are henceforth named by the name of Jacob, that is, that they are the portion and inheritance of God.

7 For the people of the Lord, he says, became his portion, Israel his inherited possession. And we who have believed boast in having become the inheritance of God, and the portion of the Savior of us all, Jesus Christ. Thus says the Lord God the king of Israel, the God of Sabaoth who delivered him: I am the first, and I am after these things; besides me there is no God. Who is like me? Let him stand, and call, and prepare for me, since I made man for eternity. And let them announce to you the things that are coming before they come. Do not be hidden, and I have declared to you. Having made mention of the knowledge in Christ through the readings just now before us, he transfers the discourse to another of the necessary topics. For since at that time, when the divine prophet Isaiah was composing these words for us, a God-hated man was ruling among them, and he had fallen into intolerable errors. For to each one whatever seemed good was a god and an object of

worship; God makes a necessary exhortation for them, interwoven with most skillful refutations; turning them away from polytheism and the sicknesses therein; calling them through repentance to the knowledge of the truth, and bringing them to the remembrance of his glory and incomparable power. For this reason he says: Thus says the Lord the king of Israel, the God of Sabaoth who delivered him.

8 For he wishes them to know that he is God and Lord of hosts, and, having recovered as from a drunken stupor, to see that also of the Egyptians they have been delivered from oppression, as he worked wonders, and manifested the greatness of the power and pre-eminence inherent in him. For what of the wondrous things has not been done? And what plague was not brought upon those who oppressed them? Or how would it not be a clear proof of his ineffable power, for the sea to be parted, and the waters to congeal like a wall, and for those fleeing to go through the midst? And what indeed were the wonders in the wilderness after this? Did he not give them the bread from heaven? Did he not break a rock in the wilderness, and give them drink as from a great deep? and bring down waters like rivers? did he not, putting a kind of bridle on the streams of the Jordan, prepare them to cross on foot? Necessarily, therefore, he does not simply call himself Lord and God in these things; but he added, "And having delivered him," bringing to remembrance, as I said, the things wondrously accomplished for his sake. Know therefore, he says, that "I am God, the first, and I am after these things, and besides me there was no God. For God is the beginning of all things, being himself without beginning, and from him all things were brought into being;

9 he himself therefore has come into being from no one, but he is the one who is and who will be. For this is his name, and an eternal memorial for generations of generations. Therefore, neither was there another God before him, nor will there be any after him. For there is one God by nature, and no other besides him. And the exhortation is exceedingly useful for those who denied him, and from too much foolishness have slipped into thinking that there are many gods. That no one is like him or another to be reckoned with him, he demonstrates by saying: "Who is like me? Which then of the gods supposed by you, that is, foolishly so named, will be according to my glory and power? From what great work then have you believed them to be gods? Let someone stand, if indeed he is like me. Let someone

prepare one having a nature of equal weight, either in strength or glory. Let them call whomever they may choose of the falsely named gods, from when I made man for eternity. For I created, he says, the heavens, and the things in them, having innumerable flocks of holy spirits worshipping and serving me, but from when I have made man upon the earth, and in the things that follow, that is, for eternity, let someone show me one like me. And saying again, "From when I made man," he shows himself to be the creator, but the falsely named gods to be nothing at all.

10 For which of those who worship them did they bring into being? but I am known as the existing creator, and founder of all things, and possessing the knowledge of all things. Inquire this from the gods spoken of by you; let them announce to you the things to come before they arrive. For it would be fitting for God by nature to have all knowledge both of things that have already passed and of things to come. But if no one among the falsely named gods is found to have obtained this, it is clear that those who do not have the knowledge of God would not be gods. "Do not be veiled over," instead of, "Do not be silent, nor pretend otherwise. "Did you not give ear from the beginning, and I announced to you? For as existing God by nature, and knowing all things that will be, and that have already come to pass, I announced beforehand to you through holy prophets, through the all-wise Moses. For I revealed the mystery of Christ, and there is nothing of which it was fitting for the knowledge to become manifest even to us, which has not been announced beforehand by me. Therefore, those are not gods, having obtained nothing of the things befitting God. But I am by nature what I am believed to be, God, clearly of all things, and possessing a God-befitting being.

11 Therefore, the word initiates those carried away from the true vision of God, and who have assented to lifeless idols, and say to the wood, "You are my father," and to the stone, "You gave me birth. You are witnesses, if there is a God besides me. He brings them back again to the memory of the power and authority shown to them, which would befit the one who is truly God by nature and Lord of all, when they were delivered from the land of the Egyptians. For at that time creation itself was armed with the Master, and of the He rose up against the wickedness of those who were oppressing them, for things were accomplished by changes of the elements [perhaps: changes]. For the water was changed into blood, and a deep darkness stretched out for three days. And the sky cast down hail upon them, and gnats and frogs, and

dog-flies, and the death of the firstborn was brought upon them, and they passed through the midst of the sea. And when they entered the land of promise, they conquered many nations, stronger than their own strength, and they became terrible and hard to encounter for the neighboring nations, and for those yet far off they were looked upon and renowned.

¹² Therefore, others would not know better, but you yourselves, your own affairs, who it was who achieved these things, and who it was who has creation as an ally in your affairs, who it was who crushed the powers of enemies, and crowns you with courage against all; you are the witnesses of my excellence, if you choose to think rightly, and you will not need other instructors. For the gods among the Egyptians were very many, and their shrines were full of statues. And likewise very many were those among the Amorites, Hivites and Perizzites, and the other nations; but none of them is seen to have been sufficient for the salvation of their own people; rather, you have even crushed the worshipped ones together with their worshippers. For it was divinely decreed through Moses that you shall tear down their altars, and you shall break their pillars, and you shall burn the carved images of the gods with fire. Therefore, if you choose to speak the truth, you bear witness to me, whether there is a God besides me. For if anyone has risen up against my powers, and has conquered, let him be considered a god among you. But if, being nothing, they have been exposed, and have become the work of fire through you, you have known by experience itself, he says, that there is no God besides me, the true God. And at that time those who formed and carved did not hear;

¹³ all who make their desired things are vain, which will not profit them; but they who form a god, and carve useless things, shall be ashamed, and all who came to be were withered, and deaf from among men. Through these things he shows that the crimes of the apostates are terrible and very difficult, if, having such full assurance that there is no other besides him who is God by nature and in truth; and being convinced, as it were, by the very things accomplished that he alone is God, they slipped into this folly, so that even when the law itself clearly proclaimed to them and said: "You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him only, and you shall not make for yourself an idol, nor any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth; you made obeying him of no account; but rather you turned godlessly

to the need to form and shape the gods from wood and stones. Such people are indeed vain, and very rightly so, going to this for none of the necessary things, but rather making their own desired things, for they have become lovers of vanity. For what profit is there from stone and wood? Therefore, the making of an idol would clearly be considered the fruit of a foolish counsel and the work of cold thoughts. Yet he declares beforehand that the matter is not without penalty, saying:

14 All who form a god, and carve useless things, shall be ashamed, and all who came to be were withered, and deaf from among men. Therefore, if what has been said is taken to refer to the man-made things themselves, we say that "They were withered" must be understood to mean "they perished. But if it refers to those who are accustomed to doing such things, it would be well to understand it in this way also; for it is said as of plants that are accustomed to being fruitless, if they should somehow wither and then be cut down for flame and burning. And "Deaf from among men," instead of, "No longer existing among men, but rather deaf and completely senseless, so that in no way do they resemble the things that came to be among them. For somewhere the blessed Psalmist also sings and says: "The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the works of men's hands. They have a mouth, and will not speak; eyes, and will not see; ears, and do not hear. And to these he adds: "May those who make them become like them, and all who trust in them. For such evils might be understood as the fruits of the utmost insensibility.

15 And yet, having known by experience the God who is by nature and truly, then to send up to stones and wood the glory most fitting for Him and Him alone, how could they not be considered foolish, and heartless, and having a heart filled with stupor to the point of madness, and indeed to differ little from the things fashioned by their own hands? Let them all be gathered, and let them stand together, and let them be confounded, and let them be ashamed together, because the carpenter sharpened the iron, with an adze he worked it, and with a drill he bored it. He worked it with the arm of his strength, and he will hunger, and grow weak, and will not drink water. Not one by one, rather, but, if they should choose, he says that the worshippers of idols, gathered in a multitude, will be confounded by their own evil counsels, and to solve what is proposed, and what then this is, he immediately adds, saying: He sharpened, he says, the carpenter, the iron. And he mentions also the instruments by which the making is done, so that he may

show them worshipping the art of the stonemason, and not the wood itself. For if it were a god, it would not have needed art, and some kind of skill; but it would have been a God even so.

¹⁶ But if you consider wood that is not worked, nor indeed given form, to be worthless matter, but you worship it when it has been crafted and say that it is a god, then art has become a god to you, and this, the art of a man who is weak and subject to corruption. For the need of food and drink is proof of corruption. For the phrase, He will not drink water, we say is not spoken declaratively. But it should rather be read as in a question and with a pause. For the understanding will follow, that surely somewhere he also drinks. Then how will the corruptible be a creator of incorruptible gods, or how will the mortal make the immortal? For it is absolutely necessary for the God who truly is to possess incorruptibility and indestructibility, and rather also to be living, and to be able to give life to those into whom he might wish to send life. The worship of those who are deceived is therefore a demonstration of the adze and the drill, and of the carpenter's strength and art; if it is true, as I said, that they would not choose to worship shapeless wood or stone; but when a form has been carved, all things seen are gods among them.

¹⁷ Having chosen a piece of wood, a carpenter set it up with a measure, and with glue he shaped it, and made it into the form of a man, and as the beauty of a man, to set it up in a house. He cut wood from the forest, which the Lord planted, a pine tree, and the rain made it grow long, that it might be for men for burning, and taking some of it he was warmed, and having burned it they baked bread on it, but the rest they worked into gods, and they worship them; of which one half he burned in the fire, and having burned it he baked bread on it, and upon it having roasted meat he ate, and was filled, and being warmed he said: It is pleasant for me that I have been warmed, and I have seen the fire. The rest he made into a graven god, and he worships it and prays, saying: Deliver me, because you are my god. They did not know how to understand, because they were darkened from seeing with their eyes, and from understanding with their heart. And he did not consider in his heart, nor did he reflect in his soul, nor did he know in his understanding, that he burned half of it in the fire, and baked bread on its coals, and having roasted meat he ate, and the rest of it he made into an abomination, and they worship it.

18 Know that their heart is ashes, and they are deceived, and no one is able to deliver his soul. See, will you not say that there is a lie in my right hand? The meaning of what is set forth is very clear and there is nothing difficult in it. For the worshipper of idols, and moreover the craftsman, is described as heartless, and having gone outside of all sense, and completely deprived of proper reasoning. And he dwells greatly on the narratives concerning him; at the same time shaming them as having been led astray, and opening the eye for those entangled in evil, and persuading them to look at the truth itself, which if they should take into their mind, they will be outside the snare, and will deliver their own heads from the wounds of foolishness. Nevertheless, we say this: for the word seems to us in these things to fashion something bitter and wise, and not being unable to persuade many to depart from the polytheistic error, but rather to choose to be under the God who is so by nature and in truth. For a carpenter, he says, having chosen wood, set it up with a measure, and with glue he shaped it; he made it as the form of a man, and as the beauty of a man, to set it in a house.

19 The art, he says, of those accustomed to make gods, would then indeed especially be deemed worthy of all wonder, whenever it works on the wood the form and beauty of a man. But that which is crafted by someone in imitation of something is surely in every way inferior to the real, or rather, it comes after. Therefore, those who worship pieces of wood or stone fashioned into human form would be caught worshipping their own form, and being much better than the imitations of themselves, they insult their own nature, by ascribing the better glory to those things. Therefore, then, the writing is of the utmost insensibility, and the accusations are of extreme foolishness. For he sets in a house, that is, in a temple, the wood which he cut from the forest. In these things he shows those who are accustomed to deify things, not ignorant of the material from which they have come, so that they may not say, according to the custom of the Greeks, that the things dedicated in shrines are fallen from Zeus and self-begotten, that is, self-delivered. And that they misrepresent the purpose of God's creation, he refutes them, saying that the wood was planted in a forest, and nurtured by the provisions of rain, so that it might be for burning by men; but by deifying the things that were made for burning, they themselves will be food for fire along with them.

20 He is almost struck with amazement, saying, that he burned half of it in the fire, and has spent it on his own needs. This, on the one hand, prepar-

ing food, and accepting the parts of the gods for the baking of bread. Then he has fallen into such senselessness as to worship the remnant of what was needed, and to pray and say: "Deliver me, for you are my god. Therefore, then, their heart is ashes and nothing else, and they have been deceived, and no one could deliver the souls of those who have fallen into this, except that God alone, if He should choose, who makes all things, and transforms, and enlightens what is darkened, and turns back what has strayed. But there is indeed what is useless and vain in the gods carved by hand, for they are deaf and senseless matter. But see, that is, understand, and you will not say that a lie is in my right hand. For all things concerning them, he says, are falsehoods, both names and glory. But in my right hand, that is, in the Son; for the Son is named the right hand of the Father everywhere in the divinely-inspired Scripture; nothing false would be found, but also if He should be called God, He is true God; and if Lord, He does not have the title as something adopted, but is rather by nature master of all;

²¹ and if king, and if light, and if life and power, and if creator, all these things He is not falsely; for He is not created, but would be understood as naturally beyond everything that has been brought into being, being God from God, and true light from true light. Remember these things, Jacob and Israel, for you are my servant; I formed you as my servant; and you, Israel, do not forget me. For behold, I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like a mist. Return to me, and I will redeem you. Christ said somewhere: He who knew the will of his lord and did not do it will be beaten with many stripes; but he who did not know, and did not do it, will be beaten with few. And the judgment in each case is altogether holy. For to those who do not know the master's will, and then transgress, and are caught in the charges of transgression, one might pardon their not having known, accepting it as a pretext for mercy. But to those indeed with knowledge of the laws who have chosen to be negligent, there would justly be added the punish- must be. For the accusations are of a clear carelessness. So that Israel might become better than himself, though convicted of very many accusations, but honored with amnesty from God, he is commanded to remember his own laziness, and the gentleness of the one who has pity. For remember these things, he says, Jacob.

²² And what are these things? Both what has already been said before, and that you are my servant. And I formed you as my servant. And he shows very

clearly in these things, that Israel has [not] remained uninstructed, but was under law and yokes, and had very many who knew how to admonish; a servant, therefore, for this reason and formed for this. In what way, we shall say as we are able. For a man is formed simply, just as, of course, our forefather Adam was from the earth. For, he says, God took dust from the earth, and formed the man. And our own affairs proceed according to the way of creation, even to this day. For each is formed in the womb of his own mother, and this is the path that brings those on earth into being. But one is also formed into a servant of God, being shaped intellectually by the knowledge of the divine laws toward an exceptional form, that which comes upon the souls of men from the good order of the virtues. This might be understood as spiritual beauty. And they are also formed, as it were, in Christ through participation in the Holy Spirit into the form that is toward him. For indeed the divine Paul also writes to the Galatians: "My little children, for whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you. Indeed, Christ is formed in us, as the Holy Spirit imparts to us a certain divine formation, through sanctification and righteousness.

²³ For thus, thus does the character of the substance of God the Father become manifest in our souls, as the Holy Spirit, as I said, transforms us toward him through sanctification. For indeed the most holy Paul said again: "Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may test what is the will of God, what is good, and acceptable and perfect. And he says that a veil is placed on the hearts of the Jews, but that all of us, with unveiled face, reflecting the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Lord, the Spirit. We are therefore formed into a servant of God. But since the name of 'servant' is somehow common—for it is used for both household servants and sons—we say that it would be more fitting for those formed under the law to be formed into household servants. For there was a spirit of bondage upon Israel, and for them to be lazy was not without penalty; for the law punished them as household servants. But if one is formed in Christ, he is formed into a son of God, according to the ways just mentioned. Therefore it is necessary to remember both the loving-kindness of the one who justifies, and that we have been formed for sonship and glory, and, as it were, repaying to God the Father the returns for the things that have come to us from him.

²⁴ And how this might happen, he instructs well, saying: And you, Israel, do not forget me. For one might forget God by neglecting piety toward him, or by departing from it altogether. Those from Israel have done this by worshipping gods that are not; and to this day some do it, going backwards after the faith, whose judgment is just, according to what is written. But that forgetting God in many places signifies fleeing from piety toward him, we shall know, when he says to those of the blood of Israel: "You who forget me, and prepare a table for the demon, and fill a mixed drink for Fortune, and forsake my holy mountain. I will deliver you to the sword, you shall all fall by slaughter. And concerning this very thing he cried out against those from Israel through the voice of Jeremiah, saying: "Shall a bride forget her adornment, or a virgin her breast-band? But my people have forgotten me for many days, of which there is no number. Therefore, forgetting would often indicate apostasy. But remembrance, on the other hand, indicates steadfastness in faith, and immovability in love, and strength for anything whatsoever that seems good to it. Therefore do not forget me, he says, but remember rather. For behold, I have blotted out your iniquities like a cloud. And in these words he says "I have blotted out" instead of "I will blot out," and as if dispersing some darkness and cloud, I will make it disappear.

²⁵ For that he says "I have blotted out" instead of "I will blot out," the following very well shows. For, he says, "Return to me, and I will redeem you. For how has he blotted out, who calls to repentance? As though they have not yet returned, but will come to this in due time, when Christ shines upon the world, through whom is all remission of sins, and the return and calling to God, both through faith in him, and an evangelical life, and most excellent deeds. Rejoice, O heavens, because God has had mercy on Israel. Sound the trumpet, O foundations of the earth, cry out, O mountains, with gladness, O hills and all the trees in them, because God has redeemed Jacob, and Israel will be glorified. From this one might easily discern that the remission of sins, and indeed the return and redemption of all, as something that will be through Christ, is proclaimed beforehand in due season by the holy prophets. For since God, being Lord, has appeared to us, and conversed with those on earth as a man, the true lamb, who takes away the sin of the world, the all-holy victim; then indeed, the event became an occasion of festival for the rational powers above and in heaven, that is, for the orders of the holy angels. For they sang, they sang at his birth, I mean his birth according to

the flesh, and they said: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

26 And if it is true, and it is certainly true, that according to the voice of the Savior there is joy in heaven in the presence of the holy angels over one sinner who repents, how could one doubt that when Christ was bringing the whole world to the knowledge of the truth, and calling to repentance, and justifying by faith, and making illustrious through sanctification, there was joy and celebration among the spirits above? Therefore, the heavens rejoiced because God had mercy on Israel, and not at all only on the one according to the flesh, but also on the one understood according to the spirit; the foundations of the earth sounded the trumpet, that is, the ministers of the evangelical ordinances; their piercing sound was carried everywhere, and like some sacred trumpets they cried out, proclaiming the glory of the Savior to all everywhere, and calling to the knowledge of Christ both those of the circumcision and those who formerly served the creation rather than the Creator. But for what reason do we say they are called foundations of the earth? For Christ is the foundation and unshakable support of all, upholding all things, and holding fast for their well-being the things that have been established; for upon him we are all built up, a spiritual house, being joined together through the Spirit into a holy temple, for his dwelling place.

27 For he dwells in our hearts through faith, but the apostles and evangelists might be understood as nearer foundations, and closer than in our case, having been both eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, and having become a foundation of faith. For, having recognized that we must follow their traditions, we will keep our faith in Christ straight and unperverted. For it was said somewhere by him to the divine Peter (when wisely and blamelessly confessing his faith in him he said: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God): "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will found my Church," saying, I think, "rock" for the unshakeable faith of the disciple. And it has been said somewhere also through the voice of the Psalmist: "His foundations are in the holy mountains. And the holy apostles and evangelists are very well likened to holy mountains, whose knowledge is established like a foundation for those after them, not allowing those who have been netted by them to fall away into what is unapproved in faith. Therefore the foundations of the earth sound the trumpet; but observe the care. For Moses was of a feeble voice and slow of speech. For the law was not widely heard, except by

those only in Judea. Sound the trumpet, however, those who are ambassadors for Christ. "For their sound went forth into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world. And he commanded the mountains to shout for joy;

²⁸ calling the foundations of the earth 'mountains' again in these things; for the divine disciples are conspicuous and manifest, distinguished in both deed and word, and most well-known everywhere, to whom the prophetic word also cried out: "Go up on a high mountain, you who bring good news to Zion; lift up your voice with strength, you who bring good news to Jerusalem. So then, he commanded these intelligible mountains to shout for joy. And from this it is possible to see both the power of the law, and the superior difference of the evangelical proclamations. For the law, threatening punishments to transgressors and subjecting the convicted to inescapable penalties, did not shout joy, but rather dejection; but the ministers of the evangelical oracles and the deacons of the gifts from Christ proclaim joy to the world. For where there is remission of sins, and indeed justification by faith, and participation in the Holy Spirit, and the splendor of adoption, and the kingdom of heaven, and a hope for good things beyond understanding that is not disappointed, there surely is joy and gladness. And we say that the hills and the trees in them are again those inferior to the mountains, and seated somewhat lower, according to the measure of the good life in them, while the holy apostles and evangelists clearly stand higher.

²⁹ Therefore, the hills would be those who are seated somewhat below their good repute and are inferior in the magnitude of virtue, yet they themselves also endure, and are beyond earthly affairs, and think on things above, and have been allotted to be conceived of as high in virtue. And the trees in them, those nourished by them, might be understood as those who believed through them, and as it were have grown into a perfect man, and have reached the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. And these might also be teachers of peoples, and leaders of flocks, winning over those who approach them by their own intelligible good fruits. Therefore the hills and the trees in them have cried out together with the foundations of the earth the joy understood in Christ, and they rejoice because God has redeemed Jacob, and Israel will be glorified. For he was not only redeemed by wiping away the pollutions of sin and being rescued from fire and judgment, but he was also glorified, having become one of God's own, and being called His son, and having obtained brotherhood with the one and by nature and truly Son,

that is, Christ. Thus says the Lord who redeems you, and who formed you from the womb: I am the Lord who accomplishes all things. I stretched out the heaven alone, and established the earth. Who else will frustrate the signs of ventriloquists, and divinations from the heart?

³⁰ turning the wise backward, and making their counsel foolish, and establishing the words of his servant, and making the counsel of his messengers true. Most providentially indeed does the God of all speak with us in these things, and he tries to fully convince those who have behaved insolently toward his glory, transferring it to others, clearly to those who are not gods, that he himself is the author of all things, and steward, and creator and maker even of those who are being instructed. And since he made promises concerning very many and wonderful matters, which it was likely would be disbelieved by some, he usefully, as I said, reveals beforehand to them his own power and pre-eminence, so that they might know that in every way and entirely, whatever he might choose to accomplish, this will run to its conclusion. For at what would he be powerless, or how would he not be able to redeem some, he who formed them from the womb, that is, he who even called them into being, and brought into existence those who once were not, he who accomplishes all things, that is, the steward of all, governing and directing each thing according to what seems good to him? And this is entirely right. For God would not fail in what is most fitting for His own glory. Or how would he not be all-powerful, and beyond all, and mind, and reason, who stretched out this immense heaven, and made firm the earth? As the Psalmist says:

³¹ "He established the earth upon its own security. And He who has ascended to this power, or rather He who is all power, will surely bring to completion whatever He wishes to do, with no one preventing him. But He says that He alone stretches out the heaven, not setting aside the only-begotten God the Word from His own substance, through whom are all things, and in whom are all things; but that absolutely none of the falsely-named gods worked together with the God over all. For those who do not exist at all, how could they be accepted as workers, or rather, to say, as co-workers with God the creator? Therefore we do not say that the contrast in these things is made with respect to the Son who is by nature and begotten of Him, but that the stretching out of the heaven, or the earth having unshakable foundations, was not the result of another god. Having shown, therefore, through

these things His own glory, and His incomparable preeminence, and the greatness of His power, He clearly shows and relates in what follows what things He will be the accomplisher of at the proper times. For who else, he says, will scatter the signs of ventriloquists, and divinations from the heart? For before Christ, the Savior of us all, shone upon us from heaven, the rapacity of the devil's tyranny was extended over all, and a deep darkness consumed all upon the earth.

³² For there were, there were in both country and city, altars and sacred precincts, and a swarm of statues, and an unnumbered multitude of falsely-named gods, and sorceries and false divinations everywhere, and deceptions of demons, pretending to know and to be able to foretell future events, though saying or knowing absolutely nothing. But since the true light, that is, the only-begotten Word of God, has illuminated all that is under heaven with the evangelical decrees, the mist of sin has been driven away, and that deep darkness has ceased, and those who were wandering have been called to the knowledge of truth; then indeed the signs of the ventriloquists were scattered. And he calls ventriloquists the false prophets, that is, the pythians, those who belch out what seems good from their own heart, and know nothing of the truth. Concerning such people the prophet Ezekiel also says: "Woe to those who prophesy from their own heart, and who see nothing at all. Therefore the signs given by some from false divination, that is, the predictions of such people, were scattered. For the Greek oracles everywhere have become inactive, and the gods among the Greeks, accustomed to speaking falsehoods, have fallen silent; and the wise have been turned back, and their counsels have been made foolish. And it seems that by 'the wise' in these things, he means either the magi among the Greeks; for they were called wise among them;

³³ or perhaps also those who were held in repute as wise among them, and were keen in understanding, and possessed a powerful style of speech, and were excellent in eloquence, and were not incapable of being able, by their eloquence, to embellish falsehood. We say that such men have been turned back; since their wisdom has finally been shown to be useless and unprofitable, which is both psychical and earthly, demonic. And the all-wise Paul also says that the wisdom of the world has been made foolish, clearly by God. But when the wise have been turned away, he says, and all their counsel has been shown to be completely unintelligent and foolish, God the Father es-

tablished the words of His own Son, that is, the evangelical and saving decree, which Christ Himself spoke to us. And He proved the counsel of His angels to be true. For angels could be understood as those who are ambassadors for Christ, and who proclaim to the world. And their counsel was good, and an exhortation to all everywhere to depart from ancient accusations, to be strengthened for good works, and to hold fast to better things, and to know the God who is by nature and in truth, and to the to submit one's neck to his laws, and so to run towards salvation and life. Therefore, the words from them are full of all truth; but the things of the Greeks have been made foolish, not having the beauty of the truth;

³⁴ for all things among them are false, both prophecy, and understanding, and the multitude of supposed gods, which is unknown even to those who are deceived. Who says of Jerusalem, 'You shall be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, 'You shall be built,' and her desolate places shall spring up. And so follows the, "I am," that is, Jerusalem, the one who redeems you, who accomplishes all things, and who stretched out the heaven. I am, therefore, he says, the one who says of Jerusalem, "You shall be inhabited. For the Babylonians indeed captured it by force, having ravaged the entire land of the Jews. But they were redeemed by God, and they threw off the yoke of captivity, when the one who burned down Babylon permitted this to be done, I mean Cyrus the son of Cambyses; and indeed having returned to Judea, they rebuilt both the cities and the temple, and have dwelt in peace. Most skillfully, therefore, the prophetic word, by saying that Jerusalem will be built, gives the hearers to understand that it will be captured in due time, and destroyed. And he makes the prediction of the things that will happen to them not from the painful things, but rather from those things at which it was likely to rejoice greatly; along with coming to thoughts, as I said, of the more somber things. Therefore, when God commands Jerusalem to be built, the word of prophecy indicates that it had certainly been captured before.

³⁵ But if someone should wish to engage in even deeper contemplations, we say that the truer Judea, that is clearly the Church, whose inhabitants and citizens might be understood as those who bear the circumcision in spirit. Though once desolate, He who commanded this to happen made it populous, that is, clearly, God in Christ, and her desolate places have sprung up. For she was found full of spiritual trees, and as it were most abounding in good trees, and having the lofty heads of saints. For it is a custom for the di-

vinely inspired Scripture at times to liken the choir of saints to plants and trees. For the God of all things said through the voice of saints, that "I will put in the waterless land the cedar, and boxwood, and myrtle, and cypress, and white poplar. And it has also been said through the voice of the Psalmist concerning the saints to God, at one time, that "The trees of the plain shall be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon which you have planted; and at another time again: "Then all the trees of the forest shall rejoice, before the face of the Lord, because he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his truth. And we do not say at all that rejoicing belongs to insensible trees, but the matter would be more fitting for saints, whom he says rejoice when Christ shines upon the world.

³⁶ For so he judged the world in righteousness, justifying in faith those who were once deceived, and condemning the destruction of Satan and his angels. Who says to the deep, 'Be desolate, and I will dry up your rivers. Who says of Cyrus to be wise, and he will do all my will. Who says of Jerusalem, 'You shall be built; and of my holy house, 'I will lay the foundation. Israel was carried away captive, as I said, in due time; for the Babylonians captured the land of the Jews. But when the seventieth year had now been completed for the captives, and the time for clemency towards them had arrived, that is, clearly, the clemency from God, he raised up against the Chaldeans Cyrus the son of Cambyses, who was ruling the empire of the Persians and Medes, who captured them, and released the Jews, having learned that the God whom they served had foretold concerning him, that being strengthened by His aid, he would be superior to his enemies, and completely unassailable to those wishing to resist, and that he himself would raise up the divine temple. That therefore the land of the Babylonians, although very populous, was about to be utterly desolated, he indicates, saying: I am he who says to the to the abyss: You will be made desolate. For in these things he called the multitude of the Babylonians, greater than number, an abyss;

³⁷ and its rivers, the nations flowing into it, which were both its neighbors, and possessing the bordering lands, were called by them for aid. And it is again a custom for the divine Scripture to compare the multitudes of the nations to rivers and seas and waters. For indeed the divine Psalmist said concerning both our Savior of all, Christ, and the multitude of the nations, which has been caught by his words: "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters, the God of glory has thundered, the Lord. For indeed the voice of the

Lord, that is, the evangelical and saving proclamation, was brought against all the nations, when it, so to speak, thundered down upon them. For the sacred and saving proclamation resounded, as it were, throughout the whole world under heaven. And again it is written: "The rivers have lifted up their voices. For we say that in these verses the holy apostles are called rivers, whose voices, that is, their teachings, have become known to all everywhere. And it is said somewhere also concerning Babylon itself, and Nineveh, that its waters are a pool of water. Therefore it was God who said to the abyss: You will be made desolate, and I will dry up your rivers. And he was likewise the one who told Cyrus to be wise, that is, to do everything with understanding, and to fulfill all things that seemed good to him.

³⁸ These things were to make the Babylonians pay the penalty for what they had done by cruelly ravaging Judea, and burning the sacred and divine temple, and in addition to this, for Israel to be released, and the house to be rebuilt, that is, to be founded. For it is more true to say this. For Cyrus commanded, and adding resources of money, for the temple to be raised, and he laid the foundations. But since in the meantime he departed from human life, the progress of the works was hindered by the envy of some, under the one who came after him. Nevertheless, it was brought to completion after this again, with God's assent. And we have the accurate account of the history in the divinely-inspired Scripture; and to choose to spend long words on these things, I think is somewhere superfluous. And let no one say that the divine word was proven false, because Cyrus, being an idolater, did not do all the things that seemed good to God. For the phrase, "He will do all my will," is ordered entirely concerning those things that it is likely God means to will, I mean the capture of Babylon, the release of Israel from bonds and slavery, and the raising of the temple, and the building of the cities of Judea.

³⁹ Thus says the Lord God to my anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, that nations might hearken before him, and I will break the strength of kings, I will open doors before him, and cities will not be shut. I will go before him, and I will level mountains, I will break bronze doors, and I will shatter iron bars. And I will give you dark, hidden, unseen treasures; I will open them to you, so that you may know that I am the Lord God who calls you by your name, the God of Israel. For the sake of Jacob my servant, and Israel my chosen one, I will call you by my name [ἡὺλγ. your], and I will receive you. But you have not known me, that I am the Lord God, and

there is no God besides me. But you did not know me. So that those from the rising of the sun, and those from the west, may know that there is none besides me. I am the Lord God, and there is no other. I am the one who prepared light and made darkness, the one who makes peace and creates evils. I am the Lord God who does all these things.

⁴⁰ We say that the most valiant Cyrus encountered this prophecy, and was greatly pleased at the things foretold about him by God, and came to this opinion, so as to make the proclamation of the glory of God in the cities and lands under his hand, confessing clearly that He alone is God, and Lord of all, who is worshiped by the Jews. And the power of the prophecy, that is, of the prophetic predictions, is very clear, as I think. But running through each of the things said, as it is possible for what seems to be, he says [unclear] sometimes also the arduous things, let us make clear. For he names Cyrus "anointed," and not as one of the saints, to whom the name would apply, but improperly, as taken from the anointing, but because it was the custom to anoint with oil those called to kingdoms by God, even if they were not holy and revered. For we will find that the holy prophets have said to some of those brought to this, that "The Lord has anointed you as king over Israel. Cyrus, therefore, is anointed as a king; yet that he has prevailed through God, and was raised to an extraordinary glory, he gives us to understand by calling him anointed, that is, called to the kingdom by His anointing and decree. For this reason he says, that he has grasped his right hand.

⁴¹ And this would be a clear sign of help, according to what was said by the saints in the book of Psalms: "You have held my hand, my right hand; in your counsel you have guided me. And he says that he has held his right hand, so that nations might hearken before him, that is, be subjected and yield to him, and that the strength of kings might be shattered. For they say there were seven kings under the one pre-eminent king among the Babylonians. And that the cities were about to be opened automatically, and that nothing of the enemy's strength could at all hinder Cyrus as he ran through, he shows by saying: Cities will not be shut. I will go before you, and I will level mountains, that is, I will make all things bare for you, and easy to traverse, so that there will be nothing to oppose you. But even if someone should attack, and like a mountain meet your forces, this too I will level, that is, I will render it pitiable, and thrown to the ground, and weak. I will shatter bronze doors, and I will break iron bars, and I will give you hidden

treasures, I will open unseen ones to you. They say that the Babylonians, after the city was taken, buried themselves in dark caves, especially the most illustrious among them, who, fearing death, hid themselves by sinking into every cave and cleft of the rocks like snakes, but were not strong enough to escape notice.

⁴² For some people informed this [perhaps this] Cyrus about them; and he ordered torches to be lit and the terrified to be dug out from the dark recesses, and thus to be subjected to bitter punishments. But others say that he emptied the treasures of the Babylonians that were under the earth and hidden. You will therefore be so illustrious and renowned, that you may know that I am the Lord God, who calls you by your name, the God of Israel, for the sake of Jacob my servant, and Israel my chosen one. For I, the only God, have called you for this, he says, and I have honored you with such brilliant glories, so that Israel, being my servant, might be well-treated by you. I have called you, he says, and have crowned you with glories. But you have not known me that I am the Lord, and there is no God besides me, and you did not know me; it is as if he were to say clearly: You did not receive such glory from me in return for brilliant deeds of valor that look toward piety; but I have honored you, although you did not know my divinity and pre-eminence, nor were you numbered among those who worship me, but so that those from the rising of the sun and those from the west may know that there is no one besides me.

⁴³ For if I should choose, he says, to deliver my own, I will accomplish the matter even through those who do not know my glory, for the sake of those throughout all the earth knowing clearly that there is no God besides me. For I am the Lord of hosts, and Master of every nation and race; and wherever I may wish, I direct the hearts of those on earth, so that even those who are not mine appear as ministers of my will. I, therefore, am the Lord God, who prepared the light and made the darkness, that is, both day and night, or rather, light for the redeemed, but darkness for the ravaged. For the one group rejoiced, as being freed from their bonds, while the other was in inescapable calamities. I am he who makes peace, and creates evils. You will take this also in the same sense, as I just said: Peace for the redeemed, But evils, that is, things that cause suffering, or productive of all suffering, to the cruel and savage ones who had been brought against Israel. For that the matter grieved God would become clear, when He says through the voice of an

angel to the prophet Zechariah: "I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, and with great wrath I am angry against the nations that joined in the attack, for whereas I was but a little angry, they helped for evil. And indeed also to the Babylonians themselves:

⁴⁴ "I gave them into your hands, but you did not show them mercy. But that Cyrus, bold and all-powerful, and employing the cruelty befitting those who were suffering, attacked the arrogance of the Babylonians according to the will of God, we shall know when He says, through the voice of Jeremiah, as to Cyrus: "Go up against her bitterly, and against those who dwell in her, and avenge with the sword, and destroy, says the Lord, and do according to all that I command you. And in addition to these things: "The Lord has opened his treasury, and has brought forth the vessels of his wrath, for the Lord has a work in the land of the Chaldeans, for her times have come. Open her storehouses, search her as a cave, and utterly destroy her. Let there be no remnant of her, dry up all her fruits, let them go down to slaughter. Woe to them, for their day has come, and the time of their vengeance. And the prophet Isaiah himself also said somewhere, as from the person of God to the Babylonians: "Behold, I am stirring up against you the Medes, who do not reckon silver, nor have need of gold. They will shatter the bows of the young men, and they will not have mercy on your children, nor will their eyes spare your children," that is, of the Medes. Let the heaven rejoice from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;

⁴⁵ let the earth bring forth, and let mercy spring forth, and let righteousness spring up together. It is a frequent custom and practice for the divinely-inspired Scripture to conduct its discourse from things that have happened to some in particular and in part to the universal and to all, and, as from a living image of things historically done, to elevate elegantly the mind of those being instructed to more mystical contemplations. This is indeed what one can see in the verses at hand. For a long discourse has been spent in the preceding concerning Cyrus, the ruler of the Persians and Medes, how he ravaged the land of the Babylonians and took it by force, and released Israel from the servitude there and from the bonds of captivity; and founded the temple in Jerusalem; and it has been recounted also that he was stirred up against the Chaldeans, with God also urging him on, opening for him bronze gates and shattering iron bars. But this was a partial narrative. For it

was only for those of the blood of Israel to be cheered and to be released from the labors of captivity.

⁴⁶ But he now transfers the force of his thoughts to Emmanuel himself, who was revealed by God the Father to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, that he might deliver from evil those who were inextricably bound by the chains of their own sins, and having declared them free from the tyranny of the devil, might prepare those on earth to return to him, and thus through himself bring them to God the Father. For he became the mediator between God and men, and through him we have received reconciliation in one spirit to the Father, and he is our peace, according to the Scriptures; he himself built the divine, that is, his own temple, that is, the Church. For he himself presented her to himself as a pure virgin, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but rather holy and blameless. Therefore, as in an image, in Cyrus and in the things done by him, one might well perceive the divinely fitting achievements granted by God to those throughout all the earth. This then is the aim of the things set before us. But we will interpret each of the things written in detail, as is possible. Let it rejoice therefore, he says, heaven from above, that is, those who inhabit the city above, and who have the brilliant and admirable dwelling place, both angels and archangels, and those beyond them, both thrones and authorities, and rational powers, and the attendants of the highest seats.

⁴⁷ And we say that a cause of gladness has arisen even for the fathers in heaven, the return to God of those who had gone astray on the earth, I mean, through Christ the Savior of us all, the recovery of sight for the blind, and simply the salvation of the lost. For if they rejoice over one sinner who repents, how is it right to doubt that they are pleased and gladdened seeing the whole world under heaven saved? Therefore, let heaven rejoice from above, he says, and let the clouds rain down righteousness. And we say that the intelligible clouds are the powers above, through whom the exhortations of the spirit descend like rain, and drip into the hearts of the believers, according to what is clearly said elsewhere concerning the vine, about those of Israel: And I will command the clouds not to rain upon them; that is, the holy mystagogues themselves, and those who are on the earth, of whom the divine disciples were the first and first-fruits, who indeed, travelling over the whole earth, scattered the divine and sacred word, and gladdening those

everywhere, like a thirsty and barren land, and, as it were, watering them spiritually, they became for them the cause of spiritual fruitfulness.

⁴⁸ Therefore, to the Jews, inasmuch as they had become deicides, and had acted insolently toward Christ himself, the giver of spiritual streams, God commanded the clouds not to give rain, but to those who believe in him, they are commanded to let it down, and to water abundantly the hearts of those who approach him. "When the rains are sent down, let the earth spring forth, he says, and let mercy sprout, and let righteousness spring up together. For it was necessary that from the intelligible clouds, as I said, watering the world under heaven with the lessons of righteousness, as from good seeds, good fruits should appear and sprout forth. For just as when the inventor of sin ruled upon the earth, and through the wise of the world was casting down abominable and profane seeds everywhere, there was no one who did good, not even one, but all had turned aside, together they had become corrupt, and the whole earth was devoid of the fruits of goodness, since the lessons of righteousness had not yet been sent down like rain to all everywhere; so then, it was consistent for there to be fruits of piety toward God; and we say that mercy is love, which is the fulfillment of the law, with righteousness accompanying it, and certainly the evangelical kind; of which Christ himself has become for us both the arbiter and teacher. But one might say that the mercy and righteousness rising up or sprouting from the earth is our Lord Jesus Christ himself.

⁴⁹ For he has become for us mercy and righteousness from God the Father; since it is true that in him we have received mercy, and have been justified, having received the remission of our old accusations, that is, that from him we have received the righteousness that is able to bring us to the attainment of every good, through which we have also been saved. But if the earth is commanded to bring forth righteousness, let no one be troubled, considering that the Psalmist also says somewhere about God the Father, and about Emmanuel himself: "He has wrought righteousness in the midst of the earth. For Christ did not bring down his flesh to us from above and out of heaven, but rather was born according to the flesh from a woman, who was one of those on earth. Therefore, when it is said that he became the fruit and sprout of the earth, you will understand, as I said, that he was born according to the flesh from a woman taken for this ministry, although she was one of those from the earth. I am the Lord God who created you; what better thing have

I fashioned as the clay of a potter? He gives the reason, as it were, in these words, why the Son, being God by nature, emptied himself, and chose also to suffer for of us, and to deem those on earth worthy of so great a sparing love, as to give His own soul as a ransom;

⁵⁰ or rather, even to endure to take the form of a servant, and to exchange the highest glory for the lowliness of human nature. For this reason he says, that I am, must now be taken to mean, I exist and live, being true God, and Lord of hosts, and having brought all things into being, and not having made death, but rather having created all things for incorruption. Then, honoring human nature, and that of all the living creatures on earth, nothing at all could be of equal weight to it, "What better thing," he says, "have I fashioned as the potter's clay? For we were formed by Him, who took dust from the earth, and like a potter shaped it very well. But the dignity of human nature does not stop at these things, but there is also in us a greater thing, a gift of hospitality and a gift of God's artistry. For we have been made in His image and likeness, and we have been enriched with the character of His glory, intellectually flashing in our souls, even if according to the flesh we are earth and from the earth. Therefore, man is not a contemptible creature on earth, but rather one worthy of admiration; and thus God glories in him. And indeed He said to the much-suffering Job, making His own great works manifest: "Did you, taking clay of the earth, form a living creature, and place it with the power of speech upon the earth? And the divine David somewhere also sings:

⁵¹ "Lord, what is man, that you are mindful of him? or the son of man, that you visit him? Then he explains the distinction of human nature, saying: "You have made him a little lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For the all-wise Paul applied some of the preceding verses to Christ. But it might not unreasonably be said also of every man like us; for there is nothing false in them. Does the one plowing plow the earth all day long? Shall the clay say to the potter: What are you doing, since you are not working, nor do you have hands? He who says to his father: What will you beget? and to his mother: What will you bring forth in labor? The saying is deep, and overshadowed with much obscurity, but you will nevertheless go straight to what is useful, and true; but I think it is necessary to unfold briefly the purpose of the thoughts. For thus it will be

both easy to grasp and easy to accept for those who listen. Therefore the God of all redeemed Israel from Egypt, and delivered them from polytheistic error and the deceit of demons, leading him by the law through Moses into the light of the true knowledge of God. For He taught them to worship one God, and to adore one Lord;

⁵² then through types and shadows He wished to lead them up to things yet greater, and more perfect, that is, the things in Christ. For the law was a pedagogue, and it was established until the time of reformation; and this was the time of the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ, when, having put away the shadow of the legal ordinances, and the types in the letter, He introduced to those on earth the beauty of worship in spirit and in truth, nakedly and unveiled. But at this very thing the Jews were displeased, and still advocating for the types they opposed Christ, and they accused Him of annulling the Mosaic ordinances, at one time saying: "If this man were from God, He would not break the Sabbath; and at another time assailing Him with even worse words. Therefore, since they made unacceptable the benefit of the evangelical proclamations, which was leading them up to spiritual fruitfulness out of the unprofitable shadow, for this reason He says: Does the one plowing plow the earth all day long? O foolish ones, He says; for the farmer cuts up the field with plows, but he does not do this forever, nor will he spend all the time of his farming with plows. For he cuts up the field, not so that it might appear to have suffered this alone, but so that it might be receptive to what is cast into it with seeds, and be seen as fruitful.

⁵³ Therefore, having once been wild and, as it were, uncultivated, the hearts of all of us, using the law of Moses as a plow, I have prepared, and cutting them like a farmer, I make them beautiful for the casting of good seeds. But the sower of every good thing is my Son. Receive, therefore, what is from him, and do not wish to continually cherish and love the plowing law. For it plowed, as I said, not so that you might have this; for what benefit is there from this? but so that you might bring forth the fruits of truth. And since we have been intellectually re-formed in Christ, that is, we have been transformed, some from Hellenic error to the knowledge of the truth, and to a holy life, through Christ the Savior of us all; and others from circumcision to the acceptance of evangelical teachings, and to a newness of worship, no longer having the harshness of the types, but rather the spiritual having the most beautiful splendor shining forth; and it was granted to us and to them,

having been enriched with the regeneration through water and spirit in Christ; likewise, to the Jewish peoples the grace upon these very things was both rejected and unacceptable; for they acted against, as I said, the ordinances from Christ; For this reason he says: Shall the clay say to the potter: What are you doing, because you are not working, nor do you have hands? The one who says to the father: What will you beget?

⁵⁴ And to the mother: What will you bring forth in labor? For I, he says, wish to re-form you towards better things, and as it were, to re-fashion you towards what is superior through an intellectual birth, that is, of course, the one through water and spirit. But you act foolishly against my plans. Did the clay, he says, ever rebuke the potter, as not having a craftsman's hand, or as not knowing in what way it is necessary to shape what is in his hands? But did the one about to be born, he says, bring a question to his own father, whether he will beget? Then how do you, being as clay in the hands of a potter, and not knowing at all in what way the intellectual regeneration concerning you will be, not fear to be contentious? and have you not rather known to yield how these things might happen to the craftsman and father? For that the Jews were contentious with the words of the Savior, which were spoken to him concerning these things, is not at all difficult to perceive. For he said to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God. But he, foolishly leaping at things beyond understanding, stood up against him, saying: "Can a man when he is old enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? And he added to these another mystic teaching, How can these things be?

⁵⁵ What then did Christ say to these things? "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? It is necessary, therefore, to yield to what God might say. He himself knows the way of his own works, and the things crafted by him are not to be meddled with, and it is fitting for us to honor with undoubting faith the things that are beyond our understanding. But it must be known that the prophet Jeremiah was also sent to the house of the potter, to see him at work; and when the clay had fallen apart, and was re-fashioned into another vessel, God said to him: "Shall I not be able, like this potter, to do with you, O house of Israel? Behold, as the clay of the potter, so are you in my hands. And that we are intellectually re-fashioned into a holy and all-beautiful life, Paul will make clear, saying: "But we all, with unveiled face, reflecting as in a mir-

ror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit; through whom we are also born again, having a seed no longer corruptible, but through the living and abiding word of God. For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, who made the things to come: Ask me concerning my daughters, and concerning my sons, and command me concerning the works of my hands.

⁵⁶ I made the earth, and man upon it. I by my hand established the heaven. I commanded all the stars. Of the In these words, a rendering of a higher meaning is seen to have been made. And the sense of the verses is as follows: For if the clay, he says, ever rebuked the potter, and accused the hand of the one who formed it as somehow unskilled or rather slow; if anyone of those not yet being or having been born, but expected to be born, meddled with what sort of children his own father would be the begetter of; ask me, you also, who will be my sons and daughters in due time; how it might happen, and in what manner you will be sons and daughters to me. Command me also concerning the works of my hands. And 'command,' he says, instead of 'give orders,' and as to one who does not know the way of things to be done, do not hesitate to give your opinion to God. Therefore, worthy of admiration and very rightly so is the all-wise Paul for having written thus: "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? For the wisdom that is the artisan of all things needs absolutely nothing in what pertains to herself. Nor would anything concerning us be difficult or impossible for her.

⁵⁷ For she can do all things, possessing the all-powerful; or rather, she is all power. For the God of all is the Lord of hosts, and He alone knows the way of His own works. Therefore, His ways are not to be meddled with, and the things beyond mind and reason are unattainable for human thoughts, but are known to Him. And so we believe that the spiritual regeneration through water and spirit is given to those who have recognized the appearance of Christ. When Christ wished to make the grace clear to Nicodemus, He explained the way of the matter; but he, understanding nothing of what was said, declared the words of the Savior impossible. And He, having this mind, urged him to receive the wonder by faith, saying: "That which we know we speak, and that which we have seen we testify. Therefore, if we do not understand the way of the divine works, freeing our mind from all

doubt, let us say to God: I know that you can do all things, and nothing is impossible for you; let us not ask Him concerning His daughters and His sons. Nor indeed let us command, that is, give orders to Him concerning the works of His hands; but as clay to the potter let us yield ourselves to be worked as seems good to Him. For He effortlessly changes our affairs to whatever He wishes, and refashions the mind from baser things to the better, and places in us a new heart, having uprooted the first one.

⁵⁸ And indeed He said something of this sort through the voice of Ezekiel, that "I will take away their heart of stone out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh, that is, tender and pliant, that they may know me, that I am the Lord. For departing from all wickedness and defilements, then re-tuning their own mind to be willing to fulfill the good; and having received in addition to this the spiritual regeneration from water and the Spirit, we shall be sons and daughters of God. For that the all-powerful is in Him, He shows by saying: I made the earth and man upon it. And He who is the author of man's generation, who brought into being him who was not, how will He be powerless for the spiritual re-formation? And is it not clear that by His own nods, the nature of His creations would change to whatever is according to His will? What is so strange if He who established the heaven with His own hand reforges the mind of man to what seems good to Him? Indeed, we say that the all-working hand of the Father is the Son, through whom are all things and in whom are all things. For by the word of the Lord, he says, the heavens were made firm. He Himself commanded all the stars, that is, He ordained, how each of them should be. For the sun is set to rule the day, and the moon the night. But as the Psalmist says:

⁵⁹ "The sun knew its setting. The God of all made darkness, and it was night. And so again the divine David sings, and says: "Yours is the day, and yours is the night. You have prepared the sun and the moon. Therefore each of these traverses its appointed course with an orderly motion and in measured intervals of hours. Likewise also the rest of the stars according to the law given to them by God, rise in their seasons and set. To them He gave command, being God by nature and Lord, the creator of all things. I have raised him up a king with righteousness. All his ways are straight. He shall build my city, and he shall bring back the captivity of my people, not with a ransom, nor with gifts, said the Lord of Sabaoth. Some might perhaps say that these things were said about Cyrus son of Cambyses, because he both re-

leased Israel and freed them from the bonds of captivity, and founded the temple in Jerusalem; but the contemplation of what follows will establish rather the power of the thoughts, not on him rather, but on the Savior of us all, Christ, who was raised up with righteousness. For God being Lord shone upon us, as God the Father was pleased to sum up all things in him, things in the heavens and things on the earth. Therefore He was raised with a righteousness that is not adopted or learned, but being himself the very essence of righteousness.

⁶⁰ And it is written somewhere else about him: "Behold, a righteous king shall reign, and rulers shall rule with judgment. For the only-begotten Word of God was always king of all things together with God the Father, and having all creation, visible and invisible, under his feet, but the man on the earth who had leaped away from the kingdom under him, and had scorned his scepters, because he had come under the hand of the devil and was entangled in the snares of sin, He, the arbiter and giver of all righteousness, brought again under His own yokes. For all his ways are straight. And we say the ways of Christ are the divine and evangelical ordinances, through which, by going to every virtue, and adorning our heads with the boasts of piety, we come to the prize of the high calling. And indeed the ways are straight; for there is nothing crooked or perverse in them, but as it were upright and easy to drive. For it is written that, "The way of the pious has become straight, and the way of the pious has been prepared. For the path of the law was somehow rough, going through many types, and of no portable difficulty, but that through the evangelical ordinances is bare, having nothing at all that is steep or rough. Therefore the ways of Christ are straight, and he himself built the holy city, that is, the Church, in which he himself also dwells;

⁶¹ for he dwells in the saints, and we have become temples of the living God, having Christ in ourselves through participation in the Holy Spirit. Therefore He has founded the Church, being himself the foundation, upon which we also are built, as costly and precious stones for a holy temple, for a dwelling place of God in the spirit. And the Church is altogether unshaken, having Christ as the foundation, and an unshakable base; "For behold, I lay, he says, the foundations of Zion, a chosen stone, a cornerstone, precious, and he who believes in him will not be put to shame. He therefore who founded the Church, also brought back the captivity of his people. For us on the earth, being tyrannized over by both Satan and sin, he has saved and de-

livered, and has brought under his own yokes; yet not with a ransom, nor with gifts; for as his disciple says, "We were not redeemed with corruptible things, silver or gold, from our futile way of life handed down from our fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. For He gave His own blood for us, and we are not our own, but belong to Him who bought and saved us. Therefore, and very rightly, those who transgress the noble rule of the orthodox faith are accused by the voice of the saints, as denying the Master who bought them. Thus says the Lord of Sabaoth:

⁶² The labor of Egypt, and the merchandise of the Ethiopians, and the Sabceans men of high stature shall cross over to you, and shall be your slaves, and they shall follow behind you bound in manacles, and they shall worship you, and in you they shall pray. Because God is in you, and there was no God but you. For you are God, and we did not know, the God of Israel, the savior. All who oppose him shall be ashamed and confounded, and shall go away in shame. Having introduced the word concerning Christ the Savior of us all, and having announced beforehand that he will restore his people not with ransom, nor with gifts, he immediately points out those who will be called to redemption, clearly those from the nations, upon whom Christ is seen to have shone especially. and yet he says clearly; "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But to them first the divine and evangelical light flashed. But since, as it is written, the beloved Israel grew fat, and grew thick, and kicked (for they killed the author of life); for this very reason and very fittingly Christ shone upon the flocks of the nations, and this very thing we shall find present in the considerations of the preceding texts. And he names the most superstitious of the nations, so that the power of the one calling to repentance might be marveled at.

⁶³ For just as the skill of those who know how to heal is praised most of all, when they are able to free from their afflictions some who are suffering from desperate illnesses, using their own experiences at the opportune time; so also God makes His own transcendent glory more manifest, when he persuades some of those who have strayed too far, and have been brought down to the very lowest depth of depravity and impiety, to swim up and return to the desire for virtue, and to the rejection of evil, and as it were to the clothing of what is praiseworthy. The Egyptians, therefore, and the marketplaces of the Ethiopians, that is, the cities of the Thebans, whose neighbors and

borderers are the so-called Sabeans, that is, the nations of the Ethiopians, or rather of the Indians (having perhaps received the name from Saba who at times ruled their country and land), have grown weary, he says; but the phrase, They have grown weary, must be understood in two ways: for either it means to show that they have grown intolerably weary, during the time of their wandering, yoked to the cruel tyrant Satan, and serving the flocks of demons who demand sacrifices, and even their own offspring, I mean both sons and daughters; or that formerly they were terrible and unbreakable, and as it were champions of the ancient deceit, and using all their strength to cling vigorously to the Hellenic impiety set before them.

⁶⁴ But when Christ shone forth, and sent the true light into the hearts of all, and rose like a spiritual morning star, they grew weary, that is, they have not remained resistant, as before, but have relaxed, as it were, their former intensity, yielding the victory to the proclamations about him, and the word concerning these things was in no way proved false. For as the all-wise Paul writes: "Where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more. For the land of the Egyptians is seen to be full of venerable and holy churches. Altars everywhere and flocks of monks, and swarms of virgins, and the labors of asceticism with much gladness and a race toward virtue, and much zeal, both vigorous and not tolerating being cut off, and the worship of [or, the] Christ extends even to the Sabeans themselves, that is, the Indian nations. For it is possible, it is possible to see among them also as many things as in Egypt, and in the marketplaces of Ethiopia, that is, in the land of the Thebans. These Egyptians, therefore, he says, and the Sabeans, being men of high stature, that is, conspicuous, and most well-known to those everywhere, and unknown to no one that they are outstandingly worshipers of demons, and champions of diabolical inventions, will cross over to you, that is, having abandoned their former deceit, and having leaped away from the foundations of perdition, they will come to you, and will be your slaves, and of your evidently ministers of His wills.

⁶⁵ For this is what the name of servitude signifies when applied to God. They will follow behind you bound in handcuffs. For they will walk, he says, in your footsteps, guided by the evangelical laws in each of their actions, and they will travel the path of the exceptional life bound in handcuffs, that is, by the bonds of love, and the chains of ineffable love for God, so as to be able to say: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, or distress,

or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? These will worship you, he says, and in you they will pray, for God is in you, and there is no God except you. For you are God, and we did not know, the God of Israel, a savior. For to Christ, the Savior of all, every knee bows, and every tongue confesses, and to him comes every end of prayer. For in Christ we ask for our requests from God the Father, and in him we pray, confessing that God is also in him, and there is no God except him. For so he taught us to think, saying to the divine disciple (this was Philip): "Have I been with you for so long, and you have not known me, Philip? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? He who has seen me has seen the Father. I and the Father are one.

⁶⁶ Therefore, 'God is in you,' and 'There is no God except you,' has the same force as, "And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. But if someone should wish to skillfully apply the force of what has been said to the person of Christ alone, we say that according to the voice of the divine Paul, in Christ all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. And He Himself was God, not divided into two sons, but as the Word possessing His own flesh, in which He is also said to have dwelt. Therefore, even in this He is understood as God, just as a soul in a human body; but nevertheless, God is one Son. Indeed, it must be known that we say the flesh of the Lord was ensouled with a rational soul. They confess, therefore, that 'And God is in you, and there is no God except you.' For you are God, and we did not know, the God of Israel, a savior. This is the voice of those repenting, and of those now turning to the light from deceit and darkness, and who have come to the knowledge of the truth, and have recognized the one who is by nature and truly God, and the creator and Lord of all. Indeed, they name as the Savior of Israel the one who became human and was incarnate, believing him to be that very one who was long ago a helper to those of Israel.

⁶⁷ That is, you will understand Israel not at all as only according to the flesh, but also as anyone else who is able to see God. For Israel is interpreted as 'a mind seeing God.' And he sees God with the eyes of the mind, the one who sees the character of God the Father, that is, the Son, at whom, he says, those who oppose him will be put to shame, and will also go away in shame. For those who did not accept faith in him, but fought against God, as indeed the Jews also did, will all be put to shame, defeated by the invincible hand,

yet in no way harming his glory, but drawing down destruction on their own heads, they will be for shame and reproach. For they will be a spectacle for all flesh, according to the voice of the prophet. Be ye renewed unto me, O islands. Israel is saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation. They shall not be ashamed, nor shall they be confounded unto the age, says the Lord Almighty. He again broadens the prophecy of the calling and conversion of the nations; and he does not stop only at the Egyptians, the merchants of Ethiopia, and the Sabaeans themselves; but indeed, that those who are throughout all the earth will be called, and there will be a showing forth of holy Churches everywhere, he has declared in these things.

⁶⁸ For the all-powerful word of God addressed the Churches, as it were, to be renewed to him, which indeed he deigns to call islands. For just as the islands in this sea are always struck by the assaults of the waves, yet remain unshaken, and also receive ships when they are in danger, and save them from the waves, offering them a waveless bay; so the Churches of Christ, lie as it were in the very midst of life's turmoil and confusion, and they endure innumerable temptations, yet they have in Christ that which is unshakable. They house those fleeing the useless and empty confusion of the affairs of this world, and those who are, as it were, storm-tossed by both Satan and sin. They must therefore be compared to islands. For this is what the divine word intends in these things. Be renewed therefore to me, he says, O islands. Indeed, the name of the Church signifies the multitude of those who have believed in Christ, both priests and laity, shepherds and teachers, and those yoked under their authority, but all these were renewed in Christ, clearly at the times when God, being Lord, shone upon us. For then, then we were renewed to newness of life, of morals and of ways, and also of worship. For we have cast off the oldness that comes from sin, and we have become a new creation in Christ, being instructed by his laws, towards a glorious and desirable way of life.

⁶⁹ And indeed the all-wise Paul writes to those called through faith and says, at one time, that "Put off the old man, with his passions and desires, and put on the new, who is being renewed in the image of his creator; and at another time, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. And he says that our old man has been crucified with him, so that we may put on the new through the way of life and life

in Christ. We are renewed in the manner of worship, those who are of the Jewish orders, leaving behind shadows and types. For they will no longer use sacrifices of oxen and incense, but spiritual, and immaterial, and as it were in the order of the most well-ordered incenses; while those drawn from the multitude of the nations will be transferred to better things, and incomparably superior. For they will no longer have the ancient darkness in their mind, but having welcomed the divine and intelligible light, they will be holy and true worshippers. For they will cease from worshipping creation with deaf and senseless materials;

70 and they will abstain from divination and sorcery, and will cleanse the harshness of Greek buffoonery and the deceit of demons, and in short, having abandoned the more shameful things, and having turned away from abominable pursuits, they will be in the beauty of all virtue, and knowledgeable in the doctrines of truth. Renewal, therefore, are the things concerning us. For the things in Christ are a new creation. Indeed, the God of all promises all according to the flesh, I mean, and him who is numbered among the children of Abraham by promise ("For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel, but the children of the promise, these are counted as children"), to save with an eternal salvation, to be far from shame and disgrace, and these things perpetually. For having stripped off in Christ profane sin and having been freed from the yoke of the devil's greed, and along with these casting off corruption, and having put on incorruptibility, in these things we will be forever. For sin will no longer dance over us; nor will Satan subject us again to his former greeds; and the power of death will also depart completely in the age to come, being trodden down in Christ, through whom and with whom to the Father be glory and power with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE 24

1 Thus says the Lord who made heaven, he who established the earth, and made it, he set its boundaries. He did not make it in vain, but to be inhabited. I am the Lord, and there is no other. I have not spoken in secret, nor in a dark place of the earth. I did not say to the seed of Jacob, Seek in vain. I am the Lord who speaks righteousness, and announcing truth. Having proclaimed beforehand the arrival of our Savior of all, Christ, and having marked out the season of salvation, in which all, having abandoned the darkness of ancient ignorance, will cross over to the light of the true know-

ledge of God, he makes a necessary exhortation in these things to both Jews and Greeks adding the clear things through which they will know very plainly, that he himself is God and creator of all things, and that there is no other besides him. For this reason he says: Thus says the Lord, and not simply Lord, for there are very many both in heaven and on earth, who have received the name by misuse; but he himself who is by nature and in truth that which he is also called, and as one who has his glory from his accomplishments, not a counterfeit one. For this, he says, is the Lord who made the heaven; a mighty thing for a demonstration of the highest renown and of all-powerful preeminence, to make the heaven and establish the earth, and to found it.

2 For he himself defined it, that is, what was once hidden in the abysses, invisible and unformed, he rendered visible and wrought. For he defined it; for he said according to the faith of the books of Moses: "Let the water be gathered together into one collection, and let the dry land appear. So then, it appeared out of the waters, and being submerged and entirely inactive, he set it apart in its place, placing bolts and gates upon the abysses, and separating it very well from the waters. That he produced it usefully and necessarily for this purpose, not that it might only be seen, but that it might have inhabitants—clearly those formed from it, just as, indeed, he also previously clarified concerning heaven, that it has the holy angels, saying: He did not make it in vain, but to be inhabited. Therefore it was shown to be a vehicle and as a kind of house for those who tread upon it, that is, for us. But if we were brought into existence by him, how is it not true to say that we came to be entirely for this reason, that we might worship him and him alone, and recognizing him as the creator of all things, offer up hymns of thanksgiving? I therefore am, and there is no other. For if he is the one who made the heaven, and established the earth, and did not make it in vain, but to be inhabited, what other could be thought to be God besides him?

3 Or who could equal him in power and glory? Or who at all is near or close by a little? How is not the whole nature of created things overcome by such great and all-surpassing glory, strength, and wisdom? There is no one. Therefore, he alone, and no other besides him at all, could be thought to be God by nature and in truth. But yes, someone might sometimes say: Who has known his purpose? Or who is able to say whether he ever wishes others to be crowned with the glory and title of God, or, that is, himself and himself

alone? Therefore, he makes his defense and says: I have not spoken in secret, nor in a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, "Seek vain things. Laws, he says, I ordained for them concerning these things, not speaking in a corner, nor striving to be hidden, but clearly and openly. For the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai in the form of fire; there was darkness and storm and smoke, and the piercing sound of trumpets. For all the people stood by while Moses mediated, and laws were announced by God, not urging Israel to seek something vain, that is, an idol, or, a falsely-named worship, but commandments restraining them from the contrary. For it was said to him: "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve, and you shall have no other gods besides me.

⁴ And you shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth. Therefore it has been said to him; and the phrase, I am the Lord, is like as if he should say, and not once but many times, that I alone am God, and Lord of all, speaking righteousness and announcing truth; and by righteousness, as I think, he means the law; for the law is the arbiter of righteousness; but by truth, the teachings of Christ. There is in it but the formation of the truth is in the law, and the mystery of Christ is hidden in the shadows. For Moses wrote about him. Therefore, in speaking of righteousness, the power of truth is also announced with it, if indeed it is true that the law was a shadow, but now in it is the formation of the truth. Be gathered, and come, take counsel together, you who are saved from the nations. They did not know, those who carry the wood, their carved image, and who pray as to gods, who do not save. The apostate dragon indeed beguiled those on earth from their relative intimacy with God, and having stripped them of the true knowledge of God, he scattered them into deceit, and polytheistic error, and by establishing them in the ways of wickedness, he rendered the net of his own perversity hard to escape and indelible for them.

⁵ But Emmanuel appeared, who leads forth those who are bound in manliness, and he endured death in the flesh for our sake, so that, as the evangelist says, he might gather into one the scattered children of God. For what Satan scattered, leaping on them like a cruel and savage wolf, these things Christ, the good shepherd, who laid down his own soul for the sheep, gathered together. Therefore he indicates this very thing, saying: Be

gathered, that is, be bound together by one faith, and unanimity. Be gathered to the God who rules over all through sanctification and righteousness; come near, you who are still far off and separated by sin, and by being brought into a most shameful and abominable disposition of mind. But we say that those who have been led astray have departed from God, who will also be near through faith in Christ. For the all-wise Paul addressed those who ran to this: "But now you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. And again concerning him, that "Coming, he preached peace to us who were far off, and to those who were near. For this reason it was said through the holy prophets to those still far off: "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Come then, he says, and take counsel together, you who are saved from the nations.

6 But, Take counsel, he says, instead of, Let the things pertaining to the return to God be done by you, not without counsel, or unadvisedly, but with admirable prudence. For through faith to advance to understanding, if indeed there is no doubt that having condemned the bad counsel in being led astray, and turning away from the harm of the ancient deceit, we run swiftly to God, receiving the light of the true knowledge of God, and incomparably casting our vote from a right mind for the better things. Take counsel then, that is, be prudent, you who are saved from the nations. For he commands those who are full of foolishness to depart to a prudent mind, an admirable and irreproachable understanding, through which one might perceive the power and glory of the God who rules over all. But they did not know this, he says, that is, they might be considered completely witless, and full of the utmost lack of understanding. Those who carry the wood, their carved image. And "carrying" in these things, you will understand as "exalting," so as to attach to it the glory befitting God, and to this wood that was carved by them. Then praying as to gods, who do not save. Ignorant therefore, and not far from those they worship in their lack of sensation, are those who worship their own crafts, and seek help from senseless matter, and assign the title of God to things made and crafted by their own hands.

7 Let them hear the lyre of the Psalmist mocking them and crying out: "May those who make them become like them, and all who trust in them. If they will declare, let them draw near, that they may know together, who made these things heard from the beginning. Then it was announced to you: I am God, and there is no other besides me; a just God and a Savior there is

none besides me. Turn to me, and you will be saved, you who are from the end of the earth. Setting terrible and various snares for those on the earth, and digging the pits of destruction, the sinners demons, both unholily plundering the glory of divinity, and binding it upon their own heads, the all-daring ones were zealous to establish the workshops of their own deceit. And pretending to know the future, and to be able to announce it to those willing to learn, they have indeed continued to plunder for a time. Indeed, oracles throughout countries and cities, and false prophecies were everywhere, and divinations by omens, and a multitude of impostors speaking from their own heart, according to what is written, oracle-mongers, and necromancers, and those who speak from the earth, and ventriloquists and diviners by barley meal, and in short the world was filled with liars and impostors. Therefore, there was among them no true knowledge of future things, but falsehoods, and buffoonery and deceit, and guile, and nothing else. For this reason, the God of all says:

§ If they will declare, let them draw near, that they may know together. For if they are able, he says, to announce, let them come that they may know together, so that in person all gathered into one (for there were, as I said, oracles in many places in part. And different people visited in different ways, and honored the lying unclean demons); but if they are truly able to announce, he says, all coming together at the same time, let them know something of the future, who made these things heard from the beginning. For who of the superstitious, or of their prophets, or of those who attend the oracles, ever knew and announced that in due time Christ would shine upon the world, and that the cloud of deceit will be gone, and the darkness of falsely named knowledge will be scattered, and there will shine upon those on the earth, as an intelligible morning star, as dawn and day, Christ as the sun of righteousness? But neither, he says, did the demons who feign to have knowledge of the future announce these things from the beginning, nor indeed the ministers of their falsehood. For no one of the poets or prose-writers among the Greeks mentioned such splendid matters. Who then has made these things heard from the beginning? Then it was also announced to you, that is, from the beginning. But it was announced not by any other, but rather by me who knows all things, and has announced them before they came to pass.

9 For I have spoken them to you both through Moses and the holy prophets, who conveyed the words from me to you. Therefore I am, he says, God, and there is no other besides me. And I am just, and a savior. For unjust indeed are the pestilent demons, as they are also destroyers, and bloodthirsty, and pushing those upon the earth into destruction. Just and a savior is the God of all, helping the wronged, and releasing from bonds those who have been seized, and bound tight with chains of sins, and enlightening those in darkness, strengthening the weak, and raising up the fallen, and turning back the wandering. For this reason, he says: Turn to me, and you will be saved, you who are at the end of the earth. In these things one might see very well the magnitude of the grace through Christ, extending to all who are on the earth. For confined indeed was the grace and salvation through Moses, going to one nation, Israel; but long, as it were, and running to the ends of the earth is that through Christ. For the whole earth has been caught in a net for salvation and life through faith in him. I am God, and there is no other. I swear by myself; unless righteousness shall go forth from my mouth, my words will not be turned back; that to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue will swear by God, saying: Righteousness and glory will come to him.

10 With the falsely named worship having been destroyed, it was necessary for the truth to come into the midst, and with the darkness, as it were, having been driven away, for the light to shine around. For this reason, and very fittingly, after this beneficial and profitable exhortation, he makes his own glory manifest. For I am God, he says, and there is no other. Then he foretells the power of the things expected to be through Christ, confirming it by an oath, that in every way and altogether the righteousness spoken through him, this is, that which in Christ through faith was graciously given to those throughout all under heaven, and his words, that is, the evangelical and saving proclamation, will in every way and entirely shine forth in due time. For, I think, this very thing makes clear the phrase, They will not turn back. For when God promises, and says that something will in every way and entirely be, who is able to hinder? So then he swears by himself. For men indeed swear by the greater, and for them an oath is for confirmation, an end of all dispute. But God, who is beyond all things and raised above others by incomparable excellences, swears by himself. For it was not possible to swear by another, since he himself is, as I said, the highest of all, and that which stands

at the limit, both in nature and glory. What then was promised? Salvation, and the conversion of every nation upon the earth.

¹¹ For to me, he says, every knee will bow, and every tongue will swear to God. But the phrase, "a knee will bow to God," and that his name is to be sworn by all, what else could it be understood to be except the conversion of all, and full knowledge, and a declaration of their relationship to him? For those who through conversion come to God completely refrain from bowing the knee to unclean spirits, and from having them on their tongue as gods (for they will not swear by anything as by God), but knowing the one who is by nature, and truly is, they submit their neck to his yokes, and bow the knee making their prayers, and if they should somehow choose to swear truly, they will make mention of him and him alone, saying, that All righteousness and all glory shall come to him, that is, it is fitting for him and him alone. For it is necessary that the best of all works, and everything in words that results in the glory of God, that this be attributed by us to him alone. All who separate themselves from the Lord shall be ashamed; they shall be justified, and in God all the seed of the sons of Israel shall be glorified. The saying is true in both respects, and the divine word would not be proved false. For it will certainly follow those who wish to depart from their relationship with God, a spiritual one, of course, that they must be put to shame;

¹² while for those who love him from a sincere heart, it is to receive glory in him and to be distinguished in righteousness. And these would not be in any way at all Israel according to the flesh, but rather the seed of the sons of Israel. But making the meaning of the preceding things clearer, we say this. For the only-begotten Word of God shone forth to those on the earth, in a form like ours, that is, having become flesh, according to the Scriptures; and he came proclaiming release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, setting at liberty those who are oppressed, and healing the broken-hearted, and proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord. But although it was necessary for the Jews especially to bring faith to him, since they indeed had the law as a tutor and the holy prophets as mystagogues, this they have not done, but they leapt away from him, as it were, and have become full of confusion, having the sin that puts them to shame irremovably. Therefore it is true that, All who separate themselves from the Lord shall be ashamed. For they heard him say, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. But those who have recognized his appearing

have been justified through faith, and have gained a long and unending glory, having been shown to be partakers of the Holy Spirit, and having been enriched with the splendid dignity of adoption as sons.

¹³For he gave them authority to become children of God, and besides this, they have a worthy and unassailable hope; for they will inherit the kingdom of heaven. And these might be understood as the seed of the sons of Israel. And by 'sons of Israel' in this context we say the holy apostles and evangelists are named; for they were from the Jews according to the flesh. And their sons are those called through them to the knowledge of Christ. At any rate, the divine Paul addressed those who had believed through him: "For even if you might have ten thousand tutors in the Lord, but not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus through the Gospel I begot you. And we find in many places also other of the holy apostles, calling 'little children' those who through them have been drawn into the net for the salvation that is in Christ. Bel has fallen, Dagon is shattered, their carved images have become as beasts and cattle. Somehow there always follow the prophecies, which were made through the holy prophets concerning the Savior of us all, Christ, necessary predictions of the things accomplished by Him, that is, of the good things set right for the world. And the most excellent achievement of all is the removal of Satan from the midst, and the profane and murderous multitude.

¹⁴Therefore, when He shone upon the world, the long-standing, great and accursed mist of sin was dispelled, which Satan had instilled in the minds of all, so that they might not see the light of truth. And the tyranny of the demons has ceased, and the games of idolatry. Therefore, necessarily, as I said, the discourse concerning these things was introduced to us, and it says that Bel has fallen. This is an idol especially of the Babylonians, but honored also in other cities. And they say that Bel is the Kronos of whom the atheistic Greeks tell myths, whom they also say is cruel and bloodthirsty, and a lover of manslaughter. For it has been recorded in Greek histories that on one day some people sacrificed three hundred foreigners to him, celebrating a festival that was foul and hateful to God and men. And indeed the God of all, being indignant at such terrible impieties, says somewhere through one of the holy prophets to those accustomed to do such things: Sacrifice men; for the calves have run out. For he says that the unclean demons have arrived at such a point of misanthropy and savagery as to thirst insatiably for human

blood, and to delight in the destruction of those who are captured. For perhaps a lowing calf upon the altar does not seem pleasing to them, nor incense and sheep; but they yearn more for the slaughter of men.

¹⁵ Therefore, he says, Bel has fallen, that is, he has been cast down, and the strength of the demon has fallen; so that henceforth, casting off the yoke from their wickedness, those who were once held fast by his depravities might run to God with a free and uncoerced mind. And Dagon was also shattered. This too is an object of worship for those who inhabit the coast, which is also bordering on Judea, I mean of the Ascalonites and the Gazans, whom the divine Scripture in many places names Philistines or foreigners. And very well does he say, 'He was shattered,' as if from what had happened to him at times, the prophet now also conducts his discourse about him. For we have read in the books of the Kingdoms that the foreigners, once having taken the divine ark, brought it into the house of Dagon; then the worshippers of the demon, entering, saw the idol fallen before the ark, and having undergone a shattering so as to have lost its hands and feet, and head. Therefore, very elegantly, as if from what had happened at times, he says, 'He was shattered.' And we say that the prophetic word signifies to us the abolition of idolatry, by naming in part both Bel and Dagon. For it was not possible to make mention of all the idols on the earth, but as from a part he again sets forth concerning the whole.

¹⁶ Lift them up, bound, as a burden for one weary, and hungry, and faint, not being strong at the same time; they will not be able to be saved from war; and they themselves, as captives, have been shamed. In these things the word again shows us the uselessness and vanity of things made by hand, and from the games performed in their honor, it reveals that the worship of those who are led astray is full of shame. For they used to celebrate for the demons festivals that were at times frigid and ridiculous; then carrying the statues out of the shrines, and some of the priests placing them upon themselves went about in the public squares, shaking and as if drunk as though bearing a burden- excessively, and wherever that which they wished to carry might become heavy, there they would somehow even push together, pretending not to be able to bear the burden. But the senseless and vulgar crowd, and women bereft of sense, would applaud with acclamations, seeing the lifeless matter formed into the shape of a man or perhaps a woman, and they thought in truth that what was being carried placed an unbearable

weight on those who had set it on their shoulders. Therefore, in these things the divine Word laughs at the greatness of Hellenic insensibility, and says concerning the statues in the shrines, which they senselessly wished to worship:

17 Lift them up, bound, as a burden for one who is weary, and for one who is faint with hunger, being at once unable. For these things, as I said, some of the priests would pretend while carrying about the handmade things. How then will the inactivity of the worshiped things be known? One might perceive it from many other things. For wood or stone or some other matter is the origin of such things. But since it is necessary to show this from the most useful examples, it brings them to the memory of their future captivity, that under the Babylonians, I say, which indeed they also suffered, since, having abandoned the need to fulfill the law and to worship the one God who is by nature, they went off to every one of the most discordant things, and have worshiped the works of their own hands; and besides this, they have sacrificed also to the host of heaven, as it is written. From where, then, will the inactivity of the supposed gods be seen? They will not be able, he says, to be saved from war, but they themselves were led away captive. For when a city or country is captured, if there are indeed any gods covered with gold and silver among them, they are taken first of all by the conquerors, who it was fitting, if they were gods, to also help their own worshipers, and to show them to be stronger than the hand of the enemies.

18 What then does a carved image profit, that they have carved it, according to the prophet's word, they have made it a molten image, a false fantasy, which are able to help neither themselves, nor indeed others? For how could any such thing come from wood and stone? Hear me, O house of Jacob, and the remnant of Israel, who are carried from the womb, and taught from childhood even to old age. I am, until you grow old. I am. I bear you. I have made, and I will bear; I will take up, and I will save you. Again the discourse is most artfully arranged, and proceeds in a fitting order, and according to a good plan. For since he made mention of the war, in which it happened that a countless multitude of men and women died, and the land of the Jews became very sparsely populated, for this reason he speaks as to one house, as to a remnant, and a leftover from barbaric cruelty: Hear me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of Israel. And the discourse would have benefited the hearers not a little, if they had been shrewd, and examiners of useful things.

For surely one might easily have also passed by the grim and unbearable things if they were foretold, having fled the causes of their assault; but when they have arrived and, as it were, leaped upon him, how could he ward them off?

¹⁹ He therefore calls them the remnant, all but crying out that they will be consumed by the war, and will be prey to barbaric cruelty, unless they cease from such outlandish practices. But that stubbornness is in the souls of the Jews, and the study of the law has become for them an unprofitable thing, he shows by saying: Who are carried from the womb, and taught from childhood even to old age. For from infancy and up to old age, though studying the sacred and divine Scriptures, they have benefited nothing; but as if they had been deemed worthy of no admonition at all, they went away to apostasy from God. But even if a long time was spent by you, he says, in unprofitable studies, and seeing that you are most ignorant, I will not cease from my innate gentleness; and I make myself thus clear to you by saying: I am, that is, I live and I exist; not as having a beginning of generation or knowing how to come to an end, but is always the same and unchanging, and until you grow old, I will be the same. For old age does not come upon me as upon you, but I am living and all-powerful. And I, for my part, brought upon you the calamities of war with a holy decree, calling to justice those who had insulted my glory. But I will relent, that is, I will release, and through amnesty I will reclaim you who have toiled.

²⁰ I will take you up and save you. For I who gave you into the hands of enemies will again make you my own, and I will release you from the bonds of captivity. Therefore, as with a multifaceted medicine, he heals the hearts of those who have acted insolently toward him, and from too much ignorance have slipped into what is unlawful, partly with threats, and partly also with good promises. For his purpose is to save that which was lost, and to snatch that which is wandering from the hands of the devil. To whom have you likened me? Devise, you who are wandering, who contribute gold from a purse, and silver in a balance; they will set it on the scales, and having hired a goldsmith they made handmade things, and bowing down they worshiped it. They lift it on their shoulders, and will go. And if they put it in its place, it will remain, it shall not be moved; and whoever shall cry to it, it shall not hear, from evils it shall not save him. He convicts the worshipers of idols of being insolent and foolish, and of sinning against the divine and highest

nature itself. For they bring down, as far as it depends on them, the high excellence of its inherent glory to things unfitting, and bring it down to lifeless matter, bestowing it on their own handiworks, then piously declaring their own heads subject to the utmost penalties.

²¹ To whom then have you likened me, he says, who by nature am distinct from all things, and raised high with incomparable superiorities, and beyond every created thing, the creator of all things, at once both king and Lord? And it is likely, I suppose, that God also wishes to make something else clear, saying to those who have gone astray: To whom have you likened me? See, contrive something, you who have gone astray. For, he says, by contributing gold and silver, then hiring a goldsmith, they fashion the form of either a man, or a woman, or rather a beast, so to speak, or a domestic animal, and the name God is immediately given by them to the thing fashioned. Understand, therefore, he says, to what have you likened me? For it is either to a man or a woman, or even to beasts or irrational animals. Then how is this matter not beyond all impiety? Devise something for a defense; absolve your sins. But you would not find the helpful argument for this. For bringing down the nature that is above all things to beasts and cattle, what arguments then will you use that are sufficient for being able to escape the accusations? And that the making of idols attempts to teach nothing other than vulgarity of thoughts; for this reason he also speaks very sparsely.

²² For they collect from a purse, he says, silver and gold, and will place it on a balance, on an equally measured scale, with each one perhaps contributing, so that, as is likely, the thing being crafted might belong more to the one contributing more. And someone might say, I think, that if they were in need of money, they would not have had a god at all, and if the world under heaven did not abound in craftsmen, there would be no one at all who was worshiped by them. And they have come to such a point of ignorance and foolish thoughts, that though they themselves pre-existed their own gods, they honor those who were born late, and they themselves create those who should rather be seen as creators; and being lords of the matter, and having taken it for necessary use, they ask to be saved by it. They will be burden-bearers, carrying their gods on their shoulders; they see that they are immobile, and carried off wherever someone might choose, and to them they bring their prayers. Therefore, when you see them having received the prayer, then expect that help will come. But if you see that they are both

senseless and immobile, then what benefit do you expect from them? Suffering from the same malady, you are not aware. For you have fallen into the utmost insensibility. Remember these things, and Groan; repent, you who have gone astray.

²³ Return in your heart, and remember the former things from of old, that I am God, and there is none besides me; declaring beforehand the last things before they happen, and at once they were accomplished. And I said: All my counsel shall stand, and all that I have purposed, I will do, calling a bird from the east, and from a land far off. Concerning what I have purposed, I have spoken, and I have brought it, I have created, and I have made it. I brought him, and made his way prosperous. Seeing them held fast by deceit and darkness and terrible ignorance, God again pities them, and commands them to go backward, as it were, applying the accurate eye of the mind to the facts, so that having learned in what evil they are, they might change their mooring to better things, and having unending memories of the words spoken to them, they might choose to repent, and not doing this simply from the tongue only, but from the heart itself. For the manner of such a repentance would be most praiseworthy and true. Therefore, that the making of idols is a ridiculous thing, he commands them to know from what he has already said before. But that he himself is God of all, he persuades them to understand from the most God-befitting dignities inherent in him by nature.

²⁴ For I am he says, the one who has the knowledge of all things, both announcing a thing before it happens, and bringing what has been promised to fulfillment. And I affirm this, that whatever I have purposed has been accomplished, and nothing of what seems good to me would ever fail. And this is a very great thing for the demonstration of invincible and God-befitting strength. For men, although they have obtained the highest honors and possess dynasties to the end, propose some goal, and plan to accomplish something, but what they have considered does not in every way and entirely go smoothly for them. For very many things fall in between, and their frustration is hard to meet; But God of all things, if he should wish to do something, what could stand against it, and oppose it? For what the holy God wills, who will scatter? And his high hand, who will turn back? Therefore, for a proof that he is God by nature and truly, it might be said reasonably by him, 'All my counsel shall stand, and all that I have purposed, I will do. Then

to this he says, ‘Calling a bird from the east, and from a land far off concerning what I have purposed’; and to this will also follow, ‘I am. Now, the bird called from the east, and from a land far off, we say is the Babylonian, who, having burned the whole land of the Jews, took Jerusalem and shook the temple in it;

²⁵ then having roused very many of both the common people and the notable ones, he carried them away from the land that bore them, and deposited them in the country and land of the Persians, casting upon them the hard and unbearable yoke of captivity. And this will be clear to you from what God said to the blessed prophet Ezekiel. It is as follows: “And the word of the Lord came to me, saying: Son of man, relate a tale, and speak a parable to the house of Israel, and you shall say: Thus says the Lord Adonai: The great eagle, long in its expanse, full of claws, whose tale is to enter into Lebanon, and took the choice parts of the cedar, nipped off the tips of its tenderness, and brought them into the land of Canaan, he set them in a walled city, and he took from the seed of the land, and gave it as a plant in the field, by much water, he set it to be watched over, and it became a weak vine, and small in size so that its branches would appear upon it, and its roots were underneath its earth. And it became a vine and made shoots, and stretched out its climbing branches. These things, then, God said to the blessed prophet Ezekiel. But since the word was hard to grasp, and the force of the thoughts not very clear to the hearers, he himself again makes it plain, saying: “Say then to the provoking house of Israel:

²⁶ Do you not know what these things are that I said. When the king comes of Babylon against Jerusalem, and he will take its king, and its rulers, and will lead them to him in Babylon. And he will take from the seed of the kingdom, and will make a covenant with him, and will bring him into a curse, and he will take the leaders of the land that the kingdom might become weak, and that it might not be lifted up at all to keep his covenant, and to establish it. For as we read in the book of Kings, after the holy city was taken, the Babylonian carried off Zedekiah as a captive, and some of the notables bound with him, to the land of the Chaldeans; and these are the choice parts of the cedar. I am, therefore, he says, the one who calls a bird from the east. Concerning what I have planned, I have spoken and I have brought it to pass, I have not been mistaken, he says. For I announced beforehand that it would come in its time, but what was foretold has been

brought to completion. I have created, that is, I have brought about evils, that is to say, afflictions, and the calamities of war for those who dishonored my glory, and have turned to lifeless idols. And I have done it, I have led him, and I have made his way prosperous.

²⁷ For it was not the work of his hand to overcome Israel, if indeed God was its helper. But I myself, saving and presiding, have prospered his way, that he might bring to judgment those who thought little of piety toward him, or rather who utterly rebelled, so as to assign to wood and stones the honor and glory most fitting for him and him alone. Hear me, you who have lost your heart, who are far from righteousness. I have brought near my righteousness, and the salvation from me I will not delay. I have given salvation in Zion to Israel for a glorification. Behold, then, again he promises salvation to them, and does not allow them to despair, lest somehow, being overcome by despondency beyond measure, they should become far from the hope that they will be saved, having chosen to repent. Heartless, then, are those who wander, and the word against them is true. For with what mind do they themselves create the ones they worship, assigning reverence to wood and stones, asking from them to be saved? Nevertheless, God endures even so, and rather pities those who have been deceived, and has mercy on those who have fallen, and with good promises he restores them to understanding, and commands them to become sober, and though they are far off and separated from righteousness, that is, from God, he commands them to come to him.

²⁸ And it seems that with the promises of partial salvation, he also interweaves the declaration of that which is universal and most general. For he saved from the land of the Chaldeans those who were carried off to it as captives, and one might say, I think, that this is a partial assistance, but the most general is that through Christ, which he had long ago promised to reveal not long after. For I have brought near, he says, my righteousness, and the salvation from me I will not delay. And we say that this is like, "Yet a little while, and he who is coming will come, and will not delay. And salvation has been given in Zion to Israel for a glorification. And in these things he names the spiritual Zion, that is, the Church of Christ, in which we all who belong to the spiritual Israel receive his salvation in glory. For just as a Jew is not one according to the flesh only, but if someone has also been deemed worthy of the circumcision in the spirit; so also Israel is not only

those who have come from the blood of Israel, but also all who have had a mind that sees God, who also have been appointed as children, and according to the promise of Abraham, and we say that these are the truer Israel. Come down, sit on the ground, virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground [there is no throne;

²⁹ enter into the darkness], daughter of the Chaldeans, for you shall no longer be called tender and delicate. Take the millstone, grind meal, uncover your veil, expose your gray hairs, bare your legs, cross the rivers. Your shame will be uncovered; your reproaches will appear. I will take what is just from you. Having said that I have given salvation to Israel for a glorification, and that from the having promised them redemption from captivity, he then remembers and clearly narrates, in what way she was captured and has been plundered, and as if on a tablet he depicts the condition of the captives. For just as he had previously announced to the land of the Jews the devastation from the war of the Babylonians, going through each detail meticulously, and saying: "Because the daughters of Zion were exalted, and walked with a high neck, and with winks of their eyes, and in the gait of their feet, at once dragging their tunics, and at once playing with their feet, and God will humble the ruling daughters of Zion; and the Lord will reveal their form in that day, and the Lord will take away the glory of their clothing, and their ornaments, and their braided hair, and the fringes," and the things that follow these; then he adds to these: "And instead of a sweet smell there will be dust, and instead of a girdle you will be girded with a rope, and instead of the golden ornament of the head you will have baldness because of your works;

³⁰ and instead of the purple-bordered tunic you will gird yourself with sackcloth; so also now what the daughters of the Babylonians, that is, their inhabitants, will suffer, with the Persians and Medes dragging them about, he shows, saying: Come down, sit upon the ground, which would imply, be humbled, although long grievously sick with arrogance. Come down, therefore, from the mountain and high mindset to humility, from glory to dishonor, from luxury to misery, from immeasurable wealth to utter poverty, from freedom to slavery, and in a word from all the sweetest things to the worse and most wretched. Sit in darkness, that is, the darkness from incurable calamity. For a sharp grief poured over the soul enslaves the mind, and the assault of unexpected toils, and fear falling like a burden. And that the time of her ancient prosperity has passed, he shows by saying: No longer shall

you be called delicate and luxurious. For the women of the Chaldeans, it is not unlikely, had a luxurious lifestyle, and were lovers of adornment, and held the art of hairdressing in no small account; because they say that even their military experts prided themselves on gold and stones, and hastened to distinguish themselves with no unremarkable adornment, even in battles themselves. You will no longer be called luxurious, therefore, he says, but you will rather endure, and not willingly, the misery of servitude; you will grind meal, you will be seen bare of the coverings of your head;

³¹ that is, with your hair flowing unkempt everywhere, although formerly it was bound up in various ways. Uncover your grey hairs, and this would be a clear sign that the captors have come to such cruelty as not even to spare an old woman. Hike up your lower legs, cross rivers. Your shame will be uncovered, your reproaches will appear. For those who have once fallen into captivity, and are carried away from their native land to that of the victors, must cross the intervening rivers on foot, clearly by hiking up their garments, and no longer bearing in their eyes the modesty befitting females; but as if by necessity also exposing to many the secret parts of the body. And one might say that her shame was seen and her reproaches appeared in another way, as she was captured once and for all, and came to be in abominable circumstances, although formerly she was luxurious and prided herself on unending prosperity. Then he says, that I will take what is just from you, that is, what you ought to suffer, this I will take from you. And what this is, he has foretold through another of the holy prophets, saying: "As she has done, do, I will do to her. And again: "As you have done, so shall it be to you; your recompense shall be returned upon your own head. And it is said elsewhere concerning everyone who is accustomed to sinning: "Woe to the lawless one, evil things will happen to him according to his works.

³² No longer will I deliver you to men, said the Lord Sabaoth who redeems you; the Holy One of Israel is His name. Another word is inserted in between, and as if to Israel, and God promises the things at no time under to fall into the hand of enemies, for he would pity them as having paid punishments equal to their sins against him, or rather even punished beyond this. For he said somewhere concerning it: "Priests, speak to the heart of Jerusalem, comfort her, because her humiliation is accomplished, her sin is forgiven, because she has received from the Lord's hand her sins. Therefore, He who delivered you, he says, the Lord Sabaoth, whose name is also the Holy

One of Israel, said, You shall no longer be given over to wicked and unmerciful men, meaning, of course, to those who formerly conquered, since God was angered, and left Israel destitute of compassion and love, seeing them turn to apostasy and uncontrollably proceeding to do what is forbidden by his divine laws. Sit down, contrite, enter into darkness, daughter of the Chaldeans; you shall no longer be called the Strength of a kingdom. I was provoked against my people, you defiled my inheritance. I gave them into your hands, but you did not give them mercy, you made the yoke of the elder very heavy, and you said: I will be a ruler forever. You did not consider these things in your heart, nor did you remember your latter end.

³³ He shows himself everywhere using a just decree, and bringing upon certain ones who might sin, balanced punishments. For the crimes of the Babylonians were very many, and he describes them with very great cruelty and inhumanity, and also shows her to be arrogant, and unwisely trusting in her own powers, so as to even think that the change for the worse would in no way ever befall her. Therefore when, he says, you endure the capture, then sit down contrite. But "contrite," he says, means, having understood, even if at last, and especially in yourself; but accept dizziness from darkness. For he said that irreparable evils pour down a kind of darkness on the mind, and like dust fall upon souls. Therefore, he says, you will no longer be called the Strength of a kingdom. For Babylon was so named, since it had a multitude beyond number, and a most warlike hand, and sufficient for resistance, if indeed there were any who resisted, and went out against those who held power among them. Then what was the pretext for the Babylonians to have inflicted upon them the things brought on by divine wrath, he makes clear, saying: I was provoked against my people, you defiled my inheritance. I gave them into your hands, but you did not give them mercy. He appears to say something similar also through the voice of Zechariah:

³⁴ "I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, and with great anger I am angry with the nations that attack, because I was a little angry, but they joined in for evil. For at times God disciplines out of love, and some who have become unadmonished and have set a proud neck against him, he brings through toils to obedience, either by bringing the hands of enemies against them, or by inflicting them with other griefs somehow. For just as fire or iron often heals incurable wounds, since they do not endure the measure of medicines, in the very same way, I think, our God

who loves virtue, when he sees a soul going with unrestrained impulses against rocks, and clinging tightly to the ways of wickedness, he heals it with bitter toils. But there are those who, having been appointed in the role of punishers, use terrible and unrestrained angers, and are carried beyond what is reasonable, unbearably burdening those who have come under them. Therefore, the matter is very difficult, and God is provoked by those accustomed to do this. We must therefore abstain from evil, and if any should suffer punishments, with God disciplining them, let us look to what is gentle, knowing well that the discipliner is greatly provoked, if the things of justice are brought upon them by us beyond measure. Therefore, he says, you did not pity the old man, and you captured them not by your own strength, but rather because I gave them.

³⁵ But you have become hard and fierce of temper, and what is still more burdensome than this, you have come to such arrogance, as to think and say, that you will have an unending rule, and that which is in to be unshakable dominions. Then these things happening to you, he says, you did not deign to take into your mind, nor did you receive into memory the last things. What were these things? Those of the captivity, clearly, and of the suffering brought upon her by God. But now hear these things, you delicate one, you who are seated, you who are confident, who says in her heart: I am, and there is no other; I shall not sit as a widow, nor shall I know orphanhood. But now these two things shall come upon you suddenly in one day: widowhood and childlessness shall come suddenly upon you, in your sorcery, in the strength of your enchantments, greatly, in the hope of your wickedness. For you said: I am, and there is no other. Know that the understanding and fornication of these things will be a shame and disgrace to you. He speaks as to some profane and wanton little woman, both given to luxury and practiced in self-adornment. But we say this: There were very many magi among the Chaldeans, whom they indeed also called wise men, by whose suggestions and false prophecies the Babylonians did everything.

³⁶ For pretending to have precise knowledge of future events, they prophesied to the rulers of the land nothing gloomy, but rather those things by which it was likely that the hearers would be delighted. It is necessary, therefore, to understand that, even when Cyrus was threatening them with his attack and already bringing on the assaults of the enemy, they were certainly present in their midst, speaking falsely and saying that they would very soon

overcome him, and they would prevail very effortlessly, and they would destroy their enemies, and would dance over the fallen. But they said these things. But now hear, you delicate one. And through these things he disparages the lifestyle of the Babylonians, as being rather weak and dissolute. For they were delicate, anointing themselves with the most fragrant perfumes, using embroidered robes, and honoring the splendor that comes from adornment, so that among them the art of hairdressing was held in esteem, and there was also a rivalry of beauty. Therefore, for this reason she has been called delicate. And he also calls her seated, instead of, reigning over, the neighbors, clearly, or rather, even over the nations yet far away. And she was also confident, that is, taking courage in the immeasurable multitude of her warriors, so as to even say: I am, and there is no other. For she thought that besides her there would be absolutely no other. But she was mistaken in her hope, and has missed the truth. For Cyrus has risen up against them, leading the Persians and Medes;

³⁷ and having suffered the capture, she barely came to know that there was another, and a better one than she, that is, the country and land of the Persians and Medes, by which she has become a widow and childless, although never expecting to suffer it. For she has been widowed of the one ruling in her, who was brought down to death, and she has been made childless by the multitude of her warriors being consumed by the swords of those who captured them. Therefore widowhood and childlessness came upon her. And these things will happen to you, he says, in your sorcery, and in the strength of your enchantments, greatly in the hope of your wickedness. For since, he says, you had a wicked hope in your sorceries and enchantments, for this reason you have become childless and a widow; for raising your brow on high, and having a mind full of arrogance, you thought yourself to be better and stronger than all other lands. For you said that there is no other. Know therefore that the understanding of these things, and your fornication, will be a shame to you. I have already said that they called the magi wise men, that is, intelligent ones.

³⁸ Know therefore, O Babylon, he says, that the wisdom of the magi, that is, of the false prophets, and of the enchanters, and your fornication in addition to these will be a shame to you. For you have fallen under the hand of your enemies, having taken courage in these things, from which it is possible to derive no benefit, except only to be put to shame for having had a vain

hope in them. And he calls the fornication of the Babylonians in these things, not at all the physical kind, but rather the incontinent and unbridled apostasy from God. For it was a land of carved images, and it was carried away, as it were, with full sails by the deceits of demons. And you said in your heart: I am, and there is no other; and there shall come upon destruction upon you, and you will not know it; a pit, and you will fall into it. And misery will come upon you, and you will not be able to be cleansed; and destruction will come upon you suddenly, and you will not know it. He writes again of her arrogance, and how she has completely turned her heart away from knowing how to love, as if nothing among men is fixed, but the existence or not of those on earth depends on divine decrees.

³⁹ But those who do not endure to know this, attribute to their own heads the ability to set all things right, and whatever can bring them to prosperity, such men admire, and as if they had set up a reed for themselves as a staff, they would be caught; for they fall unexpectedly, and lament their unforeseen destruction. Therefore, since you said in your heart: I am, and there is no other, the bitter end of such terrible arrogance will seize you. For destruction will come upon you, and you will not know it, that is, even your divination will be useless to you for this. For you will suffer what you did not know, and a bitter and unexpected calamity will befall you. A pit will come, and you will fall into it; it is as if he said, a terrible and inescapable evil. For to those who have once been cast into a pit, if it be a deep one, the ability to escape is sometimes among the impossible things. And misery will come, and you will not be able to be cleansed; destruction will also come, and you will not know it. For it was not for the magicians to know the future simply; but divining things to please, and speaking from their own heart, as it is written, they saw the outcome of what was hoped for happen in a way inconsistent with their predictions.

⁴⁰ Stand now in your incantations, and in the multitude of your sorceries, which you have learned from your youth, if you will be able to be helped. You have grown weary in your counsels. Let the astrologers of heaven stand up and save you, those who gaze at the stars; let them declare to you what is about to come upon you. Behold, they will all be burned up like stubble in a fire, and they will not deliver their soul from the flame, for you have coals of fire, sit upon them; these will be your help, you have labored in change from your youth; a man has gone astray on his own, but for you there will be no

salvation. He laughs and, as it were, scoffs at the superstition of the magicians, their empty toy, and he declares their practice to be utterly useless. For when the warriors are gathered, he says, and Cyrus is against you, and the phalanx of the enemies is overwhelming your arrows, the shields will be weak, and the power of archery will avail nothing, when the riders of the horses fall like hoplites and foot soldiers. Stand in your incantations, and in the multitude of your sorceries, which you have learned from your youth, if you will be able to be helped. Raise up, he says, against the besiegers the magicians, those who know well the frigid sayings of the tactics of incantations; but you will not be able, he says. You have grown weary in your counsels.

⁴¹ For the seemingly wise counsels of the magicians have profited you nothing at all. But if you think my word of truth has missed the mark, let the astrologers of heaven stand up and save you, let those who gaze at the stars declare to you, what is about to come upon you. This is another order of buffoons, after the magicians and the enchanters, I say. For some among them pretended, to know the risings and settings of the stars, and to measure the motion of each, where they are and whence they come, and they asserted that through this false precision they received knowledge of future events. Therefore, if they are not liars, and if the stars that have obtained the firmament fulfill for them the role of prophets, let them tell what will happen. But they will not be able to say, he says, for they will be with the others, like stubble, the work and food of fire, and not one of them will escape. Then, smiling in a way at the Babylonians, as having gone astray, he adds and says, You have coals of fire, that is, the hot and burning men of whom the word speaks, when you will sit upon them. The and the sitting might signify rest. These will be a help to you; for if you should choose, it says, to rest upon the false words of magicians, and upon the buffooneries of others, you will find much assistance from them. Then again to her:

⁴² You have labored in your changing from your youth. Again, 'you have labored' must be taken to mean 'you have become weak'. For having apostatized from God and gone over to worthlessness, by yielding to the deceptions of demons, and this from your youth, you have become weak and easily captured. For you were not rich in the assistance from the only one who knows how to save, who is indeed the Lord of hosts. And he adds to this, that A person wandered on their own, but for you there will be no salvation; which is as if he were to say: Many people have wandered in a human way, offending

God with moderate apostasies, either by stooping to the things of the flesh, or perhaps by being sick with some other passion. But you have advanced to such a point of unholiness, that no way of salvation is left for you; for judgment follows unrestrained deviations. Hear these things, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and have come forth out of Judah, who swear by the name of the Lord God of Israel, making mention of it, but not with truth, nor with righteousness, and holding fast to the name of the holy city, and bracing themselves upon the God of Israel; the Lord of Sabaoth is his name. The former things I declared of old; and they went forth out of my mouth, and they were heard. Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass.

⁴³ Having completed the discourse concerning the Babylonians, he again transfers the force of the admonition to those of the blood of Israel, seeing that they had completely declined, and had been carried off into apostasy as if with loose reins. For after the death of Hezekiah, Manasseh his son, who administered the thrones of the kingdom, became a most impious man, and was completely carried away by the deceptions of demons; and he advanced to such a point of evil, wickedness, and unholy enterprises, that he filled the holy city with altars and images, and even set up an abomination in the divine temple itself, that is, an image made in the place of God. At any rate, the God of all accused Jerusalem in these matters, saying thus: "Why has the beloved wrought abomination in my house? Shall vows and holy flesh take away your wickedness from you, or shall you escape by these things? And again at another time. that: "According to the number of your cities were your gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem you set up altars to burn incense to Baal. Why do you speak to me? You have all transgressed, and you have all been impious against me, says the Lord. Indeed, when Jeremiah fell down and offered up supplications on behalf of Israel, God said:

⁴⁴ And you, do not pray for this people, and do not ask for them to be pitied, and do not approach me for them in supplication and prayer, because I will not listen. Do you not see what these are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? Their sons gather wood, and their fathers kindle a fire, and their women knead dough to make cakes for the host of heaven; and they have poured out drink offerings to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger. For as I said before, Manasseh the son of Hezekiah served the host of heaven, and was willing to esteem sorcerers and

false prophets, enchanters and diviners, of every account, and he sacrificed some of his own children to idols. Therefore, the God of all wished to bring back Israel, who had slipped into such wickedness and impiety, to the light of truth with frequent admonitions. For this reason, he graciously gave them a very frequent word of exhortation, so that, opening the eye of their mind and freeing it from a demonic mist, they might at least late and with difficulty be strong enough to see who is the Creator and Master of all. For this reason, he says: Hear these things, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and who have come forth out of Judah.

⁴⁵ Very providentially of the fathers of nobility, that which is in character, I say, and in manners, he makes mention for the shame of those who have turned away. For they were, they were from them according to the flesh, but strangers, and far from their gentleness, both of different manners and of different minds, and having only the name from them, but being incompatible in mind with those whose nobility they boast. But that this was in vain for their benefit, our Lord Jesus Christ clearly showed. For the Jews, being very proud of the splendor of their fathers, and making a boast of their virtues, foolishly said: "We have Abraham as our father. But he to them: "If you were children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham. Therefore the name is not sufficient for the power of good repute for those who are from illustrious fathers, unless they become imitators of the brightness inherent in them. Therefore he shames them, saying that they were called by the name of Israel, and came forth from Judah, that is, and sprung from the seed of Judah, but not at all resembling them in any way. And in addition to these things, he accuses them as swearing by the name of the Lord the God of Israel, and indeed fulfilling a commandment of the law; "For by his name, he says, you shall swear when accepting the need for oaths," not rather on true and just matters, but on those things falsified by the law;

⁴⁶ then also holding fast to the holy city, and relying on the God of Israel. For they wished to raise a high brow as inhabiting a holy city, and one called God's. For they heard in the divine temple the priests chanting about Jerusalem: "Glorious things have been spoken of you, O city of God. The Lord himself also mentions this, saying, that one should not swear by one's own head, because they cannot make one hair white or black; nor by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great king. For they swore by Jerusalem,

calling it, as I said, the city of God. And they also relied on him, saying their strength was the Lord of hosts. But it was necessary for those who then supposed this not to defile the city of God with altars and sacrifices, and being restrained by the deceits of demons, nor to provoke against themselves the one in whom they trusted, but rather to please him with good endeavors, and offering to him, as a kind of sacrifice, that which is steadfast in piety. But hear these things, he says; and what things are these? The former things I have already declared, they went forth from my mouth, and they were heard. Suddenly I acted, and it came to pass.

⁴⁷ For since, as I said, in the beginning the God-hated Manasseh, having gathered from all sides those called knowers and augurs, was always prying into the future, and being carried away by their buffoonery, he thought perhaps he even knew it clearly; for this reason the God of all says: I have declared to you even the first things, and these things were not spoken to you by any other of the falsely named gods, but went forth from my mouth; and it has become audible to you, and suddenly I acted, and it came to pass, that is, even if you did not expect them to come to fulfillment, yet you knew through the events themselves, and by experience itself, that I both acted, and it came to pass. And he seems to be speaking of the former hardship brought upon them by the war, when, carried away from the land that bore them, and having taken up the yoke of bitter slavery, they were carried away to the land of the Persians and Medes. For second, after those things, happened to the Babylonians the things brought upon them by divine wrath, which have already been said by us in very many words. I know that you are stubborn, and your neck is an iron sinew, and your forehead is of bronze. And I have announced to you the things of old before they came upon you, I have made them heard by you.

⁴⁸ In these things he shows the incomparable gentleness of the highest nature, and how much mercy he has toward men, even if there are any among those accustomed to grieve him. For he has a tranquility equal to his own glory. And just as with immeasurable excellences the [nature] of created things surpasses measure, so also is He incomparably philanthropic. For observe how, although He knew Israel to be hard, having a proud and unbroken neck, so that it even seemed to be an iron sinew, that is, clearly hard and unbending, and a brazen forehead, that is, again, shameless, and unyielding, and devoid of all reverence, He foretold to him the things that

would be, and made them heard before they came to pass. And He did this not in vain, but since they had an unadmonished heart, He made the predictions of grim things, so that perhaps, being somewhat broken by terrors, they might depart from their absurd and most abominable life, and might adapt themselves to seeking what is better, and leaving behind the accursed and most abominable false worship, which they offered to falsely named gods, they might choose to worship the one and by nature and truly existing God. For those whom reason does not turn from their absurd undertakings, fear sometimes turns them, even unwillingly. And indeed, the divine David seems to suggest such a thing to us, psalm-singing and saying to the Savior God of all:

49 "With bit and bridle you shall curb their jaws, of those who do not draw near to you. Do not say that 'My idols have done them for me,' and do not say that 'My graven and molten images have commanded them to me.' You have heard these things, and you did not know, but I have also made new things audible to you from now on, which are about to happen. And you did not say: 'Now it happens, and not long ago,' and you did not hear them in former days. Do not say, 'I know them.' You neither knew, nor did you understand, nor from the beginning did I open your ears. For I knew that you would surely deal treacherously, and you would be called a transgressor even from the womb. For the sake of my name I will show you my wrath, and my glorious things I will bring upon you, that I may not destroy you. Behold, I have sold you, not for silver; but I have delivered you from the furnace of poverty. For my own sake I will do it for you, because my name is profaned, and my glory I will not give to another.

50 In the words of Jeremiah the prophet we find that when those from Babylon had once taken the holy city, and laid waste all of Judea, and carried Israel away captive, the remaining women wished to go down to Egypt with those who had been saved from Israel, but when the prophet resisted, persuading them to remain at home, and explaining the reason, they in turn cried out to them, saying: "Because we stopped sacrificing to the queen of heaven, all these evils have come upon us. For they thought, although they had suffered the capture, that having offended the falsely named gods, and being deprived of their help, they had fallen under the feet of their enemies. For this reason the prophet Jeremiah also said to God: "O Lord, your eyes are upon faithfulness; you have scourged them, and they did not feel pain; you

have consumed them, and they were not willing to receive correction. Since I, therefore, He says, made the events audible to you before they came to pass, do not say again, 'My idols have done them for me.' What did they do? To be captured, clearly, by the calamities of war; you were not led away captive by their wrath, nor, when they withheld their help, did they bring upon you an inescapable judgment. For they are graven and molten things. Nor indeed, He says, should you say to yourself, 'The idols commanded me,' that is, they threatened, or rather, they foretold that I would suffer such evils.

⁵¹ You heard these things from me, and you did not know, that is, you did not understand, nor indeed did you become wise. For this we say is to understand according to truth. For it was a work of intelligence, and the fruit of admirable wisdom, to turn away from the things foretold, and not to await the end of the grim things, but to be outside of all wrath and judgment. Therefore, I made new things audible to you from now on which are about to happen. For the predictions were made by God before they had yet happened or come to pass. Therefore, do not say that you did not hear them long ago and in former days, for I foretold them from the beginning. Do not say, that I know them, that is, through the false prophets and false speakers. For you neither knew them nor understood them, nor indeed from the beginning did I open your ears. that is, not before my words came to be, have I made this known to you through another; but I brought about the end of the things foretold. For I knew that you would utterly deal treacherously, and you would be called a transgressor even from the womb. It was necessary for those dealing treacherously and choosing to be lawless, and this from the womb; for they were taught from infancy to worship foreign gods; that the punishments fitting for them be inflicted.

⁵² I showed you my wrath, for my name's sake, and I will bring my glories upon you, so that I might not utterly destroy you. For it was necessary for my wrath to be shown to Israel who had been contemptuous, and had driven all wickedness to its end, and deemed the honor due to God as altogether of no account, but so that they might see again the greatness of his inherent love for mankind, the wonders were added to the grim things, so that they might not be utterly destroyed. For he saved them from the hand of enemies, and when they had fallen into the net of justice, he rescued them again, and he loosed them from the snares of captivity, so that he might not utterly destroy Israel. Behold then, I have sold you, he says, not for silver,

that is, not for the sake of money. For I did not ask for any such things from you, nor have I been in need of anything earthly, or of the slaughter of calves, or sheep, or goats; but because you sinned, and were neglectful concerning the honor and glory owed to me from you. Nevertheless, even so I rescued you, he says, from the furnace of poverty; for he had been enslaved to the Babylonians. And it certainly follows the evils of slavery to lie in want of every good thing. For my own sake I will do it for you, because my name is profaned.

⁵³ For those who had taken them supposed that, although God was willing to save them and was their protector, they still had conquered, and had taken advantage of the one being helped against His will. Therefore, my name is profaned, he says, since they have such opinions about me. But I will not give my glory to any other. And the glory of God is to save, and to have mercy, and to be able to rule over all, and to be able to fulfill without effort whatever he should choose to accomplish. Hear me, Jacob, and Israel whom I call. I am the first, and I am forever; and my hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand established the heaven. He brings them again to the remembrance of the honor and glory given to them, and in addition of the forbearance and love. For they have been deemed worthy of the highest rewards, they who also from all the nations have been called alone to intimacy with him, and have become his portion and inheritance. And so the divine Moses once addressed those of Israel, saying thus: "Behold, the heaven of heaven is the Lord's your God, and the Lord has chosen you out of all the nations to be his people;

⁵⁴ and again, "When the Most High divided the nations, as he scattered the sons of Adam, he set the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the angels of God, and the people of Jacob became the Lord's portion, Israel the measure of his inheritance. It was necessary, therefore, it was necessary for those so honored, who had obtained a glorious and chosen name, who were appointed as God's inheritance, and who were enriched by being among the chosen, not to turn aside to anything that is not lawful, nor to choose to grieve their benefactor with relentless rebellions, who is the giver of all honor to them, and the provider of such choice and most desired good things. But taking none of these things to mind, the wretched ones were ensnared in the mire of idolatry, and leaving the true God, they have worshipped the elements of the world. Nevertheless, even so he has compas-

sion on them again; for he calls them to right feeling, crying out, Hear me, and what was better to choose in the beginning to fulfill, so that they might have unshaken prosperity, this he commanded them to accomplish at least late, so that they might set their foot outside of judgment, and be loosed from the bonds of the servitude brought upon them. But since they worshipped the host of heaven, and leaving the Creator, for those things brought into being by him they kindled reverence, he initiates them again. For as the blessed Paul said:

55 "For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need again that one teach you, what are the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. That therefore he is "the one who is," and is before all things, and has an unending existence, being God by nature, he shows by saying: I am the first, and I am for ever. For who could be conceived as before the first? For just as no beginning could be conceived before that which is truly the first beginning; so no one else could be conceived as first before the first. Therefore, the God of all things is forever and before all things and for endless ages. For he who has no beginning, to what end will he ever come? And these things concern the divine glory. But the swarm of falsely named gods, that is, the elements of the world, could neither be conceived as first, nor can they remain the same and in a like manner forever. For the stars, the sun and moon, and in addition to these, heaven itself, were brought into being, having received a beginning and a genesis, and they will one day run to the end of their being; and one could observe nothing in them which is not completely and in every way subordinate to the glory of the divine and incorruptible nature.

56 That the word on this matter would not err from the truth, he showed immediately by saying: My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand has established the heaven. Then how shall that which was made compete as an equal with its craftsman, and contend with the glory of its creator? Therefore, he shows that it is most absurd, or rather, even containing an indictment of all impiety, to choose to worship creation rather than the Creator, and, abandoning the one who is forever and first, to assign the name and reality of true Godhead to things made in time, and to grant this to their own skillful works. For they worshiped what their fingers have made, according to what is written. But God the Father calls the Son his own hand and right hand. For thus we will find him called in many places in the

divinely-inspired Scripture. And indeed the divine Moses said: "Your right hand, O Lord, is glorified in strength, your right hand, O Lord, has shattered enemies. And the blessed David: "Let your hand be strengthened, let your right hand be exalted. I will call them, and they will stand together, and all shall be gathered together, and they will hear. Who has declared these things to them?

⁵⁷For I wished, he says, to add an inquiry to them when they were gathered, and indeed to ask them clearly, who they think was in truth the foreknower, that is, the foreteller, of the things unexpectedly brought upon them, that is, clearly, of the disaster from the war. For of the false prophets, no one is seen to have foretold it. For they claimed to be divinely inspired, and some to be possessed by spirits and demons. However, there is no foreknowledge of future things in unclean spirits, nor indeed in lifeless matter shaped into gods. Therefore, of the gods held in glory, there is absolutely no one who announced it. But I have revealed each thing in detail through holy prophets; then, when it was possible to escape the evil, and to be borne out of the snare, you slumbered, awaiting the experience of evils to testify to the truth of my words. What need, then, do you have of sorcerers? What benefit from false prophets? And what would the workshops of those accustomed to observe omens know? who, taking possession of the precincts of idols, and settling down at the unclean altars, sell for the cheapest obols the falsehood from their own heart as if from God, and belching out to those who approach them whatever they please for the sake of a handful of barley and a piece of bread, according to what was said by the voice of Ezekiel.

⁵⁸Loving you I have done your will against Babylon, to take away the seed of the Chaldeans. I have spoken, I have called, I brought him, and I made his way prosperous. Draw near to me, and hear these things; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; when it came to be, I was there, and now the Lord has sent me, and his Spirit his. He does not permit them again to be carried away to untrue suspicions. For it was indeed very likely, since they had an untutored mind, and one all too easily led into apostasy and susceptible to the snares of deceit, that they should think and say that they suffered what befell them in the war perhaps from the wrath of the falsely-named gods—with the worship proper and due to them having been neglected, and their sacrifices no longer being offered—and that these gods, taking pity again, had measured out to those who suffered such things what

came from their wrath; and there is nothing improbable in this reasoning. For we have shown before that, when Jerusalem had been sacked, and all of Judea burned along with the temple, the women who were left said that these things happened to them because they had ceased sacrificing to the queen of the.

⁵⁹ Therefore, so that they might know the Redeemer, not ascribing the grace for being saved to other gods, but rather to him, he says most clearly that, being moved by compassion and love for him, he prepared to bring to fulfillment that which was for them greatly longed for and much-prayed for, namely, the extermination of the seed of the Chaldeans, since they had indeed captured them, and shown every manner of inhumanity, and had encompassed them with evils unto their end. Therefore, by love for you I was spurred on to the need to accomplish what seemed good to you concerning the Babylonians, so as to also root out the seed of the Chaldeans. Then he speaks concerning Cyrus, how by his beckoning he was led and called for the purpose of ravaging the land and taking it by force. I led, and I made his way prosperous. And I have spoken these things from the beginning, he says, and not in secret; I have proclaimed them clearly beforehand through the holy prophets: Thus says the Lord to my anointed, Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped to make nations hearken before him, and I will break the strength of kings. Therefore I have not made the word concerning him secret nor in a hidden place, but I led him, and I called him, and I made his way prosperous;

⁶⁰ and I have not only spoken, but indeed as he was doing the things dear to you and according to your prayer, I was present with him, overthrowing the strength of the Chaldeans, and making him who ravaged them all-powerful and irresistible; so that the things being done were not so much from the hand of Cyrus, but from my most powerful right hand, bringing judgment upon them on account of their insolence toward you, or rather on account of their immeasurable misanthropy and unrestrained cruelty. For he said, "I have given them into your hands, but you did not show them mercy. Then, in the midst of such words, he places the utterances of Cyrus himself, confessing that it was God who was sharpening him, and showing him to be most difficult to fight against, and superior to the strength of the Babylonians. For "And now," he says, "the Lord has sent me, and his Spirit. And he puts "And now" instead of this: even if none of the things that have happened were foretold by God, yet behold now Cyrus has confessed that it was God

who raised him up and crowned him with glories unto the end, through his overpowering of the Babylonians. For Cyrus, having learned from the Jews dwelling in Babylon that God had spoken concerning him in the holy prophets, that he would come in due time, and would take the land of the Chaldeans by force, and that he himself would release Israel;

⁶¹ then, as he says, when they had also shown him the books themselves, they prepared him to come to this opinion, so as also in his own proclamations to name the God of Israel Lord and Most High. And it is written thus in the first book of Ezra: "In the first year of Cyrus king of the Persians, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus the king of the Persians, and he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also by writing, saying: Thus says Cyrus the king of the Persians: The Lord Most High of Israel has appointed me king of the inhabited world, and has instructed me to build him a house in Jerusalem in Judea. If any one of you, therefore, is from his nation, let his Lord be with him, and having gone up to Jerusalem in Judea, let him build the house of the Lord the God of Israel. This is the Lord who having pitched his tent in Jerusalem. Therefore, when you understand, he says, that it was not through falsely named gods, but rather through me that the things that have happened were made known among you before they occurred, hear Cyrus saying that "The Lord has sent me, and his Spirit. Thus says the Lord, who redeemed you, the Holy One of Israel: I am your God, I have shown you so that you might find the way, in which you shall walk in it.

⁶² And if you had listened to my commandments, your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like a wave of the sea; and your seed would have been like the sand, and the offspring of your womb like the dust of the earth; nor now shall you be utterly destroyed, nor shall your name perish before me. Go forth from Babylon, fleeing from the Chaldeans. Indeed, he again works in them a firm disposition and a well-established mind, so that they might know the one who is God by nature and in truth; and he reveals his own glory to them, so that they might not be carried away by the voices of deceivers somewhere toward what is worthless, that is, toward thinking and believing that the falsely named gods, who do not exist at all, can help them. For this reason, as I suppose, he says, "I am your God," with "I am" signifying "I exist. This he also proclaimed to the all-wise Moses, saying:

"I am the one who is. For the God of all is properly and truly "the one who is. But those things brought into being by him might also be said to be beings, except that they have come into being and have obtained a beginning of being. Thus then says the Lord who redeemed you, the Holy One of Israel: I am your God.

⁶³ But, O Master, one of the blood of Israel might say, I suppose, you have redeemed and saved, you have delivered from fire and justice, from yoke and bondage, from a barbarian's hand, as one who is all-powerful, clearly, and accomplishing whatever you choose with mere nods. Then how have we, who are under your care and love, always boasting in you as our helper, been brought down to this misery, so as to fall under the feet of enemies, and for those who are free from free parents to serve contrary to what is fitting? What then does God say to these things? I have shown you so that you might find the way, in which you shall walk in it. I have laid down a law for you, he says, the definer of what must be done, one that knows how to direct toward anything whatsoever of the things most pleasing to me, a guide to righteousness, a teacher of piety, leading to a straight path, through which if you had wished to act, you would have arrived at being a genuine and true servant, and very well crowned with boasts from virtues. But you have gone outside the straight path, and leaving the highway, as it were, you have turned aside to what is not lawful; you have served the host of heaven, you have sacrificed to idols, you have worshiped gods that are not, you have forgotten the Creator, you have considered the given law as nothing.

⁶⁴ For if you had been obedient to my commandments, your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like a wave of the sea. And what he wishes to make clear, is something like this: They say that torrents, when a violent rainstorm strikes the mountains, rush down terribly and irresistibly, so that absolutely nothing can withstand their force. And that other thing is also quite clear, I suppose. For the onrush of the sea's waves is terrible and hard to meet, not only for sailors, that is, for the ships, but sometimes even for the rocks themselves. For these are broken off, as the waters burst upon them like a torrent. Therefore if you had been obedient to my words, he says, if you had brought your mind to be compliant, your peace would have been like a river and waters, unconquerable by enemies, that is, by those wishing to oppose it. Or perhaps also, in another way, so that he might show the matter of their peace to be abundant and continuous, he

compares it to a river and waves, to a river that is always and lavishly flowing and moving, and to waves that are always swelling and, as it were, continually running toward the shore. And your seed would have been like the sand, and the offspring of your womb like the dust of the earth. This is similar to if he were to say.

⁶⁵ With no one raising a sword, nor the hand of the enemy destroying anyone, you would have been populous and innumerable, so as to be compared to sand and dust- your children. But since you have acted insolently toward God, and have offended not moderately, having lapsed into every sort of transgression, you were contracted to a small number, and you do not have the widely spreading increase of your race into a multitude, nevertheless, even now you shall not be utterly destroyed. For the remnant of Israel has been preserved everywhere. And God said that he would nowhere fall root and branch, because of the promise given to the fathers. Then he says, that, Go out from Babylon, fleeing from the Chaldeans. This is a royal command, releasing Israel from captivity. For just as those who hold power over earthly affairs, and manage the thrones of the kingdom, sometimes grant release from their exile to those under their power, signifying the matter with a philanthropic nod and voice; so also the God of all granted a philanthropic nod to those who had suffered, and clearly says, "Go out," so that they might know the Redeemer and the provider of all good cheer to them. Proclaim a voice of gladness, and let this be heard. Proclaim it to the end of the earth. Say: The Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob, and if they thirst, He will lead them through the desert, rocks will be split and waters will flow, and my people will drink.

⁶⁶ There is no rejoicing for the wicked, says the Lord. Confessedly, all things that God does are wonderful. But those things that surpass the others, and have obtained the highest glory of His works, if they remain hidden, they wrong those who happen to be deprived of knowing them, but when they are known, they are of no small benefit. For from these it is possible to see both His ineffable glory, and His pre-eminence over all, and His exceedingly strong hand, and His all-powerful glory. For He redeemed Israel from Egypt. But in order that He might be seen as a worker of great things, so that His glory might become manifest to those throughout all the earth, Pharaoh was brought into the middle like some vessel, so that by resisting the words spoken through Moses, he might call God to the necessity of fi-

nally making His own glory manifest to all, and to show the greatness of His immeasurable power. For it was said to him: "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show My power in you, and that My name might be declared in all the earth. And those things happened to them of old, but they were for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. It was necessary, then, it was necessary that the redemption from Babylon of those of Israel should not be kept silent, but rather be proclaimed, as it were, to those everywhere. For this reason he also says:

⁶⁷ Proclaim a voice of gladness. And we say that the voice of gladness is the doxology, which one would make while hymning Him for such great and splendid achievements. This is properly and truly gladness, a voice befitting the righteous, for whom it is fitting and necessary to give glory. At any rate, the divine David also psalms, and says: "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous. And he wishes the voice to be a narrative of the redemption of those from Israel, such as the one in the book of Psalms. And it is as follows: "You have been gracious, Lord, to Your land; You have turned back the captivity of Jacob, You have forgiven the iniquities of Your people, You have covered all their sins. For even if these things contain the declaration of spiritual matters, they are nevertheless also useful for history. And He promises that if they thirst while journeying through the desert, He will bring them water from a rock. A rock will be split, and water will flow, and My people will drink. And we say that He shows in these things that it was not some other God who freed Israel from the harshness of the Egyptians, and led them through the midst of the sea, and gave food in the desert, and brought forth water from a rock; but He Himself is always the same, acting in the same way, and able to work the same wonders as of old.

⁶⁸ For if they should go through a desert, he says, and then be in need of drink and in want of water, that ancient sign will be shown to them; for water will be brought forth from a rock; and yet one would not find that this happened as those of Israel were going up to Judea from Babylon. But it was said, as I have stated, providentially, so that they might know that God He who was of old, is also now, able to use equal power and rivaling wonders, and having unchangeable strength, he cries out and issues, as it were, a general law. For there is no joy for the impious, says the Lord. And this is true. For somehow the face of the ungodly is always downcast, as their heart is

likely smitten, and their mind is burdened by the rebukes of conscience. For he expects not crowns, nor the honor of praise, but rather fire and justice, which have been prepared for transgressors. Or perhaps this saying might also be fitting for the Babylonians. For they were rejoicing as if they had conquered the people of God, and they thought that having prevailed over His right hand, they had taken possession of Judea. But they were mistaken about the truth. For the former, because they were caught transgressing, were outside of His clemency;

⁶⁹ but the latter, because they were hard and unyielding and did not know how to show mercy, paid the penalties fitting for them, and were deprived of joy, still having their brow chastened, their pride already chastened. For it was not that they could still rejoice because they had once conquered those of Israel, but because, being evil, they perished evilly, as their country was destroyed, they received the bitterness of grief.

DISCOURSE 25

¹ Listen to me, O islands, and pay attention, O nations; after a long time it will stand, says the Lord. From my mother's womb He called my name, and He has made my mouth like a sharp sword, and under the shadow of his hand He has hidden me. He has made me as a chosen arrow, and in his quiver He has concealed me, and said to me: You are my servant, Israel, and in you I will be glorified. Through very many exhortations and admonitions he benefits Israel, he transfers the sacred teaching to the flocks of the Gentiles, and indeed he once again makes clear to them the mystery of Christ, through whom they were destined to abandon their brutish and accursed life and be brought back to the way of life most dear to Him, and to receive the true light into their mind; so as to know clearly who is God by nature and in truth, and the nature that holds sway over all things. And he addresses the islands, which we say are the Churches of Christ, lying as it were in the sea, that is, in the surge of the present life, and encompassed by the unbearable assaults of waves, that is, by persecutions and tribulations, which the enemies of the truth, who fight against the call of God, bring upon them. Concerning such islands, it has been said in many places in the God-inspired Scripture. And somewhere the blessed David also sings, and says:

² "The Lord has reigned, let the earth rejoice, let the many islands be glad. For when Christ had reigned over what is under heaven, taking all things under His hand, and snatching them from the tyranny of demons;

then also they rejoiced, that is, they became full of gladness, the Churches throughout all the earth. For that the prophet in these things, by naming the islands, indicates the Churches from the Gentiles, would become clear through what follows. For he immediately added to, Listen to me, O islands, the phrase, Pay attention, O nations. Then he says, that After a long time it will stand, says the Lord. He promises, as I said, the manifestation of the Savior of us all, Jesus Christ, and that the Word, being God, would associate with those on earth in a form like ours. But that the time was then of prophecy, and not yet of the appearance of the events themselves, he shows by saying that After a long time it will stand, that is, what was promised, or rather, what was prophesied. What this is, the very person of the Savior was brought in, saying: From my mother's womb He called my name. He immediately included in these things the deep and great mystery, one needing initiation from above. For so it was revealed to the divine Peter. It was For the Word is indeed God, of equal glory, and enthroned with God the Father, co-existing and co-eternal.

3 And the names before the incarnation that are somehow proper to his nature, God, and wisdom, and light, life, and power; and others besides these which are found in the sacred Writings. But since he sent himself down into emptiness, being made in the likeness of man, and found in fashion as a man, he receives the common name, that is, Christ and Jesus, or "God with us." "With us" signifying "in our condition. For it is written, that "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; for blessed Gabriel, revealing the mystery to the holy Theotokos and virgin, says: "Fear not, Mary. For you have found favor with God, and behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people from their sins. Have then the blessed angel and the prophet spoken words inconsistent with each other? By no means. For the divine prophet, speaking mysteries in the spirit, has foretold God become with us, naming him thus from both his nature and the economy with the flesh. And the blessed angel gave him the name from his work; for he has saved his own people. Therefore he is called Savior for this reason. And so when he endured the birth according to the flesh for us, the hosts of angels proclaimed the good news of the birth to the shepherds, saying: "Fear not ye;

4 for behold, we bring you good tidings today of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. Therefore, Emmanuel, because being God by nature he became with us, that is, man. And Jesus, because it was necessary for him, being God and having become man, to save what is under heaven. When, therefore, he came forth from his mother's womb, for from her he was born according to the flesh, then was his name also called. Therefore I say the name of Christ is unfitting for God the Word before the birth according to the flesh. For not yet being anointed, how could he be called Christ? For when he came forth from a mother's womb as a man, then he receives the calling concurrently with the birth according to the flesh. And he says his mouth has been made like a sharp sword. This also is true. For it is written somewhere about him, or rather the prophet Isaiah himself says: "And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and truth the girdle of his reins, and with the spirit through his lips he shall slay the ungodly. For the divine and heavenly preaching, that is, the Gospel, spoken through the mouth of Christ, has become a sharp and most cutting sword against the tyranny of the devil, slaying the world-rulers of this darkness, and the spiritual hosts of wickedness.

5 For he scattered the mist of deceit, and sent into the hearts of all the dawn of the true knowledge of God; for he transformed the world under heaven into a pious way of life, and made all to be lovers of holy practices, he reaped the sin of the world, justifying the ungodly by faith, and filling those who approached with the Holy Spirit, and making them sons of God, instilling in them a strong and most warlike mind, and giving to them the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, so that resisting those who once held sway, they may run toward the prize of the upward calling, with no one hindering. And that the instruction and initiation through Christ became destructive of the devil's tyranny for those on earth, the prophet Isaiah will make clear, saying: In that day God will bring the holy and great sword upon the dragon, the crooked serpent, and will slay the dragon. And he adds, that "And under the shadow of his hand he has hidden me. And he speaks in a human manner, yet to the sound-minded it is in no way difficult, even through these things, to see that the Son is inseparable from God the Father, and that he became man. For he says that he is under the shelter of his right hand, so that he might indicate that the unassailable and invincible

quality of his own nature is preserved for him, even if he has come to be in our condition.

6 For no one will prevail over the all-powerful right hand, but the Word, as I said, has been set apart by the measures of humanity. For the Word from God the Father is still all-powerful, and he himself is the Lord of powers. Since he has become man, the Father, not dishonoring the power of the mystery, accommodates himself to the economy, and says to him through the lyre of the Psalmist: "An enemy will not prevail against him, and a son of iniquity will not add to afflict him. And I will cut down his enemies from before his face. And I will put to flight those who hate him. And my truth and my mercy are with him. Consider then, consider, also through the voice of the prophet, the one who for our sake is like us, speaking in a manner befitting a man: Under the shelter of his hand he has hidden me. He has made me, he says, as a chosen arrow, and in his quiver he has concealed me. For very many have been the arrows of God, at times hidden as in a quiver in his foreknowledge, but brought forth at the fitting time for each, but a chosen arrow and above all, Christ, hidden indeed, as I said, as in a quiver in the foreknowledge of the Father.

7 For he was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but brought into the midst when it was necessary to visit the whole earth, which had fallen into ruin and destruction through worshiping creation rather than the creator, and being subject to unclean spirits, and being bound by the snares of sin. This chosen arrow destroys, as I said, Satan himself, and the wicked powers with him. It likewise destroys the enemies of the truth, and those who have impiously opposed his sacred proclamations. But it also wounds in another way for benefit and salvation. For thus says the bride who is struck in the Song of Songs: "I am wounded by love. And the Father said to me, he says, and it is clear that: You are my Servant, Israel, and in you I will be glorified. O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! according to what is written. For the Son was, and is, free, as having sprung ineffably from the substance that rules over all. But he heard the Father saying: You are my Servant. Therefore the Word, who is free by nature, is made a servant through the economy of the flesh, that is, that which is understood according to the flesh, so that you may again understand his birth according to the flesh from a woman in time. But he names him Israel, because he was

born according to the flesh from the blood of Israel; but also, "And in you," he says, "I will be glorified.

8 For the God of all was glorified also through holy prophets, yet not in them. But in Christ in a strange and unusual way. For he was being glorified in him. And when Christ is glorified, the Father is glorified in him. We see him shining forth in him through dignities befitting God and power and activity in every respect whatsoever, of sanctification and righteousness, and of utter gentleness. For in this way the Divine is given form intellectually. And so Christ said: "He who has seen me has seen my Father. And the all-wise Paul also said that the one who begot him is glorified in the person of Christ. Therefore, "in you," he says, "I will be glorified. For to the Son, who has appeared in the flesh, every knee will bow, as it is written, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And I said: I have labored in vain, and for nothing and to no purpose have I given my strength. Therefore my judgment is with the Lord, and my work is before my God. The Savior of all appeared, in order to deliver all under heaven from the wickedness of the devil, and from death, and sin, and those who approach him through faith, having been made brilliant with sacred gifts. And to this were called, even before the others, those from the blood of Israel;

9 and they were so preferred over the gentiles that Jesus said: "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But they the Having thus received a glorious and exceptional honor, they have become faithless, and insolent apostates, and terrible and arrogant herds of dishonor. And yet, though it was necessary to approach grace most gladly, and to profit from the faith, and the good things from it, this they did not do, how could they? But they rose up against him, as he called them to salvation, blaspheming unguardedly, reviling unrestrainedly; and what terrible thing did they not utter freely, and finally they crucified him. Therefore, as far as concerns the harshness of the disobedient, and the contradiction outrageously practiced by them, the Savior has labored in vain, and for nothing, and to no purpose has he given his strength. For frantic Israel, as I just said, did not endure his sacred proclamations; it has not honored his labor. For it was a labor for the Word to become as we are, and to endure human littleness. But my judgment, he says, is the Father, for the labors I have expended for the sake of

their salvation. For this reason, the judgment has also been brought forth from him. And what was the judgment?

¹⁰ They have been cast out from intimacy with him, they have been thrust out from being the people of God, they have become without share in the salvation from him, they have remained without a taste of the hope of the saints, but in their place the multitude of the Gentiles has been called in. And instead of their shepherds, others have been ordained, righteous men, and beloved of God, and overseers of holy endeavors, and able to lead the people, luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of life, as the all-wise Paul says. Do you wish to see the judgment of the Father, that is, the verdict against them? Hear the Savior saying to the leaders of the Jews: "There was a certain householder, who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenant farmers, and went into a far country. Then he says: "He sent servants to receive the fruits, and all were endangered. But when afterwards he sent his son, and when they saw him, he says, they said: 'This is the heir among themselves, come, let us kill him, and let us have his inheritance for ourselves.' And so they killed him. When this parable was spoken to them, the Lord spoke again, saying: "When therefore the lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenant farmers?

¹¹ And they to him: 'He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out the vineyard to others, who will give him the fruits in their seasons.' And in response to these things Christ says: 'Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of heaven shall be taken from you, and shall be given to another nation that produces its fruits.'" Which has indeed been brought to pass. For others have been appointed as keepers of the vineyards, and wise husbandmen, that is, the divine disciples. Upon these the clouds have sent down rain for us, although they were commanded no longer to water the Jewish vineyard. From these not thorns rather, but Christ has gathered the grape. For we have been taught to say that "The Lord will give goodness, and our land will give its fruit. And one might say, in another way, that the labor of the Son has been in the eyes of the Father, and a right judgment has resulted. And again, consider for me the power of the word, having understood the economy, which the all-wise Paul himself clarifies for us, saying: "The Son, being in the form and equality of the Father, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

but emptied himself, and became obedient to the Father unto death, even death on a cross;

¹²and for this reason he was also highly exalted and the name was bestowed on him that is above every name, that at his name every knee should bow," For he was, and is, God the Word. But since he has been called man, and has become this in truth, he has ascended to his own glory with the flesh. For he was known to be God, and he has not labored in vain. For the manner of the economy has resulted in glory for him, not attributing to him something silly and strange, but revealing him as Savior and Redeemer of what is under heaven, which indeed also being made known, prepared heaven and earth, and the things yet lower, to fall down to him. And now thus says the Lord, who formed me from the womb to be a servant to himself, to gather together Jacob and Israel; To him I shall be gathered, and I shall be glorified before the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said to me, It is a great thing for you to be called my child, to establish the tribes of Jacob, and to bring back the dispersion of Israel. None the less, we say that in these things it is the Lord Jesus Christ himself who uses such human-like words, even though he especially makes clear the great mystery of godliness, and renders the manner of his emptying plain.

¹³For behold how he says that he who is his by nature and in truth formed him as a servant to himself, but from the womb. For he does not say that he, being the naked and still fleshless Word, was brought into the formation of servitude, with God the Father approving this; but rather from the womb, that is, when he was born according to the flesh from a woman. For then, being God by nature, and free, as from a God and free Father, he receives the form of a servant, or formation. For no one, if he had sense, would say that what is by nature a servant is formed into servitude, but rather he who is beyond servitude and a yoke, and is adorned with the boasts of natural freedom, would reasonably receive the formation, or form, of a servant. For that the Son, being free, willingly lowered himself to this, how could anyone doubt when Paul says that he was in the form of God, and did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but from the equality and likeness in all things whatsoever, he descended not unwillingly into the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. For he was God with this, and he showed us no less that which is by nature and truly free, and not unwillingly a servant, in the contribution of the didrachmas.

¹⁴ For the tax collectors asked the divine Peter whether Christ would contribute the didrachma with the others, or if he would refuse the payment. Then the Lord said to him, "From whom do the kings of the earth take taxes or tribute? From their own sons, or from others? And when the disciple spoke the truth, for the kings collect what is appointed from others: "Therefore, he said, the sons are free. But lest we should offend them, go to the sea, cast a hook, and take up the first fish that comes up; and when you have opened its mouth, you will find a stater; take that and give it to them for me and you. Therefore, he who is free by nature is formed as a servant according to the economy, when he was also born from the womb of his mother according to the flesh. For this is the time fitting for the measures of the emptying. And that he was formed for service, he has fully assured by saying, 'to gather together Jacob, and Israel.' For the Word, being God, came down into our state for no other reason than to save Israel and to gather Jacob. For the inventor of all wickedness scattered all those on earth into multifaceted and multiform sin.

¹⁵ For some he caused to turn away completely from the one who created them, making them subject to himself and to the unclean demons, and casting upon them the inescapable yoke of sin, and turning them away completely from knowing who is by nature the God and Lord of all. And others, who had the law of Moses as the arbiter of their actions, he showed to be slothful and indolent, leading them away to every kind of transgression, so that they paid little regard at all to the law, but rather acted according to what seemed right to each one, and taught for doctrines the commandments of men. But when Christ appeared to the world, what Satan had scattered was gathered through faith into one right and irreproachable mind, and those who had formerly departed from the love of God have run to him, and in their zeal for good things casting the sin that makes enemies behind them, they are at peace with Christ. For the divine prophets also urged them to go eagerly toward this. Isaiah, for instance, says, Let us make peace with him, let us who are coming make peace. And the divine disciples also cried out: "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. And we make our reconciliation to God, when we come to Christ through faith. For as the most sacred Paul says somewhere again: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.

¹⁶ For in Christ the world is reconciled to God. Therefore, he makes the ministry of the incarnation clear, saying that he was formed by the Father as a servant from the womb, in order to gather Israel, and Jacob. And if anyone should say that the nation of the Jews is signified by these, he would not be far from the mark. For Christ said somewhere: "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But if he should wish to name all those saved through faith Israel and Jacob, this too would be well. If it is true that a Jew is not only one who is so outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is in the flesh, so might circumcision be spoken of; but rather a Jew is one inwardly, and having the circumcision of the heart in spirit, not in letter, whose praise is not from men, but from God. If, therefore, a Jew is one who has circumcision in spirit, it would not be at all inappropriate for such ones to be called Israel and Jacob. And in the middle of the discourse there is inserted by those called through faith, a voice declaring that I will also be gathered to him, and I will be glorified before the Lord, and my God will be my strength. For at the same time God commands something to happen, and almost immediately upon the command, what was spoken of comes to pass.

¹⁷ For Israel has not been saved once and for all, but some have disbelieved because of their own wickedness, not having accepted the grace of the evangelical teachings. But the multitude of the Gentiles has been called in with the remnant; who have also been made children of Abraham, so that in every way what pertains to the economy might not miss the purpose of the advent; for everyone who is Israel has been gathered, and indeed, also Jacob, according to the arguments just now presented by us. Therefore, the people called in Christ promise that they will both be gathered to God, clearly through faith, and that they will be glorified before God, gaining the splendid boast of adoption, and having become a partaker of the divine nature, and being made resplendent by the Holy Spirit, and having been shown to be a curator of the best practices, and that they will consider God their strength. For it is fitting for those who long for salvation and glory from him to be so disposed. He adds to these. And he said to me: It is a great thing for you to be called my servant, to establish the tribes of Jacob, and to bring back the dispersion of Israel.

¹⁸ To speak in human terms, the Father does not allow the Son to shrink from the economy, nor for the meanness of the form of a servant to be unrewarded, but rather he shows the matter to be fruitful, and the humiliation

not without reward, and the burden of the economy not to be without wonder, and indeed glorious for this very reason, even though it seems to be inglorious. For it was admittedly a small thing, for the Word begotten of God, to be called a servant, that is, a house-servant. For the name signifies sometimes the Son, and sometimes, as I said, the servant. But the need of the contexts causes this or that to be brought in, according to the time fitting for each. But since the discourse is about the economy with the flesh, it would be fittingly understood that the servant be understood as a slave. Therefore, even if the shame of servitude was a small matter for the Son, as I said, yet it was otherwise. And indeed it has become not a small thing for him;

19 for he is glorified by all, as one who did not consider being equal with God a thing to be grasped, and consorted with the ways of servitude, and descended into emptying, and endured a cross, and the things in it, and laid down his own soul as a ransom for the life of all, in order to destroy diabolical tyranny, and the things of the may drive away the hordes of demons of the unbearable covetousness against us, so that he may remove deadly sin from our midst, so that he may abolish death, and may reshape human nature to what it was from the beginning, and may hand over to God his own kingdom, no longer tyrannized by anyone, but rather casting off the yoke of the greed of others. Behold, I have set you as a light to the nations, that you should be for salvation to the end of the earth. The Father was not ignorant of the hardened and unadmonished mind of the Jews, and their being completely turned to willfulness. For they in no way accepted the teaching through Christ, although it was necessary to admire the gentleness and incomparable love for mankind of the Redeemer, and to receive his generosity as if with upturned hands.

20 Therefore, so that the economy of our Savior might not seem to have failed its purpose, seeing that the leading people had spurned it, and did not accept, as I said, his redemption, the Father added, that he will show a path of salvation, and will send forth the light of true knowledge of God to those in mist and darkness. For Israel was called to this, Christ saying clearly: "I am the light of the world. And: "While you have the light, walk in the light, so that the darkness does not overtake you. But since they loved the darkness more than the light, they were abandoned by him, although the holy prophets had foretold to them the grace in Christ. For one said: "Be enlightened, be enlightened, Jerusalem; for your light has come, and the glory has risen

upon you. Behold, darkness and gloom will cover the earth over the nations. But upon you the Lord will appear, and his glory will be seen upon you. And another: "And for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will arise, and healing in his wings. But since, as the holy Scripture says, they made their ears heavy so that they might not hear, they closed their eyes;

²¹ Christ shone upon the nations, and rendered the world under heaven full of divine light, so that those from east to west, and to the ends of the earth, might enjoy his generosity, and with the pure eyes of the mind might behold the divine and highest nature, and might consecrate the ways of spiritual worship to it and it alone. Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel who redeemed you: Consecrate him who despises his own soul, him who is abhorred by the nations, the slaves of the rulers. Kings will see him, and rulers will rise up, and they will worship him for the Lord's sake, because the Holy One of Israel is faithful, and I have chosen you. Thus says the Lord: In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you. From this you may learn with how much compassion God the Father has deemed worthy those called through Christ. For he initiates them, and reveals the profound and great mystery of the incarnation, not allowing some to be shattered on the stone of stumbling, and to trip out of foolishness on the rock of offense. For thus was shattered the stupefied Israel. What then does he say? I, the God who redeemed you, say this to you: Consecrate him who despises his own soul, that is, consider him venerable and holy, and be eager to make so him who despised his own soul, that is, who humbled himself.

²² For having become man, God, the only-begotten Word of God, has laid down his own soul for us, and chose to suffer death according to the flesh for us, having endured nothing in his own nature. For he, being beyond suffering as God, nevertheless, so to speak, cast it aside, and this for sinners. And indeed the all-wise Paul marveled at this. For he said that "God demonstrates his own love for us; for while we were still sinners, at the right time he died for the ungodly. And Christ himself says somewhere: "The good shepherd lays down his soul for the sheep. Therefore he laid it down for us, for by his stripe we were healed, and he was bruised for our iniquities, and for our sins he was delivered up. Let him therefore be sanctified, he says, That is, let him be considered holy, or rather, let him be confessed. This would be fitting for God, and for him alone properly and specifically. For even if there are many holy ones, both rational powers and, indeed, men upon earth, yet

they are called holy by participation in him who is holy by nature, and who alone is truly this. For just as he himself is the true light, he has given the dignity to others also; "For you are," he says, "the light of the world. So also, being alone holy together with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, he gives sanctification as from his own fullness to those who partake of him.

²³ Thus we say also in our prayers: "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. And we are certainly not saying that we ask for an addition of holiness to be made to the Father's name; for that is altogether foolish; but rather we pray that it may be among all what it is truly, that is, holy and awesome. So here also "Sanctify" is to be understood, even if, he says, he has despised his soul, that is, even if he is said to have suffered some human things, and prepared his own flesh to taste of death, and has laid down his soul for many. But the discourse goes on, and also mentions other things, which might at times be an obstacle to believing in him for those who do not see the depth of the economy, yet to the sound-minded it would cause no harm. For when Jesus was delivered to Pilate, some of the soldiers reviled him, some impiously mocking him, and some dishonoring him with spitting, and insulting him with the crown of thorns, and jeering and saying: "Hail, the king of the Jews. For this reason he speaks of him who is abhorred by the nations, by the slaves, by the rulers. But "Sanctify" will surely follow this too, but that he suffered economically the mockeries from the nations; but after this he will shine forth, and will be glorified by all in the highest pre-eminences, and in the honors of those who are seated below, he foretells, saying:

²⁴ Kings shall see him, and shall arise, that is, from the thrones of their kingdom. Rulers also shall worship him. And they will see not with the eyes of the body, but as in the contemplation of the mind and heart. For thus we see the glory of Christ. And they shall worship him for the sake of the Lord, that is, for my sake. For he is glorified as Son of God the Father, and because the Holy One of Israel is faithful. And "faithful" in these things signifies the one who ever abides. For the kingdom of God the Father is unshakable; and likewise also that of the Son; the falsely-named gods not being faithful. For they are recently born, and perishing, and do not abide. But the Savior and Lord of all is truly faithful, that is, firmly established in his own pre-eminences, and having them unshakably, and he himself has chosen those who are called through Christ. "For whom he knew," he says, "he also predestined

to be conformed to the image of his Son, these he also called, and besides this he sanctified, and glorified.

²⁵ It was necessary then, it was necessary for the chosen to sanctify him who despises his soul, and not, by looking at the things of his humanity, to be deceived from what is fitting, and to be carried away from the accurate knowledge of him, but rather, understanding the wisdom of the economy, to worship him, and to be firmly disposed, that he is by nature and truly Son of the faithful Lord, even if he appeared economically in our form, and underwent the measure of the emptying. And he addresses the chosen, and says that, In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you. Christ was indeed foreknown before the foundation of the world, and his mystery; but he shone forth at the times the Ruler willed, at which he has helped us, and he says the time of the incarnation is a day of salvation. For thus also says the divine Paul somewhere; "Behold now," he says, "is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation. And the prophet David also sings, and says: "This is the day which the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. And I have given you for a covenant of the nations, to establish the earth, and to inherit a desolate inheritance, saying to those in bonds: Come forth; and to those in darkness, Be revealed. And in all their ways they will be fed, and in all the roads shall be their pasture.

²⁶ They will not hunger, nor will they thirst, nor will the scorching heat strike them, nor the sun; but he who has mercy on them will comfort them, and through springs of water he will lead them. And I will make every mountain a way, and every path a pasture for them. Behold, these come from afar. These from the north, and these from the sea, and others from the land of the Persians. It seemed good to some of the previous commentators to make a beginning of the present chapter. Thus says the Lord: In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you. And they say these things were spoken by God the Father to the Savior of us all, Christ. And they weave into it some such meaning. For he prayed, he says, before the precious cross, saying: "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; and he was not heard, for he drank it. But since he has trampled death with the Father assisting him, it was necessarily said to him, In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you. But it seems to me that the argument is very weak in its plausibility.

27 For although he knew that it was necessary to drink the cup, and that the salvation of the world under heaven could not come about except through the death of his own flesh and his resurrection from the dead, the form of the prayer was enacted very providentially, so that the plea to be spared the passion might accuse the murderousness of the Jews; for in what way has Israel become guilty of the charges of impiety against him, if it was not against his will to suffer because of its shamefulness? nevertheless, even so it became his will, both to take away the sin of the world, and to reform our condition to a newness of holy life. For understanding in this way also what was said by him, that "I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me, that is, the will of the Father who sent me, that of all that he has given me, I should lose nothing from it, but should raise it up on the last day. For Christ appeared to the world, and was devoted to the sacred preaching among those from Israel. But since they were disobedient, and hardened, unruly, and insolent, they did not accept the faith, but sinned against it in many ways, and then finally they crucified him. Here, behold for me the power of the ineffable wisdom. For from the perversity of the Jews death was brought upon him, I mean.

28 And it is clear that he made this an occasion for the salvation of the flesh for those throughout all the earth, and death was abolished by his resurrection, and corruption has been trampled [variant: corruption], and we have flourished again into life, we who through the transgression in Adam were brought down to the contrary. Therefore we do not say that there was a failure in the prayer of our Savior Christ, may it not be, but rather a divine plan, which must needs be followed by wonder. And in another way too we say that the intercession, I mean, before the precious cross, was wise. For it has become for us a model and an example of a necessary matter; for when temptation hangs over us, and fear rages like a storm, we must not be lazy and reclining, but rather watchful, and then be intent on prayers, and to beg God who saves, so that, if it be dear to him, we may carry our foot out of snares and traps. But if indeed he knows that the necessity of suffering will be more profitable for us, this too comes to its fulfillment, with him granting the endurance. Therefore, since the opinion of some has been shown to be unpersuasive, come, let us take up again the matters at hand. For he says that he has given him as a covenant to the nations to establish the earth, and to inherit a desolate inheritance, saying to those in bonds:

29 Come forth, and to those in darkness, Be revealed. For when Israel had kicked him away, and had departed from love for him through unbelief, Christ gave a law to the nations, and the New to them He established a covenant, that is, the evangelical and saving proclamation, and He settled the earth that was clearly in turmoil, and not in a good state of understanding. For it had gone astray, worshiping creation, and submitting to the herds of unclean spirits. For it did only what seemed good to them. And they brought it into every form of impurity, and commanded it to live a life befitting beasts. Therefore the earth was not moderately disturbed and troubled; but it was settled through Christ, and has passed from a storm, as it were, and a squall into fair weather. For it became His portion and inheritance. And this, then, was what was said to Him in the second psalm, as from God the Father: "Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. He calls the multitude of the nations a desert, comparing it to a fruitless and waterless land. But, as I said, it became the inheritance of Christ. But how, and in what way? For to those who were in bonds, and bound tight by the chains of their own sins, He proclaimed: Come forth.

30 And to those who were in darkness, and in intellectual gloom, and separated by what was almost a deep night, He commanded them to be uncovered, and to come into the light, to open the eyes of their mind, and to let in the divine light from Him. And those who were deemed worthy of these things, he says, will be fed in all their ways, and in all their paths shall be their pasture. For the ways of goodness are many, but for the nations none was passable, but was rough and steep. They were also overcome by the assaults of their own passions, and by the greed of the devil, who made what is good inaccessible to them. But when the grace of the Savior shone forth, it loosed their bonds, enlightened their heart, and they were then able to run along every way, and to gather intellectual nourishment; for this is what "they will be fed" signifies, and to go swiftly into every path of good works. Nothing prevents us from saying that paths and ways also bring our minds to God, that is, the divinely inspired Scriptures bring them to a holy and excellent way of life; but these were least known to those who had gone astray. But since they have been called to the light of truth, they have become pastures for them, and feeding-grounds that nourish them toward spiritual manli-

ness, and to the desire for every good thing. And God promises them the abundance of His grace, and help, and spiritual consolation.

³¹ For they shall not hunger, nor shall they thirst, he says. For long ago they were in want of spiritual consolation, for there was among them no divine law, no prophet, no guide, no instructor, no teacher, no spring of spiritual waters. But since they have received mercy from God, the supply of spiritual goods has now become most abundant for them, as they have received soul-profitting nourishment. For they ate bread from heaven, they drank living water, about which Christ Himself spoke, addressing the woman in Samaria: "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will have in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. And the prophet Isaiah also said somewhere concerning those justified by faith, and who submit the neck of their mind to the evangelical decrees: "He will dwell in a high cave of a strong rock; bread will be given to him, and his water will be sure. But neither shall the burning heat strike them, nor the sun. For Christ has become their protector. He who long ago also suspended a cloud for the sons of Israel by day, and led them by a pillar of fire by night. Therefore, they will be outside of the sun and burning heat, he says, that is, they will obtain protection from God, so that no burden befalls them, that is, one that leads to faintheartedness. The divine Paul also said something of this sort:

³² "God is able, who will not allow us to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, so as to be able to endure. This, I think, signifies that the one having mercy on them comforts them. For he will lead them through fountains of waters, and he will make every mountain into a road, and every path a pasture for them. And by fountains in these things we mean the holy prophets, and apostles and evangelists, from whom, by conversing wisely and skillfully, we draw a life-giving and divine word, sufficiently able to strengthen our souls unto piety, and to work for us spiritual delight. For so it is written: "And you will draw water with joy, from the fountains of the Savior. That nothing of the exceptional great deeds is steep or impassable for those saved through Christ, the saying that every mountain will be made into a road would indicate. For it seems somehow to be raised and on high, and to be inaccessible to many for one to become manifest, for example, in self-control, temperance, long-suffering, forbearance, gentleness, love, and the rest; but the Savior has

shown us every path to be smooth and easy to travel, so that even what seems difficult to traverse and hard to travel is laid bare for those who wish to walk through him. And this, I think, is what was clearly said by one of the holy prophets:

³³ "Every valley shall be filled, and all crooked things shall be made straight, and the rough way into smooth roads. And again: "The way of the pious has become straight, and the way of the pious has been prepared. But that those who have been called have become more than number, and have been gathered from every part under heaven, he has declared, saying: Behold, these come from afar, and these from the north and the sea, and others from the land of the Persians. For 'from afar' seems to indicate the southern parts, and 'the north' the northern parts, and 'the sea' the lands to the west. For so also the Psalmist makes mention of them, saying: "The north and the sea you have created. And those 'from the land of the Persians' would be those netted from the east. For the land of the Persians is toward the sun's rays. Or perhaps, it is fitting to understand this as the magi who worshipped him. For they came to Judea inquiring and saying: "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him. For having worshipped, they also honored him with gifts, I mean, with frankincense, and gold, and myrrh. And the Psalmist makes mention of this, saying, concerning Christ the Savior of us all: "And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Arabia. For in this he names the country of the Persians 'Arabia'.

³⁴ Rejoice, O heavens, and let the earth be glad. Let the mountains break forth into joy, for God has had mercy on his people, and has comforted the humble of his people. He calls heaven and earth into one company and strongly commands them to fulfill the festival for those who have been saved by him. And 'heavens' might be understood not as the element itself, but as those who dwell in the mansions above, and possess heaven as their rich abode, the holy Powers, Principalities, and Thrones, and Authorities, and those even beyond, the Seraphim. And 'earth' likewise those among them expecting his appearance to be, and knowing he would come for the redemption of those from Israel, and of all the nations that are throughout the whole earth; just as, in fact, Simeon the righteous, holding the infant Jesus still tiny in his arms, glorified God, saying thus: "Now you are letting your servant depart, O Master, according to your word, in peace; for my eyes have

seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all the nations," and what follows. Or perhaps, we must also understand it as the saved themselves, celebrating the festival for their own sake, and crowning the Redeemer with fitting doxologies; and as for the mountains 'breaking forth into joy,' one must suppose them to be, as I just said, the rational powers raised on high in virtue, that is, the ministers of the evangelical proclamations, who speak of Christ and fill the earth with his intelligible joy.

³⁵ For they announce that God has had mercy on his people, and the humble of his people has come—he has called. For Christ, having shone upon them, has had mercy on all; if it is true, they have been rescued from the hand of the devil, and from the wickedness of demons. And they were delivered both from the sin that long tyrannized over them, and also from the bonds of death; and they were deemed worthy of grace and of a super-cosmic gift, having become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and adorned with the glory of adoption, and enriched with the hope that is beyond understanding. But observe the accuracy of the prophet's words: For the humble of his people, he says, he has comforted. And we say that the humble are those who have submitted their obedient neck to Christ, and have not dishonored the yoke of the kingdom under him, because they have accepted the faith, and have also been prepared for worship to him in spirit and in truth, and to perform service unlike those who have not accepted the faith, not being humble, but raising their horn on high [or, ἰέντων], and speaking injustice against him, and, as it were, stretching out the proud neck of their mind against his holy decrees. These have not been deemed worthy of spiritual comfort. For they were not worthy. For what portion has a believer with an unbeliever, according to what is written? For Zion said, The Lord has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me.

³⁶ Will a mother forget her child, so as not to have mercy, and the offspring of her womb? But even if a woman should forget these things, yet I will not forget you. For the Savior Lord of all proposed, even before others, to the children of Zion, that is, to those of the blood of Israel, the grace that is through faith, and through countless things he persuaded them, saying, Seize the opportunity in which it was possible for those who believed in him to be enriched with the bounties promised to the fathers. But they were unyielding and disobedient, and at any rate, scorning the laws given through the all-wise Moses, and caring little for the prophetic proclamations, they

both slipped away from believing and were caught in the snares of deicide. Therefore, for this reason, they were cast out, and were placed far from intimacy with him, yet the remnant has been saved, and Israel has not perished root and branch. But those who have been saved have become very few, and altogether easily numbered compared to the multitude of the disobedient. Most elegantly, therefore, Zion, taking on the persona of the mother of Judaea, is now introduced all but weeping as one who has been overlooked by God who gathers. For this reason, also, few children have been left to her. For she said, he says, that The Lord has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me. And what does God say to this?

³⁷ He shows his love for humanity to be incomparable, and God promises to the spiritual Zion the good things that come from compassion, and he tries to assure that he would never forget his own creatures. For just as a woman who has given birth would not forget her own children, having as an arbiter of the highest love for humankind, or rather, natural affection, the law of nature; so neither would I forget, he says, my own; if perhaps those things of God even surpass the natural affection in mothers. For the one, it is not unlikely that she can even fall into forgetfulness. But for me to suffer this is not right. Therefore, the word is as from the Zion on earth, that is, from the mother of the Jews who has suffered childlessness, or rather, having few children; but the promise is to the spiritual Zion; to which also the all-wise Paul says that the believers have come; so that you may understand the Church gathered from Gentiles and Jews, bearing the type of the one above, which the all-wise Paul also mentions, saying: "But the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is the city of the living God, and the nurse of the firstborn, and the mother of saints enrolled in heaven, which Christ would never forget. For he loves the Church, which he himself presented to himself, making the two peoples into one new man, and reconciling both in one body to the Father.

³⁸ How then could he forget his own body? that is, the Church, of which is the head. Behold, on my hands I have painted your walls, and you are before me continually, and you shall quickly be built by those by whom you were torn down, and those who laid you waste will go out from you. The meaning of the preceding is very difficult to find. For what might one suppose the hands of God to be, upon which it is right to think the walls of Zion have also been written? Indeed, in many places the holy Scripture

names the hands of God his active powers, through which he brought all things into being, even if he effects something according to his own will; for instance, the Psalmist makes clear the coming into being of every person, saying: "Your hands have fashioned me and made me, because his is the sea, and he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. And again: "And you, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands. Then how could anyone suppose that on the active powers of God, as on a tablet, the walls of the Zion understood here have been written? Or of what walls at all does the text make mention? What then do we say? Nothing, I think, would prevent a disciple of Christ from applying some such meaning to what has been set forth. Zion was accusing the Lord of having forgotten her.

³⁹ But that this is not true our Lord Jesus Christ attempts to show, at least from the things of the incarnation and what he endured for us, having become like us. For although it was possible for him to exist in the form and equality of the Father, he did not consider this a thing to be grasped, but rather came down to emptying himself. He took the form of a servant and became obedient to the Father unto death, even death on a cross. For he was hung upon a tree, his hands having been nailed. But the saving passion cast down principalities, triumphed over the world-rulers of this age, freed all from the tyranny of the devil, brought us to God. For by his stripes we were healed, and he bore our sins in his body on the tree, and he was weakened, but we have been saved, and his passion has become for us both a security and a wall; for he redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, and in that he himself suffered, having been tempted, he has helped those who are tempted, and he suffered outside the city, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood. Therefore, for I will say it again, the passion of Christ, and the precious cross, and the nailing of his hands, have become a security, and a wall both inaccessible and unbreakable to those who have believed in him.

⁴⁰ Therefore he might reasonably say, "Behold, on my hands I have painted your walls. You will understand the piercing of the hands, that is the passion, as being made clear through this one thing. But "I have painted," he says, instead of "I have imprinted. And you are before me continually. For if he suffered for us, how could he forget us? Or how would those for whom he was nailed to the tree not be in his eyes? But if anyone should wish to ap-

proach the meaning of the preceding in another way, I think it is not unreasonable to think something of this sort: that all those who have believed in Christ are in the hands of God the Father, someone might say, I think, and would not err from the truth. For he himself said: "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me. And I give them eternal life. In addition to this, also that "No one will snatch them out of my Father's hand," since indeed they are under the protection from above, and are very well fortified by helps from on high.

⁴¹ Therefore, since all are in the hands of God the Father, as holding us up, and saving us beside himself, and not allowing us to be carried off anywhere to things that are not lawful, nor indeed to be subjected to the perversities of those who plot against us, that is to become prey to diabolical wickedness, nothing prevents us from understanding that the walls of Zion are, as it were, painted on his hands, that is, trained for spiritual refinement, and having as an adornment to be very well distinguished by every virtue. And we say that the walls of the intelligible Zion are the holy apostles and evangelists, appointed for this by God, and having an unceasing mind with him. For their names were written in heaven, and they are placed also in the book of the living. And do not be surprised, if he says that the saints are the enclosures and walls of the Church. For he himself is the wall, and the outer wall; Just as ... being, and all security for those who have believed in him, he has given to the holy mystagogues, as in the rank of a splendid dignity, to be called walls of his Church. But quickly, he says, you will be built up by those by whom you were torn down. For the Jews, or rather, the teachers of the Jews, tore down the earthly Zion, that is, their own mother, leading her away from Christ, and teaching to make the faith unacceptable. For they were saying:

⁴² "We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he is from. And having driven to the end of all evil, and having killed the heir, they became the cause of her falling. But just as Jews tore her down, so again, the divine disciples, being Jews, raised her up, having been transformed, of course, not remaining what she was, that is, disobedient, and a slayer of the Lord, but pre-eminent in faith, clearly, that which is in Christ. But those who had made her desolate went out from her. For the first teachers were cast out, and others rose up in their place, whom we have just now mentioned; for it was not possible for her to change in any

other way, and to love Christ, and to choose a shadow in preference to the shadow of the law, unless the first ones were driven out from leading her unlawfully, and the chorus of the holy mystagogues was raised up in their place, of whom also the divine David makes excellent mention, singing somewhere, and saying to the Savior of all, Christ: "You will make them rulers over all the earth, and they will remember your name in every generation and generation. Lift up your eyes round about, and see them all. Behold, they have gathered together, and have come to you. As I live, says the Lord, you will put them all on, and wear them as the ornament of a bride.

⁴³ Through all holy and divinely inspired Scripture it is clearly declared, that the portion and inheritance of Christ is for those of the blood of Israel, or for the children of the earthly Zion, in the last times of the age. "For they will return," he says, "to the Lord their God, and to David their king. And they will be amazed at the Lord and at his good things in the last days. For when they disobeyed, there has been inserted the Church from the Gentiles, which we also say is the spiritual Zion. But those also will be called, there will be one flock, one shepherd, so that no longer will two Zions be named, but both will result in one Church, having come under the hand of the one chief shepherd of all. And that these things will be in every way and altogether, he fully assures, saying to the mother of the Jews: Lift up your eyes round about, and see them all. Behold, they have been gathered, and have come to you. As I live, says the Lord, you will put them all on, and wear them as the ornament of a bride. For they were scattered as a shepherd no longer existed for them. For it is said somewhere through one of the holy prophets, as from the person of Christ: And I said, I will not shepherd you; let what is dying die, and what is failing fail, and the rest. Let each one eat the flesh of his neighbor.

⁴⁴ For what has completely fallen away from the forbearance and love from God, what sort of harm would it not suffer? For they will be exposed to those wishing to tear them apart, and to carry them off to wherever it seems good to each of the wrongdoers. And they carry them away from God, both wicked and destructive demons. For it is written, that "They shall be portions for foxes. And this is done also by the manifold passions that are in us. For the all-wise Paul says that some were given over to dishonorable passions, and to a debased mind. What then in these things does the divine word promise? The calling and gathering of the scattered, and the return in spirit

of the lost, and the coming back of those who fled, both a turning back and an awakening, and the rewards of love for Christ. Look around for, he says, and look at them all. Behold, they have been gathered to you. But that the promise might be shown to be faithful, he confirms what was said with an oath, and says: As I live, says the Lord, I will put them all on as a bride's ornament. For the assembly is the ornament of the churches. For because of this, it is the custom in the divinely-inspired Scripture to adorn the Church with golden and variegated clothing; for just as the many-formed and most precious of stones, I mean the Indian ones, set in golden rules, create a certain wonderful and sightly ornament;

⁴⁵ so also the souls of the saints, beautified by the glories of their virtues, gleam with a bright beauty in the eyes of the Godhead, so that each one, giving thanks to Christ, says: Let my soul rejoice in the Lord. For he has clothed me with a garment of salvation, and a tunic of gladness; as on a bridegroom he has put a crown on me, and as on a bride he has put a headband on me. Because your desolate places, and your ruined places, and your fallen places, will now be too narrow because of the inhabitants, and those who devoured you will be far from you. For your sons, whom you had lost, will say in your ears: The place is too narrow for me, make me a place, that I may dwell. And you will say in your heart: Who has begotten me these? But I am childless and a widow. But who has brought these up for me? And I was left alone. But where were these for me? As from things in sight and more manifest, he now weaves the form of the discourse; for when Israel disbelieved and laid hands on Christ himself, the whole land of the Jews was plundered, and Jerusalem itself was burned, along with the temple itself, and so great a lack of men took hold of Judea, that the blessed prophet Isaiah enigmatically indicated this very thing in many places.

⁴⁶ For he said, that "And seven women will take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own garments, only let your name be called upon us. Take away our reproach. For it was said through the law, "There will not be a barren or sterile woman among the sons of Israel. And they did not consider the reproach of childlessness to be bearable. Since, therefore, the war consumed the entire male sex, and very few were left at all, he said that seven women would be received by one man, so as to take away their reproach, that is, childlessness. But since it is burdensome for one to please seven women, they promise to eat their own bread and to wear their

own garments, as if they will need nothing at all from him. For they affirmed that they only feared the reproach of childlessness, as I said. As, therefore, their land was brought into complete desolation, he promises a release from what has happened, and says that the desolate places and the fallen places will be too narrow because of the inhabitants. Evidently with those who devoured her being removed, it is clear that these were the ones who had been appointed to lead; who, almost like some wild beasts, destroyed and devoured her. And he shows the multitude of those who will be called, how great and innumerable it is. For your sons, he says, whom you have lost, will say in your ears, Make a place for me.

⁴⁷ And it has been said somewhere also to the spiritual Zion: "Enlarge the place of your tent and fix your curtains. Do not spare, stretch out further to the right and to the left. And we have also read in the books of Moses, that concerning the tent in the wilderness, which I say was made of skins, wide and long courts were arranged, on the one hand facing the east and the light, and on the other to the west behind the tent, and indeed to the north and south, the type prefiguring what would be in due time the breadth and length of the holy courts, that is, of the churches. Nevertheless, even as the grace from Christ is always increasing, the places everywhere are narrow for those who have believed, so that the rejoicing Church, which is the spiritual Zion, considers and cries out by herself: Who has begotten me these? And I would say that it is faith in Christ. For through it, being childless and a widow, she is great you have become [rich] in children; she has nourished your peoples for you, and you who were formerly left alone, have become unexpectedly rich, and you have been seen with many children, you who were formerly naked and alone. Thus says the Lord: Behold, I lift up my hand to the nations, and to the islands I will raise my standard, and they will bring your sons in their bosom, and they will carry your daughters on their shoulders.

⁴⁸ And kings will be your nurses, and their princesses your nursing-mothers on the face of the earth. And they will worship you, and they will lick the dust of your feet. And you will know that I am the Lord, and you will not be ashamed nor yet put to shame. Having promised to Zion that she will be with many children and blessed with children, and that her children will come to such a multitude, so that she would need wider places than before, and to ask that the tent be enlarged, he shows at once that not so much

from Israel, but from the flock of the nations the multitude of children promised to her appears. And the matter is true, and it is possible to see it through the events themselves. For the remnant of those from Israel has been saved; but this is small and easily counted; but those under heaven have been caught in the net through faith in Christ, and the power of the apostolic and evangelical proclamations brought to him those throughout the whole earth. Therefore, that this will be, he shows by saying: Behold, I lift my hand to the nations. And "I lift" means I exalt and I raise up. And the hand would signify strength or power.

⁴⁹ For when Christ was made known to the nations through the evangelical proclamations, he became both lofty and distinguished through the wonders he worked, and through the resurrection from the dead, when the standard of the precious cross was displayed, and among those who had never known the God who is by nature and truly, then Zion became rich in a multitude of children, then runners arrived to her from all sides, running head-long, crying out to one another, and saying: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and they will declare to us his way, and we will walk in it. But that for those going to the divine house, there will be nothing at all uphill or rough or, in other words, an obstacle, he shows by saying: They will bring your sons in their bosom, and they will carry your daughters on their shoulders. For the blessed disciples have become like nurses to those from the nations, and those after them still holding forth the word of the sacred mystagogy, and presiding over Churches. For those approaching the faith, they practically, both carry them in their bosoms, and placing them on their shoulders, carry them, commanding nothing toilsome, but as it were nourishing them with milk, as is fitting for infants, and setting before them the simple and very easy-to-grasp word of the catechism. This again the prophet Isaiah himself taught us, saying somewhere else:

⁵⁰ "The way of the pious became straight, and the way of the pious has been prepared. For the way of the Lord is judgment. And he has also brought in the divine Baptist, crying out and saying: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be brought low, and the crooked will become straight, and the rough into smooth ways. That, therefore, without any sweat, for those eager to go to Zion as to a mother, the arrival through faith

will be, the being taken up into bosoms, and being carried on shoulders, both her sons and indeed her daughters, would signify. And that they will be full of the highest honor, and of glory and well-being, he further declares, saying that Kings will be their nurses, and princesses their nursing-mothers. For it is, it is possible to see through the piety of the rulers those who have believed in Christ being cared for with honor, and deemed worthy of all consideration, so that they seem to be their nurturers rather, and nothing else. For if they fall on their face, and will worship Zion, that is, the Church, and as if thrown to the ground with outstretched hands, they practically also lick the dust of her feet;

⁵¹ how could it be doubtful that, having advanced to this in judgment, and by the grace of piety adorned, they would add to their own practices also the need to honor the chosen, and whosoever would believe in Christ, these they will count in the rank of children? When this has happened, Zion, who was made childless as far as the Jews are concerned, will no longer be ashamed as childless and a widow, but she will be crowned with glory. Shall one take spoils from a giant? And if one takes captives unjustly, shall he be saved? The form of the discourse fabricates a question, but it demands understanding. The sense of the preceding things is something like this: For the world under heaven was seized by both the devil and the herd of demons; there was no one on earth who had escaped the tyranny of their wickedness. For there was none who did good, not even one, but the single net of sin was stretched over all, and darkness and a mist, having descended upon the hearts of all, both carried them away from knowing the God who exists by nature and in truth, and assigned them to their captors. Therefore, some worshipped creation rather than the creator, and the elements of the world, while others served those very ones who imposed unbearable greed. They became, therefore, as if taken by the spear under a harsh tyrant, and captives, and as far as their indwelling mind was concerned, subject to the one who had subdued them.

⁵² But there was no one at all who was able to help the wronged. Indeed, puffed up with unrestrained presumption, he said that, 'I will seize the whole inhabited world in my hand as a nest, and I will take it up as abandoned eggs, and there is none who shall escape me or speak against me.' Since the devil had such arrogance against those on the earth, the Savior inquires and says, 'Shall one take spoils from a giant?' which he says is difficult and hard to

accomplish, to conquer the strong one—for in these words he calls the strong one a giant—and to take spoils from him. Then how is this doubtful? For such as these are very hard to encounter, and not easily overcome by those who wish it, but are rather captured only by those who are able to raise a surpassing and invincible hand against them. But I, He says, will take them, and I will set free the wronged, and having broken their yoke of slavery, I will make them radiant with the grace of freedom. But that a just decree of God will plunder Satan, and will demand justice from the sinner for the things committed against us, He will confirm by adding, 'And if anyone takes captives unjustly, he will be saved.' We shall take the verse again as a question and with a stop.

⁵³ For he who unjustly assails those who have done no wrong, then takes them captive and casts them into inescapable hardships, will not be saved, but rather will be made to pay the penalty for the things he has dared to do. Therefore, He will release those who have been in the position of spoils, that is, captives of their spears, and He will also require an account from those who were unjustly under them. He says something similar somewhere else: 'Just as a garment stained with blood will not be clean, so you too will not be clean, because you have destroyed my land, and you have killed my people, you shall not remain for all time.' And one will remind those who encounter this writing that the Savior Himself is found to have said something of this sort in the evangelical decrees: "Or how can one," he says, "enter into the house of the strong man, and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his goods? For He called the earthly region the house of the strong man, that is, of Satan, and not as being his in truth, but because it had been seized by him. But when the Word, having become incarnate, entered into it, binding the strong man with ineffable power, He transferred his goods to Himself, that is, those who once thought his thoughts.

⁵⁴ Just as we say the saints are vessels of election, so also there are diabolical vessels, those who have come under him and have chosen to think his thoughts, or rather have been compelled. Thus says the Lord: If one takes a giant captive, he will take spoils; and taking from the strong, he will be saved. I just said that by the powers that using ineffable and God-befitting means, our Lord Jesus Christ entered into the house of the strong man, that is, he has arrived in this world in the flesh, and the one who of old was tak-

ing advantage of, and doing violence to those throughout all the earth, and bringing them under the yokes of sin, and making them into the rank of captives, he both plundered him and, as it were, casting him into unbreakable bonds, having cast him down to Tartarus with chains of darkness, he delivered him to be kept for the judgment of the great day to be punished, and after this he plundered him, persuading those who had been under him to turn back, at least to the point of being willing to be subject to the true God, and to hold fast to his commands, and to hasten to accomplish what would lead them to the finding of salvation. And since Christ has conquered, he has also passed on victory to us ourselves, yet not without him; for he himself is the boast of the power of the saints, according to the voice of the Psalmist.

⁵⁵ And indeed the all-wise Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Therefore showing us that the ability to plunder the strong man, that is the giant, I mean Satan, is a straightforward course. If anyone captures a giant, he says, he will take spoils. For when we overcome diabolical strength, and escape the attacks of the enemies, having Christ himself as our universal weapon of good pleasure, then we plunder the evil one, both carrying away the victorious vote, and having been shown to be superior to the wickedness and evil inherent in him. But that the ability to conquer comes from Christ to those who act manfully, and that one could not otherwise attain this glory, he shows very well by adding: But taking from the strong, he will be saved. For as he gives us the ability to overcome the bloodthirsty dragon, we shall plunder him, and we shall also be saved by this, as he sends us on from victory to an untold life, to glory, to boasting, and to the kingdom of heaven. And Christ himself also said somewhere, having plundered Satan, and having declared the way of exercising power to be clear and easy for those who have believed in him: "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

⁵⁶ It is true then, that having received from the strong one, that is, from him, for he is himself the Lord of hosts, we have both been saved and have conquered. But one might also plunder Satan in another way, skillfully bringing those who have come under him and have been deceived into the light of true knowledge of God, and transferring them from depravity to a life befitting saints. But I will judge your case, and I will rescue your sons, and

those who afflicted you will eat their own flesh, and they will drink their own blood as new wine, and they will be drunk, and all flesh will perceive that I am the one who rescues you, and who takes hold of the strength of Jacob. He makes his words as if to Zion, I say. And he seems in these words to name as her sons the holy apostles and evangelists, and those after them who were still called to the priestly ministry; who also became lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, and proclaiming everywhere the glory of Christ, and making manifest the power of the salvation from him to those throughout all the earth, upon whom indeed was a certain fierce and harsh beast, and the primeval dragon, heaping up afflictions and persecutions against them, and intolerably sharpening the champions of his own inherent wickedness.

⁵⁷ Indeed persecutions were very often attempted against the holy Churches, and the fiercely savage cruelty of tyrants, having leaped upon them, brought many to the contests of martyrdom. But I, he says, O Zion—and we say this is the Church, which he indeed also calls Zion—I will judge your case, and I will rescue your sons. For having done no wrong, those devoted to God, and having been condemned for no impropriety at all, then having endured contests even unto soul and blood with brilliant deeds of valor for the A monad running upward; but as for what came to the plotters' purpose, they are both dead and have perished. Therefore the judgment upon them, that is, a righteous judgment, will entirely and in every way come from God. For those who for piety's sake swam through the most glorious contests, and arrived at the prize of the upward calling, will bind on the crown of incorruptibility. But those who brought persecution upon them, and unjustly killed those whom it was better to hasten to emulate, will eat their own flesh, and will not so much sip the blood of those who suffered, but rather their own. For what they brought upon others, they will suffer not in justice but rather by the just decree of God, who crowns those who have suffered, but brings under a long and unending punishment those who did wrong. And such a righteous judgment will be most well-known to all flesh, that is, to every man.

⁵⁸ For they will be among those who are in danger for piety's sake. That the help from me, who also strengthens you, Jacob, will take hold entirely and in every way, that is, him from the seed of Jacob. And I said that the prophetic word in these things is somehow written in the person of the holy

apostles and evangelists, who were from Jacob, according to the flesh, I say. And it is not unlikely that every supplanter be called Jacob, that is, the one who supplants Satan, and artfully and vigorously drives past the snares of sin. For Jacob is interpreted as 'supplanter.' Thus says the Lord: What is the bill of your mother's divorcement, with which I have sent her away? or to which creditor have I sold you? behold, for your sins I sent your mother away. The Divine is both incorporeal, and immaterial and invisible, and simple. And no one, doing the fitting things concerning it, would receive any corporeal image. But the sacred Scripture discusses things concerning it to us in human terms. For it was not possible for those who are in simple and thick bodies to be able to understand otherwise. unless our human affairs were brought forth as in the order of examples, so that from things perceptible and visible, we might be able, at least in part, to understand things concerning the divine and supreme essence, which is also beyond all corporeal imagination. Observe, then, that in these things the word to the prophet has become anthropomorphic.

⁵⁹ For as some man dwelling with and joined to a wife, he speaks to the peoples of the Jews, and speaks about their mother; I mean the earthly and perceptible Jerusalem; so that again through it, and as in the person of one woman, their system might be understood. For just as when we say Church, we are not accustomed to apply the force of the word to the circuits of the walls, but we rather denote the most holy multitude of those who have chosen to worship God in it; so too if one should speak of the mother of the Jews, again he no less signifies them. Therefore, "I have not," he says, "cast off your mother, although I have become to her as in the role of a bridegroom, and have cast down the seeds of equity through both the law and the prophets; but rather she herself has departed, having disregarded her duties toward me, and having thought it of almost no account at all to be with God. Since what bill of divorcement has been given to her by me? For God sends no one away from intimacy with him; nor does he shake off any of those accustomed to walk uprightly; but to those who would be genuine in faith, and knowledgeable of every good work, to these he grants the ability to be unshakeably enriched with intimacy toward him forever.

⁶⁰ Indeed, outside of such glory comes the one who has a mind inconsistent and incompatible with his divine ordinances, being a lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God. Therefore, as in the role of a husband, having

dwelt with the mother of the Jews: "What," he says, "is the bill of your mother's divorcement, with which I have sent her away? "For no one," he says, "could show that it was I who thrust her out and hated her, but rather he will condemn her, as having chosen apostasy of her own accord. To whom being in debt have I sold you? In these things, the figure of speech is different. For he speaks as a master to slaves. For was it, he says, that like a man pressed by a lack of money, and having fallen among creditors, I sold to other masters those who were my servants? And yet how is this not utterly foolish, either to think or to say? For the Divine is beyond necessity, and absolutely nothing is beyond it. Therefore I have not sold, he says, nor would I have given away to other masters, those who love me and are devoted to my ordinances. How then did you endure the yoke of servitude to others? The cause of your evil has become sin. For because of this, the father of sin and the inventor of all wickedness has taken possession of all of you;

⁶¹and seizing for himself those who fall away from intimacy with God, and casting them into the pits of evils, and bringing them down to the springboard of Hades. For it surely follows for those who have slipped from intimacy with God that they must be entangled in inescapable snares. For Satan is terrible in his greediness, and whomever of those on earth he might see choosing to neglect being with God, these he brings under his own yokes, and brings them down into the worst evils, rendering them slaves instead of free, and dishonored instead of glorious. For such are always the wages of his wickedness. Why is it that I came, and there was no man? I called, and there was none who hearkened? Is my hand not strong enough to deliver? Behold, with my rebuke I will desolate the sea, and I will make rivers a desert, and their fish will be dried up from there being no water, and they will die in thirst. And I will clothe the heaven with darkness, and like sackcloth its covering. Having very clearly stated that the children of Zion, that is, those of the blood of Israel, and Zion itself, clearly the earthly Jerusalem, had been sold and cast out from intimacy with him for their own sins, he brings a charge, and an indictment of their terminal folly and ignorance.

⁶²For when the Only-begotten shone forth in the flesh to those upon the earth, and appeared in a form like ours, they, unholily forgetting both the law and the prophets, have remained hard and unyielding, and are incurably sick with willfulness. For they did not want to know the Redeemer, the author of salvation, who justifies the impious, and is able to release from all ac-

cusation those who are entangled in human weaknesses. I came therefore, he says, that is, I became human and I appeared to those of Israel, and there was no man among them, that is, one with understanding, and able to know the time of redemption. I called, and there was none who hearkened. For as the prophet Isaiah himself somewhere says again in the person of the Savior of us all, Christ: "I was found by those who did not seek me, I became manifest to those who did not ask for me. I said, Behold I am, to a nation who did not know me. All the day long I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people. And indeed in the evangelical writings we will find the Lord in many places calling his own [ἡμιφρεδ. λεγιτ Ἰουδαίους] to faith: "Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. And again at another time: "He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

⁶³ Yea, and also showing that believing them is both fruitful and beneficial: "Amen I say, he says, to you, that he who believes has eternal life. And one could pile up very many other sayings having the same power, if one should choose to speak at length. Therefore, I called, and there was none who hearkened, he says. But perhaps those who have thus stumbled through long folly, who have a hard and unbreakable mind, will say that my hand would not be strong enough to deliver her to heaven. But in this too they have thought nothing of what is true. For he was, as I said, in a form like ours, although the Word was God. And he became human, having undergone a birth according to the flesh from a woman. But those who knew this, and were not ignorant of the depth of his divine mysteries, knew that being God by nature he can do all things, and was sufficient to redemption of all under heaven. But the unbelieving and ignorant approached him as a common man, so that they even assaulted him and said: "For a good work we do not stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God. To these it would be fitting both to think and to say, as if his hand could avail to help those on earth, and to deliver those held fast by the devil, and by sin. But when you consider these things, he says, remember something better;

⁶⁴ for I am not simply a man as you are, but rather God, having become in your form through the economy, that I might deliver you from both death and sin. For I myself, who speak, am present, I who of old worked wonders through Moses, and with ineffable power divided the sea, that is,

clearly, the Red Sea. For the waters were frozen like a wall, and the redeemed passed through, having cast off the yoke of bondage in Egypt. The phrase, I will make the sea a desert, he says here, instead of, I made it dry. And I will make rivers deserts. And the word 'I will make' must again be understood as 'I have made. For he stopped the Jordan, and made it a desert of waters as Jesus led Israel across and brought them into the land of promise. And if he says that the fish in the waters shall be dried up, understand that this too was included to show that the Jordan was completely dried up, and the divine David, commemorating this so glorious and great wonder-working, says at one time: "What is it to you, O sea, that you fled, and you, O Jordan, that you turned back? and at another time again: "The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you, and they were afraid. The abysses were troubled, the multitude of the sound of waters. And concerning the Jordan again he says thus: You dried up the rivers of Etham, that is, those in the south.

⁶⁵ He also commemorates another wonder-working, and says that I will clothe the heaven with darkness, and I will make its covering as sackcloth; and again, 'I will clothe' must be understood as 'I clothed. For we remember that the all-wise Moses wrote that for three days a deep darkness was scattered over the land of the Egyptians, but it did no harm at all to the children of Israel. For they had both day and light. This too is strange, and beyond all description. When therefore I myself, he says, am he, and having appeared in the flesh, I who of old made the sea a desert, that is, made it dry, and did this also to the rivers, and clothed this immense heaven with darkness, and by experience itself made it manifest that I am the Master of all things, and that absolutely nothing is impossible for my powers, how should it not deserve laughter, or rather undergo an accusation of impiety, if anyone should choose to think and to say, my hand is not able to deliver? The Lord gives me a tongue of instruction, to know when it is right to speak a word. He has appointed me in the morning; he has added to me an ear to hear, and the instruction of the Lord opens my ears.

⁶⁶ It would not be improbable, but rather not inconsistent with the words of orthodoxy, to apply the preceding words to the choir of the holy apostles, that is, to all who have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been made wise through the Spirit, and have received abundantly from him enlightenment into their mind and understanding, who also have come to partake of divine gifts, and have been able to perceive the depth of the di-

vinely inspired Scripture with pure eyes of the mind, and have entered into the art of a good evangelical life, and of a holy understanding. These, therefore, offering up hymns of thanksgiving, say that there has been given to them a tongue of instruction, that is, the ability to speak in an instructed manner, and to explain without rebuke the divine mysteries, and when and how it is fitting to use the words of consolation. This is indeed what the divine disciples did, having stored up in mind and heart a sound and blameless knowledge of the faith in Christ, and yet for each of those who approached the divine preaching, they offered the word that was fitting and suitable for him. For to those who are still infants, as it were, in the rank of milk, they offer well the word of simple catechesis, but to those who have attained to a perfect man, and have arrived at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, the solid and most nourishing.

⁶⁷ This, then, is a tongue of instruction, and a gift to know when it is necessary to speak a word. And they say that they are placed early, that is, in the mind, and the heart the dawning of the day, the shining of a divine and intelligible light, the rising of the morning star. And this again we shall know from the blessed Paul having written thus: "Giving thanks to God the Father, who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love in the light. For the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, so that the light of the Gospel of Christ might not shine in them. But for us the sun of righteousness has risen, shining around the mind with divine light, so that we are and are called sons of light and of the day. Then he says, He has added to me an ear for hearing, and the instruction of the Lord opens my ears. For having accepted the faith in Christ, and being enriched by the enlightenment from him, we have received an addition of an ear, that is, a power of hearing that was unusual, or of old. For the Jews, when reading the law, do not pass beyond the shadow, but are settled in the types, bare and alone. For the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, as it is written.

⁶⁸ For we, believing the law to be a tutor, whenever we receive into our ear the things through Moses, we understand them with other ears, transforming the types into truth, and making the shadow a pretext for spiritual contemplation. We have therefore received an addition of ears. For the instruction through Christ, that is, the evangelical proclamation, and the initiation through him, spiritually persuades to understand the law. It widens,

as it were, the ears of those who have believed in him, which those of Israel did not have. For our Lord Jesus Christ said to them: "Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me, and you are not willing to come to me that you may have life. And the all-wise and divine Paul writes about them, that "when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart, not being unveiled, because in Christ Jesus our Lord and Redeemer it is done away."

DISCOURSE 26

¹ But I am not disobedient, nor do I contradict. I gave my back to scourges, and my cheeks to blows, and I did not turn away my face from the shame of spitting, and the Lord became my helper. For this reason I was not confounded, but I set my face like a solid rock, and I knew that I would not be ashamed, because he who justifies me is near. Through the things already read before, or rather examined before, he has made a very great outcry against the disobedience of the Jews. For he said that I came and there was no man, I called, and there was no one who obeyed, but the person of those who accepted the faith having been inserted in the middle, and saying: The Lord gives me a tongue of instruction to know when it is necessary to speak a word, and the things added to these, and those raising up voices of thanksgiving. The person of Christ himself runs in again, zealous to contrast his own obedience with the follies of the Jews, in order that he might completely convict them of being hateful to God, raising a proud and harsh neck to him who calls them to salvation. For I have called, he says, and there was no one who obeyed.

² They have become slow to obedience, tardy and completely without understanding in what is necessary to understand for their benefit, and the things through which it was likely to be able to run through, and very easily, both the tyranny of sin, and the plots of diabolical malice. But they disobeyed, but I do not disobey. For since God the Father willed to sum up all things in me, things in heaven and on earth, I submitted myself to emptying, and have descended into the measures of human poverty, having appeared as a man that I might become obedient, even unto death, and the death of the cross. Therefore I have given my back to the scourges, and my cheeks to blows. And my face I did not turn away from the shame of spitting. For these things happened for him to suffer, with the insolence of the Jews raging against him, and Pilate tearing him with scourges, and one of the un-

holy servants insulting him, and striking him, and others spitting upon him. But there was one purpose for the one suffering: to carry out to the end the good will of the Father. And so Christ said somewhere, that "I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of the Father who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, "that of all that he has given me, I should lose nothing from it, but should raise him up on the last day.

³ Therefore, for the sake of securing life for those who believe in him, he did not consider insults, or scourges, or the experience of being spat upon as something to be rejected, although he was God by nature, and true Lord. Then he says as a man, And the Lord became my helper, for this reason I was not confounded, but I set my face like a solid rock, and I knew that I would not be ashamed because he who justifies me is near. He speaks, therefore, in a human way, as I said, and in no way unfittingly to the measures of his emptying. Nevertheless, through these words he seems to allude to the judgment that befell the insolent, on account of their impiety toward him. For, he says, the Lord became my helper. It is as if he were to say, When I gave my back to scourges, and my cheeks to blows, and suffered also the passions on the cross, the Father became a helper. For he defended, and did not allow his own Son to be utterly confounded, nor indeed to be put to shame. For they have been punished, and those who dared to fight against God have paid the penalty for their offenses against me.

⁴ And by adding that He who justifies me is near, he again subtly indicated that the matter of justice for those who had acted insolently against him would not run to a distant time, nor to a postponement, but would, as it were, follow close at hand, and at the heels of their deeds. But we say that the Son was justified in some such way as this. For since they dared to kill him who was just, and in no way guilty of any faults, they have been punished, as I said, and the punishment of the sufferers has testified to the complete innocence of the one impiously insulted by them. God the Father said something like this: "And I will give the wicked for his burial, and the rich for his death. And by rich and wicked, he names the leaders of the Jews. For suffering from extreme love of money, they were carried away by it into wickedness against him. For although they had recognized him, they said: "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us have his inheritance for ourselves. Who is he who contends with me? let him stand against me at the same time. Who is he who contends with me? let him draw near to me. That he

was righteous, and completely innocent—for he committed no sin—and endured the outrages from the Jews, the divine prophet himself will confirm, saying about him: "See how the righteous one has perished, and no one takes it to heart.

5 And again, as from the person of the Jews concerning him: "Let us bind the righteous one, because he is useless to us. And the matter itself would cry out. For how was it possible for the divine and pure nature of the Word to sin against what is fitting and proper to it, and to sustain the blemish of an offense? For it has been said concerning Christ, the Savior of us all, that "He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth of him. Therefore, since he says that he, being innocent and just, endured the plots from the Synagogue of the Jews, he necessarily addresses those who did not know his complete sincerity, or perhaps, even thought that something wrong had been done by him, and that he suffered on the cross, and in justice, and says: Who is it that contends with me? let him stand against me at the same time. This resembles what was clearly said by Christ himself to the Scribes and Pharisees: "Which of you convicts me of sin? If I speak the truth, why do you not believe me? For although the only-begotten Word of God was made like us, and took on a likeness in every respect whatsoever, yet in this one thing alone he is believed to have been beyond our nature. For since every man is subject to stumblings and sins, and no one at all has had a completely blameless life; he alone, even when he became man, kept for himself his God-befitting dignity.

6 For the nature of God would reasonably be understood to be beyond sinning. Therefore he also said, that "The ruler of this world is coming, and he will find nothing in me. For he who was made like us, that he might deliver us from the snares of sin, how could he himself be caught with us, or how could he come under blame and indictment, he who frees from indictment and blame all who have believed in him? "For it is God who justifies, who is he that condemns? Behold the Lord helps me; who will harm me? Behold all you shall grow old like a garment, and a moth shall consume you. He wishes to teach two useful and necessary things at the same time to those who have nursed an impious and unjust envy against him. First, that the plot against him, and the bloodthirsty enterprise, would in every way and entirely fail. Then, that bitter and unbearable punishments will be exacted from those who have sinned against him; for they thought they could subject to

death the Lord who is the author of life. But as the Psalmist says, "They have devised a plan, which they shall not be able to establish. For it was impossible for him, being life, to be held by death.

⁷ Therefore, he was raised by the power of God the Father, as it is written, not having become weak himself, inasmuch as he is understood as Word and God, I mean in being able to drive away corruption from his own flesh, but because he became man, appearing to receive this also from the Father. For all things for man are God-given. For that God the Father through him abolished the power of death, through his resurrection from the dead, would be clear from his saying to the crowds of the Jews: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. But since it is his custom to attribute things beyond human hand and nature rather to the person of the Father, for this reason he also says here in a human way: Behold the Lord helps me, who will harm me? For with God the Father assisting, he says, and destroying all your insolence, and establishing my glory, who among you will be so great as to oppose the invincible counsel, and be able to harm him who is helped by him? Therefore, if the Scribes and Pharisees had any sense, they would have abstained from their plots and attempts against him, having known beforehand through the holy prophets, that they would not be able to wrong Christ, being God, and Lord, and true Son of the Father; but they rather draw upon themselves a terrible and most severe judgment. And this he teaches, adding:

⁸ Behold all you shall grow old like a garment, and a moth shall consume you, that is, you will go to oldness, and decay, and to destruction, wasting away in many and inescapable evils, while an incurable calamity consumes you like a moth. This again the prophet Isaiah also says somewhere else: "Why should you be struck any more, adding sins? Every head to pain, and every heart to grief; from the feet to the head, [there is no soundness in him,] neither wound, nor bruise, nor festering sore, it is not to apply a poultice, nor oil, nor bandages. Your land is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, strangers devour your country in your presence, and it is desolate, overthrown by strange peoples. This plain speaking, even of things so dreadful, is very sufficient to persuade the Jews to be quiet, and in no way to choose to offend God, if indeed, as I said, their plot was to be fruitless, and for their unaccomplished undertakings they themselves would pay the penalty, and fall into utter ruin and destruction. Who among you fears the Lord? Let him

hear the voice of His Servant. Saying that those who might choose to labor in vain and to revel in insolence against him would grow old like a garment (for he said, Behold, all you shall grow old as a garment, and the moth shall devour you), he then offers kindness to the gentle, and shows them the path of salvation;

9 for very many of those from Israel have believed, as was also clearly related in the Acts of the Apostles. For the remnant has been saved, of which the divine disciples have become, as it were, the first fruits and the first offering. Therefore, to those more ready for faith he offers things of gentleness, saying: Who among you fears the Lord? Let him hear the voice of His Servant. And by calling himself the servant of God, he allows us to understand that even having become man, he is the true Son of God the Father. And to hear his voice was not a transgression of the law, but a confirmation of the law, which prefigured the truth through type and shadow, which is Christ and his ordinances. For this reason the all-wise Paul also writes, and says: “Do we then nullify the law through faith? By no means! Rather, we uphold the law. For it is written, ‘My righteous one shall live by faith.’” And the end of both the law and the prophets was the mystery of Christ, justifying the ungodly by faith, and freeing from accusations those ensnared by their own transgressions. Therefore, to hear his voice, that is, Christ’s, which is to accept the evangelical and saving proclamation, was a confirmation of the law; and that it is pleasing to God the Father for those on earth to be instructed by the voice of the Son, the power of the evangelical Writings would show to the more discerning.

10 For Christ was transfigured on the mountain, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light; and Moses and Elijah appeared talking with one another; then there came a voice from God the Father, instructing the holy apostles and saying: “This is my beloved Son, hear him. If, therefore, there is anyone, he says, who has the fear of God in his mind, and has hidden it within himself as a kind of treasure, let him hear the voice of His Servant. It is, as I said, the evangelical and divine proclamation, calling to the redemption that is through faith in Christ, and to a holy way of life, and one far superior to that in the law. For the one, as I said, was in shadows, while the other has the truth bright and manifest. You who walk in darkness, and have no light, trust in the name of the Lord, and support yourselves on the Lord. The most skillful of physicians sometimes

combine with harsh medicines also remedies from gentle things, as if charming away the harsh and more savage pain. We find that our Lord Jesus Christ has now done something of this kind.

¹¹ For on the one hand he convicts them as walking in darkness, and as if held fast by a mist, and utterly deprived of light, that is, clearly, of the divine and intelligible light, and making their paths not upon any of the things that lead to salvation, that is, to their benefit, but rather upon those things which would easily push them down into the abyss of destruction. For it is not, it is not possible for those in darkness ever to walk uprightly; for they are brought down, if a pit should be found anywhere, or if stones are scattered about, they stumble unguardedly to them. Therefore, to you, he says, I offer admonitions, to those walking in darkness and who unwisely do not accept the light from me. You have trusted in the name of the Lord, and you have leaned upon God. "For since, out of excessive foolishness, the peoples of the Jews, seeing the only-begotten Word of God in our form, that is, having become man, did not understand the mystery concerning him, but being senseless they often grieved him with slanderous words, sometimes calling him a Samaritan and a drunkard, and sometimes, being sharpened for wrath by a misguided zeal (for they said:

¹² "For a good work we do not stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.") Necessarily, as I said, having just become man, he makes clear to them his transcendent and most God-befitting glory and power, and he turns some away from wishing to think small things of him, saying: You have trusted in the name of the Lord, and you have leaned upon God; most clearly, therefore, he says that he himself is Lord and God, turning them away, as I said, from wishing to think and to say anything base and abject concerning him. And it is a boast for those who have received the faith, to trust in him, and to make him a rod and a support. For he sustains all things for well-being. And this, I think, the divine Psalmist teaches when he says to the Father and God of all: "Your rod and your staff, they have comforted me. For the human mind is prone to slip regarding the things in this world, and it has veered much toward improper pleasures and love of the flesh; and it always needs the one who saves, and who extends a saving hand, so that those who have partaken of the help say: "He set my feet upon a rock, and directed my steps. That the mind of the Jews was cast into darkness and gloom, it is possible to see from the holy Scriptures.

¹³ For the all-wise Paul says, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ might not shine. And the divine prophet Isaiah says something like this concerning those of the blood of Israel: "When they waited for light, darkness came to them; waiting for dawn, they walked in gloom. But Christ himself called them to the light, saying: "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in the dark[ness], but will have the light of life. It is fitting, therefore, and it is true, that for those not choosing to follow him, it will in every way and entirely follow that they walk as in night and darkness. Behold, all you kindle a fire, and strengthen a flame. Walk in the light of your fire, and in the flame, which you have kindled. Because of me these things have happened to you; you will lie down in sorrow. And he shows them another thing, which was likely to be able to effortlessly move them to choose to think correctly. For the memories of punishments, with their beneficial terrors, somehow render even the disobedient and hardened mind receptive and docile. He says, therefore, that they kindle a fire against themselves, who strengthen a flame. For by stumbling through long disobedience, and by wishing to have a heart that is thus unadmonished, they raise up against themselves the unquenchable flame, that of punishment, clearly.

¹⁴ What has been clearly said by our Savior Christ himself has the same meaning as the preceding things: "He who believes in the Son is not judged. But he who does not believe is already judged, because he has not believed in the name of the Son of God. For what else is it to be judged, except to fall into flame, and into the eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels? And by adding, You strengthen a flame, he allows one to understand something both sharp and true. For those who place upon a fire wood that can be burned up, strengthen it. For the flame rages amidst much wood, but it somehow grows weak when not well-supplied with much. The Jews, therefore, kindled a fire against themselves, by killing the prophets, and having stoned those who were sent, and having strengthened their own flame adding to their former crimes their drunken outrages against Christ. For they have added the Son to the servants, and as far as it was in their power, they killed the author of life, even if He came back to life, being God and life. But since they did not accept the teaching through Christ, remaining in the shadows of the law; for this reason, and very rightly, as those thinking they had the light from the law, but not truly having it, he sends them away

from fellowship with him, saying: Walk in the light of your fire, and in the flame which you have kindled.

¹⁵ For it was not a light for them, but the seeming to know the law, yet no longer wanting to accept the things through Christ, became for them a cause of fire and flame. For that they have paid the penalty for their drunken outrage against Christ along with having died strengthened in their sins, he makes clear by adding: Through me these things happened to you. In sorrow you shall lie down. What are these things? For their country has been ravaged, and the wicked have perished wickedly, and the holy city has been captured, and has fallen into the hands of enemies, and the temple itself was burned, and they have fallen asleep in sorrow. For those who die unpurified, and not being deemed worthy to receive the redemption through Christ, not in the hope of rewards and spiritual gladness, but in fear of punishments and in sorrow because of them will they lie down to sleep. Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, and seek the Lord. Look to the solid rock from which you were hewn, and to the pit of the cistern from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you, for he was one, and I called him, and blessed him, and loved him, and multiplied him.

¹⁶ Having sufficiently reproached those who had hardened themselves to the truth, and having made clear the punishment that would befall them, if they did not choose to follow the evangelical decrees, they persisting, having raised the proud and harsh neck of their own mind, he transfers for a time the words of exhortation to those who believed from the blood of Israel. For the nation of the Jews has not utterly perished, but the remnant has been saved according to the voice of the prophet. And indeed, as it is written in the Acts of the holy apostles, very many received the word concerning Christ, they recognized the epiphany of his glory. To these, then, he speaks, and says: Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, and seek the Lord. And he says "the just" instead of righteousness, clearly that which is through Christ, that which is, I say, through faith in him, which justifies the ungodly, and frees the defiled from all stain, and sanctifies in the Spirit, and procures the glorious boast of adoption. And they pursue righteousness, not as driving it away, and having removed it from their own minds, but as running towards it, so that they might also grasp it. The divine David also said something like this: "Seek peace, and pursue it. Or you will understand it ac-

cording to that which was said by one of the holy prophets: With what shall I apprehend the Lord, shall I take hold of my God most high?

¹⁷ They pursue righteousness, therefore, as I said, so that having found it they might seize it. These would be those who also seek the Lord himself, that is, Christ. For they find him through faith, God the Father calling them to this. And indeed Christ said somewhere to the people of the Jews: "Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. But consider this: God speaks not to all simply, but rather to those who are pursuing righteousness, and seeking him, according to the ways just now mentioned by us. Therefore all who are called to the knowledge of truth through faith in Christ are taught by God. But what the power of these thoughts might wish to declare, we will say as we are able. For there was a very great multitude of the Jews, but entirely few were those from among them who believed. Except that they will advance at times he tries to assure the believers, who are a multitude greater than number, brought from the circumcision and the so-called uncircumcision, that is of the Gentiles, God gathering them, taking the divine Abraham, and with him Sarah, as an example of the matter, or rather for the confirmation of hope for this. For they became the root of the whole nation, although being of an old and advanced age, and no longer in hope of being able to bear children. For he was one hundred years old, and she was both barren and childless.

¹⁸ But since nothing is impossible for God, but all things are smooth and easy, they became the beginning and root of a multitude of people rivaling the stars. For it was said somewhere to the divine Abraham, to look up at the stars, and to believe that his seed would be equal in number to what was seen. And that Sarah did not bear a child according to the law of human nature, and that the divine Abraham became the father of a child, a man already over-aged and past his prime, he receives two examples: a solid rock being quarried, and a deep pit being dug. For just as it is among the most difficult things to be able to quarry stone from a solid and hard rock, and to dig a deep well; in the same way, I think, it would not be easy, but rather impossible for a child to be born from an old man and a barren woman. Nevertheless, this too was accomplished paradoxically, with God's assent. Therefore, when you who have believed consider yourselves to be few, since the divine and holy preaching is indeed in its beginnings, yet it is firmly estab-

lished, he says, that your affairs will increase to a multitude greater than number .

19 For Abraham was one, and I called him, and I blessed him, and having blessed him I loved him, and having loved him I multiplied him, that is, I have made him father of the whole race of the Jews, or nation, and in addition to this, of those of the promise. For it was said to Abraham, that "I have made you a father of many nations. Therefore, the one who is called is blessed, and whoever is blessed will be loved in every way and altogether, and he who obtains this will be numerous, spiritually that is. For he will have various fruits from virtues and from evangelical boasts. Nevertheless, even according to the historical account, it is possible to see the promise as true through deeds. For what is under heaven worships Christ, the Savior of all, and all things have become full of him, and all the earth has been filled with his glory. And I will now comfort you, Sion, and I have comforted all her desolate places, and I will make her desolate places like the paradise of the Lord. They will find gladness and joy in her, they will give thanks [or: thanksgiving] and a voice of praise. The word of the holy prophets is always somehow shaped in relation to visible things, and to matters of sense perception. Yet it has a reference to things that are beyond sense and intelligible.

20 Therefore, even if it names Sion, do not think of the earthly one, but rather accept the intelligible one, which is the Church of the living God; since how could one see the prophet's words coming true? For God promised to comfort her; but we will find this has happened nowhere, but on the contrary it is possible to see her made desolate and ravaged. Therefore the word for the prophet now has been addressed to the multitude of those who have believed, which is the Church of the living God. And what, then, does he say? For just as, he says, I called Abraham, and being one I made him the father of many nations; so also I will comfort you, Sion. And the comfort in these things is a gladdening promise, and one that implants a firm hope in its hearers, that in every way and altogether, as God gathers those who will be called in faith, she will not be desolate and fallow, but like some paradise, flourishing and with the finest trees, adorned with beautiful and noble plants, and having intelligible fruitfulness, that is, gladness and joy, thanksgiving and a voice of praise. Understand from this that he promises to bear away from the legal worship those who will be in the rank of plants, and the intelligible filling a garden, which indeed he calls the paradise of God. For of

old the law of Moses commanded to sacrifice oxen, and to slay sheep, and to offer turtledoves to God, and fine flour mixed with oil.

²¹ But the God of all is no longer approached through these things, but as Christ himself said: "God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. But worship in spirit and truth, and the power of spiritual service, has as its fragrance spiritual gladness, and exultation in the hope in Christ. For we are disposed that he will also transform the body of our lowliness to be conformed to the body of his glory; and we shall be with and reign with him, ranked among the sons of God, and having been enriched with his divine and life-giving Spirit. And we also offer to him a spiritual fruitfulness, both confession and songs of thanksgiving. For with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Listen to me, and you kings, give ear to me, for a law shall go forth from me, and my judgment for a light to the nations. Promising to show the multitude of those who believe in him to be very great and beyond number, thus he speaks to it, as if it were already gathered. He then initiates them as his own worshipers, so that what is written about them might also be seen to be true: "And they shall all be taught by God. For the divine David also sings, and speaks thus to Christ, the Savior of all: "Blessed is the man whom you instruct, O Lord, and teach him out of your law. And he also promised the honor in this to those who have recognized his epiphany.

²² And indeed he also says through one of the holy prophets concerning his own presence, which came to be in this world in the flesh, that "In that time, says the Lord, I will put my laws into their mind, and write them on their hearts. And having rightly understood this, the all-wise Paul writes, and says to those who have obtained this: "You are our letter, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. Therefore, "Listen to me," he says, that is, receive my words, and do not become unbridled like Israel, clinging to the oldness of the legal letter, and seeing nothing beyond the types. Until the time of reformation the commandment through Moses was established, he says. But since the time of the incarnation is no longer expected, but is already present, let the shadow give way to the truth. Therefore, listen to me, my people. And saying, "my people," he holds forth the spiritual kinship granted to them in due time, entreating, as I think, also through this, and making them more eager for what is necessary, I say, to receive the word from him. And he calls not only those who are among the peoples, but with them also kings, so that you may understand the rulers, that is, the

leaders of the peoples. For from the multitude of believers many were brought to this, of whom the divine disciples became the firstfruits; then after them, following in their footsteps, those after them were invested with the name of kingdom;

²³ since indeed they were enriched with the name of kingdom, and also appointed to lead peoples. And so, as from exceedingly great joy, they raise up songs of thanksgiving to God, saying: "He has subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet. And about them sings also the divine Psalmist: "The rulers of the peoples were gathered together with the God of Abraham. O then, peoples and kings, he says, listen to me, and give ear, and what is promised for the future. A law shall go forth from me, and my judgment for a light to the nations. In these words, "law," he names the divine and evangelical proclamation. For the new and saving ordinance is, as it were, of a different kind; and, as it were, a change of the ancient law for the better, and a transition of types that have passed away to the truth. For Christ said: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For I say to you, that not one jot or one tittle shall pass away from the law, until all things be accomplished. But the law in letters was given through Moses; but the saving proclamation, that is, the Gospel, came forth through Christ. For it was fitting that Moses be a minister of the shadow and type, as it were, and Christ the enlightener of knowledge and of true worship in spirit. For He is the true light.

²⁴ And he adds to these things, that "My judgment is for a light to the nations. By "judgment" here he means either his holy and man-loving decree, which brought forth his grace as a light to the nations, that is, judgment, meaning uprightness and just judgment, or righteousness, that is, of the Gospel. For thus the divine David recalls the sacred proclamations, saying: "You have prepared uprightness, judgment and righteousness in Jacob you have wrought. But if he says that the divine and saving proclamation has been made in Jacob in these things, and not rather also among the other nations, one must remember God saying clearly: "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And indeed also through the voice of the divine David himself: "But I was established as king by him (it is clear that this is God the Father) upon Sion his holy mountain, declaring the decree of the Lord. For from Israel were the fathers and the promise, the lawgiving and the covenant. But since they became unruly apostates, and murderers of the

Lord, for this reason grace has therefore departed, and has become a light to all the nations. My righteousness draws near swiftly, and my salvation will go forth, and in my arm shall the nations hope. The islands will wait for me, and in my arm they will hope.

²⁵He does not allow the zeal of those who have been called to be withered by iniquities, nor indeed does he say that the recall of hope will be for long ages, but he reveals the promise as running, as it were, at the heels of his words. Such is that which was said through the voice of Habakkuk, or rather to him by God: "Yet a little while, a very little while, he who is coming will come, and will not delay. For the hopes of good things, being thirsted for by those who expect them, are consumed by delay. For this reason he says his righteousness draws near. And if we wished to apply these words to the person of God the Father, we say that he calls his Son his righteousness. For we have been justified in him, and not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his great mercy. For he came into this world, not to judge it, but rather that it might be saved through him. And it was saved in no other way than through much gentleness. For he said, "I am he who blots out your iniquities, and I will not remember them. And again: "And you, Israel, do not forget me. For behold, I have blotted out your iniquities like a cloud, and your sins like a thick mist. And David also sings, and indeed says to him:

²⁶"You have been gracious, Lord, to your land, you have turned back the captivity of Jacob, you have forgiven the iniquities of your people, you have covered all their sins. Therefore, in the righteousness of God the Father, that is, in Christ, we have been saved and have been sanctified, having washed away the filth of wickedness. But if it were Christ himself who says, "My righteousness draws near swiftly," you will understand righteousness in these things no less as the justifying grace from him, that is, the evangelical and heavenly proclamation, through which we have known the way of righteousness pleasing to him, and we have been guided to every one of the best virtuous deeds, according to what is said in the Psalms: "Your law is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths. And he names righteousness also salvation, and very fittingly. For it draws us out of every evil, and freeing us from the bonds of death, it leads us up to unending life. And he promises something else as well. For "nations will hope," he says, "in my arm. And indeed he also affirms that islands will wait for him. For of old the nations the multitude,

entangled in unbreakable bonds, of sin, I say, and subjected to the greed of the all-wicked and primevally-evil dragon, was captive, and in extreme miseries, being completely without help. For there was no one able to deliver from so bitter and inescapable a calamity;

²⁷ there was no one to shatter the yoke of greed, but they were, as I said, in the lot of captives, stripped of all hope that leads to life, and destitute of every good thing. For those who had not known the Lord who is by nature and truly, certainly continued in the world without God and having no hope, according to the voice of the blessed Paul. But those who were formerly weak, he says, and as it were cast down to the ground, taking my arm will gain an unexpected hope for salvation. And everywhere the sacred Scripture calls the Son the arm of the Father. For he is his power. But if anyone should wish to understand also the arm of the Son himself, on whom will be the hope of the nations called to salvation, you will understand his God-befitting and extraordinary power, by which he will crush Satan and the world-rulers of this world, and has saved those from the nations. For he himself said: "Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house? And David also said: "You have humbled the proud one as one who is slain, and with the strength of your arm you have scattered your enemies. Christ, therefore, is the hope and way of salvation not only for those of Israel, but indeed also for all the nations; for whom the islands will also wait.

²⁸ And by islands, as I think, he means the churches of the nations, which, lying as it were in the midst of the sea, being beaten by the assaults of affairs as by waves, carry off the crown of good repute through endurance. For endurance produces proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not put to shame. Therefore, to wait for God could not be understood as anything else, except that through perseverance and endurance one is to be well-pleasing to him, and on this account to be deemed worthy of his mercy and oversight. For it is written that, "Waiting, I waited for the Lord, and he attended to me. Lift up your eyes to heaven, and look upon the earth beneath, for the heaven was established like smoke, and the earth will grow old like a garment, and those who dwell on the earth will die in like manner. But my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will not fail. Saying that he himself will be a hope for the nations, he weaves for them a necessary initiation. For it was not otherwise possible for those who did not

know him to cleave to God in spiritual intimacy, except by being delivered from the ancient error, and getting outside the snares and perversity of the devil, and becoming rich in the true and blameless knowledge of God. For it is like an entry into intimacy with God to both know clearly and to confess, that there is no other God besides him.

²⁹ Therefore, since they thought heaven to be God, and were persuaded to worship the more prominent of the stars, and they venerated the very earth lying under everyone's feet, having completely departed from the doctrines of piety, and who is by nature the God of all things, and brought into being things that once were not; for this reason he says, showing that creation is of a different nature in relation to himself; and demonstrating very well the incomparable difference between creator and creation, he commands them to lift their eyes to heaven, that is, to consider the firmament itself and the things in it, and again to bring the mind down to the earth, that is, to the contemplation of the things in it, both animals, I say, and simply all the things in it, and even if they should choose to marvel at it, not to stop their mind there, but from the greatness of the works to measure the power of the one who crafted them, and the supreme and ineffable glory of the creator of all. And somehow we are accustomed to the [doctrine] concerning God to gather knowledge from the divinely-inspired Scripture, and from the magnificence and order of created things. So Paul laughs at the wise men among the Greeks, because although they fashion for themselves a pretense of wisdom, they have a heart full of all foolishness. "For they revered, he says, and served the creature rather than the Creator.

³⁰ So he also rebukes others, as turning back again to the weak and poor elements of the world, and wanting to serve them beyond what is reasonable. For that the beauty of creation would not provide an occasion for going astray to the more intelligent, but rather starting points for true knowledge about God, he clarified, saying: "For His invisible attributes from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, both His eternal power and Godhead. Therefore when you marvel, he says, at the heaven made firm, and seen as in the form of smoke, yet know, he says, that things brought into being will be dissolved again. For things that have beginnings of existence will end again in not being. The earth therefore will grow old, he says, that is, it will vanish, and those who dwell on it will die, just like these things. But he aptly calls the death of the ele-

ments the change for the better. For as Paul says, that "The creation itself also will be set free from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. But in what way will it be set free? Christ's disciple will clarify, saying: "For the day of the Lord will come as a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a rushing noise, and the elements, being burned, will be dissolved, and the earth and the works that are in it will all be burned up;

³¹ but we look for new heavens and a new earth according to His promises. Therefore he says the renewal of creation will be like a resurrection from the dead, just as with human bodies. But while the elements are being dissolved, my salvation will be forever, he says, and my righteousness will not fail. Now, salvation and righteousness, as we have often said, he calls the Son; and calling Him His own, he shows the property which He has toward him, the Son being by nature from Him and in Him. However, He will be forever, he says, and will not fail. And how great is the difference between Creator and creation, Maker and what is made, he makes clear through these things: For creation will grow old, and as it was brought from non-being into being, it will not be without corruption. But the Creator and Artificer of all, God the Word, through whom are all things and in whom are all things, will be forever, and will not fail. This the divine Psalmist also teaches, saying, "In the beginning You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands. They will perish, but You will remain; and they all will grow old like a garment, and like a cloak you will roll them up, and they will be changed; but You are the same, and Your years will not fail. Listen to me, you who know judgment, my people, in whose heart is my law;

³² you will not fear the reproach of men, nor be defeated by their scorn. For like a garment they will be worn out by time, and like wool they will be eaten by the moth; but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to generations of generations. Having initiated those from the gentiles, and having woven for them a simpler discourse suited to their minds (for milk is more fitting for those still of an infant disposition) he speaks again to those who are already manly, and have a stronger heart, and a well-established mind if to endure suffering ... and considers piety nothing But who these might be, he states clearly: Those who know judgment, that is, those who like approved money-changers test each of the things to be

done, and discern accurately, holding fast to what is good, and abstaining from every evil thing. And these are they who have the law of God in mind and heart, and who have practiced receiving it as a certain tutor and wise guide. For David sings and says concerning every righteous and wise man, that "The law of his God is in his heart, and his steps shall not be tripped up. A salutary thing, therefore, is to make the divine law, as it were, a deposit in our mind and heart.

³³For just as a vessel made from bronze material, or some other such thing, and then having fire heaped in it remains hot, so also the soul of a man, having the divine law in its mind, is certainly fervent in spirit. But one of the holy disciples says, because lawlessness will be multiplied, the love of many will grow cold. Listen then, he says, you who know judgment, and you who bear my law in your heart. Do not fear the reproach of men, and do not be overcome by their contempt. For all who desire to live godly in Christ will be persecuted; and suffering for piety, they endure the mockeries from those who do not know it. But one must consider such things as nothing, but rather understand that the Savior and Lord of all himself endured the cross, despising the shame. And for this reason he said: "A disciple is not above his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household; and in addition to these: "Blessed are you when they persecute you, and reproach you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

³⁴You must therefore have an unbreakable mind concerning these things, and spit out as stale the laughter of your persecutors, and despise all reviling, but rather consider being persecuted for piety and being reviled for Christ an occasion for all good repute. For what harm will insolence do, and a word boiled up from a foolish heart, to one who is approved through endurance? For that the good repute of the sufferers will shine forth in due time, and those who reviled and reproached them will come to nothing, he has fully assured by saying that Like a garment they will be made old by time, and like wool they will be eaten by the moth. and are most ready to suffer aging and decay, both wool and garment. But my righteousness, that is, the justification from me, and the salvation to be given will be long and endless, and will run to many generations, that is, it will stand perpetually.

Therefore, having suffered little for piety, we will find a more abundant reward. And the all-wise Paul will testify, saying that "The momentary lightness of our affliction, produces for us a weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. Awake, awake, O Jerusalem, and put on the strength of your arm. Awake as in the beginning of a day, as a generation of an age.

³⁵ It seems in these things that mention is made of the calling and conversion of Israel. For he himself also will be called to the knowledge of the glory of the Savior of us all, Jesus Christ, after the ingathering of the Gentiles. For it is written in the prophets: "Because for many days the children of Israel shall sit, without a king, and without a ruler, and without a priesthood, and without oracles; and after these things the children of Israel will return, and will seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they will be amazed at the Lord, and at his good things in the last days. For that in these things the prophet names as David Christ who is from the seed of David according to the flesh, I think no one at all will doubt. For when the divine David was already dead, many years later the words of the prophecy were made. And the all-wise Paul also knew that the calling through faith of those of the blood of Israel would happen in due time. For he himself once said that "When the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, then all Israel will be saved; and at another time he also converses with those from the Gentiles who have believed, and says, as about a plant and an olive tree: "But if some of the branches were broken off, that you might be grafted in, do not boast against the branches.

³⁶ For you do not support the root, but the root supports you. For just as you were cut from the wild olive tree which is yours by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, so also these who are by nature will be grafted into their own olive tree. O Jerusalem, therefore, he says, arise. This, I think, is clearly what the most holy Paul wrote to some: "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. Be watchful, therefore, that is, rise as from the dead, he says; put on the strength of your arm, and not a perceptible arm, but rather an intelligible one, that of the soul, by which one is clearly directed to the accomplishment of virtue. For admittedly Israel grew weak by insulting Christ, but having turned back and become sober again, it will put on the power from Christ. And this,

then, was what was said to him through one of the holy prophets, Turn back, Israel, to the Lord your God, because you have grown weak in your iniquities. And it was also said concerning them through the voice of Jeremiah by Christ, the Savior of us all: "Behold, I am bringing weakness upon this people, and fathers will grow weak in it, and sons together, neighbor and his kinsman will perish.

³⁷ For Israel has fallen away completely, because of its impiety toward Christ, from being able to fulfill at all any of the things that are accustomed to make for an excellent life. But arise, he says, as in the beginning of a day, as in the generation of an age, so that you may run to this, and return again to what you were and in the beginnings, when human nature, that is, the first man, was brought forth into existence, before he was caught in the snares of diabolical wickedness, and treated the given commandment as nothing. For Christ reforms us into that one, and repaints the ancient beauty of nature in us, impressing His own characteristics; for we have become according to his image and likeness. At any rate, the most excellent Paul writes to those who after the faith were carried away out of ignorance into the shadow of the law: "My little children, for whom I am again in labor until Christ be formed in you. Are you not the one who dries up the sea, the water of the great deep? The one who made the depths of the sea a way of passage for the delivered and the redeemed? He brings Israel to the remembrance of the mighty works in Egypt. For he freed them from a harsh and inescapable slavery, and delivered them from the hand that oppressed them unbearably, and he led them through the midst of the sea.

³⁸ For the waters were congealed as a wall, and the surge was passable for the redeemed; for they ran as on dry land. And these were not their own works, but rather a display of the miraculous power of the most mighty right hand. For it was God, as I said, who made the water passable for them. However, he speaks of the things that happened for her sake as the works of Jerusalem herself, at the same time persuading them to be confident, that by believing in Christ they will overcome every temptation, and will prevail over all the strength of the enemy. For He who long ago led them through the midst of the sea, and declared it a way of passage for the delivered and the redeemed, will again mightily drive away, and sometimes pursue the things that will come from certain people. For it is written, that "All who desire to live godly in Christ will be persecuted. Therefore, it is God who says to Jerus-

alem: "Are you not the one who dries up the sea? and what follows. That is, you will also understand the power of the preceding things in another way. For since she is called to the knowledge of Christ, by God the Father saying: "Arise, Jerusalem, and put on the strength of your arm; having been watchful in a certain way, and brought to the remembrance of her strength, she converses and says to her: Are you not the one who dries up the sea, and the great deep?

³⁹ The one who made the depths of the sea a way of passage for us who are delivered and redeemed, declaring a way through the waves? And it is likely, indeed, that the experience of what has already happened has been received by them as an unshakable faith in the things that will follow. For he who through the midst of the sea having led them through, He will certainly abolish also the surge of the present life, and He will show the vain and un-mixed turmoil of the affairs in the world to be stale, so that in no way may the souls of those who have been called be choked by worldly cares; but He will drive them beyond every temptation, and having been saved and redeemed, to glorify Him, saying: "Sing to the Lord a new song, for the Lord has done wonderful things. His right hand has saved him, and his holy arm. Now the right hand and arm of God the Father could be none other than our Lord Jesus Christ. For they shall be turned back by the Lord, and shall come to Zion with joy and everlasting exultation. For on their head is exultation and praise, and joy shall overtake them; pain, sorrow, and groaning have fled away. Again he forms the figure of the speech according to the power of the things that have already happened to them.

⁴⁰ For having stumbled against God in many ways, and having slipped into the worship of idols as into some pits, they were defiled in no small measure; and having rejected the commandment of the all-wise Moses, they turned to the teaching and commandments of men. For all these reasons, they were given over at times to the Babylonians, and were captives inhabiting the land of the Persians and Medes. But they were shown mercy again. For when Cyrus released them according to the will of God, and allowed them to depart, they were brought back to Judea rejoicing and shouting, and having hymns to God like a crown upon their head. Therefore, as from the things that have historically happened, he also very well portrays the gladness at the final callings. For they will be turned back by the Lord, he says, and they will come to Zion, the spiritual one, that is, the Church, being glad

and rejoicing. For upon their head there will be praise and gladness, and exultation will overtake them. For the Savior of all crowns, as it were, the souls of believers, and fills them with all joy, exultation, and gladness, being glorified by them, and having become a string and lyre for them.

⁴¹ But wherever there is a call inviting to repentance and conversion, and to the washing away of sin, that is, through faith in Christ, where there is the supply and grace of the Holy Spirit, and the honor of adoption, and the enjoyment of unending good things, and the hope of the kingdom of heaven, there certainly must also be rejoicing, and pain, sorrow, and groaning have fled away. For what place will pain have, and over what things could there be groaning, where there is no pretext at all for groaning and being in pain, but rather hope prevails, of exultation and gladness, of inalienable delight and joy? I am, I am he who comforts you. Know who you are, that you were afraid of a mortal man, and of the son of man, who have withered like grass. And you have forgotten God who made you, who made the heaven and founded the earth. And you were afraid continually all the days at the face of him who afflicted you. For in the way that he planned to take you away, even now where is the fury of him who afflicts you, For in your being saved he will not stand, nor will he delay. The phrase, I am, he says in these words, is instead of, I live and I exist; for He is the one Who Is. And this is a fitting and extraordinary dignity for God;

⁴² for to be and to live belongs only to the nature that is beyond all, not having received these things by participation from another, nor indeed having the thing as a gift, but rather being life itself. Therefore, I am, he says, the one who comforts you, that is, the one who bestows all spiritual comfort, and who sustains with assistance so that one may be well established, in order to proceed with boldness straight to every virtue. Or perhaps you will understand comfort in these words in another way as well. For through the evangelical proclamations the Savior was calling to the washing away of sin, that is, I say, through faith in Him, to the participation of the Holy Spirit, and the boast and glory of adoption. But you, he says, O Israel, You were not afraid to despise me, who am, and having scorned the one calling you to life, you were afraid of a mortal man, and of a son of man, who like grass have withered. Then you forgot God who made you, who framed the heaven, and founded the earth, but you feared the face of the one afflicting you. And in these things God accuses the leaders of the Jews, who continually opposed

the glory of the Savior, and as far as it was in their power, they declared it to be absolutely nothing. He performed miracles in many ways; but they poured out bitter words beyond wonder against the divine signs;

43 for they said that he cast out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons. With his teachings that are above the law, he often charmed his hearers; but they slipped into such impiety as to rebuke those who praised him, and to say: He has a demon, and is mad; why do you listen to him? Therefore, they feared the plots of the Pharisees; and the blessed evangelist will testify, saying: "Therefore the rulers knew that he was the Christ, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it. For the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. And the Savior himself rebukes the teachers of the law, saying: "And woe to you, lawyers! for you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves do not enter, and you hinder those who are entering. Therefore, he accuses the people of the Jews, as having from exceedingly great folly despised the true and living God, who by his word raised up the heaven, and founded the earth, but preferred rather respect for men, and received the voice of mortal men, who are dried up like grass. For that they were about to endure the final punishment of all, who imposed upon them this strange dogma [ἡνυμφρ. λεγισσε ηιδετυρ δεῖμα], and for this reason led them away from the need to honor the one who calls to salvation, he has fully informed them, adding:

44 For in what way they planned to take you away, and now where is the wrath of the one afflicting you? For in your salvation it will not stand, nor will it delay. For the wrath of the Scribes and Pharisees against the people under their hand was temporary; but they have gone to destruction, and are given over to slaughter. And those who believed in Christ rejoiced, having been saved, and having escaped the divine wrath. But the others did not delay, that is, they perished not long after, when all Judea was ravaged, and the temple was burned, and Jerusalem was destroyed, together with those who inhabited it. For I am your God, who stirs up the sea, and makes its waves roar. The Lord of hosts is my name. I will put my words into your mouth, and under the shadow of my hand I will cover you, by which I established the heaven, and founded the earth; and he will say to Zion, You are my God. Having accused those of Israel, as fearing men, that is, those who were chosen to preside over the synagogue, and out of respect for them hav-

ing unwisely stepped into the mire of disobedience, and having utterly disregarded love for him, he shows in these things, that also circumstances and persecutions, whatever may happen to those who have chosen to be pious, he settles without toil;

⁴⁵ and he renders the malevolence of those who threaten them ineffective and inactive, changing painful things to what is easier, and diverting the assault of grievous things to cheerfulness. And he takes for an example this visible, broad sea. For I am, he says, the one who stirs up the sea, and makes its waves roar. The Lord of hosts is my name. Therefore, just as the wave is sometimes arched, and violently dashes against the shore, driven by the force of the winds, but changes back again to calm and stillness as soon as God wills; in this very same way, he says, the terrible and unbearable things, and all that leads to the utmost evil, I change, as if by merely nodding towards calm; for having calmed every disturbance, I release into the breadth of cheerfulness those of the choosing to contend for piety. And this, I think, is what is enigmatically sung through the Psalmist's lyre: "He commanded the storm, and it became a breeze, and its waves were stilled. So that they might accept courage without any hesitation, that in every way and entirely the things that were promised will run to their conclusion, and the promise of the help given by Him would never prove false; he says necessarily, that the Lord of Sabaoth is my name. For if He is the Lord of hosts, how will he be weak in saving some, or what difficulty, or steepness of affairs, or impossibility is there for the right hand that is mighty in all things?"

⁴⁶ He adds something else sufficient for help, and at the same time showing that the wrath against them is loosed, the harm of His turning away has ceased, and for the rest they are in account with Him, and have been deemed worthy of His forbearance and love, such as would befit those who have recognized His epiphany. "For I will put, he says, my words into your mouth. And what is this, the divine David said somewhere while singing psalms: "But to the sinner God said: Why do you declare my statutes, and take up my covenant in your mouth?" – "For praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner," as it is written. Therefore the wrath [alt. law] of God scares away the profane and the sinful from even remembering his words at all. For it is said: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. How is it not clear to all, that those who have an evil heart would not utter good words? It is therefore most fitting for the saints to both have the law of God in their mind,

and to utter it forth, as it were through tongue and word. Therefore the God of all promises as to those already righteous, and sanctified in faith, and who have received the boast of genuineness, to put His own words in their mouths, so that by frequently remembering the divine law, they might know the useful path to their salvation.

⁴⁷ For it is written concerning every righteous person, that "The law of his God is in his heart, and his steps shall not be tripped. And again: "In my heart I have hidden your words, that I might not sin against you. For the law of God holds us up to be well established, and to have a mind well-founded in every one of the best pursuits; and it does not allow us to fall toward worse things, and it vigorously turns us away from what is by nature unjust. But since, as I said, He is conversing with them as already genuine, He promises something else beforehand. For I will cover you, he says, under the shelter of my own hand. This is also worth acquiring, and an exceptional good, and sufficient for salvation for those deemed worthy to choose it once. For we understand the hand of God the Father to be none other than the Son who appeared from Him, our Lord Jesus Christ. And nothing of all that is by nature able to do harm would harm those who are under Him. For they will be strong and most courageous, superior to all disturbance and temptations, and unconquerable by Satan, and beyond all carnal abomination, and past the passions of both soul and body. That the right hand of the Father is all-powerful, he prepares by adding: By which I established the heaven, and founded the earth.

⁴⁸ For if by the word of the Lord the heavens were made firm, as it is written, and the earth has been established to be unshakable; how would it not be sufficient to save some, those whoever would choose to make much of the shelter under Him? Then indeed, then, he says, Zion will say: You are my God. Here observe for me clearly and plainly the confession of faith in Christ being introduced. For of old, although Christ worked miracles in many ways, and had glory by the brilliance of the divine sign, which was beyond word and wonder, they claimed out of very great impiety to be ignorant of him, not being truly ignorant, but insolent. For they have dared to say out of very great madness, that is, folly, and a godless way of thinking: "We know that God has spoken to Moses God, but this man we do not know where he is from. But those of old, he says, who denied and slipped into this impiety, taking my words on their tongue, and coming under the shelter of

my right hand, will recognize the Redeemer, they will confess, saying to him: You are my God. Therefore faith is a saving thing, and a path leading to unending life, the power of the confession of Christ. Awake, awake, arise, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath.

⁴⁹ For the cup of stumbling, the bowl of wrath you have drunk, and you have drained it, and there was no one to comfort you among all the children you have borne; and there was no one to take you by the hand, not even from all the sons you have raised. He speaks to the Synagogue of the Jews as to one who has fallen and still lies low, and commands her to rise, all but giving a hand, and pitying her as God. And we certainly do not say that the rising is physical, because it is not fitting for the fall to be understood in such a way, but rather as spiritual, as having been accomplished in unbelief. Therefore, in faith is the good of the resurrection in these things. For they have admittedly fallen into ruin, not accepting the evangelical and saving proclamation, but rather adhering to the teachings and commandments of men, although God says clearly through the voice of Isaiah: "My people, those who call you blessed are misleading you, and they confuse the path of your feet. For those chosen to lead them, always praising among them the law of Moses, and often crying out:

⁵⁰ We are blessed, O Israel, for the things that are pleasing to the Lord are known to us, they turned the minds of those under their hand from the love of Christ, and persuading them to disregard his grace, they have led them astray, and confused the path of their feet, not allowing them to walk uprightly, that is, to come by a straight path to justification by faith, although the law makes nothing perfect. Therefore, Awake, he says; this is clearly what is said through the voice of Paul, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. And indeed this too in addition: Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet. And that they paid a fitting and equal penalty for their impieties, having treated Christ with drunken violence, and having dared, as far as it was in their power, to inflict death on the author of life, he shows, saying: She who drank the cup of wrath from the hand of the Lord. For the cup of stumbling, the bowl of wrath you have poured out, and you have drained. And by "bowl" he means judgment; but the phrase, "You have drained," in this context does not mean "You have poured out," but rather,

"You have drunk it all," that is, you have received the full wrath from the Lord, and have endured anger equal to your transgressions.

⁵¹ For the wicked have perished wickedly, their whole country having been plundered, and together with Jerusalem the famous temple itself being burned down, and moreover they have lost their hope in God, and have been cast out from the flock of the saints. And when all these things had happened to you, he says, and you were as if drunk with the fullest wrath, none of your children stood by; there was no one to take you by the hand, there was no one to comfort you. For there were very many among them Levites and priests, Scribes and Pharisees, revelling in the honors from all, and exalted for being prominent and presiding over the others; but not one of them all averted from Judaea the disaster brought upon her by divine wrath. There was no one so great who was able to offer even a moderate consolation to her when she was entangled in unbearable evils. Therefore they did wrong by leading them away from the love of God, and persuading them to make faith in him unacceptable; but they helped not at all, having themselves slipped into the pits of destruction. These two things things are against you, and who will grieve with you? A fall and a crushing, famine and a sword; who will comfort you? Your sons, who are in distress, who are sleeping at the edge of every exit, like half-boiled beet, who are full of the wrath of the Lord, undone by the Lord God.

⁵² One could enumerate very many evils that befell the Jews at the time of the capture, I mean, that under Vespasian and Titus, when the whole land of the Jews was set on fire, and no kind of disaster was lacking for them, but they had passed to the extremity of every evil, with Christ, the Savior of all, having also foretold this to them. For He was being led away by the soldiers of Pilate to the place of the cross. And since weeping women followed him, turning to them He said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. And again: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us. And through very many holy prophets the weight of the incurable disaster was foretold. And now the power of the verses before us travails with these things. For, O wretched Jerusalem, it says, these two things are set against you, it says, that is, fight and make war. And what are these things? A fall and a crushing, famine and a sword. In these things, as if briefly and concisely, the disaster of the war is signified. However, that must

be observed not in passing. For having enumerated four, it says they are two. For it said, a fall and a crushing, and famine, and a sword. And what then do we say? Or how could the named things be two?

⁵³ Even if they might seem to be more, the prophetic word in these things connects what follows to the first things. As I say: crushing certainly follows falling, and the sword follows famine, that is, death. Therefore, the first two are a fall and a famine; and following these, a crushing and a sword. Therefore, it says, when these things have happened, who is able to defend and ward off the assault of the disaster? for this is what comfort means here. For, it says, will your sons be sufficient for this? and yet it is possible to see them in distress, that is, having nothing, which they might plan and do for their own consolation, for the benefit of their own souls. For they are sleeping at the edge of every exit. For when the war broke out, the powerful ran out of the land of the Jews, and seized the extremities of the land, so that they might be ready for flight. For some hastened to occupy the neighboring lands of the Egyptians, others the neighbor of the Moabites, or the other lands of the adjacent nations. And they were at the edge of every exit, that is, in the extremities of the land, as I said; not watchful, that is, able to do anything of what is not unhelpful for the benefit of those suffering, but as if intoxicated, and heavy-headed, and lying down, thus weakened in their minds, and undone in their intellect, like a half-boiled beet. And what is the reason for these things?

⁵⁴ For they are filled with the wrath of the Lord, and this has become the cause of their undoing. For we are always somehow disposed, when we are struck by unending and inconsolable disasters, to have an almost ecstatic mind within ourselves, and to find no way that is able to save us, especially when the evil against us is sent by God. Therefore hear, you who are humbled and drunk, but not with wine. Thus says the Lord God who judges his people: Behold, I have taken from your hand the cup of falling, the goblet of wrath, and you shall no longer drink it again, and I will give, and I will cast it into the hands of those who wronged you and of those who humbled you, who said to your soul: Bow down that we may pass over, and you made your back like the ground, outside for those passing by. The words are of one pitying, and restraining his wrath, but rather releasing them to cheerfulness. For he calls her humbled and drunken. For sufficient, as I said, are those beyond measure calamities, and bringing those who are captured to

the utmost evil, and making drunk those who have suffered, but not from wine, as he says. For the Lord's cup is in no way understood as perceptible, nor is the mixture in it such as to be thought common.

⁵⁵ But it is rather the custom of the divinely inspired Scripture to call "cup" the portion allotted to each, whether perhaps to the unjust, or also to the good. For example. The divine David sings, and says concerning the wicked: "Fire, and brimstone, and a scorching wind, is the portion of their cup. This lot has been prepared by God for those who do not know him, and a most grievous sentence will overtake them. For drinking, as it were, fire and brimstone, they endure a continuous and unbearable punishment. But it would be fitting for every just person to say: "I will take the cup of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord. For to know and to call upon the Lord of all would be for those accustomed to do this a saving mixture. Therefore God, who judges righteously, says that Jerusalem has been made drunk not from wine, but from incurable calamity, and unbearable misfortune. And he judges righteously, having allotted to the good their fitting lot, but rebuking those who are not such, so that, having been shown to be better than themselves, they might depart from their wicked ways, and might change their mindset towards willing to think and to do the things that seem good to his divine laws. But behold, he says, I have taken the cup of falling as from your hand, and you shall no longer drink of it.

⁵⁶ For she will be called, as I said, to the knowledge of Christ, and will delight with us in the good things from above. And she too will be a partaker of sacred gifts, and will possess spiritual wealth. And the prophet is a witness of this, saying: "Because for many days the children of Israel shall sit without a king, and without a ruler, without a sacrifice, and without an altar, and without a priesthood, or manifestations; and after these things the children of Israel shall return, and shall seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall be amazed at the Lord and at his good things, in the last days. For in these words, the prophetic word names as "David" Christ from the seed of David according to the flesh. And a clear proof of this is that the prophecy came to be very many generations after the divine David was already dead. Therefore, so long as she has not yet been called to the grace that is through faith, she has not yet put aside the cup of wrath. But when she honors Christ by faith, then indeed the cup will certainly be taken from her, and she too will delight in the other good things, concerning which it is

written, that They will forget their former affliction, and it shall not come into their heart; but rather there will be everlasting joy and gladness upon their head. For sorrow, grief, and sighing have fled away.

⁵⁷ But when the cup is taken from her, it will be given to the swarm of those who wronged her. And in what way did they wrong her? By not allowing them to walk uprightly, nor indeed to tread a blameless path, through which, while achieving a life pleasing to God, and being clothed in the splendor of the evangelical life, they might be able, together with those who have believed in Christ, to arrive at the city above. Who then could be understood as those who wronged her? For as far as saying what is ready to hand and apparent, first, those appointed to lead the Synagogue, who indeed most of all have drunk the cup of wrath. For by how much more distinguished a good standing they had than others, by so much more burdensome an assault of the war they have had, being thrust out of honor and glory, wealth and luxury, and even life itself. But if it is necessary to say something of the hidden things too (and I think this is necessary), we say that the Synagogue of the Jews has been wronged, not only by those appointed to lead, but also by diabolical perversity, which did not allow them to receive the divine light into their mind, so that they might understand him who calls to salvation, him who justifies the ungodly, and delivering from judgment, and dragging out from the bonds of death, I mean Christ. And of this Paul is a witness, having written thus:

⁵⁸ "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them. Yea, and the Son Himself said that something of this sort happened to the herds of the Jews, and He clearly convicted them, how from an unclean spirit they became hard and disobedient, and were carried off to every sort of evil. For He said, "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and when he findeth none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. Then he taketh seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation. For they served the gods there in Egypt, and the unclean spirit was in them. But when they were redeemed through Moses, and received the law as the determiner of what must be done (they heard it saying clearly:

"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"), the unclean spirit was also driven from their hearts. But since they did not have the fear of God in themselves, nor did they receive Jesus as an indweller through faith ("For he dwells in our hearts by faith," as it is written);

⁵⁹ that ancient and unclean spirit, seeing the place empty, has rushed in again, and has dwelt in them, and their last state has become worse than the first. That the inventor of impiety also prepared the traitor among the disciples to become such a one, is not unclear. For it is written, that after the morsel Satan entered into him. Therefore the Synagogue of the Jews has been punished, with Satan darkening it, and not allowing it to see with the eyes of the mind the light of the world, that is, Christ. But since they have been called to conversion, the cup of wrath and the chalice of stumbling has been given into the hands of those who wronged her; the wicked and opposing powers have been punished, with Christ the Savior of all casting them down to Hades, and having cast them into Tartarus with chains of darkness, delivered them to be kept for judgment on the great day to be punished. For these were the ones saying: Jerusalem, bow down that we may pass over, And she laid her back to the ground for those passing over her, that is, she laid herself down and submitted to those wishing to trample on her. The wicked powers do this, when they see a soul that is weakened, and casting aside its own mind, so as to be willing to submit easily to their own unholy and God-hated counsels.

DISCOURSE 27

¹ Awake, awake, O Zion; put on thy strength, O Zion, and put on thy glory, O Jerusalem, the holy city: there shall no more pass through thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Hearing Zion and Jerusalem in these things, do not think that simply the cities built of stones are being indicated. Rather, the word of the prophecy signifies the assembly of those called through faith, that is, the Church, from both the Jewish ranks and from the nations. Moreover, saying, 'Awake,' and that very often, he bestows on them a most abundant exhortation. For just as the all-wise Paul says, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: Thus, where the bitterness of the judgment is great, there is a consolation equal to the misfortunes, or rather, much more abundant than the faint things. And He has commanded her to put on her strength, and in addition to this, her glory. And strength might reasonably be understood as the practical, according to its operation, by

which the soul of each person goes toward some particular of the things to be done with a youthful spirit. And what other glory could there be besides the Lord of glory, who is Christ? to whom somewhere the divine melodist also says, at one time, that "Awake, my glory; and at another time again concerning everyone who believes in him, that "You are the boast of their strength. And in what manner we shall put on both the glory and the strength itself, the all-wise Paul has made clear to us.

² For he said again; "Put on our Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. And in addition to this; "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Yes, and indeed the prophet Isaiah has introduced the person of the Church as in the manner of a woman variously adorned, saying: "Let my soul rejoice in the Lord. For He has clothed me with the garment of salvation, and the tunic of gladness. Christ is therefore a most fitting garment for every saint; and a tunic of spiritual gladness, the author for us of strength and glory. And he calls the Church a holy city. For it was sanctified not through the worship according to the law (for the law made no one perfect), but by becoming conformed to Christ, and a partaker of his divine nature, that is, by participation in the Holy Spirit, in whom we were also sealed for the day of redemption, having washed away all filth, and being delivered from every stain. For we have been justified through faith in him, and we have been enriched with security from him against anything whatsoever, and we are, as it were, walled in by his grace, which wards off every diabolical attack against us, and the savage uprisings of the opposing powers. And this he teaches, saying as to Zion, that is, Jerusalem, which is the Church of the living God; The uncircumcised and the unclean will no longer pass through you.

³ For historically indeed you will understand what was said in this way: The nations neighboring Jerusalem might be understood as uncircumcised and unclean, knowing neither the God who is by nature and in truth, nor indeed having received the instruction through the law; and they fought very often against those of the blood of Israel, so that in many places they were seen as superior in the power that was in them, and they all but passed through it, as though having it cast under their feet. And from the things that happened historically, at times, come, let us fashion the spiritual things. The hordes of demons, that is, the world-rulers of this darkness, and with them the profane Satan, have under their feet the souls not yet subject to

God, and they, as it were, pass through them, with no one hindering, that is, defending; but when, having been reconciled to God, they have him as their glory and strength, then indeed, then their greed will cease. For it is written that "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. Therefore uncircumcised and unclean might be understood as the abominable, and profane, and productive of all filth, and evil, and opposing powers. Shake off the dust, and arise, and sit down, Jerusalem. Loose the bond from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion. He then shows her knowledgeable of holy boasts;

⁴and in what way she will put on the strength of her arm, and in addition to this, the glory, he teaches clearly. First, he commands her to shake off the dust, and thus to arise, and to sit down, and to loose the bond from her neck; and by "dust" in this, as I think, it is fitting to understand the earthly mindset, and the impurity of fleshly desires. For just as it is in every way necessary for those lying on the ground to be filled with soil and dust, in the same way, I think, also for those who have their mind cast down and an earthly mindset, the thoughts of carnal impurity sit within. Therefore it is necessary for us, who have been called into spiritual intimacy with our Lord Jesus Christ, and are about to put Him on as strength and glory, to first shake off the earthly and worldly mindset, and to first purify the mind, and, as the all-wise Paul says, to put off the old man which is being corrupted according to the desires of deceit, and to put on the new man which is being renewed in the image of Him who created him. Having done this we rise up, that is, we use an upright and steadfast mind, and a heart made firm, according to what was said elsewhere by God through one of the prophets: "Make yourself stand, Zion. And the divine David also sings somewhere, that "He set my feet upon a rock, and made my steps secure.

⁵And it is also written in the book of Psalms: "God sits upon his holy throne," that is, He perpetually has the firm and established nature of His own kingdom. For nothing bodily should be thought of in relation to God. And there follows the sitting, that is, the having a mindset that is firm and established, and the putting off of the bond of the neck. For each one is bound by the chains of his own sins, and we have been brought under the yoke of sin, and of Satan himself. But in Christ we are freed from these things too; and having broken their bonds, as it is written, and having cast off their yoke from ourselves, with a free and relaxed mind we achieve the

good. Thus somewhere the God of all says to us through one of the prophets: "And you shall go out, and leap like calves released from bonds, and you shall trample the lawless; for they shall be as ash under your feet. And adding to these, The captive daughter Zion, first lets us understand that God pities those who have fallen under diabolical yokes and have served sin. Then in addition to this he shows that we fall into this, although it was possible not to suffer it. For having named Zion a captive, he also calls her a daughter. Then how was it possible for the daughter of God, who had been deemed worthy of such resplendent glory, to be caught in the snares of captivity?

6 Who then brought her to this? Not the weakness of the [sō] living one from anywhere, but the counsel and choice of her who suffered, having run outside the compassion of the Father, by choosing the evil rather, and by a vote for the worse, destroying the good. For thus says the Lord: You were sold for nothing, and you shall not be redeemed with silver. Having called her captive, he necessarily adds also the things that always befall those who fall into this misery. For they are carried off into slavery, with no one paying a price for them, but as prizes, and the fruits of war and of a barbarian invasion; for by violence and necessity they are called to unwilling service. Thus says the God of all her redemption will also be. For Satan seized the race on earth, and having it like a captive, he unbearably oppressed the world under heaven, having bound it with the yokes of his own wickedness. But the only-begotten Word of God became man, who has conquered on our behalf; and entering into the house of the strong man, and binding him, he plundered his goods, and transferred to himself all those on the earth. Therefore, as we were seized, so also we have been redeemed. For Christ did not take us from a willing captor, but rather by crushing his strength, and as God driving away the phalanx of demons. Therefore we have neither been sold for silver, nor have we been redeemed in the same way;

7 but rather by the strength of Christ, the Savior of us all. For being a good shepherd, he has laid down his life for his own sheep, and has saved us by his own blood; for by his wound we were healed; and he was weakened for our sins; but we have been set free, having shaken off both the yoke of sin and the rapacity of the devil. Thus says the Lord: My people went down to Egypt previously to sojourn there, and they were led by force to the Assyrians. And now why are you here? Thus says the Lord: Because my people were taken for nothing, you marvel and wail. Thus says the Lord: For your sake

my name is continually blasphemed among the nations. Having called Zion captive, he wishes to know the cause for which it has happened to her to fall into this disgrace and misery. For sometimes it brings back to better things those who have suffered something unexpected, the fact of not remaining in ignorance of their sins. For this reason he usefully reminds them of the things that happened from time to time to those before them. For when a famine was severe, Jacob went down at that time to Egypt, and his journey was unwilling, being unable to find provisions from anywhere. And Israel was also carried away to the Assyrians, when the king of the Chaldeans at that time ravaged Judea. And what was the reason for this? For having departed from being genuine, and from the duty [alt.

8 the] to worship God alone, having senselessly cast off what seemed right according to the law [corr. having pushed away], they have inclined to idols and worshipped the works of their own hands; this became for them the reason for being captured by the hands of enemies, and fleeing the land that bore them, and serving their foes, inhabiting the country of the Persians and Medes. By force, therefore, they were led; for they were not willing in these matters. But now why are you here? He says "here" instead of "scattered in the lands of the nations, and dispersed to every wind," according to the voice of the prophet. For the Roman sword drove away from all of Judea those who were strong enough to flee at all. Or, "here," means, "In such a state of affairs as you are now in. And they have come to be, as I said, in extreme misery, on the one hand, with the army of the Romans overrunning their country according to the law of war, and on the other hand, with the whole city sacked, and the temple itself burned down. Why then have they come to be in these circumstances? he says; or is it not clearly because they did not accept the justifying faith, but in many ways insulted the one calling them to it, and unholily laid hands on him himself, after the just men and prophets who were sent, of whom they killed some and stoned others?

9 And in these things the prophetic word has revealed this to us concerning the common multitude. But since it was the custom especially for the teachers of the Jews to raise a high brow against every nation, and for Israel to sometimes remain uncaptured and unconquered by its enemies, if indeed it was called the inheritance of God and a holy people; then when it happened that Judea was brought down in the ways I just mentioned, they were astonished and wailed, as if the evil had run beyond all hope for them.

For this reason the God of all says to them: Because my people were taken, he says, for nothing, you marvel, and you wail. Thus says the Lord: For your sake my name is continually blasphemed among the nations. For you yourselves, he says, have become responsible for the suffering of those under you, leaving them untaught, or rather not allowing them at all to turn to God, and to see with the eyes of the mind the one who came down from heaven, the God Logos who appeared in human form, so that he might proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, and to heal those who have a broken [crushed] heart, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Therefore for your sake my name is blasphemed among the nations.

¹⁰ For since Israel was scattered, he says, in every country and city, no one throughout the whole earth was ignorant that the holy city had been sacked, and that the temple itself had become a work of fire; then they slander my name, and mock my glory. For perhaps they think that my hand, which has always been a helper to Israel, has grown weak, but they are still ignorant of the true reason, and there is no one among them who understands that they are paying the penalties for the killing of the Lord and many other transgressions. Therefore my people will know my name in that day in that day, that I myself am he that speaks: I am present; as a season upon the mountains, as the feet of one preaching a message of peace, as one preaching good things. For since, he says, on account of your sloth I was blasphemed among the nations, I will not endure the slander, nor will I allow my glory to be assailed by calumnious voices. But in that time, in which I will shine upon those on the earth with flesh, those who become my peoples, having accepted the faith, whether they be from the Jews or from the gentiles, these will know my name. And by name he means glory. For it is the custom of the divinely-inspired Scripture to speak thus. For it is written, that "A good name is to be chosen, rather than great riches.

¹¹ We who have been called by him have known his glory, and we do not approach Christ, the Savior of all, as a human judge; but even if the Word became flesh, we believe that, being God by nature, and ineffably begotten of God the Father, he is above all creation, and is pre-eminent on the highest thrones, and rules over all things, and has a most powerful right hand, and easily saves whomsoever he might choose of those who have come to be under him, and absolutely nothing surpasses his power. But Israel was

not so disposed. For they paid attention to him as to one of us, and not as to God who had become man. For this reason they sometimes said: "Who are you? And what do you make yourself to be? and: "For a good work we do not stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God. Nevertheless, whoever might be called to the knowledge of truth, he says, will know my glory. For I myself am he who speaks in the prophets: I am present. For God the Lord has appeared to us, as it is written. This the all-wise Paul also teaches, saying: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the worlds.

¹² It must be observed therefore in these things, that God the Father brought all things into being through the Son, and has spoken to us in the last times, not as through another son, the one according to the flesh from a woman, as some of the perverse have thought, but as there being one Son with the flesh, the Word who became man for us, who is also the maker of the ages. I am present then as a season upon the mountains, he says; and by season he means the spring. Come, then, let us observe the spiritual things as from an manifest fact. What does the spring, seen on the mountains, accomplish? It crowns the plants with new blossom, and from barrenness it moves them to bringing forth what each might naturally have. We will find something of this sort also written in the Song of Songs; "For arise, come, he says, my companion, my beautiful one, my dove; for behold, the winter has passed, the rain has passed by for itself, the flowers have appeared on the earth, the time of pruning has arrived. For when winter has passed, the bright spring rises for the earth, and makes it a nurse of flowers, and becomes the mother of ripe fruits. Something of this sort has also been done for us in an intelligible way. For the apostate dragon made winter under heaven, rendering it dry and fruitless.

¹³ For there was no one at all who did good, not even one, "But all turned aside together, they have become worthless. But when the Only-begotten appeared with the flesh, he became for us as a season upon the mountains. For having, as it were, lost our bloom and cast off from our own souls the beauty of all virtue, we blossomed again in him and have been filled with spiritual fruitfulness, so as to be able to say what is in the Song of Songs: "Let my beloved come down into his garden, and eat the fruit of his choice trees. He be-

came, then, as a season upon the mountains, and as the feet of one preaching a message of peace, and preaching good things; for with sin lying between us and God, we were separated from him, and were estranged from the Master, and rising up against his divine laws, and acting contrary to the Master's will, and were placed in the rank of enemies. But Christ appeared the our peace, who took away the sin that lay between, and prepared us to enter into friendship with the Father, and united us through himself; for through him we have had access. Just as, therefore, if someone should come, it says, running swiftly and fast, saying that enemies have been captured, and announcing peace, and bringing good news;

¹⁴ So also the Savior of all visited the world in the flesh, and became for us an arbiter of peace with God the Father, Satan having been destroyed, and all his host having been put out of the way, and that a time has come, in which it is possible for those who wish to partake of every good thing; for it will certainly follow for those who have believed in him, and have chosen to think and do his will, to have the most abundant participation in heavenly goods, and to be filled with every good hope; for the Savior is a lavish giver. That I will make your salvation heard, saying: Zion, your God shall reign, because the voice of those who guard you has been lifted up, and with the voice they will rejoice together; for eyes shall see to eyes, when the Lord shall have mercy on Zion. Now, he again names Zion in these words, not some earthly city, but rather his holy Church, which he established from the two peoples. For it is written that, "Rejoice, O nations, with his people. And Christ is said to have made both one, and to have broken down the middle wall of the partition, and to have abolished the law of commandments in ordinances. But with the proclamation of the evangelical message, which is also full of true doctrines, the power of the shadow in the law has ceased, that is, the worship and approach through blood.

¹⁵ Zion, therefore, is to be understood as the Church, as I said, which Christ himself presented to himself, not having spot or wrinkle, but rather holy and blameless. Of this he made salvation heard, that is, renowned. For the power of the evangelical proclamations has escaped the notice of absolutely no one on earth; nor has anyone remained unheard of the salvation through Christ. For he also said through the lyre of the Psalmist: "Hear this, all nations; give ear, all you inhabitants of the world. And just as the memory of demons perished with a sound, that is, publicly and notoriously,

and no one was ignorant of the destruction of the tyranny of demons; so also the divine and heavenly proclamation has become audible to those everywhere, bringing salvation to those who have recognized the appearance of Christ. And what is the power of the proclamation? Zion, your God shall reign. For long ago, that is, before the coming of our Savior, Satan had reigned over us through sin, and a yoke of tyrannical cruelty was cast upon those throughout the whole earth. But when the king and Lord of all shone upon us, having broken their bonds, and having cast off the yoke of him who formerly had the advantage, we subjected our neck to the scepters of God, and God the Father has reigned over us through the Son, and the matter has become for us an occasion for festival. At any rate, David sings, and says: "The Lord has reigned, let the earth rejoice. And again:

¹⁶ "Sing praises then with understanding, God has reigned over all the nations. And to this, as I said, the Savior himself has also called us, saying: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you. Therefore, we were acting wretchedly, and we were in the worst of evils, yoked to a savage tyrant, and having submitted to the yoke of sin. But the power of the sacred proclamations announced the kingdom of Christ, and we are all under him. For it has been proclaimed, saying, that "Zion, your God shall reign. But how he will reign, or in what manner, he himself immediately clarified, saying, that "The voice of those who guard you has been lifted up. And the guardians would be the divine disciples, or rather, simply all who know how and are able to initiate, and who persuade the the called, at least to be able to perform the good very well, and to hold fast to the love for Christ, and to make a right and blameless confession of faith in him. These are good shepherds, keeping for the chief shepherd of all the rational flock, and warding off the attacks of untamed beasts. He says their voice is lifted up, that is, to be heard by those everywhere. For it was said to them through the voice of Isaiah:

¹⁷ "Go up on a high mountain, you who bring good tidings to Zion, lift up your voice with strength, you who bring good tidings to Jerusalem. Lift it up, do not be afraid. For the apostolic proclamation is piercing and altogether unknown to no one. And that everything will run prosperously for them, and that those to whom their word would be given will be readily called, and that they themselves will rejoice greatly, seeing the fruits of their own initiation, he makes it clear, saying, that With the voice they will rejoice togeth-

er. For as soon as they speak, he says, the multitude of those who have been initiated will follow, and those who are being instructed will run to the faith without delay. And this is a joy to those who have been commanded to teach. At any rate, Paul writes to those who believed through him, that "You are my joy and my crown. That the ready obedience of those being initiated followed the initiations of the saints in most places, one might see through many examples, by perusing the holy and God-inspired Scripture. For in Jerusalem, the divine disciples were speaking to the ranks of the Jews; but as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles: "Three thousand men were added in one day. And indeed the divine Paul, together with the blessed Silas, being prisoners, were singing hymns to God in the middle of the night.

¹⁸ But when a holy angel came to the prison and loosened everyone's bonds, the jailer, becoming terrified, wanted to kill himself; but when Paul cried out: "Do not do yourself any harm; for we are all here; marveling at the miracle, he was baptized with all his household. That the matter became an occasion of gladness for him, how is it possible to doubt? Therefore, at the heels, he says, of the initiation, the ready obedience of the called will run. And your eyes will see eye to eye, when the Lord will have mercy on Zion. Whom will they see, if not the author of salvation, that is, Christ? For the Word was made flesh, and the Psalmist is a witness to this, saying: "God will come manifestly, our God, and he will not keep silent. That is, what I said, that With the voice they will rejoice together, and this you will see with your own eyes, he says, at that time, when the Lord will have mercy on Zion, adding to all the grace through faith, and the abundant enjoyment of the heavenly goods. Let the desolate places of Jerusalem break forth into joy together, because the Lord has had mercy on her, and has redeemed Jerusalem. And the Lord will reveal his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation from God.

¹⁹ To break forth into joy would signify the use of the voice, offering up songs of thanksgiving, and being eager to practice the doxologies, through which God would be gladdened. For it is written in the book of Psalms: "And my tongue will meditate on your justice, all the day long on your praise; and for those who wish to do this, the matter will be for gladness. Since he says the desolate places of Jerusalem must do this, we say that thing of necessity, wishing to clarify the meaning of the preceding words. Those who inhabit a wide and long city, if they are so many in number as to be able to fill it, leave

no place of it desolate; but when they are few in number because many have died, or war has broken out, or some other cause has brought it to this, most of the places or dwellings in it remain empty. Those from Israel have suffered something of this sort. For since they became deicides, and full of blood they have held back their hands, they have been consumed by the war with the Romans, so that very few of those saved were left, and the holy city was empty of men. But its desolate places, he says, will rejoice. For houses are gloomy, and as it were full of sadness, when they have no inhabitants; but somehow cheerful and as if laughing, if they should have very many settled in them. From the history, then, let us say something of spiritual things:

²⁰ The Church from the Gentiles, that is, those from the Gentiles who have believed, who are also named Sion, and indeed Jerusalem, were few in the beginning, and the truly holy city of God, that is, the Church, was like a desert. But nothing has remained idle in it; for it has been filled through Christ. And so it was said to her: "Lift up your eyes round about, and see your children gathered together." Behold, these come from afar, these from the north and the sea, and others from the land of the Persians. And you will say, he says, in your heart: Who has begotten me these? I was childless and a widow, but where were these for me? And again: "Enlarge the place of your tent, and of your courts; fix them, spare not; stretch out still to the right and to the left. For from every nation, city, and country there has been a concourse to Christ, the Gentiles having been called through faith, so that those who turn are called from the east, and south, and west, and north, being many more than those of the blood of Israel. And the prophet Isaiah himself revealed this, saying concerning the Church and the Synagogue of the Jews: "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor, for many are the children of the desolate one rather than of her who has a husband.

²¹ For he calls the Church from the Gentiles barren, she who does not bear, and in addition to this, desolate. For she was childless and desolate, that is, a widow, not having the word which is the sower of all good. But he says that the Synagogue of the Jews is married, because it was yoked to the law through Moses, and became pregnant with the sacred ordinances, through which it was possible to bear fruit to God through the worship that was still in shadows and types. But many are the children of the desolate one, that is, of the widow, rather than of her who has a husband. And in what way this

will be, he clarified by adding that the Lord will reveal his holy arm in the sight of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation from God. For when the arm of God the Father, that is, the Son, became manifest among those throughout all the earth, when he was made known to all the nations, and the ends of the earth, that is, those from one end to the other, have seen the salvation from him, that is, clearly through faith, then the desolate places of Jerusalem, clearly the spiritual one, were filled, and the multitude of those called is beyond number. It is a custom in the divinely inspired Scripture to call the Son the arm of God the Father.

22 For he is his power and all-powerful right hand, through whom he works all things, and concerning it the divine David says: "Let your hand be strengthened, let your right hand be exalted. And again concerning God the Father: "Sing to the Lord a new song, for the Lord has done wonderful things; his right hand has saved him, and his holy arm. Depart, depart, go out from there, and touch no unclean thing. Go out from the midst of her, be separate, you who bear the vessels of the Lord, because you will not go out with haste, nor by flight. For the Lord will go before you, and the Lord God of Israel will be your rear guard. The word seems to be spoken by God either to those who have been gathered together through faith, and have been called children of the Church, or perhaps to the holy mystagogues, clearly the apostles, and evangelists, who have become a light to the world under heaven, conveying the word of the evangelical proclamations to those throughout all the earth. He has therefore commanded these to depart, and to withdraw from the unbelievers, as from those who are defiled, because they chose not to believe in Christ, but also with the crimes of decide their own to declare their heads guilty. Therefore, go out and touch not the unclean thing, that is, be cut off from communion with them, so as not to even want to be sharpened by them. For he who touches pitch, it says, will be defiled;

23 for it is necessary that those who have believed in Christ, and through Him have been called to the cleansing of sin and to a participation in holiness, should love to be carried out of Jewish ignorance, and to be in every way of a different mind from them, and to be separated completely; for there is no communion of light with darkness, nor any part for a believer with an unbeliever. And indeed, the all-wise Paul writes to those from Galatia, who, after justification in Christ, dared to relapse into worship under the law: "O

foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being perfected in the flesh? For they were being circumcised without understanding, although they had received the circumcision in the Spirit, that is, through Christ. Therefore, necessarily, in these things the God of all says, "Depart," and "Go out from there," and "Be separate, you who bear the vessels of the Lord. For those who have honored Emmanuel in faith, and have become partakers of his divine nature, by partaking of the Holy Spirit, and have been filled with his sacred gifts, bear vessels for God. And in what manner, the all-wise Paul will teach, saying:

²⁴ "Put on the whole armor of God; this is the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. For having this spiritual panoply, they lead out against Satan, and stand against the powers with him, leaping forth in a way and defending their own souls and the peoples under their hand; for this is the role of leaders. But having commanded to go out from her midst, "You shall not go out with haste," he says, "nor shall you go by flight. For he does not command them to depart from the Jewish orders as fugitives, that is, as those who are afraid, but rather in a relaxed manner and as if with authority, as those refusing to want to live with those so defiled, and to be numbered with the profane and wicked. Therefore, "You shall not go by flight," he says; but that their affairs will also come with ease, and nothing at all hard, or steep, or rough will meet them, he has fully assured them by saying, that "the Lord will go before you, and the God who gathers you. And with God being with them and going before, what will there be to harm the bearers of the sacred proclamations? Or rather, how will not all things turn out for them according to their prayer, and they run preaching as if on a smooth road?

²⁵ Behold, my servant shall understand, and shall be exalted, and shall be glorified exceedingly. In the way that many will be astonished at you, so your appearance shall be without honor from men, and your glory from men. And so many nations will marvel at him, and kings will shut their mouths; because they to whom it was not reported concerning him will see, and they who have not heard will understand. In these things, God the Father openly makes speeches concerning our Savior of all, Christ. For "Behold, my servant

shall understand," he says; and by servant you will understand the Son, that is, the slave. For the Word, being God, took the form of a slave, and being Lord of all, he entered into the measures of humanity. "For he did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself. Therefore, when he became man, having sent himself into humiliation, then he was also blamelessly named a slave, having taken the form of slavery. But, "He will understand," he says, instead of, "He will do and speak all things with the God-befitting understanding and wisdom.

26 And it is a work of God-befitting wisdom, and before all others, for the only-begotten Word of God to become flesh, that is, man, and to become poor with to those on earth, that we might be enriched by his poverty, that believing in him we might wash away the defilements of sin, since the law through Moses was powerless to remove sins, that by the death of his own flesh he might abolish death, and overthrow corruption, and reforge to incorruption those held fast by death, and make the man on earth a citizen of heaven, and through himself unite to God the Father the one who long ago was a runaway, and proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, and heal the brokenhearted, and empty Hades, and remove Satan from his rule and dominion over all. Therefore my servant shall understand, it says. For there is nothing at all unintelligent, or rather, unwise, in what has been done for us. For he has made all things in wisdom, according to the voice of the Psalmist. For this reason he will be exalted, it says, and glorified exceedingly. For God is glorified by us as Lord, and we call him Savior and Redeemer. And we have believed this to be according to truth. But that the word from God the Father might be entirely true and beyond reproach, it necessarily added that Just as many will be astonished at you, so will your appearance be without honor from men, and your glory from men.

27 For those who have recognized his epiphany, and have been able with the eyes of the mind to perceive the greatness of the divine authority within him, are amazed at the economy; such was the prophet Habakkuk, who says, "O Lord, I have heard your report, and was afraid; I considered your works, and was astonished. But those who did not understand his glory, remaining unbelieving and without understanding, impiously condemned him to dishonor and shame, calling him a Samaritan, a glutton and a drunkard, and born of fornication, and in addition to these, a sinner. Therefore, as many

will be astonished at you, so also among men will your appearance be without honor, and your glory from men. But just as this will happen, so also will many nations marvel at you, and kings will shut their mouths. For the all-daring Jews, although worthy of no account, dared to mock, and often unleashing an unbridled tongue against him, they attacked him with abusive words. But many kings, fearing him as God, and offering glory to him as king of all, will shut their mouths, that is, they will say nothing harsh, nor will they utter anything that defiles the glory of Christ.

28 And that the divine and sacred and saving proclamation, that is the gospel, will not come from those among whom his appearance was dishonored, but rather from those who shut their mouths and were amazed at his glory, he showed by saying, that Those to whom it was not announced concerning him shall see, and those who have not heard shall understand. For it was announced to those of Israel through the law and the prophets concerning Christ, but to the nations not at all. But these, he says, will rather see the salvation from him; and those who have never heard of his mysteries, these will understand them, by believing, clearly. For faith is the root and nurse of understanding, and like an entrance leading to piety and life, bringing in those who receive it. And so the prophet Isaiah says, "If you do not believe, you will not understand. Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? We announced before him, as a child, as a root in a thirsty land. A great discourse has always been made by the holy prophets concerning the Savior of us all, and they have not ceased to admonish, announcing very clearly, that God the Word will come at the appointed times in human form, and that he will work miracles in a manner befitting God. And he works both this and that, calling the straying to the straight path, and justifying the ungodly in faith.

29 But they profited those of the blood of Israel very little, who were greatly inclined to disobedience; so that although it was necessary to snatch the prediction, and to gather life-giving knowledge, and to store it in their own hearts, from the opposite, they leap upon the mystagogues, and attack them, saying very bitterly: "Speak other things to us, and announce to us another deceit. And so the prophet Jeremiah, as one brought down into despondency by the immeasurable cruelty of the Jews, says somewhere thus: "Woe is me, mother! what a man you bore me, judged and contended with in all the earth? I have neither profited, nor has anyone profited me. My

strength has failed among those who curse me. But in sum, the whole chorus of the saints, speaking as it were about Jerusalem, say: "We would have healed Babylon, but she was not healed. Let us forsake her, and let each go to his own land; for her judgment has reached to heaven, it has been lifted up even to the stars. For in these words they call Jerusalem Babylon, as one eager to imitate its ways, and in no way inferior to the land of the gentiles, with respect to wickedness, and in not enduring to honor the law, or the benefit of prophetic instruction. This is the meaning and power of the preceding verses. For he accuses Israel of having completely turned aside to disobedience, and says: Who has believed our report?

³⁰ For we, O Master, he says, have been initiated by you into the word concerning the incarnation, and we have had this report; but no one has believed, and to no one has your arm been revealed, of the Lord and God of all. It is the custom in the divinely-inspired Scripture to call the Son the arm of God the Father, as has been shown in many places. But as if someone were objecting and saying: You, O prophets, have possessed the report through the Spirit, and have been enriched with the knowledge of the mystery; did you then proclaim the mystery to others? Yes, they say, we announced, and we almost solemnly testified, saying, that we shall be before him as a field, that is, as a flourishing and fruitful field, or also as a root in thirsty ground, the Only-begotten clearly watering us with divine and ineffable words, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. For long ago the whole earth was as it were dry and fruitless, and like a thirsty land, having [no] cultivated fruits. But since it was enriched with the rain from Christ, clearly the spiritual rain, and the supply through the Holy Spirit, we sprouted as a root, that is, as a plant both beautiful and flourishing. And so one of the holy prophets said to us: "And all the nations will call you blessed, because you will be a desirable land, says the Lord almighty. And he calls desirable that which is fruitful and most fertile;

³¹ for this is welcome to farmers. But that the once thorn-bearing, dry and waterless land has been changed into a most fertile one, and to be able to be rich in spiritual fruits, the God of all will make clear, speaking through the voice of Isaiah: "And it shall be, instead of the thornbush shall come up the cypress tree, and instead of the fleabane shall come up the myrtle tree. For thornbush and fleabane are kinds of thorns, and the barren and waterless land always nourishes them; but the myrtle and the cypress flourish in

gardens. When the thorn is removed, therefore, he says, the most fragrant of plants will then spring up, when the thirsty land becomes watered, God saying, that I will make the desert into pools, and the thirsty land into water-courses. I will put in the waterless land the cedar, and the box-tree, and the myrtle, and the cypress, and the poplar. Therefore we announced, that by believing in Christ himself, we shall be before him, that is, watched over by him, as a field, as a root, that is, as a plant in a once thirsty land, but now made watered by him. He has no form, nor glory; and we saw him and he had no form, nor beauty. But his form was dishonored, lacking beyond all men. What then does the prophet say in these words, or what meaning might one apply to what has been said, Come now, let us consider again, as we can.

32 For it has been acknowledged that we have also announced, that is, we have made the prediction complete, that he will come in due time. But perhaps someone might say to this: What then, if the Word, being God, came down from heaven, crowned with glory befitting God, and shining with unapproachable light, appeared to those on earth, and was unapproachable because of the excess of glory? And indeed when he descended in the form of fire upon Mount Sinai, there was darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, and fire darting on high, and smoke, and many other things besides these, productive of the utmost terror and dread, so that the sight became unbearable to the beholders. And indeed those of Israel asked for a mediator, saying to the most excellent Moses: "Speak you to us, and let not God speak to us, lest we die. It is no wonder then, he says, if you predicted it, but he appeared to those on earth having an unapproachable glory, and was unbearable to anyone. What then do the prophets say? They respond ardently, saying: Disobedience is without excuse, apostasy has no pretext, he has no form, nor glory. For he was not in a form, he says, and glory befitting God. For he emptied himself, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself. And we say these things, having the tradition not from hearing alone, but having also seen with our own eyes him who is proclaimed.

33 We saw him, and he had no form, nor beauty, that is, beauty befitting God, but his form was without honor. For human things are small, and of no account, and altogether without honor, compared at least to the divine and supreme excellence, and the most resplendent beauty of the nature that

is above all; and indeed it is said: Fair in beauty beyond the sons of men. And he says something even greater: Lacking beyond all men, clearly referring to his form, just as if they had said: For it is possible to see some among men who are distinguished by the splendor of their dignities; raised on high by retinues from wealth, and ruling widely, or, in some other way, being in earthly excellences. But Emmanuel was not among these, but in a small and lowly station, so as to seem inferior to other men. And the saying is true. For he was not born of a rich mother, the holy Virgin, but he came through all things that are small, that he might exalt the humble, and make desirable that which is without honor. And from another point of view, being God, Lord and king of all, what need would he have of splendor among men? A man in suffering, and knowing how to bear sickness; because his face was turned away, he was dishonored, and was not esteemed. Having said, that we also *saw him, and he had no form, nor beauty*, they clearly declare in what state of countenance they beheld him who is proclaimed.

³⁴ For he resembles a man, they say, who is in suffering, but nobly bears sickness, that is, affliction, or suffering evil. For perhaps they saw the Savior's face as downcast, and as it were in turmoil and fear, since indeed he was already about to suffer death upon the cross; when he also said, at one time, "Now is my soul troubled; and at another time again: "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. —And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause I came to this hour. And one of the holy evangelists also said that when the time was at hand, in which he was about to suffer, he began to be sorrowful and very heavy. For although the only-begotten Word of the Father, being God by nature, and unsusceptible to passions, and grief, and all such things whatsoever, he permitted our nature not to be without pain when temptation assailed, proving by all means that he became as we are, and not, as some thought, a shadow and an image seen on earth, but that he became a man in very deed. But his face, he says, was turned away. And "turned away" is instead of "was ashamed," "was dishonored," and "was not esteemed. For Pilate sent Jesus to Herod; but he, it says, set him at naught and sent him back. Not for he reckoned Jesus to be, and his face was dishonored, that is, by the sending of spittle, and by Pilate's soldiers striking him, and saying:

³⁵ "Prophecy to us, Christ, who is it that struck you. And he was dishonored in another way, by enduring the torments of scourges, and the

blows from the servants. For he said through the voice of Isaiah: "I gave my back to scourges, and my cheeks to blows, and I did not turn my face away from the shame of spitting. Therefore, as I said, the divine prophets seem to have seen in a vision, that is, through the Holy Spirit, the Son, or rather his face not free from human-like sorrow, since indeed the time was at hand, in which he had to suffer, so that by the death of his own flesh he might abolish death, having removed the sin of the world. This one bears our sins, and is in pain for us; and we considered him to be in toil, and in affliction, and in distress. But he was wounded for our sins, and was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, by his stripe we were healed. We all like sheep have gone astray; every man has gone astray in his own way, and the Lord has delivered him up for our sins.

³⁶ Our Lord Jesus Christ endured the cross, despising the shame, and became obedient to the Father unto death, and bore the impiety of the Jews, so that, as I just said, he might take away the sin of the world, the letter of the law, that is, the worship according to the law, having no power to accomplish this. For it was impossible for the blood of goats and bulls to take away sins. Indeed, he suffered outside the gate, so that, as Paul says, he might sanctify the people through his own blood; for he suffered, not for himself, far from it, but for all under heaven. And the all-wise Paul will testify in writing about God the Father, that "He did not spare His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, that with him he might also freely give us all things. And he himself somewhere says through the lyre of the Psalmist to the Father and God in heaven: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you had no pleasure, then I said: Behold, I come. In the scroll of the book it is written of me, to do, O God, your will, I desired.

³⁷ For since the worship according to the law was useless for those on earth for taking away sins, since sacrifices of oxen and slaughter of sheep were not desired by God, the true lamb, who takes away the sin of the world, has offered himself for us as a fragrant offering; then having endured the death of the flesh, he freed all under heaven, both from death and from sin. For one more worthy than all suffered for all, that he might rule and reign over all. And Paul will again confirm this in writing: "For this reason Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. And again: "One died for all, that those who live might no longer live for

themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised. Rightly therefore the prophet says, that "This one being in affliction, who knows how to bear weaknesses, whose face was turned away, who was dishonored, and not esteemed, bears our sins, and is in pain for us, and we considered him to be in toil, and in affliction, and in distress. Observe now for me again, with how much skill the prophetic word proceeds in these things. For it assumes the person of those who do not know the mystery of Christ, but who thought that he was in his passion as one who would put away his own sins.

38 For we considered him to be in toil, and in affliction, and in distress, it says, that is, we thought the passion happened to him as a stroke from God, as if for certain sins, and on account of this sin to be in toil, and in affliction, and in distress. But it is not so at all, but rather he was wounded for the sins of us, and he was weakened on account of our iniquities. Then he also gives other reasons, through which it is possible to see that for the sake of our salvation, and life, he who knew no sin came to be in suffering. For of old we were set at enmity with God, fighting against his sacred laws, and not having the yoke of obedience, and refusing to serve him. But it was necessary, he says, for those who had slipped into such insolence to be chastened with a scourge; so that, departing from evil things, we might destroy the enmity and be at peace with God, by submitting our neck to him, and by trying to do what is pleasing to him. But this chastisement, he says, which ought rather to have been brought upon those who had sinned, so that they who were at war with God might be reconciled, came upon him. And this, I think, is the meaning of, The chastisement of our peace was upon him. And he makes the meaning of the matter clearer, by adding immediately, By his wound we were healed.

39 For he suffered, as I said, for our sake. For we all went astray like sheep; a man went astray in his way, and the Lord delivered him up for our sins. Therefore we have gone astray, we have departed from the living God, following our own pleasures. But the Lord of all, that is, God the Father, on account of our sins delivered him up, so that he might free us from punishment, and save those who believe. And knowing this, Christ himself said: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For as the rain comes down, or the snow from heaven, and does not return until it waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and sprout, and gives seed to the

sower, and bread for food; so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return, until it has accomplished all that I willed. As from a clear and most well-known example he tries to convince us how great is the power of his commands. For rain or snow falls from heaven, and no one could hinder it when it is sent down from God; rather the purpose of him who sends it runs to its completion; for it renders all the earth fruitful, so that the farmers have great abundance both of seeds and of food.

⁴⁰ For when the time comes for the well-nourished ear of grain to be given up by the earth, farmers seek not only those things which can suffice for food, but also whatever will be sufficient for them again, when the season calls for them to labor. So, he says, no one could restrain my word, nor would it be turned back, that is, it will not cease, until what seems good to me comes to pass. And the word is true; for as the prophet Isaiah says, "What the holy God has planned, who will scatter, and his high hand, who will turn it back? For who will be so great as to stand against divine decrees, and to rise up against the master's will? No one at all. Therefore, whatever goes forth from the mouth of the God who truly is, this in every way and entirely will run to its completion; for it is in him to be able to accomplish all things, and in addition to this, not to lie. However, God the Father sent down to us on earth a kind of divine and spiritual rain, the comfort through Christ, that is, the provision of the evangelical proclamations, through which the whole earth has become fruitful and most fertile. For the divine David sings, and says: "You have visited the earth, and have watered it, you have multiplied to enrich it; water its furrows, multiply its produce, in its drops it will rejoice when it sprouts.

⁴¹ And indeed also through the voice of Moses, "My saying, he says, will come down as rain, and let my words come down as dew. And the all-wise Paul also writes to some: "Now may the God of peace increase your seed, and multiply the fruits of your righteousness. Therefore we have had spiritual fruitfulness, having received into our mind the provision through Christ, so as not only to gather the sacred food, that is, for us to have the life-giving bread, but also seed for the sower. For those who are leaders of the peoples, and knowledgeable in sacred dogmas, and are able to instruct others and who weave the word of mystagogy for the people under their charge, sow in their hearts the seed which they have stored up for them, having previously heaped it up in their own souls. For as the all-wise Paul says, "We are God's

field; for we are co-workers with God who sows in us both an accurate knowledge of dogmatic skill, and an understanding of a holy way of life, and a desire for every good thing; and this is Christ, who also says concerning Himself: "A sower went out to sow his seed. And I will make my ways prosperous, and my commandments. For in gladness you shall go out, and in joy you shall be taught.

⁴² Having promised that in every way and entirely they will be shown mercy, having washed away the filth of sin, then having become pure they will be joined to him spiritually, and those who are far off will be near, and will be enriched by the bounties from him, and having inserted in the middle the means by which they could believe that he is also without falsehood, being God by nature and Lord of hosts, he again takes up what follows, that is, the enumeration of the spiritual gifts to be given to them. For I will make my ways prosperous, he says, and my commandments; this is a great and noteworthy good, and a gift from heaven; and in what manner, we shall say. For to those wishing to move from worldly love of pleasure to a respectable life, the matter is not a smooth one, nor even passable in the beginning. For the sweetness of ingrained habit, as it were, rises up against them, and intoxicates the mind within them with sorrows. For the passions of the flesh are not easy to escape, nor indeed for those who are willing is it a well-trodden path to run toward virtue. But when God makes the way prosperous, and makes the impassable and uphill places bare and easy to travel, one might very easily flee even the assaults of the passions, and most vigorously leap up to the heights of the virtues. For it is written: "The high mountains are for the harts.

⁴³ What then does God promise to those who have believed in him? I will make my ways prosperous, and my commandments, and you will not go out in sorrow, but you will be taught in joy. This, I think, is what the prophetic writing said again somewhere else: "The way of the pious has become straight, and the path of the pious has been prepared. For the way of the Lord is judgment. And another of the holy prophets says, "The ways of the Lord are straight, and the righteous will walk in them, but the ungodly will be weak in them. For if God does not make the ways smooth for them, they would not have the strength to travel through them. For that it is a gift of heaven, as I said, to be able to walk the divine ways and fulfill the commandments, through which one might journey to God, he taught when he said

concerning the Synagogue of the Jews: Therefore, behold, I, he says, will hedge up her ways with thorns, and she shall seek her paths, and shall not find them. Therefore, he says, when I make the commandments prosperous, you will go out in gladness, that is, you will be superior to sorrow, you will not be bitten in the heart, having become outside of passions, and running over to the better and admirable life. For you will be taught rejoicing, and delighting in the sacred words. And so the divine David: "How sweet, he says, are your oracles to my throat!

⁴⁴ more than honey and the honeycomb to my mouth. And he affirmed that he rejoiced in them more, and very wisely so, as over all riches; and in joy they might also be understood in another way as running out; for being delivered from the ancient deceit, they joyfully seize the call from God, and it is possible to see from the facts themselves that this is true. For the mountains and the hills will leap forth to receive you with joy, and all the trees of the field will clap with their branches, and instead of the bramble shall come up the cypress, and instead of the flea-bane shall come up the myrtle. And the Lord shall be for a name, and for an everlasting sign, and it shall not fail. By "mountains" in these passages he perhaps means the powers above and in heaven, which indeed have also been appointed by God for the assistance of those on earth. For they are ministering spirits sent forth for service for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation, and they rejoice even over one sinner who repents. Indeed, they might also reasonably be compared to mountains, as having obtained a very high station and according to the magnitude of the virtue within them. Or rather, you would take "mountains" to be those having the teaching office in the Churches, thinking of nothing low, but rather seeking the things above, and having leaped up from earthly things;

⁴⁵ and "hills" indeed, those who are inferior to their pre-eminence, and, as it were, sitting below their glory. For there are measures in the Churches both of honor and of ministries; these intelligible mountains, he says, and with them the hills, will leap up, that is, they will leap for joy, rejoicing, clearly, on account of your conversion and calling, and they will receive you with joy; for we rejoice not moderately, when some of those who have gone astray, having forsaken continuing any longer in mist and darkness, rush to the light of the true vision of God. Thus also the all-wise Paul addressed them, saying: "My joy and crown. But also all the trees of the field, he says,

will clap with their branches. And you will understand "trees of the field" to be those who are numbered among the laity. For flourishing is the garden of the Savior. And at any rate, since she is both thriving and fruitful, the bride described in the Song of Songs, she says: "Let my beloved come down into his garden, and eat the fruit of his choice trees. Therefore the intelligible trees will clap with their branches, he says. For those who have believed rejoice, just as indeed also the mountains and the hills, that is, those appointed to lead the peoples, at the salvation of those called to life, and at the completion of the immaculate mystery-initiation, through which the divine light is sent into them.

⁴⁶ Then, that there will be a very great change for the incomparably better for those who have been called, he shows immediately by saying that instead of the thornbush there will be the cypress, and instead of the fleabane the myrtle will come up. They say that thornbush and fleabane are bitter and unapproachable [or: rejected] thorns, and they do not grow at all in places under cultivation, but rejoice in dry and salty land. Such were those who were wandering, and worshipping the creation rather than the creator. But since they have been called to the knowledge of truth, having ceased to be thornbush and fleabane, they have changed in an intelligible way into the tall and most fragrant of plants. For they are called cypress and myrtle. Great therefore is the wonder of the one who cultivates the Church, that is, of Christ. For he transforms the thorns into the noble and choice of plants, and makes them other than they were in a fatherly [or: spiritual] way. And we shall find this to have happened also among those of the blood of Israel. For though once being thornbush and fleabane, Matthew and Paul—for the one was a tax-collector, the other a persecutor and insolent man—have become luminaries of the world, and they are the sweet aroma of Christ in every place, both among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, as the most holy Paul says.

⁴⁷ And that the provider and ruler of all these things will remain in endless glory and permanence, he teaches, saying that "The Lord will be for a name, and for an everlasting sign, and he will not fail. and by "name" in these passages he means the glory, and by "sign," as I think, the radiance through the cross, through which we have also been saved, and we shall be in it without ceasing. For his grace will not fail us at any time or in any way.

DISCOURSE 28

¹ Thus says the Lord: Keep judgment, and do justice. For my salvation is about to come, and my mercy to be revealed. Concerning the calling of the nations through faith, that is, the one in Christ, he has made long speeches in the preceding parts a little while ago, and having finished this, he moves on again to the need to admonish those of the blood of Israel. For being good by nature, He wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. But since it was their custom to raise their eyebrows at the nobility of their fathers, and to be high-minded for this very reason, and this alone, and to think these things would suffice for them, even if the boast of a good life was not seen among them, he tries to assure them that their puffing up over this will be completely in vain, and he shows rather that those who have obtained God-befitting glory are those who choose to fulfill what has been commanded, and love to practice brightness in works. Therefore, he says, keep judgment, that is, right judgment, or the divine judgments, which clearly means the commandments. Do justice; for it will not suffice merely to wish to adhere to the divine laws, but to shrink from the need to carry them out; but one must be seen as a guardian of the sacred judgments, and besides this, to excel through every good work.

² And lest anyone of us should think that through these words those from Israel are being incited to the observance of the law, which is, as I say, in shadows and types; for no one is justified by the law before God, as the most excellent Paul wrote to some; he says that salvation is near, and his mercy is to be revealed. And he calls Christ mercy and salvation; for we have been shown mercy through him, gaining remission and salvation through faith. We say that this is similar to what was said [alt. this to what was said] by God to the blessed Habakkuk: "Yet a little while, and he who is to come will come, and will not delay. And when he says 'to be revealed,' it is instead of 'to be made manifest'; for the blessed prophets foretold the arrival of the Savior; but he became visible to those on earth at the times when the ruler willed it; and the divine David will teach this, saying: "The Lord has made known his salvation, he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations. For Christ, who is salvation and righteousness, has been made manifest to the nations; for as I just said, God the Father has saved and justified us in him. Blessed is the man who does these things, and the man who holds

fast to them, and keeps my Sabbaths from being profaned, and keeps his hands from doing any wrong.

³ These things are also akin to what we have just said, and proceed along the same lines, yet the discourse has much for observation. For observe how he says that the blessed one is not at all necessarily the one from the seed of Abraham, nor the one boasting in flesh and noble birth, and having a vain mind on this account, but rather that one in whom is seen excellence in good things, and the brilliant and manifest dignity of a life unprofaned. Something of this sort is also seen to have been proclaimed by the blessed John the Baptist to the crowds of the Jews; for they came honoring the baptism from him, but it was one of repentance, and he rebuked them for being very bitter, saying: "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves: We have Abraham as our father. But he says: "If you had Abraham as your father, you would do the works of Abraham. Blessed, therefore, he says, is not one who is a son of Abraham, but the one who keeps these things; and what are these things? Judgment and justice, and in addition to this, keeping and performing them, and holding fast to them, that is, not proceeding to them negligently or carelessly, but as it were with all zeal, and vigorously, so as to hold fast to them exceedingly, and to keep the Sabbaths from profaning them.

⁴ So that you may again understand this: it was not permitted on the Sabbath to take any thought for things concerning the flesh of toils or of zealous works. But it was necessary rather to be idle from this, as the divine law commanded, yet while being idle they offered the customary sacrifices to God, the letter of the law enigmatically showing, that abstaining from carnal care it is fitting to wisely offer spiritual sacrifices to God, and those for a spiritual aroma of sweet fragrance. The power of the Sabbath rest, therefore, fulfilled the type of the rest from sins and carnal desires; thus it is fitting for us also to keep from profaning the Sabbaths; for having ceased, as I said, from all earthly and carnal care, we keep the sabbath spiritually, not performing the sacrifices through blood and smoke, but gladdening him with holy zealous works, and offering ourselves up as a smell of sweet fragrance. For with such sacrifices God is well pleased, as it is written. Therefore, it is necessary not to profane the Sabbaths, and in addition to this to keep our hands clean; and in what way, he himself taught by saying: To do no wrong.

For it is not possible to be able to keep judgment and to do righteousness while wishing to do wrong, and defiling the hand with the filth of sin.

5 And hand not in every case means that of the body, but instead of the hand you will understand practical energy, by which we approach each of the matters. Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say: The Lord will surely separate me from this people. And let not the eunuch say, I am a dry tree. Thus says the Lord to the eunuchs: Whoever shall keep my Sabbaths, and shall choose the things that I desire, and hold fast to my covenant, I will give them in my house and in my wall a named place, better than sons and daughters, I will give them an everlasting name, and it will not fail. God drags down another brow of those of the blood of Israel, that is a pretext for arrogance, as both rotten and stale; for they thought much of themselves, as I said, saying, "We have Abraham as our father," and indeed that we are a holy people, chosen, and we are also assigned as God's inheritance. And they also fled from childlessness, since indeed the forefather Abraham in the order of blessing received from God that his immeasurable seed would be extended into a multitude; for God promised to show it to be equal in number to the stars. And it was said to them also through the all-wise Moses: "There shall not be among you a barren man or a barren woman.

6 And that having many children was considered a great and excellent thing among them, one of the holy prophets will fully inform, saying: "Their glories are from childbirths and birth pangs, and conceptions. And that seven women will take hold of one man, the prophet Isaiah says; and they said that "We will eat our own bread, and we will wear our own garments, only let your name be called upon us, take away our reproach. For they did not want, as I said, to be reproached as barren and sterile. Therefore, since it seemed to those of Israel to think highly of themselves for their carnal nobility, and in addition for having many children, he necessarily removes them from this ignorance also, saying: Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, The Lord will surely separate me from his people. For not because he is a foreigner, that is, not of the blood of Israel, is he for this reason also without a share in the gifts from him, that is, of intimacy with him, clearly spiritual; but if he should join himself to the Lord, he will certainly be ranked among his own, and those known, and as a holy nation, and a royal priesthood, and as an inheritance of God; and he will be numbered also among the children of Abraham.

7 For not all who are of Israel are Israel, as the all-wise Paul says, nor because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children, but the children of the promise are counted as seed. And the promise has been given to Abraham by God, not only upon those from him according to the flesh, but also indeed upon all those through faith; for thus was Abraham justified. Therefore, to those who walk in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham will certainly be given the being numbered among the children. He will not therefore separate the proselyte from his people, but he who has once been added and called in faith he will receive, and will call them a holy people. But if someone is a eunuch, he says, that is, childless or barren, let him not say to himself, "I am a dry tree," that is, let him not grieve because of his childlessness. For this is nothing before God, nor does it render one rejected. For what manner of virtue, or what brilliance of achievements, is having many children? These are works of the flesh, far from both blame and praise. For even if this thing has been given to some as a blessing, when the time calls for it, it would in no way wrong those who did not receive it. Since what manner of condemnation would there be for those who died before their time, or who departed from our human affairs before marriage and union, for whom there was no begetting of children?

8 And will being fathers of many sons and daughters in some way profit the lovers of sin in this life? Let him who has no children not say, he says, "I am a dry tree. But it is no grief, rather I say it is necessary to remember now also those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven, according to the voice of the Savior, to whom one might apply, and very rightly, the word from God in these matters. For I will give to them, he says, in my house and in my wall a famous place. And by house and wall, that is, the enclosure and security, he seems to call the Church, perhaps the one above and in the heavens, or the one on earth, in which men excel who are companions of purity and reverence, and who take up the boast of continence, and consider the glory in this to be better than having many children, and who in respect of a reverent way of life differ in no way from eunuchs. These receive eternal glory from God; this the name makes clear, and the grace from him would not fail in them; for the rewards of continence are exceptional, yet he does not promise the provision of such splendid dignities to simple eunuchs, but to those who keep his Sabbaths, that is, of Christ; and his Sabbaths, as I said, are different from those of the law.

9 For the one were in types, but the other are illumined by the beauty of truth. And since to those who choose [what] he himself wishes, and hold fast to his covenant. And Christ wishes not the things in shadows and letters according to the law, but also the things in the covenant from him; and it is clear that this is the new and evangelical one. And to the foreigners who cleave to the Lord to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants and handmaids, and all who keep my Sabbaths from being profaned, and who hold fast to my covenant, I will bring them to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their whole burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable upon my altar. For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations, said the Lord who gathers the dispersed of Israel. These things must be joined to what was said before, so that what is said may be of this sort: Thus says the Lord to the eunuchs, and to the foreigners who cleave to the Lord to serve him. Therefore he speaks to those from the nations, and not at all only to those from the blood of Israel, who, raising a high brow, looked down upon the foreigners, calling themselves the portion and inheritance of God and a holy people;

10 saying, "We are blessed, O Israel, for the things that are pleasing to the Lord are known to us. It is clear, therefore, that it is not the power of fleshly nobility that joins one to God; for not because they are from Abraham have they remained God's inheritance, but those who cleave to him would be counted as his people through a spiritual connection, even if they should be foreigners, cleaving through faith, and considering servitude under him a boast, and loving his name; and loving in such a way as to run always under the yoke through complete subjection to his kingdom, not turning aside to what is not lawful, nor indeed being easily led to choose to turn back, at least to the necessity of cleaving to other gods, but rather a firm and having an unshaken mind, and so keeping His Sabbaths, so as not to profane them, of Christ, that is. For Jews keep the Sabbath according to the law, keeping the flesh free from all toil, and practicing inactivity as regards bodily works. But such a sabbath-keeping was rejected by God; but he who has entered into the rest of Christ, and keeps the Sabbath intellectually, has ceased from his own works. For thus writes the all-wise Paul. He promises to bring the foreigners into His holy mountain, and to gladden them in His house of prayer. Here see for me the shadow of the law overturned, and the oldness of the letter now somehow inoperative.

¹¹ For all things have become new in Christ, the old things have passed away. The law indeed forbade foreigners to enter the house of God; for it said: "An Ammonite and a Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the Lord. But the Savior and Lord of all, transforming our affairs into a spiritual newness, promises to bring the foreigners into His holy house. For He says the holy mountain is nothing other than His own Church, into which having entered they are gladdened by His gifts, delighting, that is, and being rich in the hope of the saints; and that they will live purely, and will have the God of all to be benevolent and gracious, He has declared by saying, that Their whole burnt offerings, and their sacrifices will be acceptable upon my altar. And the word was given as from an example and type of the worship according to the law. For of old it was the custom for those of Israel to offer whole burnt offerings of rams and bulls, and to bring sacrifices. But since, as I said, the shadow has passed away, those called from the Gentiles do not make their approach through blood, but as it were consecrate themselves to God, dying to the world, but living to righteousness, as it is written. And they will be acceptable, and as a fragrant aroma, some presenting their whole life as if it were sacred, so as to be understood in the rank of whole burnt offerings;

¹² others as a partial sacrifice, such as is the life of those who have married in the Lord, being divided in a way between God and the world. For the animals offered for sacrifices were not placed whole upon the altars, but rather by halves, that is, in part. Therefore the foreigners are acceptable, offering themselves up as a spiritual fragrance. But that the divine temple, that is, the house of prayer of the God over all, has not been allotted only to those of Israel, but is rather praised by those throughout all the earth who are called through conversion and faith to the knowledge of Him, He makes clear by saying, that My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations. Who then is it who promises these things beforehand? Is it the divine prophet Isaiah, as from his own opinion? Not at all. For the Lord has said, he says, who gathers the dispersed of Israel. These, therefore, are the words, and the voices of Him who has mercy; for being good by nature, He wants all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. But that the greatness of his gentleness was not shown only to those of the Gentiles, when Christ shone upon the world, but indeed also upon those of the blood of Israel, would be made clear by his saying, The Lord has said who gathers the dispersed of Israel.

¹³ Therefore they too were scattered, and not so much bodily, that is, carried away somewhere outside of Judea, and being in other cities or countries, but as having departed from the polity of the law, and having leaped away from the love of God; for they have not kept the given commandment; and we shall find in many places, that they also inclined to the worship of idols, and honored God with their lips, but having their mind estranged, and worshipping Him in vain, teaching as doctrines, the commandments of men. Therefore let the intractable Israel not boast over the foreigners; for they too have been shown mercy in a like manner by God; For they were taken, not having their genuine nature unshaken, nor indeed their noble sentiment entirely blameless, but rather scattered and dispersed, as I just said. Because I will gather an assembly against him. All you wild beasts, come, eat, all you beasts of the forest. See that they are all blinded, and they did not know how to be prudent. They are all dumb dogs, unable to bark, dreaming in bed, loving to slumber, and like shameless dogs in their soul, not knowing satiety, and they are wicked, not knowing understanding, all have followed in their own ways, each one according to his own. You will approach what is written in a twofold manner:

¹⁴ for it either says that the untamed and savage beasts are those from the nations, inasmuch as they have been brought up under such a tyrant, I mean the devil, and as it were have been made beastly, and live in a way that is not human; or it seems to call beasts those who laid waste to Israel, and with their whole mouth devoured him on account of their impiety toward Christ. And if it is mentioning the nations as beasts, we say that the words, 'Come, eat,' have been addressed to them by God. And this signifies that every abundance of the sacred gifts has been given to them by Him, and that the life-giving table has been set before them; for they too have eaten the bread of life, for they have become partakers of Christ, and of the same body as the saints, so as also to say rejoicing: "The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall not want. He has made me to lie down in a place of green pasture; He has nourished me beside the water of rest; He has restored my soul. You have prepared a table before me. And He said also through one of the holy prophets: "Eat, drink, and be drunk, O neighbors. For being far from God, they have come near through faith, those who once were wandering have been filled with the sacred food; for it is written, "Bread strengthens man's heart.

¹⁵ But if by beasts we understand those who devoured Israel, 'Come, eat' is as if throwing to them those who have acted impiously, and for whom it is fitting to suffer, and very justly so; for they have killed the author of life, not having accepted the faith, and those who were near have become far, and no longer the people of God, but rather are hated as slayers of the Lord. But lest God seem to be punishing in vain, and demanding penalties for nothing, He immediately sets forth the reasons for which they, having become liable, are given over to destruction by their enemies, that is, to the beasts for consumption. For, He says, See that they are all blinded, they did not know how to be prudent. For truly blind are those of Israel, and especially among the others the Scribes and the Pharisees, and those chosen to be leaders of the Synagogue. For they did not receive the true light, nor indeed did they wish to know Christ, although He clearly cried out, at one time, "I am the light of the world," and at another time again, "I have come as a light into this world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. Therefore, when it was possible to be enriched by the light by accepting the faith, this they did not do, but as the prophet says, When they waited for light, there was darkness for them, waiting for brightness they walked in gloom.

¹⁶ And the Savior Himself also said concerning them and the peoples under their hand, "They are blind, and guides of the blind. Therefore, they are all blinded, He says, and did not know how to be prudent. For it was indeed the part of prudent and understanding men to grasp swiftly the present time of salvation; for the divine David urged them to this, saying: "Lay hold of instruction, lest the Lord be angry, and you perish from the righteous way, when His wrath is kindled swiftly against you. But since they did not lay hold of the instruction through Christ, His wrath was kindled against them, and they perished from the righteous way, that is, they have become outside the evangelical way of life, through which alone the ways of the righteousness pleasing to God shine forth. And in addition to being blind, he says, they were also dumb dogs, unable to bark, dreaming in bed, loving to slumber; as from an example He makes his arguments about them clear. For the dogs that follow the flocks, always circling around, are stronger than sleep and slumber. For if any of the untamed wild beasts should be seen, they bark vigorously, and using all their strength they hasten to drive them away from the livestock, and this is their task.

¹⁷ Those who preside over the rational flocks, that is, the guides and teachers, ought to be like these, so as to care for those yoked under them, and to drive away those who wish to do harm in any way whatsoever, and who, while leading them away from the love of God, persuade them to neglect their reverence for Him, and snatch them away for their own purposes. But the leaders of the synagogue of the Jews did not wish to be such; for they were rather mute dogs, loving slumber, and dreaming in their beds. And yet, though it was necessary to introduce what is useful to the people under their authority, and to drive off the attacks of those accustomed to teach other doctrines, they did not do this, but rather they themselves cast them into the pits of destruction. And God of all will teach this, saying: "Your priests did not say, 'Where is the Lord?' And those who upheld the law did not know me, and the shepherds acted impiously against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal. Therefore, just as dogs, they did not want to bark at those who threatened the flocks, but they imitated the shamelessness of dogs, and their not knowing satiety. For being lovers of wealth, and overcome by shameful gains, and delighting in bribes, they acted unlawfully;

¹⁸ who, though ashamed of it, at times passed an unjust sentence on those who did no wrong, while justifying the ungodly, for they did not know satiety, that is, a surfeit of shameful gains, clearly; and for these things the Savior himself also accused them, saying: "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: judgment and mercy and faith. And the divine prophet Isaiah also said about them: "How the faithful city Zion has become a harlot, she that was full of judgment, in whom righteousness lodged, but now murderers! Your silver has become dross, your wine merchants mix the wine with water, your rulers are disobedient, companions of thieves, loving gifts, pursuing rewards, not judging orphans, and not attending to the judgment of a widow. Yea, and the divine Habakkuk, on this very account, almost tearfully, called upon God: "How long, O Lord, O Lord, shall I cry, and you will [not] hear? I will cry out to you being wronged, and you will not save? Why have you shown me toils and labors, to look upon misery and impiety? Judgment has come before me, and the judge takes. Because of this the law is scattered, and judgment is not brought to completion, because the ungodly man overpowers the just. For this reason judgment will go forth perverted.

¹⁹ Therefore, they did not want to emulate the watchfulness of the dogs in the herds, but only imitated them in being despisers of all reverence, and being insatiably intent on the collections of gains. And in addition to this, he says that they are wicked, and do not know understanding. Therefore the wicked man is without understanding; for understanding would be most fitting for those accustomed to do good, but may wickedness of mind be far from the good. For to see scabies and a sore on a body is the same as wickedness in the mind; for it renders it without understanding, bringing it down to awkwardness, and making it perverse. But since they have become wicked and without understanding, for this reason, he says, they all followed in their own ways, each in the same manner; for having abandoned, as it were, being borne straight to every good, and the necessity of following what has been established, having given, as it were, full rein to their own wills, they did what was pleasing, and not just one by one, but indeed also in the same manner, that is, together and as a multitude. And we will find the teachers of the Jews out of place and discordant with the divine laws, in their assemblies, and councils counseling, and acting. For thus they fell also into the crimes of deicide, and each one turned otherwise to his own way.

²⁰ For they were lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, and they delighted more in the distractions of this present life, utterly disregarding the lawful and best life. See how the just man has perished, and no one takes it to heart, and just men are taken away, and no one understands. For from the face of injustice the just man has been taken away, his burial will be in peace, he has been taken from the midst. Having declared that they have become mute dogs, and insatiable in their love of gain, he further shows in these things that they are slothful and scornful, so as to be unyielding even in the last of their offenses, and not even willing to have in mind the need to repent. For, he says, the just man has perished, and no one takes it to heart, and just men are taken away, and no one understands. And through these things he seems to signify the audacious acts of the Jewish flock against Christ, and all that they have done against the holy apostles; for they killed Jesus, almost shouting and saying that prophetic word: "Let us bind the just one, for he is useless to us," and as far as their purpose was concerned, he who was just perished, that is, he who knew no sin;

²¹ for they did not kill him for reasonable causes, and they unmercifully prepared men who were just, who proclaimed to them the divine and evan-

gelical word, and called them to repentance for their cruelty, to come to trial. Indeed, the divine Stephen was killed by them after he had delivered a long speech to them, and by those things through which it was likely they would be caught for repentance, by these very things they were incited to hostility. Therefore just men are taken away, he says, and no one takes it to heart, that is, he does not deign to consider the magnitude of the impiety; they have contended against the just, and the wicked have prevailed over him who knew not how to sin. His burial will therefore be in peace; he has been taken from the midst. Observe for me again the figure of the speech; for it shows the purpose of those who killed, and not at all in every way the end of the matter as it is said. For Christ has not been taken from the midst, nor indeed those who proclaim his words, being themselves just, as being justified by him; but they have become as if from the midst, according to, I say, the attempt of those who killed; but that the accusation runs against all those who killed, and there was no one among the Jews who would be outside the charge, he indicated, saying: His burial will be in peace.

²² And he calls death "burial," and by adding "in peace," he indicated that there was no one at all in the ranks of the Jews who opposed their unholy counsels, that is, who stood against and rebuked those willing to commit unholy acts; for all from one counsel and opinion dared to act against Christ, and being at peace with one another they killed him. But you, draw near here, lawless sons, seed of adulterers and of a harlot. In what did you revel? And against whom did you open your mouth? And against whom did you let loose your tongue? Are you not children of destruction, a lawless seed? From very great love of God the divine prophet attacks the foul mouths of the Jews, and is exceedingly grieved at their unholy words, which they have spoken against Christ. For they have continually, as it were, let loose their tongue against him, and run him down with full sails, so to speak, of his inherent forbearance. For what of the outrageous things would they not be caught having said of him? They called him a Samaritan, and a winebibber, and one born of fornication, and they said that he who rebuked demons was possessed, and that he who crushed Beelzebub worked his divine signs by Beelzebub. Then, finally, they brought him to Pilate, and they accused him, saying nothing of the truth, but rather using falsehoods and slanders. For they said, that this man stirs up the crowds, and forbids giving tribute to Caesar;

²³and other things to to these things, which will pour down upon their own head the unquenchable flame. For these things the Savior himself also accused them, saying through the voice of Hosea: "Woe to them, for they have leaped away from me; they are wretched, for they have acted impiously against me. But I redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me. And through the voice of Jeremiah: "I have forsaken my house, I have left my inheritance, I have given my beloved soul into the hands of her enemies. My inheritance has become to me like a lion in the forest; it has raised its voice against me, therefore I have hated it. For in addition to the other slanders, which they have made against him, they have often dared to say when bringing him before Pilate: "Away, away, crucify him. The leaders of the Synagogue of the Jews, more than the others, have done this. For although they knew that he is the heir, they said among themselves: "Come, let us kill him, and let us take his inheritance for ourselves. But their hope failed them. For they indeed killed him, but he did not remain held by death; for he rose again, and has given the vineyard to other husbandmen, having miserably destroyed the ungrateful and Lord-slaying ones. Therefore, O lawless sons, he says, O seed of adulterers and of a harlot.

²⁴And by these he calls adulterers the Scribes and teachers of the law, who were appointed to lead, who all but committed adultery with the Synagogue, speaking to it the things from the divine law. But they turn aside rather to things which are not lawful, and teaching for doctrine the commandments of men. And the Synagogue of the Jews is rightly a harlot, receiving the seeds of those who commit adultery, and setting aside the law of the all-wise Moses. For this very reason he very rightly calls them lawless sons. Tell me then, in what, he says, have you reveled, and against whom have you opened your mouth, and against whom have you let loose your tongue. Many times, he says, you have uttered railings against holy prophets, but they were, though genuine to the God over all, yet servants, and yoked under, and having the human measure, and their sins were against fellow-servants. But now, against whom have you let loose your tongue? For you were not willing to receive the one who saves; and lawless seed; for you did not endure the one who orders toward piety through evangelical decrees. You who call upon idols under thick trees, slaying your children in the valleys in the midst of the rocks. That is your portion, this is your lot, and to them you

poured out libations, and to them you brought sacrifices. Over these things, then, shall I not be angry?

²⁵ Upon a high and lofty mountain, there is your bed, and there you brought up sacrifices, and behind the posts of your door you have set up your memorial. Having declared them slayers of the Lord, he shows that their God-hating sickness, and their readiness for bloodshed, was not new in them, but had been in them for a long time and from the beginning. For you are the ones who in former times, he says, called upon idols under thick trees. For although the law through Moses awarded them useful things, and stated expressly, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve," they slipped into such madness, or rather into unrestrained impiety beyond all measure, so as to become makers of idols, and to perform sacred rites to them, and to call upon them, that is, to teach others to worship under thick trees, and to crown them with honors fitting for God. The God of all makes this clear, saying through the voice of Jeremiah: "Have you seen what the house of Israel has done to me? They went upon every high mountain, and under every leafy tree, and committed fornication there. For taking possession of the tops of mountains and the most flourishing parts of the groves, they constructed altars and sanctuaries, and there they offered sacrifices and libations to unclean demons; and there are also those who did not spare their own children. For Jechonias slaughtered his own son to those that are not to gods.

²⁶ This God himself said somewhere through one of the holy prophets, showing the cruelty of those accustomed to do such things: "Sacrifice men; for calves have failed. You therefore, he says, are the ones who call upon idols, slaughtering their children under shady trees in the ravines among the rocks. What then for these things? That is your portion, this is your lot. For you have worshipped, he says, vain things; and you will have such a portion, and your lot will be vain. That is, it probably means to declare this: You have slaughtered their children in the ravines, he says. Therefore that is your portion, this is your lot, that is, you will be held in equal evils, and the slaughter will be your portion and lot. For what reason? First, because you have become a child-murderer, then because you poured out libations to unclean demons and lifeless idols, and offered sacrifices to them. Shall I not therefore be angry at these things? he says; is not my wrath well-occasioned against you, and does not justice have a reasonable starting-point? Upon a high and lofty

mountain, there is your bed, there you brought up sacrifices, and behind the posts of your door you have set your memorial. That they slept on the mountains for the sake of dreams, the prophetic word has declared to us in many places.

27 They say that Israel slipped into this error, so as to carve the forms of idols on the doors and on the posts, so that both entering their houses and walking outside they might see them, and have them in unceasing memories. This matter would be reckoned to them as a clear proof of complete godlessness, and very rightly so; and they called the carved images of the idols salvations [alt. saviors] and guardians of the house. You thought that if you should depart from me, you would have something more. You loved those who lay with you, and you multiplied your fornication with them, and you made many those who were far from you, and you sent ambassadors beyond your borders. All unseemly pleasure, and all evil, which bewitches the human mind, all but promises some experience of a good thing, and that one will partake of things not long ago known, and will be in better circumstances than before. For having thus taken it captive, it carries it off to whatever they might choose. But the foolish, having learned by experience where they are of evil, with difficulty return to their former state; but those who with the eyes of the mind perceive very well the end of each matter, do not endure a turning away; but rather they keep the mind untouched, seeing before experience the things that come after it. But such was not the Synagogue of the Jews;

28 for it was under the hand of the all-powerful God, and clothed with glory from him, it was terrible and unbearable to its neighbors, and having a thrice-desired hope, and full of all prosperity. For following the law through Moses it served the God who is by nature and in truth God; and it continued for seasons not enduring to call, that is, to know how to worship, another God besides him. But when it was inclined to certain teachers and unholy shepherds, it fell into apostasy from God, and worshipped the works of its own hands; thinking perhaps, that it would also be in better circumstances, having slipped away from the love of God. For these things he accuses it, saying: You thought that if you should depart from me, you would have something more. But the expected outcomes of so cold and vain a hope did not come to pass for it; for they have rather been in every evil. Therefore they have had nothing extra for prospering, having cast away what is genuine,

and considering what is firm in these things worthy of almost no account at all. And what is even more irrational than this, You loved, he says, those who lay with you, and you multiplied your fornication with them; and he speaks as to a harlot. But who were those who lay with her, except perhaps "false shepherds, men seared in their mind," as the blessed Paul says, and full of diabolical darkness?

²⁹ These have become for it both a way and a pretext of destruction, leading away of genuineness toward God, but injecting as it were the seeds of impiety, and persuading them to bear fruit for Satan, the crimes of drunken insolence against God. And we say that the fornication of some is multiplied, that is, the apostasy from God, when the force of the accusations is not seen, perhaps, as being of one manner and of one kind, but as being accomplished out of excessive perverseness, and bringing forth many things against them for which one might, and very justly, find fault with those who do them; for instance, I say: it certainly follows for one who has chosen to serve Satan to tolerate doing nothing wholesome; but to be scattered, as it were, into every path of profane and abominable pleasure. And concurrent with such accusations would be the other evils of this sort, both sorceries and necromancies, and the useless little tales of the interpreters of portents, both false prophecies and incantations, and the slanders of the astrologers, and the observance of days, and in addition to this, of hours, seasons and years. Thus, he says, multiplying your fornication, you made many to be far from you. And who these might be, it is necessary to see again. For either he means the holy prophets, who, seeing her going beyond all audacity, and driving toward the end of all godlessness, departed from her as from one defiled, almost crying out and saying:

³⁰ "We would have healed Babylon, but she was not healed; let us forsake her, and let us go each one to his own land; for her judgment has reached to heaven, and has been lifted up even to the stars. (for since Babylon was named a land of graven images, and Jerusalem was grievously sick with this, for this very reason the divine prophets very fittingly call her Babylon; or perhaps, she has made many to be far from herself. For, being curious about the objects of worship of the neighboring nations, and the falsely-named gods among each one, they sent for these; and they were devoted to them and have served, some these, others those. And indeed God said somewhere through the voice of Jeremiah, that "According to the number of your cit-

ies were your gods, O Judah, and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem you have set up altars to burn incense to Baal. This, I think, is also what is shown by, You sent ambassadors beyond your borders. For not being content with the gods present among them, they sent for, as I said, many others as well, each according to what was supposed to be good for them.

³¹ Or perhaps the phrase, You sent ambassadors beyond your borders, might signify that the acts of fornication were practiced among them beyond measure, so that what is said is in the manner of a parable, and a common expression, spoken of those who go beyond what is reasonable in each of their affairs. And you turned away, and you were humbled even to Hades. You have wearied yourself in your many ways, and you did not say: I will cease and be strong. Because you have done these things, for this reason you did not beseech me; you, revering whom were you afraid, that you lied to me? What is the end of the apostasy from God, of the immeasurable fornication, and of the unholy undertakings, that is, of the turning away from better things to worse? Utter humiliation, and to arrive, he says, at the lowest abyss of destruction. For since you were not willing to remain exalted, and to have unshaken prosperity, for this very reason you have become humble. For that some of Israel were exalted, at least as far as concerns the glory from God, would become clear from His saying about them through the voice of Isaiah: "I have begotten and exalted sons. Therefore, she has a self-inflicted humiliation; for she has acted impiously against the God who exalts. And in what way she has been humbled, he shows immediately; for he said: You have wearied yourself in your many ways.

³² For by going, as it were, into every way of destruction, they have spent the vigors of the soul—clearly meaning the intellectual ones—on nothing useful, and they have grown weary not moderately, by placing their earnestness in destructive matters. Or perhaps by "many ways" in these things he means the constant changing to other gods, and despising those already acquired, but seeking those that belong to certain others, and becoming drunk as if being scattered everywhere, and for the mind within them to have no support or stability. And we happen to suffer this also in the excesses of pleasures. For the mind is sometimes carried away towards every form of impurity, and sometimes it praises being rich, and sometimes it loves the flesh, and is overcome by empty glory, and is, as it were, carried about by every wind,

according to what was said through the voice of Jeremiah concerning a certain one: "In the desires of her soul she was carried away by the wind; she was given over, who will turn her back? For the soul that has suffered this will certainly be given over to the assaults of the passions; and the Proverb-writer teaches this, saying: "For crooked thoughts separate from God, and the wandering of desire subverts an innocent mind. It is necessary, therefore, for us to restrain the mind, if it should somehow wish to go unrestrained over rocks, and to delight in and associate with the excesses of pleasures, so that, wearied from much wandering, it may not become the devil's prey.

³³ Therefore, having done these things, he says, O Jerusalem, you did not say: I will cease being strong, that is, you did not check with your reasonings the advance towards baser things, you did not measure the apostasy, you did not put an end to your zeal for what is vile, but you rather more intensely apply yourself to wanting to do the things which ought not to have happened in the first place. For it is the work of a soul, at least of one having moderate understanding, not to want to be caught in accusations leading to sin; but if it should happen to suffer this, at least to choose to repent, and through the return to what is better, to cast off the charges. But if it should be carried unrestrainedly towards baser things, and in addition reject the need to repent, it has added sin upon sin, and one can see it suffering sickness upon sickness. At any rate, the God of all accuses those who are in these things, and says: "Does not he who falls rise? Or he who turns away not turn back? Why has this people turned away with a shameless turning, and they have been held fast in their choice, and have not been willing to turn back? But because you have done these things, he says, for this reason you did not entreat me.

³⁴ And yet how was it not more necessary, since you have dared to do such shameful and rejectable things, to lift up supplications, and to ask for mercy from God? For he receives those who are willing to repent, being good by nature, and knowing our frame, according to what is written. For he said through one of the holy prophets: "Return, O returning children, and I will heal your breakings. It is, therefore, proof of the utmost folly and of a complete turning away, for one who has been in so many evils, not to endure to seek from God even to be shown mercy with the confession of his stumblings. For it is written, that "Declare you your iniquities first, that you may be justified. And someone sings, and says: "I said: I will confess my iniquity against myself to the Lord; and you forgave the ungodliness of my heart. But

there was a certain argument among the Jews, both rotten and weak, and full of ignorance; for they were contending to turn away from the living God, and to incline towards other gods, since the host of the Babylonians was being announced to them as about to arrive at any moment. But, O madman, he says, whom having feared did you revere, and lie to me? The tyrant of the Babylonians is a man, and as for the divine strength, his army is absolutely nothing. For it is written concerning God: "He who holds the circle of the earth;

³⁵and those who dwell in it are as grasshoppers. And again the prophet Isaiah said: "If all the nations are as a drop from a bucket, and will be counted as spittle, and were counted as the turn of a scale, to whom have you likened the Lord, and with what likeness have you likened him? Therefore, most foolish are those who considered the man from earth to be greater than God, and who lied about their piety towards him, and thought that they would be saved through gods that are not. For what benefit could come from stone and wood? At any rate, it is said concerning them: And in the time of their evils they will say: Arise and save us. And where are your gods, which you made for yourself? If they will arise, and save you in the time of your affliction. And they lied to God, not doing this in word only, but indeed through the things themselves, of what sort is that which was said about them as in the manner of an example: "And I waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced thorns, and not justice, but a judgement. And somewhere the divine Psalmist also said, as from the person of Christ, about them: "Alien sons lied to me, alien sons have grown old, and they have limped from their paths. And you did not remember me, nor did you take me into your mind, nor into your heart. And I, seeing you, overlook you, and you did not fear me.

³⁶And I will declare my righteousness, and your evil deeds, which will not profit you. When you cry out, let them deliver you in your affliction. For a wind will take all these, and a tempest will carry them away. God said somewhere through the voice of Ezekiel to the mother of the Jews, I mean, the Synagogue: "As you have done, so shall it be to you; your recompense will be returned upon your head. Yes, and also the prophet Isaiah: "Woe to the lawless," he says; "evil things according to the works of his hands will happen to him. Something of this sort is also now signified through the preceding words. For since you have rejected the knowledge concerning me, he says,

you will be overlooked by me, and you will endure a penalty equal to your transgressions. But one forgets God who is by nature and truly God, and who rules over all things, not, of course, by coming entirely into a state of forgetting that God exists (for even the demons believe, and shudder, according to the voice of the apostle), but rather by scorning the will to be subject to him, and by caring little for the things ordained by him; so as to be seen as unruly and disobedient, and having completely turned aside towards everything contrary to what he ought to fulfill. But God forgets, that is, overlooks those who are unmindful of him, all but withdrawing his helping hand, and stripping them of all mercy; which indeed Israel has suffered.

³⁷ For he did not fear the Lord of heaven and earth, and the creator and craftsman of all things; but having freed his neck, as it were, from his scepters, he has been enslaved to gods that are not. For this reason he says, that You did not fear me, and I will declare my righteousness, and your evil deeds; calling 'evil deeds' evidently the apostasy from him, and, I mean, the inclining to those gods which he himself made. And the God of all declares his righteousness upon those who are accustomed to do such things, pronouncing a divine sentence upon them, and imposing a punishment of equal measure. For the audacious acts are not against one who is like us, but they are committed against the very high and exalted nature that rules over all. But that the invention of falsely-named gods is ineffectual [alt. unprofitable] to them, he clearly shows by saying, that "They will not profit you; and that the matter is true, he further declares, saying: "When you cry out, let them deliver you in your affliction. Therefore, as the prophet says, "What does a graven image profit, that they have graven it? They formed it, a molten image, a false fantasy, and a craftsman made it, and it is not God. Then how could an image made of wood and stone, and the findings of human art rather than God, help those who are deceived? For this reason he says, that a wind will take them all, and a tempest will carry them away.

³⁸ But these, who? Either the gods devised by them, or perhaps those who worship them, who, like dust and ashes, are tossed up by the blasts of the winds. And this, I think, is what is said in the book of Psalms: "Let them become like dust before the face of the wind; that is, "they will go towards nothingness. And it is a custom for the divinely-inspired Scripture often to compare the onsets of temptations, that is, of punishments, to a whirlwind and a tempest. But those who hold fast to me will possess the land, and will

inherit my holy mountain; and they will say: Clear the ways from before him, and take away stumbling blocks from the way of my people. Necessarily, these things also have been added to what came before. For it was necessary, it was necessary, for the punishment of the lovers of sin and the apostates to become clear, and the works of those who love him. And in general indeed True is the promise; for everyone who holds fast to God, and considers nothing better than complete love for him, and also excels in all good works; this one will be an heir of the land prepared for the saints, which indeed the Savior himself signified to us, saying: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. But by holy mountain in these things I mean, perhaps, the city above, the heavenly Jerusalem, the beautiful city of the saints. For somewhere the divine David sings and says concerning it:

³⁹ "Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart. Therefore, for all who hold fast to God, the inheritance will be the land of the saints, and the revered and renowned mountain. And he now seems to be making his arguments concerning those from the Jewish ranks who have believed in him, of whom the first-fruits and first ones were the divine disciples, clinging tightly to the love for Christ, having unshakable faith in him, and unassailable submission, and inseparable love. For they say, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? These have become heirs of the kingdom of heaven, and have taken possession of the land above which has been prepared for the meek. The name of meekness would be fitting for those who live the evangelical life, to whom Christ also commanded not to be angry, nor indeed to avenge oneself on any who have caused grief, but rather to hasten to do good even to those who are in the category of enemies. For "Do good," he says, "to your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, and to him who strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. To excel in these things would be proof of forbearance and meekness to the highest degree.

⁴⁰ But to those who have acquired the land and the holy mountain, as it will be said in promise and in hope, he says: "Clear ways from before his face; this is clearly, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And in what manner the preparation is done, he clarified by saying: "Take up the stumbling blocks from the way of my people; that is, make the way of salvation through faith smooth and easy for those throughout all the earth; let

there be nothing rough and steep. For the law through Moses did not know how to pity, and it was difficult to fulfill; for we all stumble in many ways, and it was hard to find one who was completely free, and able to complete it blamelessly. And so the divine disciples said to those who after the faith wished to return to the shadows of the law: And now why do you test God, to place a yoke on the neck of the disciples, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear? And Paul also said, that the law was added because of transgressions; for the law is a conviction of sin, and stumbling against it, they were under blame and indictment. Therefore, the difficulty of the life under the law was a hindrance. But let it be taken away from the midst, he says; and let the well-trodden path, passable without sweat, be shown, that is, the power of the evangelical life bringing in true worship.

⁴¹ God said something like this also elsewhere to the holy mystagogues: "Go through my gates, and cast the stones out of the way; that is, free the way from all difficulty, which would lead to God through worship in spirit and in truth, and through the brightness of faith. Thus says the Lord the most high, who dwells in the high places for ever, holy resting among the holy, and giving long-suffering to the faint-hearted, and giving life to the contrite in heart; I will not take vengeance on you forever, nor will I be angry with you for all time. For a spirit shall go forth from me, and I have made every breath. The blessed prophets, when the Lord of all promises something great and befitting of God to some, they receive the great wonder of his glory and gentleness, and as if leaping for joy they turn to doxology. We shall now find the prophet having experienced something of this kind; for he did not simply say, Thus says the Lord, but he necessarily adds, the most high, that is, he who by nature is beyond and above all that has been brought into existence; and by saying, who dwells in the high places, he indicates again that the divine and most supreme nature is in unshakeable eminences and in ineffable heights. And yet this, I think, is what it is for it to dwell in the high places forever;

⁴² for it possesses unchangeably in things pertaining to itself, and could not in any way be in better things than what it is, but rather it is inherent in it unchangeably to be continuously in what it is. And he says that he, the Holy One, rests and dwells in the holy, hinting that he rejects those of the blood of Israel as polluted through much sin, but lovingly abides in those who have been cleansed through faith and sanctified in spirit. And he gives

longsuffering to the fainthearted, and he calls fainthearted those who are accustomed at times to be somewhat weak regarding the purpose of life set before them. And he gives to them longsuffering, that is, endurance and patience, almost crying out and saying: "Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the Lord. And he also gives life to those who are contrite in heart, that is, to the poor in spirit; and such are all those in obedience to God, and who have a yielding mind; these would be they who through faith are called to the knowledge of Christ; and they are called poor in spirit, walking the opposite path to those from Israel. For the latter were boastful, disobedient, and unbroken; but the former are good, and good-hearted, and assign to the laws of God the necessity to prevail, and place the neck of their mind under the yoke of Christ. And these are the works of those in Christ.

⁴³ But what does the Most High say to those who have slipped through disobedience into the crimes of impiety toward him? I will not vindicate you forever, nor will I be angry with you always. He does not cut off the hope of being saved from those from Israel; for the remnant has been saved; a very great portion of their multitude has been called, and will they also be called in the last times? with God checking his anger against them, and pulling back the punishment, so that it might not be extended against them entirely. For being good, he has kept his unfailing promise to their fathers. And he gives another reason, as a compassionate God. For a spirit, he says, will go forth from me. And in what way it will go forth, he clarified by saying: I have made every breath. For he is the Father of spirits. Yet he is not understood as having begotten them from his own nature, as he did his own Son, nor do we say that they have had a procreation, that is, a proceeding forth, from the essence in the same way as the Holy Spirit; but rather we affirm, thinking correctly, that they came forth from God creatively into being; for he himself made every breath. And wherever creation is named at all, there would certainly be the going forth, that is, the exodus, not essentially, but rather as signifying in a figurative word the act of bringing into being.

⁴⁴ For a short time I grieved him for sin, and I struck him, and he turned my face from him; and he was grieved, and went sullen in his ways. I have seen his ways, and I healed him, and I comforted him, and I gave him true comfort, peace upon peace to those who are far and to those who are near.

And the Lord said: I will heal them; but the unjust will be so tossed, and will not be able to rest. There is no joy for the wicked, said the Lord God. The Jews have paid the penalties for their drunken violence against Christ, unbearable indeed for any man, yet measured, insofar as it came to equality with their sins. For they have committed impiety beyond all measure, killing the righteous, and making themselves guilty of the blood of holy prophets. And finally they laid their hands also upon Christ himself, whom the Father sent, being his Son, with the servants. But they even so boasted against him, although they said to one another: "This is the heir. Therefore, for this sin I grieved him, he says, and I struck him, and I turned my face away from him. For he said: "When you stretch out your hands to me, I will turn my eyes from you; and if you multiply your prayer, I will not listen to you; for your hands are full of blood.

⁴⁵ But in later times when Israel repents (for he will go on gloomily), the things of the turning away will cease; and he will be accepted through faith, and will be delivered from his ancient sins, God having pity on him; and he will receive a true consolation. And what do we say this is, if not clearly the grace through Christ, which justifies by faith, and delivers from sins, and also provides the sanctification through the Spirit, and the glory of adoption, and the hope of the rewards prepared for the saints? Therefore, the consolation is true, which brings to those who have been deemed worthy of it, in addition to all other good things, peace upon peace, that is, the continuous and unfailing tranquility of peace, which the Savior gave both to those who are far off and to those who are near, that is, both to those from the Gentiles and to those of the blood of Israel. For the blessed Paul has addressed the Gentiles, saying, "But now altogether, you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For inasmuch as it came to Israel to be yoked to the law, and to worship the living and true God, at least according to what seems to be in the sacred proclamations (for it was said to them: "The Lord your God, the Lord is one"), they seemed to be near in some way;

⁴⁶ but the Gentiles were far off, because they were entirely alienated, both from holy teachings and from knowing the Creator and Lord of all. But peace has been given to these and to those by God the Father, clearly that through Christ, who made both one, and created the two peoples into one new man, and broke down the middle wall of the fence, and abolished the law of commandments in ordinances. Therefore, through him we have re-

ceived reconciliation, and undivided peace, toward God and toward one another. For Christ said somewhere to the Father and God in heaven: "I desire that, just as I and you are one, so they also may be one in us. And the prophet adds to these things: And the Lord said, I will heal them, making through this a kind of recapitulation of the whole discourse, and establishing a clear and true promise of the God who rules over all; for he promised, he says, saying that he will heal them; but the unrighteous will be so tossed by waves, and will not be able to rest. For since he went through the rewards of those who will be called, for this reason, and very rightly, he also usefully announces the punishments of the disobedient, and the storm among them, and the endless torments. For there is no joy for them, he says, said the Lord God. And when the Lord and God of all has removed their joy, what manner of gladness will there be for them?

⁴⁷ But that even at the time of the calling of those from Israel, some will remain in disobedience, cleaving to the son of lawlessness, the all-wise Paul will make clear, saying: "Because they did not receive the knowledge of the truth, for this reason God will send them a working of error. And the Savior himself also said: "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name," that is, the son of lawlessness, as I said, "him you will receive. Therefore, Israel will be called in due course to the knowledge of Christ, and will be enriched with grace through faith in him; but some impious and unrighteous people will remain; and then, having fallen as if into an unstable storm, and having cast away all joy, they will by no means be able to rest; for they will be crushed, being held fast by a long and endless punishment. Cry out with strength, and do not hold back; like a trumpet lift up your voice, and declare to my people their sins, and to the to the house of Jacob their iniquities. Having finished the discourses concerning the calling of those from Israel, he comes to another kind of admonition, a good and beneficial one, productive of all good order, and one which makes for glorious crowns;

⁴⁸ and I say that it is necessary to first lay bare the purpose of the prophecy to those who will encounter it, so that they may know to what end the sense of what has been said tends. Therefore, in the previous discourses, which God made concerning those from Israel, there were clear [proclamations] of war and of an inescapable disaster which was yet to come. For He said: "And you did not remember me, nor did you take me into your mind, nor into your

heart; and I, seeing you, overlook you, and you did not fear me; and I will declare my righteousness, and your evils, which will not profit you. When you cry out, let them deliver you in your affliction. We were saying that in these things he calls the inventions concerning idols the evils of those from Israel. For this reason he also said: "When you cry out, let them deliver you in your affliction. There was, therefore, a certain proclamation of war, and this was rumored among the peoples of the Jews; but there were some among them who put on a pretense of piety, and while acting heedlessly, doing things which it is not even lawful to speak of, they adorned themselves with outward embellishments, and, as I said, snatched at a reputation for equity. These men also feigned fasts, and made frequent prayers, thinking by this to avert the things from the divine wrath.

⁴⁹ Therefore, since they were brought to a forgetfulness of their own faults, they thought that for those accustomed to do the most shameful things, fasting alone and prayer would suffice for justification and sanctification; God commands the prophet, saying: "Cry aloud with strength, and do not spare; lift up your voice like a trumpet, and declare to my people their sins. For do not speak secretly, he says, nor indeed in a corner to some; but rather use a certain high and lifted-up voice, and with all boldness rebuke the transgressors, and let them learn their own transgressions, and from what they should have abstained, if they wished to be honored by God, and worthy of forbearance by the [perhaps of the] from him. They seek me day by day, and desire to know my ways, as a people that has done righteousness, and has not forsaken the judgment of their God. They join, he says, day to days, seeking help from me, and wanting to know my ways, that is, the administrations for each matter. For with war having been announced, and fear having thrown everything into confusion, they have indeed fasted, and they thought that they would learn even to what end the matter would come. This, I think, is the meaning of, They desire to know my ways. They desire this as a people that has done righteousness, and has not forsaken the judgment of their God;

⁵⁰ that is, as those who have conducted themselves lawfully, and have become the best guardians of the ordinances given to them, and have a blameless life, and are clothed with the boast of a pious polity. For it would be fitting for such people to also seek God, that is, to wish to be near him, and to enjoy forbearance from above, and in addition to this to know his ways. For

it has been said through one of the holy prophets: "Seek the Lord, and when you find him, call upon him. And when he draws near to you, let the ungodly forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his counsel, and let him return to the Lord, and he shall have mercy; for he will abundantly pardon their sins. They now ask of me a just judgment, and desire to draw near to God, saying: Why is it that we have fasted, and you did not see? we have humbled our souls, and you did not know? For in the days of your fasts you find your own wills, and you oppress all who are under your hand, you fast for judgments and strifes, and you strike the humble with your fists. They accuse me, he says, as one who does not dispense just things because of not wishing to have mercy on the humble through fasting and prayer;

⁵¹ then they wish also to be near God, though on account of nothing pertaining to piety boasting of deeds of valor, but not even clothed with the radiance that comes from virtues, but because of mere abstinence from food alone; and indeed they say, "We have fasted, and You did not see; we have humbled our souls, and You did not know. And they do not say such things as if God were ignorant of their humiliation through fasting; but because they have not come to a sense of their accusations, they say, "You did not see," and "You did not know. For we say that God of all then knows the labors of some, those done through prayer and ascetic practice, I say, when He assents to their requests. Why then He did not accept those who fasted, and made unacceptable the prayers of those who had humbled themselves, He explains, saying: For in the days of your fasts you find your own wills. For fasting is an excellent thing, and prayer is also beneficial; and to humble oneself in the eyes of God has the greatest benefit. For it is written, "I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer shall return to my own bosom. And the divine David also said: "My knees are weakened from fasting, and my flesh is changed for mercy; yes, and also the God of all Himself: "Turn to me," He says, "with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. For He readily pities those who make their humiliation through toil self-chosen.

⁵² But it is most absurd for those who wish to be pitied to provoke the lawgiver in another way, and to call Him to wrath by loving to do none of the things that have been commanded; for in every way those who approach God must be holy, and excel in good works, and be seen as free from all filth. For because of this reason He says: You have fasted, but I did not see, that is, I did not pay attention; you humbled your souls, and I did not know, that is, I

did not deem your humiliation worthy of any reward; because in the days of your fasts you find your own wills. It is necessary, therefore, that those who wish to fast purely and holily, should depart from their own wills, and choose what seems good to God, and submit a compliant neck to His wills; but those from Israel did not do this at all; but rather they followed their own wills, dishonoring what seemed good to the lawgiver, and they pricked their subjects to judgment and battles; and yet it was necessary to gather into one accord those who were set against one another, and to award peace to those who were brought into disputes. But they turned their zeal to the very opposite. And they struck the humble, and not entirely with hands, but with insults and greed, that is, by some other manner of injustice. Then how was it possible to praise those fasting, when such impurity was in them?

⁵³ or how could the prayers of such wicked men be accepted? To what purpose do you fast for Me, so that your voice is heard today with a cry? I have not chosen this fast, and a day for a man to humble his soul. Nor if you bend your neck like a ring, and spread sackcloth and ashes, not even so will you call it an acceptable fast. The power of the true fast has an extraordinary cry before the God who rules all things. For He perhaps gladly receives the prayers of those who worship Him; and if He sees them humbled through toils and ascetic practices, without any delay He grants their requests. But indeed, of that which might be done lazily and carelessly, He makes its manner rejected. And we say that a fast is holy, that which is accomplished from a pure conscience; which someone might do, having first departed mightily from the ways of wickedness, and having sent away every stain from his mind, and having wiped away the filth of the love of the flesh, and having washed his hands in innocency, according to what is written; and simply, having been shown to be a practitioner of every good work. But that which is not such, is like one gone astray, and while in the form of a fast, it has absolutely none of the things that befit it, it is both ridiculous and unseemly.

⁵⁴ For those who are good and completely neglecting good things, and having accomplished none of the best deeds of valor; then practicing unprofitable and useless fasting, as if it were some great thing and honorable before God; they box in vain, and they beat the air; for their labor is not rewarded, because it is also unacceptable to God. Why then do you fast for me, he says, so that the cry of your voice may be heard in one day? He says "cry," meaning either the prayer with, I say, the useless fasting, or the cry from the matter it-

self. For the things done by us are said to have a certain voice to God, according to what was said to Cain by him: "The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the earth. But this is not the fast I have chosen, he says; and what this fast is, he has already declared, saying, that "In the days of your fasts you find your own pleasures, and you prick all your subordinates into judgment and fights. You fast, and you strike the lowly with your fists. Therefore, not even if you bend your neck like a ring, and spread out sackcloth and ashes, that is, even if you practice extreme humiliation, and tread an unbearable path of labor, with such shameful accusations, not even so will you call it an acceptable fast. For if you wish, he says, to speak the truth, not even you yourselves would call it an acceptable fast.

⁵⁵ Is not this the fast that I have chosen, says the Lord, but loose every bond of wickedness, undo the knots of forced contracts, send the crushed away in forgiveness, and tear up every unjust document. Break your bread for the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house. If you see one naked, cover him, and you will not overlook the members of your own seed. to Cain by him: "The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the earth. But this is not the fast I have chosen, he says; and what this fast is, he has already declared, saying, that "In the days of your fasts you find your own pleasures, and you prick all your subordinates into judgment and fights. You fast, and you strike the lowly with your fists. Therefore, not even if you bend your neck like a ring, and spread out sackcloth and ashes, that is, even if you practice extreme humiliation, and tread an unbearable path of labor, with such shameful accusations, not even so will you call it an acceptable fast. For if you wish, he says, to speak the truth, not even you yourselves would call it an acceptable fast. Is not this the fast that I have chosen, says the Lord, but loose every bond of wickedness, undo the knots of forced contracts, send the crushed away in forgiveness, and tear up every unjust document. Break your bread for the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house.

⁵⁶ If you see one naked, cover him, and you will not overlook the members of your own seed. It was necessary for those who did not know the manner of the true fast to be shown this by God. For from him comes all wisdom, and understanding, and the way to everything that is best is revealed. At any rate, the divine David also sings, and says: "Lead me, O Lord, in your way, and I will walk in your truth. Therefore, he made the most artless and in no way beneficial fast of the Jews rejected, and he reveals the power of the

true one. For loose, he says, every bond of wickedness, that is, rid yourself of the desire to take advantage of anyone; for greed is a bond of wickedness, and attacking some of the weaker ones, and, as it were, binding them with inescapable entanglements of accusations, in order to make them terrified, and thus to seek to receive from them whatever they might wish. Undo the knots of forced contracts. And we say that commercial transactions are full of forced contracts, and those resulting from knots, that is, ill-nature. And in addition to these, the other things of so-called givings and takings, which involve certain kinds of greed, and prove men to be lovers of shameful gains those accustomed to doing the same things. And the broken, he says, send away in release, that is, those who endure crushing, or toil, or from the bond of injustice, or from violent transactions.

⁵⁷ Release in release, that is, free them from the distress that has been brought upon them; permit the weary to rest at last. And tear apart every unjust contract; as I think, he means the notes of the moneylenders, often drawn up without even the giving of as much money as the measure of the contract travails with. But when you refrain from these things, he says, then add what is lacking. And this is to bear fruit for one's neighbor the good things that come from love. For the fulfillment of the law is love, according to what is written. And the fulfillment of love toward brethren, and proof of compassion which is honored by God, is to break bread for the hungry, to take the poor and homeless into one's house, and to clothe the naked, and to one's own kin, that is, those of one's family, sufficient care, I think, [to bestow] and to share with them the breadth of the abundance given by God. But observe, that to refrain from evil is not the same as to do good. Nor would it suffice for some as a boast before God not to have done what is wicked, but one must follow in every way and altogether, and fulfill the need for good works, and hold fast to the pursuits of piety. For to undo the knots of violent transactions, and every bond of injustice, and to tear apart every unjust contract, is nothing other than only to depart from wickedness.

⁵⁸ But to choose to fulfill the works of love by breaking bread for the hungry, and taking in the poor and homeless, and clothing the naked, and not tolerating any of one's own kin, has clear proof of the best virtues. For this reason also the old law, being a tutor unto Christ, did not bring in the fulfillment of the good to those of that time, but rather taught them to depart from wickedness beforehand. For, "You shall not murder, You shall not

commit adultery, You shall not swear falsely," has this force. But the perfect, and the fulfillment of all good was reserved for the ordinances through Christ, from whom we learned to fulfill the works of love toward God and brethren.

DISCOURSE 29

¹ Then your light shall break forth like the morning, and your healing shall spring up speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you, and the glory of God shall be your rear guard. Then you will call, and God will hear you. While you are still speaking, He will say, "Behold, I am here. If you fast purely, he says, and show to God hands that have been cleansed, and a mind freed from all filth, that is, when you wash away the striking of the lowly with fists, and the goading of your subordinates into judgment and fights, and following his [alt. your] desires and pleasures, when you break bread for the hungry, clothe the naked, bring the poor and homeless into your house; then your light shall break forth like the morning. The word has the greatest emphasis. For he did not simply say, "The light will be given to you by God," but rather "it will break forth," as if like a flash of lightning, sent down by God with impetus and speed, through which is clearly shown the eagerness of the one who bestows it. And by saying "early," he teaches that it will come down even before its time. For God, the steward of our affairs, the giver of spiritual gifts, knows the appropriate time for the honors for each person.

² But if someone becomes fine and good, and in addition merciful and gentle, to this person early rewards will be given by him, so that they also spring up in him like ears of corn; and his healings, that is, the removal of all sickness, and the influx of better things. For when someone is freed from sicknesses of the soul, he will certainly bear as fruit the desire and readiness for anything good whatsoever. Therefore, when the divine and intelligible light shines in us, healings also arise in every way and entirely, with God moving us and weakening our passions, and introducing into us the will to do good and to excel in righteousness. For this reason he says, "Your righteousness shall go before you. It will go before, clearly making the path to piety easy, and changing the rough to the smooth and passable, and bringing down the steep, and as it were directing the course in all the best things. And he adds something else. "For the glory of God," he says, "will encompass you," that is, it will surround you, and will make you admired, and a com-

mon benefit to many. For the brightness of the saints benefits not a little those who look upon them. And so Christ said to the holy apostles: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

3 Therefore we shall be brilliant, with the glory from God going about us and as it were clothing us, which He would grant to those who are diligent in [perhaps of the] righteousness; therefore, when these things belong to you, he says, you will then cry out, and God will hear you; while you are still speaking He will say: Behold, I am here. "For he hearkens to the prayers of the righteous," according to what is written. And as the Psalmist says, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. For as one who is good He will assent to those who ask, but not to all of them immediately. But to those who have excelled in righteousness, without any delay He grants their requests, and holds his hearing most ready for them, so that rejoicing at each of their requests they say: "He heard my voice out of his holy temple, and my cry before him will enter into his ears. Therefore, the un-postponable nature of the honor, and the great readiness of God the giver, is clearly demonstrated by His crying out, Behold, I am here, while the righteous man is still speaking and raising his prayers.

4 If you take away from you the yoke, and the stretching forth of the hand, and the word of murmuring, and give your bread to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall rise in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday, and your God will be with you always. The excellent points of the lessons, even if they are said often to some, nevertheless have their benefit. And so the all-wise Paul writes to those who believed through him: "To say the same things to you is not tedious for me, but for you it is safe. Therefore in many ways through the same things he comes to us, speaking and making clear the paths of good repute, and describing the splendor of the rewards to be given to the saints, so that he might make them even more eager to choose to do those things through which they would become venerable, and will find the honor from above and from him. Therefore, "If you take away," he says, "from you the yoke, and the stretching forth of the hand. And by yoke, as I think, he means the wickedness of the nations, their awkwardness and contentiousness, and the practice of making, as it were, conspiracies of things against some, and making in-

quiries of crooked inventions, so as to bind some at times, and to cast them into inescapable snares of circumstances.

5 For a man must be simple and approachable, if he has the aim of being watched over by God, and of desiring the gifts from Him. And by stretching forth of the hand perhaps he means bribery, and desiring shameful gains, for we sometimes say of certain men that he has his hand stretched out to receive, and of those who reject shameful gain, that he has his hand drawn in. And it has been said concerning the leaders of the Jewish Synagogue: "Her leaders judged for a bribe, and her priests divined for money," and that they have become companions of thieves, loving gifts, pursuing recompense. And somewhere the divine Habakkuk also said: "Judgment has come before me, and the judge accepts [a bribe]. Therefore the name will either be significant of bribery, that is, the stretching out of the hand, which indeed He has commanded to take away, that is, to put away; or else, in another way, it signifies to avenge oneself, and to return evil for evil. For the Psalmist said concerning some people, that "He stretched out his hand in retribution. And he adds that "They have profaned His covenant. Therefore the stretching out of the hand would signify, as I said, also the retribution, which someone might make, taking vengeance on those who have grieved them, and bringing things born of anger against those who have offended them. And we remember the Savior Himself saying that "If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

6 For it would be a proof of complete gentleness and freedom from anger to know how to persevere when taken advantage of, and not to love taking revenge on those who have grieved us, but rather to be disposed toward them without malice. And in addition to this He wishes to take away also words of murmuring. For we must submit to the divine laws with a cheerful mind, and make no outcry against the excellent way of life, as if shaking off the yoke, with the mind descending to the desire for worse things, and praising the love of pleasure rather than self-control, and preferring the luxuries in the world to choosing to live reverently. Which indeed those of Israel did while traversing that deep desert. For when God sent down the manna to them, they received an inclination toward baser things, saying, "Would that we had died, smitten by the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, and ate bread to the full. But their murmuring against God resulted in their destruction, for they were destroyed by the serpents. For this

reason also the most wise Paul says, "Do not murmur, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed by the serpents. Therefore, it is fitting for the caretaker of all good order, and for the one who strives for excellent acts of virtue, to have a cheerful mind;

7 and having taken away the word of murmuring, if you give bread to the hungry, and satisfy an afflicted soul, that is, if you become compassionate, a lover of good and a lover of your fellow men, generous, and sociable, and loving your neighbor as yourself, then your light will rise in the darkness. But how, then, is this so? For just as day comes from night, so in us, when the intelligible darkness is cast out, the divine light enters in its place, so that one seems to be at midday, that is, at the height of brightness. For the circle of the sun at midday then indeed especially sends forth its most intense light upon those on the earth. So thus your God will be with you always. And this, in addition to the other things, is immensely great. For what good thing is not available to those who obtain this? Or of what gifts will a person not be full, when God who is all-powerful is with him, and with a rich hand distributes those things of which He is the supplier and giver, and warding off the assaults of temptations, and making one so strong, as to stand up bravely both against Satan himself and against the outrages from the passions?

8 And you shall be satisfied, as your soul desires, and your bones shall be made fat, like a well-watered garden, and as a spring whose water has not failed, and your bones shall spring up like grass and be made fat, and they shall inherit for generations of generations. And with what, then, shall you be filled? he says. Of divine gifts, clearly, and of nourishment befitting saints; for as Christ Himself said somewhere: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God," this was also of old inscribed as in a type for those of the blood of Israel, when God sent down the manna from heaven; since in a way it might be conceived as the bread of angels, and the bread of heaven. And if there should be any, in whose mind the divine light has flashed richly, and of the sacred Scriptures an accurate and has worked a blameless knowledge, and we say that these have been filled, and have come to satiety of the delight from above and from God; but Israel has fallen away from this; but the nations have come into possession and ownership of it through faith, and as many as approach the evangelical and saving word.

9 And so our Lord Jesus Christ said to the holy apostles, that "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given," that is, to those who did not believe, to whom indeed the divine word also proclaimed, "Those who serve me shall eat, but you shall be hungry. Behold, those who serve me shall drink, but you shall be thirsty. For they have hungered and thirsted, having no share in the good things through the Spirit, and completely without taste of the gifts through Christ, that is, of the divine and evangelical instruction. For he said somewhere through one of the holy prophets; "Behold, I am bringing a famine upon the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord, and they shall run about from east to west seeking the word of the Lord, and they shall not find it. For the life-giving and most nourishing word of God has been taken away from the flock of the Jews. But it has been given, as I said, to those who love Christ, to whom indeed he also proclaimed, saying: "Eat, and be drunk, O friends. And so the divine David also sings, since he too had a share in such a venerable and abundant honor; "You have prepared a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

10 you have anointed my head with oil, and your cup makes me drunk, as the best. Therefore, as many as have had knowledge of his divine mysteries, that is, have been filled with them, their bones have been made fat. But the saying is fashioned as from those who are accustomed to live luxuriously in a carnal manner; the soul of such persons would become like a well-watered garden, that is, blooming, and full of fine trees, and adorned with various kinds of flowers, and bringing forth all sorts of fruits. For waterless gardens are very ugly; for they are dry and destitute of all fruit, or perhaps even lacking the plants themselves. But those that are soaked by unstinting streams of water are crowned with all sorts of fruits, as I said. Indeed, the Church has become the garden of Christ, and taking on its person, the bride described in the Song of Songs says, "Let my kinsman come down into his garden, and eat the fruit of his choice trees; for what the choice fruit is among plants, that is, beautiful fruit, this in the souls of the saints is a good virtue and most pleasing to God. Therefore, your soul shall be, he says, like a well-watered garden, and yes, also like a spring, whose water has not failed. Such have the divine mystagogues become, sending forth the streams of pious teaching as

from an ever-flowing spring of their own heart, and richly watering the souls of those being instructed.

¹¹ And the dispenser of such excellent gifts himself will confirm it, saying, "He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water. And again: "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will have in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. We say that such are the holy apostles and evangelists, and all who proclaim the divine word, on the one hand being well-versed in dogmatic skill, and on the other hand also revealing the path of brightness in works. And your bones, he says, will spring up like grass, and they will be made fat, and they will inherit for generations of generations. In these things he seems to reveal the mystery of the resurrection; for then the body will rise again, just like some grass in a field, which during the winter season withered and closed up, but when the fine spring weather smiles, grows again, and as it were returns to the beauty that is in it by nature. But the bones, having sprung up like grass, will be made fat, he says, evidently by the life-giving grace from God. For somewhere the divine David sings and says: "You will send forth your Spirit, and they will be created, and you will renew the face of the earth," that is, of those on the earth.

¹² Then we will inherit generations of generations, that is, a long life, since death will have been abolished, and corruption entirely removed. And it is said in many places of the divinely inspired Scripture, that the intelligible bones of the soul are certain practical powers and energies of it, as in the saying that "God has scattered the bones of the men-pleasers. For God does not scatter the bones of the body, but rather shatters the powers of their soul, so that nothing is able to be accomplished by those who see them, nor indeed is anything they are fond of doing done for the glory of God, nor for the benefit of their own soul. And again the divine Psalmist said, "Because I was silent, my bones grew old from my crying all the day," that is, to give glory and to pray, I have become silent, having fallen into human faint-heartedness. My bones grew old, that is, the powers of the mind, or of the soul, became weak. These, therefore, sometimes paralyzed for a short time by sloth, again spring up like grass, as God fattens them with consolations through the Holy Spirit, and strengthens it, so that for this reason we may be made heirs of long-enduring life; for this, and nothing else, is what "for

generations of generations" signifies. And your everlasting deserts shall be built, and your foundations shall be for generations of generations, and you shall be called the builder of fences, and you will cause the paths between them to cease.

¹³ Through two other examples the prophetic word comes to us, and the beauty of the hidden meanings is revealed. For the form of the word is fashioned as if upon a city once made desolate, and completely shaken, so that it remained without walls. For your deserts, he says, shall be built forever, that is, you will not be bare of good thoughts inhabiting your heart, nor indeed will you remain without walls, or unguarded, and having no firm foundation. For Christ will be to you a foundation and continual security, and you shall be as a populous city, having innumerable inhabitants. For the souls of the saints are full of words and thoughts, those concerning God, that is. These are very many, and coming by means of perfect accuracy, they run up and down through it, showing it to be full of every good thing. And in addition to this you will be called the builder of fences, and you will cause the paths between them to cease; for many are they who go through deserted gardens. For with no one at all standing guard, that is, fencing it securely, there would be nothing to prevent those who wish to walk through the middle. But if they should somehow become secure under a gardener, then they also cast off being subject to the feet of the many, a fence having clearly been raised. For in this way the paths through the middle will cease.

¹⁴ You shall be, therefore, he says, as a diligent gardener raising fences, and causing the paths between them to cease. For as long as the soul is unguarded, snoring toward sloth, and for this reason not untrodden by the strange paths of pleasures, it is like a garden traversed by anyone whatsoever. But when, having become sober, it leaps away from the snares of wickedness, and rather seizes the will to do good, and raises up security for the mind as a kind of fence, I mean, that from the fear of God, and drives away from the intellect the thoughts that formerly held it, which went as it were through the middle of it, having it underfoot, and making it a thing to be trampled by mastering it, then it will also be called the builder of fences. But it must be known that also the evil and opposing powers sometimes run down the wretched soul, bringing forth foul pleasures, and carrying it off tyrannically wherever they wish, and walking as through a fallow garden. But they will

cease from trampling it, a fence having been raised, which the fear of God raises in us. You will apply such a saying also to each of the holy mystagogues.

15 For they have become builders of fences, securing with admonitions to virtue the souls of those being instructed, so that they have their minds in a way untrodden by the assaults of pleasures and vulgarities, and by those accustomed to speak empty words, who corrupt the right word of faith, not knowing either what they are saying, or about what things they are making confident assertions. If you turn your foot away from the Sabbaths, from doing your own will on the holy day, and call the Sabbaths delicate, holy to your God, you will not lift your foot to a task, nor will you speak a word in anger from your mouth, and you shall trust in the Lord, and he will bring you up to the good things of the earth, and will feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your Father. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things. The divine Paul, setting aside the shadow of the law as ineffective, transfers the things in it to a spiritual contemplation. For one might observe him not accepting either circumcision according to the flesh, or inactivity on the Sabbath, but rather he is seen proclaiming a spiritual circumcision, and likewise a Sabbath-rest. For he said, "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God.

16 Concerning the Sabbath: therefore a Sabbath-rest remains for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Therefore, if someone ceases from his own works, that is, yields the need to hold to his own desires to the sacred decrees, thus he keeps the Sabbath spiritually, and truly observes a holy day. This the saying of the prophecy at hand also shows us. For if you turn away, it says, your foot from the Sabbaths, from doing your own will on the holy day. But "turn away your foot from the Sabbaths" would be nothing other, as I think, than that one must not do what one wishes, and follow the paths of one's own desires. For that the goal of human desires looks toward the love of pleasure, the all-wise Paul will confirm, writing: "For I do not do the good that I wish, but the evil that I hate is what I do. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Therefore, it is necessary indeed for those wishing to be well-

pleasing to God to vigorously contend against their own will, and following His divine laws everywhere, to traverse the admirable path of righteousness. But he calls Sabbaths delicate which have nothing from one's own judgment.

¹⁷ But a hard and harsh judgment is to not want to be subject to what God wills; being such, He rebuked Israel, saying, "I know that you are stubborn, and your neck is an iron sinew, and your forehead bronze. Therefore, obedience, and tractability, and the yielding quality of one's manner, render the inactivity on the Sabbath delicate to God, that is, the spiritual Sabbath-rest, which those wishing to achieve blamelessly do not lift their foot to a task, that is, they do not walk practically, but rather they accomplish the holy and profitable inactivity, I mean, in respect to things most shameful, and abominable, and hateful to God. He wants such people to be seen as being masters of anger and wrath, and having a door and a bolt upon their tongue. For you shall not speak a word, it says, in anger from your mouth. Therefore he here circumcises two terrible and very difficult things, from which if one departs, he will be perfect before God. For one of the holy apostles said, "If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. But he who is superior to anger is surely also well-mannered, if the opposite is also true; for it is written that "A man the wrathful is not comely.

¹⁸ Therefore, God wants those who observe the sabbath spiritually, and holily, and delicately, to be gentle and possessing the greatest virtue, and he commands them to trust, not in wealth rather than worldly powers, not in the strength of bodies, not in any other such thing, which, like the grasses in the fields, are both temporary and easily withered, but rather in the Lord, the giver and ruler of all cheerfulness. The things of those accustomed to live thus, what sort of men they might be, crowning them, he points out saying, that "He will bring you up to the good things of the earth, and will feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father. For the God of all promised the land of promise to the fathers of the Jews, and indeed they were brought into it under the leadership of Jesus after the hierophant Moses; Then how through the preceding verses, as to those who had not yet received the inheritance promised to the patriarch Jacob, does he promise to give it to them? Therefore, the promise was not from God to the divine Jacob concerning the perceptible land, that is, the one bequeathed to them, that is, to Abraham and Isaac, but rather concerning that which the Savior himself signified to

us, saying: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. And that the things promised will in every way and altogether come to fulfillment, he confirms by saying: For the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things;

¹⁹ and it is impossible for the divine words to fall away; for God is truth. Is my hand not strong enough to save? Or has his ear become heavy, that it cannot hear? But your sins separate between you and God, because of your sins he has turned his face from you, so as not to have mercy. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with sins. And your lips have spoken iniquity, and your tongue meditates injustice; no one speaks righteous things, nor is there true judgment. They have trusted in vain things, and speak empty things. A little before this, the person of God was introduced, saying to the divine prophet: "Cry out with strength, and do not spare, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and declare to my people their iniquities, and to the house of Israel their sins. They seek me day by day, and desire to know my ways, as a people who have done righteousness, and have not forsaken the judgment of their God. They now ask of me a righteous judgment, and desire to draw near to God, saying, Why is it that we have fasted, and you have not seen? we have humbled our souls, and you have not known? For in the days of your fasts you find your own wills, and you oppress all who are under your hand, you fast for judgment and strife; I have not chosen this fast, says the Lord.

²⁰ And we were explaining the power of the prophecy, as is possible, interpreting that, rising up against the things established through the all-wise Moses, and considering it of little account at all to live rightly, they did their usual things, practicing a way of life hateful to God and fond of sin, then when war was announced, they sometimes considered fasting through a bare and mere fast, that is, abstinence from food, thinking they would render the judge merciful to themselves. Then, having failed in their hope, they grumbled, and indeed they said: Why is it that we have fasted, and you have not seen? we have humbled our souls, and you have not known? Behold then, behold the divine prophet, as out of a very great love for God he rebukes them, and says, Is the hand of the Lord not strong enough to save, or has his ear become heavy, that it cannot hear? For the all-powerful right hand of the Lord, he says, has not become weak, nor is his ear heavy and turned away, so as not to listen. But your sins separate between you and him. Therefore, if one should remove the difference, and take away that which walls off the

knowledge of God, that is, sin, he who saves is not far off, but will certainly receive the supplications. For in him is both the all-powerful, and the capacity to benevolently receive the prayers from those who are weary.

²¹ What sins therefore separate between God, and those of the blood of Israel he brings forth, saying: "For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with sins. And your lips have spoken lawlessness, and your tongue meditates injustice. For they killed the holy prophets who were sent from God, and they have spoken against him. For Jeremiah said, My strength has failed because of those who curse me; but leaving such things aside now, he seems to be accusing them of impiety against Christ, saying their hands are defiled with blood. For they became killers of the Lord, and their lips spoke lawlessness, and their tongue meditated injustice; for they have not ceased fighting and reviling and speaking against Christ, and at one time mocking his divine signs and bearing false witness against his god-fitting great works, and at another time accusing and saying: "Away with him, away with him, crucify him. And sometimes for this reason, as Christ endured an unjust sentence, the prophet cries out with holy boldness, No one spoke what is just, nor is there true judgment. They have trusted in vain things, and call on what is empty. And what is their vain trust? For they thought that by removing the heir from their midst, they would possess his inheritance; and speaking these empty words to one another, the wretched ones have acted impiously against him.

²² Therefore, the prophetic word either accuses those of the blood of Israel of impiety toward Christ, that is, that being in no way righteous, they would be convicted, they who have hands defiled with blood, and lips and a tongue that know how to meditate on nothing else except things tending to impiety, and lawlessness, and injustice, and that in addition to these things they have become unjust judges, taking bribes, that is, and being overcome by shameful gains. For it is said somewhere else, "How the faithful city has become a harlot, Zion, full of judgment, in which righteousness lodged, but now murderers! Your silver is worthless, your wine merchants mix the wine with water, your rulers are disobedient, companions of thieves, loving gifts, seeking rewards, not judging orphans, and not heeding the judgment of the widow. Because they conceive trouble and bring forth lawlessness. They have broken asps' eggs, and weave a spider's web, and he who is about to eat of their eggs, having crushed an addled one, found also a basilisk in it. Their

web will not become a garment, nor will they cover themselves with the works of their hands. It is a custom in the divinely-inspired Scripture to always call envy 'trouble'. And the saying has much probability; for it melts away and withers the hearts of those who receive it. The Psalmist also says something of this sort about someone, that is, about the people of the Jews, "He has conceived trouble and brought forth lawlessness.

²³ For having been in labor with envy against Christ, they have brought forth impiety against him, that is, lawlessness; for they would be convicted by their very arguments of saying that prophetic word: "Let us bind the just man, for he is unprofitable to us. And we will find them in their councils taking a most outrageous counsel. For they were saying concerning the Savior of us all, Christ: "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, the Romans will come and take away both our nation and our land. And one of them, Caiaphas, this one became the inventor of the impiety against Christ; for he said again, "You know nothing at all, but that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish. Most clearly, therefore, from what has been said, it is possible to see that, having conceived trouble, that is, having been in labor with trouble against him, they have brought forth lawlessness. What then does the prophetic word signify to us in these things? They have broken asps' eggs, and he who is about to eat of their eggs, having crushed an addled one, found. For the Jews thought that their deliberations against Christ would come to a favorable end for them, and would be for the benefit of the whole nation.

²⁴ But they missed the mark, and it has happened that they have suffered something like what those suffer from excessive folly, who the things of breaking the eggs of asps. For having crushed them, they will find nothing else, except a basilisk in it; and this is the most difficult offspring of a serpent, and deadly besides. Therefore, the end of their audacious acts against Christ is profitless for the Jews, but rather also a cause of destruction. For a serpent has, as it were, come forth for them, and an acknowledged offspring, that brings them to the abyss of hades; but that the conspiracy against Christ has been entirely useless, he shows immediately also through another example; For they weave, he says, a spider's web. For the spider, I mean this small and most insignificant creature, weaves webs in the less used parts of rooms, skillfully woven with thin threads, which, having been made with the greatest

labor, profit them not at all in the end; for they will not be a garment for the one who made it, but are easily torn when used for a covering, and better than the art itself. Thus, he says, are also the inventions of the Jews, clearly those against Christ;

²⁵for by weaving deceits and entwining false accusations, they thought, as I said, that by covering him with the death of the flesh, they would accomplish something beneficial for themselves, and to be enriched with the covering from their own undertakings, but the end of what they hoped for came to nothing for them. For they have become naked of the good will from above, and have cast off their protector, that is, Christ; for from good works, a covering will come to those who wish to do them, with God bestowing this on them; but for the workers of evil, what comes from them will not be for a covering, but rather they will be destitute of the covering from God. For their works are works of iniquity, and their feet run to evil, they are swift to shed blood, and their thoughts are thoughts of murder; destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known. There will be no judgment in their ways. For their paths are crooked, which they travel, and they do not know peace. For this reason judgment has departed from them. Each of the Jewish transgressions is enumerated in detail, so that since they have been cast out of intimacy with him, they may be convicted of having suffered this by a just sentence. For he says all their works are works of iniquity, and in these, in summary, the condemnation of their entire life has become true;

²⁶and so he runs through each of the accusations, saying that their feet run to evil, and are swift to shed blood, and that they have had thoughts set on murder. Consider again for me, that although their transgressions are very many, he first mentions their readiness for, I mean, choosing to murder. For he said their feet run to this, and are sharp or swift to receive thoughts of blood and murder; and he insists that destruction and misery are in their ways, and that they do not know peace, or the way of peace. For what they did unholily, and going beyond all boldness, became for them a cause of destruction and misery, or rather, from them to others. And they were certainly full of meddlesomeness, and litigious, and very sick with contentiousness; and the pretext for this was the desire for gains and bribe-taking. Therefore, quite rightly, he says, "There is no judgment in their ways. And by judgment he here means righteousness, that is, a most lawful and irre-

proachable way of life. For thus somewhere the divine David says concerning the commandment through Moses, "You have established judgment and righteousness in Jacob. Therefore, uprightness, that is righteousness, is not in their ways. For they are crooked, and they flee peace, that is, refusing to be peaceful towards others, or rather, by peace here he means our Lord Jesus Christ, whom they did not wish to know, digging for themselves the pit of destruction.

²⁷ For this reason, he says, judgment departed from them, that is, for this cause righteousness departed from them, that is, the knowledge of doing those things which procure the crown of righteousness to those who have chosen to do them aright. But the Jews are outside of all spiritual skill, and as it were, the ability to know at all how to accomplish correctly anything of the things pleasing to God has flown away from their mind. While they waited for light, it became darkness to them; waiting for brightness, they walked in gloom. They will grope for the wall like a blind man, and as those who have no eyes they will grope, and they will fall at noonday as at midnight. They will groan like those who are dying, they will go together like a bear and a dove. Having declared their life accursed and most lawless; for he said what their works are, works of iniquity, and having enumerated these in detail, what they are, and in how many ways they come, he necessarily adds and sets forth both the loss inflicted on them from this and the recompense for their unbearable wickedness, that is, the fruits of the impiety within them. For the Jews indeed were expecting the illumination from Christ. They heard holy prophets crying out openly, "Be enlightened, be enlightened, Jerusalem, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

²⁸ And then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and as for what pertains to the foretelling of the holy prophets, the wretched ones were not without good hope. And indeed the leaders of the synagogue of the Jews once spoke to one another, "Does the Christ come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David, and from Bethlehem the village? And that Samaritan woman confessed clearly, speaking to Christ Himself, the power of His advent. For she said that, "We know that Messiah is coming, who is called Christ; when He comes, He will tell us all things. Therefore they were expecting, as I said, the illumination from Christ, but the things of their hope turned out for them completely the opposite. For

they did not receive the true light, but, as if self-invited, having brought darkness into their own minds, they have become blind, and guides of the blind, according to the voice of the Savior. Therefore, while they waited for light, that is, having hoped or expected, it became darkness to them, and waiting for brightness, they walked in gloom. Again, the prophet states this same thing in another way, that is, about the same thing, making the meaning of what was said clear. For those who expected brightness, walked in deep darkness. For this is what the word 'gloom' signifies. Then, showing the magnitude of the blindness that came upon them, he said they would grope for a wall like a blind man.

²⁹ For in this way it is sometimes the custom for those who suffer the affliction of blindness in their eyes to walk. But it being noonday, he says, they will fall as at midnight. And 'noonday' he usually calls the middle of the day, when the sun's orb also sends forth its strongest ray from mid-heaven upon those on earth, and as it were illuminates all things with richer beams; and 'midnight,' the middle of the night, when deep darkness is also poured down upon all under heaven. At noonday therefore, he says, that is, when a most abundant light, that is, a divine and intelligible one, was illuminating the world under heaven through Christ, the Savior of us all, the Jews will fall just like blind men, not even knowing where they are going; for they did not wish to obey Christ when He said, "While you have the light, walk in the light, that darkness may not overtake you. Therefore they were overtaken by darkness, not having endured to walk in the light; and they will suffer something else besides. For they will groan like those who are dying, he says, that is, as those who are held fast by a grievous and unbearable disease.

³⁰ And they will go together as a bear and a dove, and not as two distinct beings reconciling with each other, of whom one might be understood as a bear, and the other as a dove, but each one of them at the same time, according to his disposition and at least according to the mind within them, being at once a bear and a dove. For since he said they would groan, he shows very well what sort and how great their groaning will be. For they say that bears, if they should be bereaved of their young by someone, their of her cubs, to wail dreadfully, and to be filled with unmixed madness, to roam the mountains and glens, and to leap uncontrollably upon those it meets; and somewhere through one of the holy prophets He signifies something of this sort, when the God of all says concerning those of the blood of Israel, I will meet

them as a bear bereaved, that is, savagely and fiercely. But the doves, settling in their nests, coo frequently, and send forth a sort of mournful sound. Such have the Jews become; for with their whole country having been sacked along with the holy city, I mean Jerusalem, and the temple itself also having been burnt, they have a beastly disposition against those who took it. Yet they mourn for its suffering like doves. For it is written, that "And they shall be on the mountains like mourning doves.

³¹ Or perhaps we shall suppose the prophetic word in these things to indicate something else. For they will go, it says, as a bear and a dove, that is, they will live in a ferocity of mind, coupled with foolishness; and of ferocity the bear is an image, or an example, but of simplicity and foolishness, the dove. For it has been said concerning Israel through one of the holy prophets, And Ephraim was a silly dove, without a heart; and we will find the Jews to be truly somewhat savage and foolish. For the understanding and gentleness from Christ is not in them; for they denied Him who is the bestower of wisdom and understanding, who makes those who love him tame and gentle. Thus the prophet Jeremiah said concerning them at one time, that "Every man has become foolish from his knowledge," and at another time, "There is no wisdom in them, because they have rejected the word of the Lord. We waited for judgment, and there is no salvation, it is far from us; for our lawlessness is great before you, and our sins have stood against us; for our lawlessness is in us, and we have known our wrongdoings. We have acted impiously, and we have lied, and we have turned away from following our God. We have spoken unjustly, and have disobeyed; we have conceived, and have meditated from our heart unjust words, and we have turned judgment back, and justice stands far away.

³² The word of the holy prophets is always a lover of truth. For the spirit of truth speaks in them, that is, of Christ. For this reason, whenever they make mention of the rejection of the nation of the Jews, and of the wrath brought upon them because of their impiety towards Christ, they also usefully call to mind their future conversion in the last times of the age, and of the calling in Christ through faith. Most providentially, therefore, lest anyone think that the truth speaks falsely, it introduces them repenting, and taking on their person, it almost presents them to God saying: We waited for judgment, and there is none. And by judgment they mean righteousness, that which is through Christ, of course, which they expected to receive, but

it is not among them, for they have become hard and disobedient. Because of this it says, that salvation is far from us. For our lawlessness is great before you, and our sins are in us. For since they have utterly fallen away from the one who justifies by faith, they have also become far from the salvation from him, not having cast off the pollutions of sin, not having wiped away the charges of lawlessness, but as it were having the filth from it ingrained in them. For this reason Christ addressed them, saying, "Truly I say to you, that if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. Therefore, since they have not believed, they have died in their sins;

³³ and since they have acted impiously against Christ in many ways, they make confession of these very things. For they say, that We have known our wrongdoings, we have acted impiously, and we have lied, and we have turned away from following our God. For they acted impiously, intolerably speaking falsely of the glory of the Savior of us all, Christ, and turning away from the will to follow him. More- And they confess, that We have spoken unjust things, and have been disobedient, we conceived, and we meditated from our heart unjust words. For they have spoken unjust things against Christ; for at one time mocking his glory, and slandering his divine signs, they were saying that by Beelzebul the prince of the demons he casts out demons, and at another time also bringing forth from their own heart unjust words; for they accused him, a Samaritan and one having a demon, daring to call him both a glutton and a wine-drinker, and they also slandered him before Pilate, saying that, "He stirs up the crowds, and forbids giving tribute to Caesar. For this reason they say that, "We have departed from behind our God, we have spoken unjust things, and have been disobedient; we conceived, and we meditated from our heart words of injustice, and we have put judgment behind, and righteousness has stood far off," that is, we have cast righteousness behind, and as it were have given our backs, having turned away from it. For this reason it has stood far off from us.

³⁴ These then indeed are the voices of those repenting, and of those seeking to be shown mercy by Christ. For a saving thing is to repent, and to make clear confessions of transgressions. For it is written, "Declare thou first thy transgressions, that thou mayest be justified. And the divine Psalmist also said; "I said, I will confess against myself my transgression unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my heart. That truth has been consumed in their ways, and they could not come by a straight path. And the truth is

taken away, and they turned aside their mind, from understanding, and the Lord saw, and it did not please him, that there was no judgment. And he saw and there was no man, and he considered, and there was no one to help. And he defended them with his arm, and with the mercy, by which he was established, and he put on righteousness, as a breastplate, and placed a helmet of salvation upon his head. And he put on a garment of vengeance, and a cloak, as about to render a recompense, a reproach to his adversaries. And they from the west shall fear the name of the Lord, and they from the east the glorious name. For the wrath of the Lord will come as a violent river, it will come with anger.

³⁵ The prophet, having recalled what those from Israel will say at the time of their calling, asking from God the Father the grace of salvation through Christ, again shifts the words to his own person, and speaks against those from Israel, or rather agrees, that they have become wicked, and apostates, and enemies of the truth; and he asserts, saying, that Truth has been consumed in their ways, that is, it is all but spent, and has completely gone. For there was not at all in their works truth, that is, the law of truth. For this reason they could not pass through by a straight path; for those who have altogether slipped from the knowledge of how to live according to the law, and according to what seems right to the truth, and the law of God is everywhere called truth, how could they have come straight to what is fitting? or how have they not had crooked and perverted ways? And adding and saying, that The truth is taken away, and they turned aside their mind from understanding, he shows that truth had completely departed from them, and they were completely turned aside from being able to understand the things that lead to salvation. These things, he says, the Lord saw, and it did not please him. For there was no judgment among them, that is, just judgment, and law. Then;

³⁶ He has seen, he says, and there was no man, he considered and there was no one to help, For since he is compassionate, as God he remits, sometimes, even the charges against a whole city, for one, and only one righteous man found in it; and at least he said through the voice of Jeremiah; "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and seek in the broad places thereof, and see if ye can find a man, if there is one that executes faith, and loves mercy, and I will be merciful to her, saith the Lord. And he also promised to Sodom that he would remit the punishment by fire, if they had five

righteous men among them, that is, in each city one righteous man. He considered therefore, he says, and there was no man, there was no one to help. For the human race to be saved, that is, and before all others those from Israel, who have believed, to be in participation of the Holy Spirit, through whom also the boast of adoption is brought in, and to speak in a tongue the word of faith, as the all-wise Paul has written: "Do not say," he says, "in your heart: Who will ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down, or, Who will descend into the abyss? that is, to bring Christ up from the dead. But what does the Scripture say?

³⁷ The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that if you say, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses unto salvation. We have received, therefore, from God the word of faith, that is, the confession: a saving thing, and a cause of righteousness: for thus Christ justifies the ungodly, He who also cried out of old, "Behold, I have blotted out your iniquities like a cloud, and your sins like a mist. Let this word of faith be in us continually, and it will not cease from our mouth. And we shall send it on to generations of generations, for thus also those after us will be justified. For if Christ is always both God and Lord, the confession of faith in Him will never cease among those who have known His appearing. Arise, shine, O Jerusalem, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness and gloom shall cover the earth over the nations: but the Lord shall appear upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you. And kings shall walk by your light, and nations by your brightness.

³⁸ As the promise has been given that Israel will be saved in due time, the prophetic word in these things leaps up, in a way, for us to gladness, for, raising a great cry on high, it almost exclaims: "Arise, shine," it says, "for your light has come. But consider how, when the divine light from God was distributed to those of Israel before all others—it is clear that this is through Christ—the prophet says, "your light has come," almost pointing out to them as present Him who was long ago foretold through the law and the holy prophets, but who shone upon those on earth in the last times of the age with flesh. And he says that the One who appeared is the glory of the Lord, for Christ has risen like some sun, illuminating all things with divine and intelligible light, and sending down the radiance of the true knowledge

of God to those more ready for faith. And He is also the glory of God the Father. For in Him, and through Him, and with Him He is glorified. And He portrays, as if in His own nature, the One who begot Him. And since we have known the Son, we have seen through Him and in Him the majesty of the Father, and His incomparable glory, and the excellence of His divine dignities. And so Christ said somewhere: "Father, glorify your Son, that also the Your Son, I will glorify you.

³⁹ Therefore the glory of God the Father appeared among us, then, having separated Israel from all other nations, as one specially honored by God and being His inheritance, he adds and says: " Behold, darkness and gloom will cover the earth upon the nations, but upon you the Lord will appear. And he does not say such things as if darkness were about to overshadow the nations when Christ shone upon the world, but rather it was enlightened, and has cast off the darkness of ancient deceit. But those who interpret the divine Scripture are often indifferent concerning the rendering of tenses. Therefore they have put "will cover" instead of "covers. For it is true that even when Christ shone forth, and before others to those from Israel, the multitude of nations was still held in darkness, grace not yet having been transferred to them. Behold, therefore, he says, the whole land of the nations is covered with darkness and gloom, that is, of ignorance and of error, but upon you the Lord will appear, for, as I said, he shone upon them, and his glory was first seen by them, through exceptional great works, and signs, and wonders. For he performed miracles as God among them, raising the dead from tombs, putting light into the eyes of the blind, cleansing lepers with a command, rebuking demons with authority, and in short leaving no way unused which was sufficient for the conviction that he is truly God, and the Son of God by nature.

⁴⁰ "And kings shall come, he says, to your light, and nations to your brightness. Again the prophet connects the calling of the nations with the visitation of those from Israel, so that they might know that even if they dishonor the Redeemer by their disobedience, and leap away from love for him, to the destruction of their own head, he will not be destitute of worshippers, but rather will gather by faith both nations and kings: for by the brightness given to you, he says, that is by the illumination from Christ, kings and nations will come. And where will they come? To salvation through faith, obviously, to a glorious and blameless life, to knowing and confessing who the

Creator and craftsman of all things is by nature and in truth. For they worshipped the creation rather than the creator, and attached their reverence to wood and stones. But since they were illuminated by the light given to you, they too, he says, will travel the straight and royal road, stumbling over none of the things lying in between, but as in the dawn and in the day, although they were sons of night and darkness, running past all the stumbling blocks. Lift up your eyes round about, and see your children gathered together: Behold, all your sons have come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders:

⁴¹ then you will see, and you will fear, and you will be amazed in your mind, because the wealth of the sea will turn to you, and of nations, and of peoples, and droves of camels will come to you, and the camels of Midian will cover you in and Ephah. All shall come from Sheba, bearing gold and frankincense, and they shall bring precious stones, and shall proclaim the salvation of the Lord: and all the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you, and the rams of Nebaioth shall come to you, and they shall be offered acceptably upon my altar, and my house of prayer shall be glorified. The word has a very great and wise economy. For it proclaims the calling of the gentiles, and the union of the two peoples in Christ, and the change from the shadow of the law to spiritual worship. For all things are new in Christ, and the old things have passed away, and he himself created the two peoples into one new man, making peace, and reconciling both in one body to the Father. Of all these things he makes the prediction, and indeed he says to the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, the Church, which from the beginning was constituted of the Jews: for they were the first to believe: " Lift up your eyes round about, and see your children gathered. For behold, all your sons have come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on shoulders.

⁴² For as the divine and evangelical preaching gathers those who have believed from every nation and country, netting the whole world under heaven, and persuades them to go to a certain very well-towered city for the grace that comes through faith, that is, for the nourishment of the saints, I mean the Church, it says such things, just as, indeed, somewhere else: " For it shall be, it says, in the last days that the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, prepared on the tops of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and many nations shall come to it, and shall say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will an-

nounce to us his way. And we will walk in it. Therefore, the children of Jerusalem would not be called only those from the blood of Israel, but rather also all those from every nation and country called through faith into the light of truth. For as the all-wise Paul writes, "Not all those who are from Israel are Israel, nor because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children, but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. And it was said by God to the divine Abraham, that "I have made you a father of many nations. Therefore, as a multitude has already been gathered from the nations, and is worshipping Christ:

⁴³ Lift up, it says, your eyes round about, that is, survey the whole inhabited world, and from every part of it you will see your children running to you, and they shall come, though once they were far off, but far off not in place, but in mind and disposition of intellect. And so one of the holy prophets said to those who had fled from knowing the God who is by nature and truly so: "Remember, you who are far from the Lord, and let Jerusalem come up upon your heart. And the all-wise Paul also wrote concerning Christ, that " He came and preached peace ce to those who are far off, and to those who are near. And he writes to those from the Gentiles: "Remember you Gentiles, who are called the uncircumcision by the so-called circumcision in the flesh made by hands, that you were at that time without Christ, alienated from the hope of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, but now you who were once far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For those who did not know at all the God who is by nature and in truth, are said to be, and are, far off, according to disposition and mind, as I said. But behold, they have come, he says, that is, their calling will not be to a distant time, nor for a postponement:

⁴⁴ for they will run as if at the heels of the evangelical proclamations, and they will make their arrival to God through faith without any toil and free from all difficulty and sweat. For they will be carried on shoulders: for the figure of speech is formed as from an example from our own lives: for newborn infants love to be nursed, and seek to rest in their mothers' bosoms and arms. Something like this happens with those called from Hellenic error, for they are cared for by their instructors in the mysteries, not being led harshly, nor immediately taking the rough path, but, as it were, through a tender upbringing are fed with milk and ascend little by little toward a perfect man,

to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. And so it was commanded to the holy apostles to baptize all the nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, and to teach them to observe all that he had commanded them. And they, wishing to do this, laid no burden at first on those who believed, using pedagogical skill. For they wrote to those from the Gentiles, that "It seemed good to the holy Spirit and to us to lay no greater burden on you, except that you abstain from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood.

⁴⁵ And the most excellent Paul also writes to some, that "I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it, nor are you able even now. But solid food is for the perfect, of those who by practice have the senses of their heart trained for the discernment of good and evil. Therefore, on shoulders will your sons be carried, he says, and your daughters, and then you will see, and you will fear, and you will be amazed, that is, you will marvel: for thus somewhere also the divine Habakkuk: "Lord, he says, I have heard your report, and I was afraid. I considered your works, and was amazed. And we ourselves are somehow accustomed, to say at times, "I was amazed," whenever something paradoxical happens to be done by someone. You will marvel, therefore, he says, and what will be the reason for this? For the wealth of the sea will be transferred to you, and of nations, and of peoples. In these words he makes a clearer prediction, that in due time the multitude of the nations will be called to the knowledge of the truth. For it was indeed in the land in the more southern regions of the Jews, but indeed the parts towards the north, and the sea, and the cities, and the lands lying upon it, the flocks of the Gentiles divided among themselves.

⁴⁶ But since, having returned from their ancient deceit, they have undergone a change for the better, having been called to the knowledge of the God who is according to nature through those who minister the Gospel of Christ: for this reason, he says, the wealth of the sea will be transferred to the Church: and the wealth, as I said, of the cities and lands lying by the sea, are those who dwell in them. "And herds of camels shall come to you, he says, and the camels of Midian and Ephah shall cover you. For these are nations neighboring Jerusalem, and having common borders, both the Midianites and those from Ephah. For they were abominable, and uncircumcised, and idolaters, but that they themselves also will be called, and will bear fruit for God, he shows in these things. For they were camel-riders, and they provided

the resources for living from both fighting and raising cattle: and they were especially so to those of Israel, but those who once wandered, both profane and unmixed with the sanctified, will come, he says, not one by one, but as in a herd, and in a multitude, either mounted on camels, that is, bringing what they have, and honoring God with what is at hand. "And all shall come from She ba, bringing gold and frankincense, and they shall bring a precious stone, and shall proclaim the salvation of the Lord.

⁴⁷ Again, Sheba is a land beyond that of the Ar abs, and rather near the Red Sea, from which She ba, the queen of the Ethiopians, in the times of Solomon visited Jerusalem. And the land is most fruitful in frankincense-trees, and gold, and Indian stones. Therefore they will come, he says, bearing fruit for the glory of God, and offering frankincense, and gold, and stones, that is, the fragrance from good works, and intelligible brightness, and spiritual wealth. "And they will also proclaim the good news of the salvation of God. For very many who have been called from the nations, and having been made wise in heart, and having received a knowledgeable mind of the sacred doctrines, have obtained the dignity of teaching, and proclaiming to others the salvation and grace from Christ our all-Saviour, have put on the crown of genuineness. "And the sheep of Kedar, he says, and the rams of Nebaioth will come to you, and will be offered up acceptably upon my altar. And Kedar, and Nebaioth are again other lands, both rich and with good pastures, and having very many inhabitants in them, but they were idolaters, and wanderers. But these also, he says, will offer rams and sheep, and all will be acceptable upon my altar: and yet according to the law of Moses it was not permitted for foreigners to offer sacrifices to God. Nor if they had offered them would anyone have made them acceptable. But behold, God commands that these also be acceptable to the holy sacrific borders.

⁴⁸ For in Christ Jesus there is neither slave nor free, barbarian, Scythian, Greek and Jew, but Christ is all, and in all. For the two peoples have become one, since he brought down the middle wall of partition, and abolished the law of commandments in decrees. Therefore the sacrifices of all are acceptable, of those who approach God through faith in Christ. ¹And the house of prayer of God was glorified. And again, consider for me the depth of the word: for he no longer wishes the Church to be called a house of sacrifices and smoke, just as the temple in Jerusalem was, but rather of prayer, that is, of spiritual worship. For somewhere the divine David also sings and says: "Let

my prayer be set forth as incense before you, the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice. And it should be noted that the Savior himself also recalled this verse somewhere when rebuking the commerce of the Jews, saying: "It is written: 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'" Therefore, when it became a house of prayer, then it was also glorified. Who are these that fly like clouds, and like doves with their young? The islands have waited for me, and the ships of Tarshish among the first, to bring your children from afar, and their silver and their gold with them, for the sake of the holy name of the Lord, and because the Holy One of Israel is glorious.

⁴⁹ It is possible to see again in these things the person of the Church introduced, that is of the spiritual Jerusalem, lifting up her eyes as in a circle, as she was commanded by God, then being astonished at the multitude of those running to her, and the people gathered through faith beyond all number. "For who are these that fly," it says, "like clouds, and like doves with their young? For they are caught in the net through faith, not only the old, but with them also the young, and together fathers with children, and mothers with daughters. Therefore, for every age the linen-net of the evangelical proclamations is spread out, and this, I think, is what is written in the book of Psalms: "Young men and maidens, old men with younger ones, let them praise the name of the Lord. And it says they fly, either because they will walk to her, not carelessly and feebly, but like winged and swift creatures, or that, having left behind their earthly and base mindset, they are in a way raised on high, and just as clouds from the sea, so from worldly turmoil and luxury, they leap up high, and swim up, hastening to the city above. Therefore, as the Church marvels at the gathering through faith from every land, he who nets them lays bare again the cause of the matter, and says: "The islands have waited for me, and the ships of Tarshish to bring your children from afar, and their gold and their silver with them.

⁵⁰ And here you will understand islands not, of course, as the lands of the islands themselves, for that is foolish, nor yet as the very... Of another race, indeed, because not from the blood of Israel according to the flesh, but wise master builders, according to the divine Paul, and knowing well how to lay Christ as a foundation in us, that is, through faith and the teaching of good things. This, I think, is what is meant by, "Men of other races will build your walls, and their kings will stand by you. But whose kings? Clearly, those of

the other races. By these he means kings, either the rulers and leaders of peoples, who have stood by the Church of Christ, as if serving as its body-guard, and protecting its children, and warding off every attack of enemies visible and invisible, or in truth those crowned with the highest honors, and holding the scepter of kingship, who also have stood by the Church. And the 'standing by' in this context signifies obedience. For they yield to the divine and sacred decrees, and they deem the proclamation of the Church worthy of all account. For in my wrath I struck you, and in my mercy I have loved you. And your gates will be opened continually, day and night, and they will not be shut, to bring in to you the power of nations, and kings being led. For the nations and the kings that will not serve you will perish, and the nations will be made desolate.

⁵¹ For since, it says, you were found guilty of very many and intolerable sins, you have undergone the commensurate penalty. For it was necessary for one who was such to undergo the things that come from wrath. But since again it was necessary for you as from a good and compassionate Lord and God for mercy to be given, it is given, and I will banish the things that come from wrath. What then will there be, what will be given, when the grim things have ceased? "Your gates," it says, "will be opened continually, day and night, and they will not be shut. In these words it seems he promises them peace, and the calm weather that comes from it. For cities that are under suspicion of an enemy attack do not always have their gates thrown open, but as occasion and need require, and hardly in the daytime, and not without fear: but those completely freed from expecting to suffer any such thing open them wide to those entering, even if some do this at night.

⁵² If, therefore, God promises them peace, and a breadth of prosperity, that is, the concourse of those coming to it will be uninterrupted, and the entry, as it were, continuous, as they are drawn in a certain way through faith to the knowledge of Christ, so that the gates seem to be opened, and there is no time at which it is proper for them to be closed, and not only for those of a humble life, and under the yoke of kingship, but indeed also for those themselves who hold power over all. And it is possible to see through the events the power of the prophecy prevailing to this day. For the Church receives at all times those willing to believe, and shuts out from this endeavor absolutely no one: and it is possible for those who wish, with no one hindering, at whatever time they might wish, to be led to the light of the

true knowledge of God: and God and the Father leads all to the knowledge of the Son, through whom, and in whom, and with whom he is glorified. And he himself has revealed this to us, saying: "No one can come to me, unless my Father who sent me draws him. But he says that the power of the nations will be brought in, so that you might not think only, as I said, of those in smallness and in a low state, but also those in power, and glory in this life.

⁵³ And he adds that, "And the nations, and the kings, who will not serve you, will perish, and will be made desolate. For the unbelieving, and uninitiated, and those without a share in the salvation through Christ, whether they be some of the distinguished, or of the more obscure, will fall into the pit of Hades, and into the snare of death: for they will have died in their own sins, and they will suffer the final punishment of all. And the glory of Lebanon will come to you in cypress, and pine, and cedar, together to glorify my holy place. Lebanon is a mountain of Phoenicia, full of cedars, and cypresses, and pines, and with these very plants of Lebanon. And for this reason the aforementioned mountain is admired, as having the most abundant timber, and abounding with the tallest and most fragrant trees. This glory, therefore, will be given to you, he says, that is, intelligibly, and spiritually. For the Church of Christ nourishes very many, and renowned heads of the saints raised on high from virtues, and yes, most fragrant. For they have the fragrance of Christ: and in them is also the state of being beyond the corruption that comes from a carnal mind, just as indeed the pine and the cedar do not decay. But it is the custom of the divinely-inspired Scripture at times to liken the multitude of the saints to such plants, and so God said somewhere again through the voice of Isaiah:

⁵⁴ "And I will make water in the desert, and rivers in the waterless land. I will place in the waterless earth the cedar, and the box-tree, and the myrtle, and the cypress, and the white poplar. For he likens the nations to a desolate and waterless land: for the divine word was not among them, which is able to give life, and to bring to growth in piety and knowledge of God, but there have come to be among them the cedar, and the box-tree and the myrtle, and the cypress, and the white poplar, that is, tall and admirable plants, of which also the divine Psalmist makes mention, saying: "Bread strengthens man's heart, the trees of the plain will be satisfied, and the cedars of Lebanon, which you have planted. For as the all-wise Paul writes, "We are God's field. This glory of Lebanon, therefore, he says, will be given to you, that is,

you will be seen abounding with many and admired heads of saints. And this will be, so that my holy place may be glorified. For the boast of the Churches are those who have entered into the heights of the virtues, and having nothing low, that is earthly, and cast on the ground in mind because of the to mind the things of the flesh, but rather rushing on high, and minding the things that are above, and as it were departing from the earth, and while walking upon it, yet having our citizenship above and in the heavens.

⁵⁵ And the sons of those who humbled you and provoked you shall come to you in fear, and you shall be called the city of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. The very outcome of events shows precisely the power of the prophecy, not straying from the truth: for having acted insolently towards the Savior of all, our Jesus Christ, Jerusalem has been humbled, having been cast out from intimacy with God, and having slipped away from hope in him, and having become destitute of mercy from above, and having fallen into the hands of enemies, who indeed having laid waste to all of Judea, also burned the divine and famous temple. But since the remnant has been saved through God's pity, for not a few of those from Israel have believed in Christ, it has been called the Church of Christ, and has become a mother, as it were, of nations. For the sons of those who once humbled her, that is, those who hold power in earthly matters, and coming as it were from them in the succession of scepters, consider the Church venerable, and in fear, that is, with reverence, and having the divine fear in mind, they approach her: "For she has been called the city of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. For the Church is the city of God, and the divine David teaches this, as if to her, "Glorious things have been spoken of you, O city of God.

⁵⁶ And the Lord of all himself says somewhere through the lyre of the Psalmist: " Here I will dwell, for I have chosen it; I will bless her provision, I will satisfy her poor with bread; I will clothe her priests with salvation. But if anyone should wish to name the successive sons of the kings who once persecuted the Church, who now approach her with honor and fear, and honor her as a divine city, he is not carried outside the scope. For we see the outcome of events has turned out this way. Because you were forsaken and hated, and there was no one to help you, I will make you an everlasting exultation, a joy from generation to generation. And you shall suck the milk of nations, and you shall eat the wealth of kings; and you shall know that I am the Lord who saves you, and the God of Israel who redeems you. "For you have be-

come, he says, forsaken, and hated, and there was no one to help. This was the cause of your humiliation, for you acted insolently toward the one able to exalt you and to guard your prosperity unshakably, but there was no one to extend a helping hand, since you were hated by God: for you acted insolently not against some one of those in a servile station, and having a diac-
onal ministry, but against the very King and Lord of all.

⁵⁷ But since you have once suffered humiliation, the wicked things will pass away, and he will reclaim you with the second things. For just as having disobeyed if it was necessary for her to be punished by the just decree of God, so it is fitting for her when she has returned to be pitied. "I will make you, therefore," he says, "a joy for generations of generations: For there is nothing gloomy in the Church of Christ, where there is altogether the hope of incorruption, and of unending life, and of unfading glory, and of the kingdom of the heavens, what dejection could it have? And you shall suck the milk of nations, and you shall eat the wealth of kings. And the meaning of the prophecy seems to some to teach something of this sort, that many from the Hellenic flock, having been made wise in their mind by the God-inspired Scriptures, and having leaped up to a knowledge of dogmatic skill, will be teachers of the Synagogue from the Jews. But somehow for the present the text seems to go not so much this way of thought, but perhaps wants to make this clear, that she will be filled with the fruitfulness from the nations, and with royal offerings. For the experience of things shows that this too is true. But with these things thus accomplished, he says that, "I am the Lord who saves you. For as the prophet Isaiah says:

⁵⁸ "Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we would have become as Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah. For by the grace and loving-kindness of God the remnant of Israel has been saved, so that the nation from the holy fathers should not be utterly destroyed. And instead of bronze I will bring you gold, and instead of iron I will bring you silver, and instead of wood, I will bring you bronze, and instead of stones, iron. And I will give your rulers in peace, and your overseers in righteousness. He takes up the materials as in the order of examples, having a very great difference from one another. But he signifies something spiritual and profound indirectly. For he wishes to say that all things will be changed for the better, and the second things will differ from the first. For the education in the law will in every way yield to that through Christ, that is, to the evangelical ordinances,

and the difference will be as great as that between bronze and gold. For bronze has the appearance of gold, but it is not gold; and iron has the appearance of silver, for it has brightness in it, but it is not silver, but is very much inferior to the superior one. Therefore one might liken the education in the law to bronze, but that through Christ to gold:

⁵⁹and again one might liken the power of the way of life in the law to iron, which has a measured brightness, but that in Christ and the gospel, rather to silver: for it has perfect brightness, spiritually speaking. For this very reason, the all-wise Paul, although saying that he had the greatest boast from the life in the law, and from the knowledge under it, considered all things to be refuse, but wished to gain Christ, and the surpassingness of the knowledge of him. And wood and stones are useful for building: and we will find the all-wise Paul likening the power of the initiation by some to these materials. "For if anyone," he says, "builds upon the foundation, wood, ...wood, hay, stones, stubble. This being so, we say this, that the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees, that is, the instruction of the unbelieving Jews as a whole, who do not understand the mystery of Christ at all, since they have not believed in him, might be compared to wood perhaps, and to stones, but the teaching in Christ, the evangelical, is so much better, as bronze is to wood, and iron to stone. For their teachings and thoughts were easily broken, but those of the Christians were solid, and as it were unbreakable, along with being splendid and precious. For the Jews fall into genealogies and endless myths, explaining to the people under them, weaving in certain trifles and old wives' chatter:

⁶⁰but those who bear Christ in mind teach those under them every way of holy skill, and make those who come to them lovers of dogmatic precision, and workers of every virtue: and the following passage immediately shows somehow that the meaning of the prophecy has this purpose. "For I will give," he says, "your rulers in peace, and your overseers in righteousness. For with the first ones, he says, having been cast out, the Savior of all raises up other rulers and overseers of the peoples, excelling in peace and righteousness. For those are at peace with God, who are eager to think the things that are pleasing to him, and who are crowned with the boasts of righteousness. The prophet Isaiah said something of this sort again elsewhere, or rather God through the prophet to the mother of the Jews, I mean Jerusalem: "And I will bring my hand upon you, and I will purge you to purity, and I will des-

troy the disobedient, and I will take away all the lawless from you, and I will humble all the arrogant; and I will establish your judges as before and your counselors as from the beginning, and after these things you will be called the city of righteousness, the faithful metropolis Zion. Indeed, the Savior himself also rebuked the teachers of the Jews, saying: "Truly, truly I say to you, the kingdom of heaven will be taken away from you and will be given to another nation, producing its fruits."

DISCOURSE 30

¹ And injustice will no longer be heard in your land, nor destruction and misery in your borders, but your walls will be called salvation, and your gates a sculpture. And the saying is very likely. For if her rulers are in peace, and the overseers are pre-eminent in boasts of righteousness, surely the practice of living eagerly in all righteousness and piety according to Christ will prevail also among those under their yoke. "Not And there shall be, he says, no devastation within your borders. By devastation he means greed, especially against those in a subordinate and weak position. For such people are an easy path, and are set forth as a most ready prey for those who wish to plunder. And at times, the leaders of the Synagogue of the Jews have become unjust and greedy, and rising up against the divine laws, they made their judgments on every matter perverse. For Sacred Scripture in many places accuses them of having advanced to such a measure of unholiness that they were seen to be liable to intolerable charges: for at one time it says that her leaders judged for bribes, and her prophets divined for silver. And the divine one also sings, "Devastation and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes. And the God of all rebuked them even when they were fasting, saying thus:

² "For in the days of your fasts you find your own wills, and you provoke all who are under your hand. You fast for judgments and quarrels, and you strike the lowly with your fists: and in addition to these things, through the voice of Isaiah: "And they coveted fields, and they plundered orphans, and they oppressed houses, and they plundered a man and his house, a man and his inheritance. Since their ways have ceased, but the choir of the holy apostles has been raised up in their place, and those after them who still endeavor to follow in their footsteps rightly divide the word of truth, and have become the best teachers of those under their hand. For this reason, and very rightly, he says that injustice will no longer be heard in their land, nor dev-

astation and misery: but her walls will rather be called salvation, and her gates a carving, and by walls, as I think, he means the holy teachers, securing the Church with dogmatic and ethical instructions, so that it is also impregnable to enemies, whether they be visible or invisible. And these same ones would also be gates, since indeed they use an introductory word, and bring in through faith to the knowledge of truth those who were until now outside of it. And a carving because their word was exceedingly beautiful, and as it were, turned on a lathe toward truth: for everything that is carved is comely:

3 and the Seventy have given this interpretation, but the other interpreters have put Jesus instead of carving. And this is also true. For he was and is called beautiful in his comeliness beyond the sons of men, and we have been enriched with him as walls and gates. For he secures us with unspeakable power, and with the aid of the holy angels: "For he shall give his angels charge over you," he says, "to keep you in all your ways: and "The angel of the Lord will encamp round about those that fear him, and will deliver them. But we come d through him to the knowledge of the Father, and for this he has become both a door, and a gate, and a way. For he said that " I am the door, and the way, and no one comes to the Father, except through me. And he is also an engraving, that is the form, and the appearance of the one who begot him, and the character of his substance, and an image, and the effulgence of his glory. And the sun will not be for you a light by day, nor will the rising of the moon give you light by night, but the Lord will be for you an everlasting light, and God your glory. For your sun will not set, and the moon will not fail. For the Lord will be for you an everlasting light. Some wish, through the meaning of the preceding words, to lead us to suppose something of this kind.

4 For in the last times of the age, when those who lie in the earth have been raised, and our Savior of all, Christ, has descended from heaven with the holy angels in the glory of the Father, the brightness of the elements will cease, but we expect new heavens, and a new earth, and his promises, according to what is written. And the Savior himself also said something of this sort, that " In those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light. For the glory of the Savior himself will be sufficient for the enlightenment of the saints. But so that the preceding words might seem somehow to follow the meaning of what has gone before, having praised this interpretation, we also say that something else is signified through the pre-

ceding verses. For the light of the sun, and additionally that of the moon, is both useful and necessary for the eyes of the body. But at night the light of the sun is withdrawn, and in the day that of the moon. For they alternately yield to each other to shine. But the divine and intelligible light, which the Savior of all sends into the hearts of believers, he says, through the Holy Spirit, and through those who know well how to initiate into the mysteries, will be unquenchable, and unending, and ever-shining, so that the mind of each is in no need of sun or moon for illumination, or for sight:

5 for the mind is not illumined by perceptible light, but is rather satisfied by the illumination and brightness through the Holy Spirit to be able to see the glory of Christ, and whatever resemblance he might have to the one who begot him, in substance, of course, and indeed also to know unerringly the way of the best life. The Savior has therefore become for us an everlasting light, and this he makes clear to us, saying: " I am the light of the world," and again: " As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. " He who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life. And the days of your mourning will be fulfilled, and all your people will be righteous, and they will inherit the land forever, guarding the planting, the works of his hands for glory. The few will become a thousand, and the least a great nation. I the Lord in due time will gather them. Those who the Saying that the time of the consummation is being revealed through the fact that the light of the sun, or that of the moon, no longer shines, but is rather diminished, so that our Lord may become an eternal light, they say that for those who mourn now, whom the Savior says will indeed be comforted, there will be an end of mourning at about that time:

6 for they will cease from doing so any longer, and from being worn out, and they will obtain eternal rewards. For this, I think, is what it means to be comforted. But since again it is necessary to follow the lofty aspects of the contemplations, we say this, that for those who remain in transgressions dejection is fitting and most appropriate. For they expect not honors and crowns, not comfort from God, but rather punishment, and fire, and darkness: whereas those who are engaged in good works rejoice in hope, as the all-wise Paul says: for their goodness is succeeded by glory and delight for endless ages: except when he turns to the Lord, even he who is held fast by very many sins, then is justified through faith, and receives the remission of his offenses, and will expect to receive also the honors prepared for the saints.

Then indeed the days of his mourning will cease, and toil and dejection will end, and what follows confirms this thought, as it were: "For it shall be," it says, "all your people will be righteous," that is, every people that follows you will be justified: and the word is as to the Church: for Christ justifies the impious by grace and loving-kindness, and He Himself releases from every charge those who have been caught. For who will be the provider of such things, He has revealed, by saying: Protecting the planting, the works of His hands for glory.

7 For we are a planting of the plants of our Savior of all, Christ, and His work: for being wild olives we were grafted into a good olive tree, with Christ, as it were, working on us Himself: for not an ambassador, not an angel, but the Lord Himself saved us. For He Himself said: "Behold, I who speak am here." - "And it shall be," it says, "that the few will become a thousand, and the least a great nation. For now, that is, in this age, the glory of the saints is hidden, and with respect to worldly arrogance they seem to be very few, not having manifest glory. But when Christ shines forth again from the heavens at that time, even he who was considered to be least and few will become a great nation. For he will lead peoples, and will rule over many, since indeed he has completed the approved course in this life: and this it is possible to see from what Christ said: for speaking to the apostles: "When the Son of man shall sit," He says, "on the throne of His glory, then you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. But indeed also in the distribution of the talents He is found saying, "You shall be over ten tribes: but to others He gives the lesser portion: "For you shall be," He says, "over five cities.

8 Of equal weight as though in every way extending to them a reward for their fairness, and weighing out the honor fitting for each. Therefore, rejoicing in this very thing, the saints say: "He has subjected peoples to us, and nations under our feet. Those indeed who were considered to be the least in life, then became thousands, and a great nation. "I, he says, the Lord of all, will gather them at the proper time," namely, those of the visitation from heaven. For then the saints will have the enjoyment of every good thing: who also will be caught up, as the all-wise Paul says, in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord, delighting in unending honors. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because of which he has anointed me; he has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to heal the

brokenhearted, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to call the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of recompense, to comfort all who mourn, that to those who mourn in Zion should be given glory instead of ashes, the oil of gladness to those who mourn, and a garment of glory instead of a spirit of dejection. He who said in the preceding words concerning those who would be called in faith:

9 "I the Lord will gather them at the proper times," as the time was already present, in which he promised to gather them, and as one who had already become man, and had undergone the likeness to us, and had lowered himself to emptiness, "The Spirit of the Lord," he says, "is upon me," although being by nature God the Only-begotten is the Holy of holies, and he himself sanctifies all creation, since indeed he is begotten of a holy Father, and pours forth the Spirit from himself, and sends it into the powers above as his own, and moreover to those who have recognized his epiphany. How then was he sanctified? For being at once God and the same one man, he gives the Spirit divinely to creation, but he receives it from God the Father according to his humanity. This we say is the use [or, anointing]. And he makes clear the cause of the incarnation. For having said that it was from the Father, he necessarily added, "Because of which he has anointed me; he has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to those in captivity, and to grant recovery of sight to the blind, and in addition to these to call also a day of recompense: many at the same time are the manifest achievements of the incarnation of the Only-begotten.

10 For in order that he might win the world under heaven, and bring those throughout the whole inhabited world to God the Father, having transformed all things to a better state, and as it were renewed the face of the earth, he took the form of a servant, although being Lord of all. He therefore preached good news to the poor; he says he was sent for this reason. And the poor would be, or rather, be understood as, those who had once suffered the lack of every good thing, having no hope, and without God in the world, according to what is written. These would be those from the nations, who being rich in faith toward him, have gained the divine and heavenly treasure, that is, the evangelic and saving proclamation, through which they have become partakers of the kingdom of the heavens, and co-sharers with the saints, heirs of things beyond mind and reason. "For eye has

not seen," he says, "and ear has not heard, and it has not entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him. Or perhaps the saying also means that to the poor in spirit has been granted in these things the abundant supply of the gifts through Christ. And he says "brokenhearted" for those who have a weak and easily corrupted mind, and are not able to stand against the assaults of the passions, but are so overcome by them as to seem to be captives.

¹¹ To these he promises both healing and release, and to them, being blind, he gives recovery of sight. For those who worship creation, and say to the wood: "You are my father," and to the stone, "You begot me," and then did not know the God who is by nature and truly is, how would they not be blind, having their heart bare of the divine and intelligible light? to these the Father sends forth the light of the true knowledge of God. For they have been called through faith, and they have known him, or rather have been known by him, and being sons of night and of darkness, they have become children of light: for the day dawned upon them, and the Sun of righteousness arose, and the bright Morning Star shone forth. But it is no harm to apply all that has been said also to those of the blood of Israel. For they were poor, and brokenhearted, and as captives, and in darkness. "For there was none on earth doing good, there was not even one, but all turned aside, together they became worthless. And Christ has been sent, before others, preaching the good news to those from Israel of the achievements of his coming. And in addition to these things, so that he might also call a year of the Lord acceptable, and a day of recompense. And an acceptable year, indeed, is that in which Christ was crucified for us.

¹² For then we became acceptable to God the Father, and made fruitful through him, and he himself taught us this, saying, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone: but if it dies, it bears more fruit. And again, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all to myself. And so, on the third day he came back to life, having trampled the power of death. Then he addressed the holy disciples, saying: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me: go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit. That year, therefore, is surely acceptable, in which we were received, having obtained intimacy with him, washing away sin through holy baptism, and becoming partakers of his divine

nature through of his tyranny, "And having cast him down to hell with chains of darkness," according to what is written, "delivered them to be reserved for judgment to be punished on the great day" both him and the others, who became his fellow-apostates. For indeed the divine David also sings as from the person of the redeemed, and says: "I will give thanks to You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and exult in You.

¹³ I will sing to Your name, O Most High, for you have maintained my judgment and my cause. You have sat on the throne, judging righteousness: You have rebuked nations, and the wicked one has perished: You have blotted out his name for ever and for ever and ever: "Yes, and elsewhere again he says about him thus. "His sin shall be sought, and shall not be found. And the Savior Himself also said: "Now is the judgment of this world, now will the ruler of this world be cast out. It is a time therefore of recompense, and in this manner, in which Christ shone upon the world: and He says that He has come to comfort all who mourn in Zion, to give them glory instead of ashes, and the oil of gladness, and a garment of glory instead of a spirit of faint-heartedness. For there have been at times among the Jews holy men, and learned in the law, and searchers of the prophetic proclamations, and men of knowledge. These, seeing those of the blood of Israel caring little for the commandment through Moses, but turning rather to what seemed good to them, and teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and living a most lawless and sin-loving life, felt over them a grief befitting the saints. And they were looking for the redemption through Christ. For being Spirit-bearers they were not ignorant of Him who justifies the ungodly by faith, and with a grace that forgets evils cleanses those who are defiled.

¹⁴ And so, the righteous Simeon, taking the infant Christ in his arms, prayed, saying: "Now you are releasing your servant, Master, according to your word, in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel. And we shall find also the divine Zacharias, the father of John, saying: "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and has made redemption for his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us. And Philip also evangelized Nathanael, saying thus: "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth. And somewhere the all-wise Paul

also writes that "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."-"Therefore, comfort has been given to those who mourn in Zion," that which is through Christ, "and glory instead of ashes. For they ceased to mourn and weep for it, and they received the grace through Christ, evang- both hoping and proclaiming. " And an ointment of gladness was given to them instead of mourning, and a garment of glory, instead of a spirit of faint-heartedness.

¹⁵ But by ointment in these things he means cheerfulness, that is, hilarity, and gladness, instead of mourning and weeping, and a garment of glory, that is, a covering, or a robe, and a mantle instead of a spirit of faint-heartedness, that is, instead of their former smallness of soul. For those who formerly mourned her and were faint-hearted for her have been glorified. But how were they glorified? For they have been set up as her guides and teachers, and this was indeed what was said to her through the lyre of the Psalmist: " Instead of your fathers, sons have been born to you. For being children of the Jewish Synagogue, the all-wise disciples have become fathers. Indeed the all-wise Paul writes to some, " For in Christ Jesus through the Gospel I have begotten you. Therefore, those who had become her sons were placed in the rank of fathers: But that the divine disciples have received the garment of glory from God would be clear from Christ saying to them, at one time, that " Heal the sick, cast out demons, raise the dead: and at another time again: " You are the light of the world. And they shall be called generations of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for glory. And they will build up the eternal desolate cities, they will raise up those formerly desolated, and they will renew the desolate cities that were desolated for generations.

¹⁶ For those in Christ are called "A chosen generation, a holy nation, a people for possession," on account of the beauty of the righteousness within them, and I do not mean that according to the law, but rather that which they have received through the ordinances of the Savior: for the one through Christ is incomparably better than the one in the law: and indeed He said to the holy apostles: " Amen I say to you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven."-"Therefore, he says, they will be called generations of righteousness, and moreover a planting of the Lord. For we are truly God's tillage, and concerning us the divine David says: "Planted in the house of the Lord, they will

flourish in the courts of our God. And indeed the all-wise Paul calls those called through faith in Christ God's tillage. But he said again, that " I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. " For the Savior cultivates us through the holy mystagogues: for this reason they also very rightly say that they have become co-workers with God. And the all-wise David also sings in the Psalms: "The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, he will be multiplied like the cedar in Lebanon. We are therefore indeed a planting of the Lord, and for His glory. "But they will build, he says, eternal desolate cities, and they will renew desolate cities.

¹⁷ He seems to wish to make clear through this, either the multitude of those who will be called, that it will be so great, as to seek out other cities besides the existing ones, and to renew them those once desolate: that is to say, perhaps this: For, being straitened, he says, by the multitude in the churches, although they were once bare and desolate, they will do something of the sort that those who wish to build up desolate cities are accustomed to do, and as those who are zealous to raise what is lying on the ground. It was said, then, to the Church: "Enlarge the place of your tent, and of your courts: fix them, do not spare: spread out still to the right and to the left. And the outcome of events itself would show, and very easily, that the prophecy concerning this is true. And foreigners shall come shepherding your sheep, and aliens as plowmen, and vinedressers: but you shall be called priests of the Lord, ministers of God. You shall consume the strength of nations, and in their wealth you shall be admired. [Instead of your double shame, and instead of dishonor their portion shall rejoice, and so] they shall inherit the land a second time. And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. Here he says clearly that there will be a change of the law and of the priesthood according to it.

¹⁸ For it is no longer fitting for those of the blood of Levi + to perform sacred rites, nor the name and reality of ministry, but they have been pushed out, and the glory in this has been given to those from the nations who have been called through faith. For they are crowned by the decree of God, and they themselves are appointed as ministers and priests: "For foreigners shall come," he says, "shepherding your sheep. But the saying is directed to the Church, whose sheep the holy multitude of those saved through faith would be understood to be: she is shepherded by foreigners. For the scribes and Pharisees of old, who obtained the lot of leading those of the blood of Israel,

became indolent and supine, and most unskilled shepherds. Therefore the multitude placed under them was perishing, since their silver was counterfeit. And they taught as doctrines the commandments of men, and they carried away those subject to them from knowing Christ, at one time saying: "We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he is from: and at another time: "He has a demon and is mad; why do you listen to him? Therefore, the God of all things testified through the voice of prophets, saying thus, that "The shepherds have become foolish, and have not sought the Lord. Therefore the whole pasture did not understand, and they were scattered: and indeed through the voice of Ezekiel: "O shepherds of Israel, do the shepherds feed themselves?

¹⁹ do not the shepherds feed the sheep? Behold, you consume the milk, and you do not feed my sheep: and in addition to these things: "You fed on the good pasture, and trampled the rest with your feet, and you drank the settled water, and disturbed the rest with your feet, and my sheep fed on the treadings of your feet, and drank the water disturbed by your feet. For settled water is the [teaching] through the law he calls it my teaching, and the best pasture: but those who were confusing all things, and muddying it by not teaching the people under their hand correctly, prepared, as it were, water to drink that was not pure, nor pasture to graze on that was not fresh. Therefore, and quite rightly, they were thrust out from still shepherding the people of the Lord. For gentiles have been called to this. For wise teachers of the Churches are ordained by Christ, and sagacious, and having a mind filled with doctrinal skill, men from the Greek flock, and not being of the blood of Israel, these have become both plowmen and vinedressers. For since those who have believed are called in many places of the divinely-inspired Scripture chosen earth, and a vineyard, and a garden: for this reason, the word says, that those who from time to time should become priests of the Lord and ministers of God will be plowmen and vinedressers, rightly dividing the word of truth, and ministering the Gospel of Christ, as it is written:

²⁰ therefore they do not seize the honor for themselves, but rather are called by God, just as the all-wise Paul also says. And yet, though he was of the tribe of Benjamin, he calls himself everywhere a minister, and a called apostle of Jesus Christ. "You therefore, all who have received the dignity of the sacred ministry, shall eat the strength of the nations, and in their wealth you shall be admired. He says the strength of the nations, either the honors

from the most powerful, who would be those called from the nations, or you will understand it in another way. "For none of you," he says, "will escape the mouth," that is, the word, for the sacred Scripture everywhere puts "mouth" for "word," as in, "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." – "Therefore you shall possess," he says, "the strength of the nations. And by the power of the nations, the word seems in these things to mean either those who are brilliant among them, that is, the most renowned, and those who have worldly wisdom. And we shall find that the word of the holy mystagogues prevailed, and being enriched by their calling, they were glorified. For the boast of teachers, and crown and glory, are those saved through their enlightenment. For this reason he says, "In their wealth you shall be admired.

²¹ That the divine proclamation will take hold of the regions, and of every nation, and that in due time the leaders of the holy Churches will be, so to speak, heirs of the world under heaven, ascribing glory to Christ, he implies, saying: "Thus they shall inherit the land a second time. For long ago Joshua the son of Nun allotted to those of Israel the lands of the nations: for they took the land of the Amorites, and the Idumaeans, and the Hivites, and those of the others. But Christ, shining upon the world, of whom the Joshua of old was a type, allotted to his own ministers, not just Judea, but indeed the whole earth. And a second allotment came after the first. For they divided the countries and cities by his decree, mystagogues and teachers, and they come hither rejoicing in Christ, and having an intelligible joy, as a certain crown upon their head. And the joy is eternal: for we do not expect the reward to be in temporary things, but in a long hope, and in a life without end, and in the good things that are beyond mind and reason. For I am the Lord who loves righteousness, and hates robberies from injustice: and I will give their labor to the just, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the nations. And their offspring in the midst of the peoples.

²² Everyone that sees them shall know them, that these are a seed blessed by God, they shall rejoice with joy in the Lord. Having said, that "Strangers shall come feeding your sheep, and foreigners shall be plowmen and vinedressers," as the first were evidently cast out, and driven from leading the peoples, he shows the causes for which they have suffered this, by the holy decree of him who judges righteously. For since I love, he says, righteousness,

but hate robberies from injustice, and the leaders of the synagogue of the Jews have become such, I have passed over, he says, and cast them out. For the labor of those who seize plunder from injustice I give to others. For those who become rich unjustly, and, as the prophet says, treasure up for themselves impiety and misery, pass these things on to others. For Solomon said, that "Wealth unjustly gathered shall be vomited up, an angel shall drag him out of his house. And again: "He that gathers his wealth with interest and increase, shall leave it to him that has mercy on the poor, and certainly not at all to good and compassionate men, but rather to the profligate. For he euphemistically said that such men have mercy on the poor. For to those who live in profligacy very many attach themselves, and spend with them the things unjustly accumulated by the sweat of many. And the divine David also sings about such men, and says: "Surely he is disquieted in vain:

²³ he treasures up, and knows not for whom he shall gather them: And in another way the labor, that is the care, of the Scribes and Pharisees was given to others, it is clear that "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. Therefore they were cast out, he says, but with us who are called from the nations to the priesthood I will make an everlasting covenant, which signifies the evangelical preaching, that is, the hope without end. "And among the nations shall be known," he says, "their seed, and their offspring, everyone that sees them shall know them, that these are a seed blessed by God. For the sons in discipleship of the holy mystagogues from much exceeding good work, and from the pious life, are most well-known to all, that they have also become the offspring of saints according to j, which we have done upon the earth. Therefore, the saints must be compared to a bridegroom and a bride, on account of their strength, and in addition to this, their fruitfulness: but consider this, for everywhere in them is that which excels in beauty. This is preserved in them, both in bearing the exceptional fruits of mighty deeds, and in acting manfully against the passions. But that righteousness and exultation shone upon the nations when Christ appeared, like some flourishing grass crowning the earth under heaven, he has shown by saying:

²⁴ "As the earth bringing forth her flower, and as a garden its seeds, so the Lord will cause righteousness and exultation to spring up before all the nations. And through these things, it seems that what springs up, that is, what rises up, the seed and flower before the nations, he names our Lord Je-

sus Christ Himself. For He said in the Song of Songs: “I am a flower of the plain, a lily of the valleys: that is, the evangelical and saving proclamation, and His justification being superior to that according to the law, which is entirely and in every way followed by rejoicing, which is exultation. For to those who have completely achieved it, to be in long-lasting gladness will be allotted by God. For they will hear our Savior of all, Christ, saying: “Well done, good and faithful servant, you were faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord: And exultation, the saving proclamation, might also be understood in another way. For the law was a chastiser, and had much that was dejecting: for anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses, but the evangelical oracle brings to us life and a promise of rewards, and a true hope of goods beyond understanding.

25 For Zion’s sake I will not be silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until my righteousness goes forth as light, and my salvation as a burning torch, and the nations shall see your righteousness, and kings your glory, and he shall call you by your new name, which the Lord will name, and you shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. In these things he calls Zion the Church, of which the divine disciples became the first-born children from the beginning, and those called through them to the knowledge of Christ, and before all others, those of the blood of Israel. For the remnant has been saved, and very many of them have believed. Therefore, I will not rest, he says, that is, I would not cease from needing to carry out to the end what has been promised to Zion. And God the Father promised salvation through Christ to both Jews and Greeks, if indeed “God is one. as the all-wise Paul says, “who will justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. For He is not the God of the Jews only, but of the nations also. Therefore, I will not rest, he says, until my righteousness goes forth as light. And the salvation of me will be kindled as a lamp.

26 Both righteousness and salvation Christ appeared and became to those upon the earth, for he justifies, and saves, being himself the true light, and as a lamp in darkness. For he himself said, that “When I am in the world, I am the light of the world. For all things had been seized by gloom and darkness, the devil blackening the hearts of all, and there was no one who did good, and knew righteousness, that is, the path that leads away [alt. leads to] to be

saved. But neither was there one who had the divine light in his mind, and was able with the eyes of the intellect to perceive, who is God by nature and in truth, and the creator of all things, and Lord: but when he arose as a light, and the Savior shone as a lamp, then the world under heaven was enlightened, and we have seen the path of salvation through him. Then he says to the Church, from the flock of the Jews, and when the multitude of the Gentiles had not yet been gathered in the net, that " Nations will see your righteousness, and kings your glory. And again in these things, righteousness, and indeed also glory, he says is nothing other than our Lord Jesus Christ. For we have been justified in him, and we have been enriched with the glory from him. For we have become his, and we are called his inheritance.

27 And we have been placed under yokes and scepters, having washed away the greed of the one who tyrannized over us: and that having departed from the worship according to the law, and having, as it were, changed towards the newness of evangelical life, it will also cast off its former calling, and will then be renamed with a new name, according to what seems good to the God over all, he shows by saying: "He will call your new name, which the Lord will name it: for it is no longer called a synagogue, but the Church of the living God, and his city and house. For the divine David also remembers it, saying thus: "Glorious things have been spoken of you, O city of God. And that it will be exceedingly beautiful, and crowned with incomparable beauty, he teaches, saying: "You will be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. For each holy soul, and the Church as a whole, that is, the communities of the saints, must be compared to a crown composed of many flowers, or to a royal diadem, shining with Indian stones, and having manifold excellence: for the heroic deeds of the saints are very many, and the manner of their boasts is not one, but many and various.

28 And indeed the divine David introduces the Church of Christ clothed in gold-fringed garments, variegated, but the phrase " In the hand of the Lord," he says, that is, under the shadow of my hand I will cover you: and Christ himself somewhere concerning his own flock, that is, of the flock of those who have believed in him, says, that "No one will snatch them out of my Father's hand. And no longer c You will be called forsaken, and your land will not be called desolate: for you will be called my delight, and your land,

inhabited. He teaches again, that He will at last cease from the former turning away, which He has often made towards the Synagogue of the Jews, and will have stopped from His anger, and will make her desirable, and in addition to this also fruitful, and will show her to be crowned with the multitude of those who have believed. For Zion, having rejected our Lord Jesus Christ, has been given over to desolation, and the multitude of those who disbelieved has perished. But since the remnant accepted the faith, then the multitude of the Gentiles has been called to it, and the two were founded into one people, and one Church has consequently been named from both, God grants to her that in no way is she to be caught in the former evils, nor indeed to be called [al.

29 ai] forsaken, or desolate, but that rather she will become desirable to him, and no longer desolate, but rather will be called inhabited. And we see this having come to fulfillment through the things themselves. For in fair weather and calm we see the Churches situated everywhere, and the believers always extending into a multitude beyond measure, and God taking pleasure in them. For persecutions have been stirred up from time to time, but not for a long time, but constrained, and training the saints rather than harming them: for they have become approved through endurance and patience, having taken up the crown of genuineness toward Christ, and having become rich in the glory of martyrdom. And as a young man cohabits with a virgin, so will your sons dwell with you, and it will be that in the way a bridegroom rejoices over a bride, so will the Lord rejoice over you. Then he makes his words to the Church as one constituted, at least, from the Jewish ranks in the beginning. Of this one the divine disciples were sons according to the flesh, but they were in her, pre-eminent over the others, and leading, as being in apostolic dignity, yet preserving for her the utmost love and affection, so that the tender love that came to be for her seemed to be such as would befit a young man living with a virgin, that is, to her who was joined to him from virginity:

30 and they say that it drives to the limit of all tender love those who are all but bound tight in such a bond. And indeed the all-wise Paul says: "Sorrow I have," "and unceasing anguish in my heart for my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites. And he even prayed to be accursed for their sake, except that a great newness of things is signified through the prophecy set before us, and the change is worthy of admiration:

for the old Synagogue, and in a way grown grey [al. grown old] because of time, is compared to a young woman: "For they will dwell as with a virgin," he says, "your sons: And this, I think, is what is in the Psa hymned by us: "Your youth will be renewed like an eagle's," indeed they have dwelt in her, leading her by the hand as a nurse, exhorting her as a mother, carrying her away from the shadows and types, and wisely leading her up to the point of choosing the truth over the unprofitable shadow: the divine David also said something like this to her: "Instead of your fathers, sons have been born to you. For those who were her sons according to the flesh have become her fathers, being the beginning of her new children, namely, those called through faith to the knowledge of Christ our Savior of all: and since this is so, he says: "So the Lord will rejoice over you, just as a bridegroom over a bride.

³¹ For the only-begotten Word of God came down from heaven, that He might make the Church fruitful, whom He presented to Himself as a pure virgin, having no spot or wrinkle, but rather holy and blameless. Having therefore received from Him the seeds of the evangelical way of life, she has both conceived and given birth, no longer to the worship through blood and smoke, but rather to that in which the beauty of truth is most especially engraved. For this very reason He rejoices quite fittingly, seeing the types of the law transferred into evangelical truth, and with spiritual sacrifices, and with truly holy achievements the bride shining forth. And on your walls, Jerusalem, I have set watchmen all the day, and all the night, who shall never be silent, remembering the Lord. For there is none like you. He speaks as to a splendid and well-inhabited city: and always somehow the most prominent of the cities very many and sober watchmen surround, lest any of the enemies should invade unexpectedly: so also the Savior and Lord of all, having fortified the Church with ineffable power and with the help of angels, has appointed for her wise and watchful guardians, who have a sleepless care for her, namely, the holy mystagogues, who in no way cease from remembering His glory, and His wonders, as it is written.

³² For we are accustomed in the churches to always proclaim to the people under our care the mighty works of the Savior, and the demonstration of His divinely-fitting excellence, so that from this they may have a sure and unshakable faith concerning Him. Or perhaps he says that the watchmen will remember the Lord by exclaiming and saying, that "there is none like you.

For He is not like us, but by as much as He surpasses human things in the excellence of His renown and in the glory of His divinity, by so much does He excel also in being good and loving-kind. For as the Psalmist says: "He has not dealt with us according to our iniquities, nor rewarded us according to our sins. For He saved us while we were sinners, and lovingly brought to Himself those who were not worthy of being saved. He said something similar also through another prophet: "What shall I do to you, Ephraim? What shall I do to you, Judah? I will set you as Admah, and as Zeboim my heart is turned within me, I will not act according to the anger of my wrath: I will not abandon Ephraim to be blotted out, because I am God, and not man, the Holy One in you. For since I am not a man, he says, but rather God, the Holy One in you, for this reason I will not abandon Ephraim to be blotted out.

³³ If you are corrected, and I make you, Jerusalem, an exultation upon the earth, the Lord swore by his glory, and by the strength of his arm, If I will yet give your grain, and your food to your enemies, and if strangers will yet drink your wine, for which you have labored, but those who gather it will eat it, and they will praise the Lord, and those who gather it will drink it in my holy courts. As from a similarity of things, that is, of misfortunes very often inflicted upon those of Israel, he weaves a narration of most profitable contemplations for us. For they sinned in many ways, having abandoned the God who is by nature and in truth, and being devoted to the worship of idols: for they worshipped the works of their own hands, and having kicked away, as it were, even the life according to the law, they were carried off toward what seemed good to them. For this reason they were smitten by God, sometimes with barrenness, with bodily plagues, with incursions of wars, which, ravaging their whole country, plundered even the things in the fields. For it has been said to them: "You shall sow, and not reap; you shall press olives, and not anoint yourself with oil; and wine you shall not drink.

³⁴ " If therefore you are corrected, he says, O Jerusalem," that is, if you should change to spiritual worship, if you should flee from the types, and recognize that Moses wrote concerning me, if you should receive the grace through faith, "and you make for yourself an exultation upon the earth," that is, a glorious boast, namely that which is in Christ, "the Lord swore by his glory," for he has no one greater by whom to swear, "and by his arm," that of the things formerly inflicted on you because of great disobedience,

nothing will happen any more. For you will not have the sweat of your husbandry unrewarded: but you will understand this spiritually: but as the divine David says: "You shall eat the fruits of your labors. And as Paul says, that " Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap, and he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life: that therefore one will abundantly heap up for oneself the things from spiritual fruitfulness, he indicates through the preceding words: "But those who have obtained these things will give glory, he says, to the Lord, and those who gather them will drink them in the holy courts. For those who have gathered the boasts of the excellent life and who collect the fruits of right and blameless faith will delight in the mansions above.

³⁵ Go forth through my gates, and prepare a way for the people it must be, he said, that is, that the word of faith which we preach should be lifted up and become most known, or perhaps also the symbol of the saving passion. And this too is a confession of faith. For one must say that Jesus is Lord, and believe that God raised him from the dead. And this saves both from death and from sin. Therefore not only of the Jews, but also of the gentiles. For the sign is raised not only for those who have believed from the blood of Israel, but also for those everywhere on earth: for the whole world under heaven has been gathered in through the evangelical preachings. Say to the daughter of Zion: Behold, your Savior has come to you, having his own reward, and his work before his face: and he will call them a holy people, redeemed by the Lord: and you shall be called a city sought after, and not forsaken. And he foretells the arrival of the Savior, and what things we have gained through it, and the wealth that will be given to those who believe in him. Indeed, he names Zion a daughter. And if someone should wish, let him understand the ancient one as having now been shown mercy, and justified in faith. But if indeed the new one, that is the Church, she too might not unreasonably be said to be the daughter of Zion.

³⁶ For first those from the blood of Israel have believed, and as a kind of daughter of the Church constituted from them in the beginning, the one from the gentiles is named. And to whom does he command to preach the good news to Zion? Or surely to the holy mystagogues who have been appointed to lead the Churches, whom he also strongly exhorted to open the gates and to cast the stones out of the midst? And what then is being preached? " Behold, your Savior has come to you, having his own reward, and

his work before his face. He puts two things together, both befitting God and excellent, through which the glory of the Savior might become manifest. For the divine prophets called it to a good life, and to a life lawful and decent. Then they made mention of the rewards, which they will receive from God in due season, for whom it should be to be well-pleasing in word, but they themselves were not givers of the spiritual gifts. But they proclaimed, as I said, the promises of God. But the Savior of all, since he is indeed God, has the power to give rewards, and in addition to this, to oversee the way of each one, that is, his work: for this too is befitting of God.

³⁷ For it is written, that "The ways of a man are before the eyes of God, and he looks upon all his paths." - "He will come therefore," he says, "having his own reward," that is, he himself giving the prizes to whom it may be fitting to receive them. And indeed, to the divine Peter who confessed the faith correctly, "I will give you," he says, "the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in the heavens. And he also bestowed upon all the holy apostles collectively over unclean spirits authority, and to be able to heal every disease, and every infirmity among the people. Indeed, he declared that the faith of the thief crucified with him was not without reward, saying: "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. Having arrived, then, he says, those who believe in him "he will call a holy people, and redeemed by the Lord. For not an ambassador, not an angel, but the Lord himself saved us, as it is written: "But you, Zion," that is, the Church, "will be called a city sought after, and not forsaken: And "sought after," he says, means "deemed worthy of remembrance. For what is sought is remembered: and not forsaken, as was the first, that is, the multitude of those who disbelieved.

³⁸ For it was said by Christ through the voice of Jeremiah, "I have forsaken my house, I have left my inheritance," and through [the voice] of our Savior of all, Christ himself: "Behold, your house is left to you. Who is this that comes from Edom? with the redness of his garments from Bosor? This one, beautiful in his robe, crying out with strength: I speak righteousness, and a judgment of salvation. Why are your garments red, and your clothing as from a full, trodden winepress? And of the nations there is no man with me. And I trod them down in my anger, and I crushed them as earth. And I brought down their blood to the earth, and I stained all my garments. For a

day of retribution has come upon them, and a year of redemption is at hand. And I looked, and there was no helper. And I considered, and no one took hold, and my arm delivered them, and my anger was present. And I trod them down in my wrath, and I made them drunk with my anger, and I brought down their blood to the earth. Wisely and artfully the word of the prophecy all but paints the ascension into heaven of our Savior of all, Christ: for to bring to completion the power of the economy in the flesh, he ascended to the Father and God in the heavens.

³⁹ Moreover, he was seen by the powers above not only in our form, that is, as a man, but also showing the signs of the passion: and we are not saying that after the resurrection from the dead the piercings of the nails, and the other marks were still in the holy flesh, but rather this: for just as he showed the prints of the nails and his side to the disbelieving Thomas, when the holy apostles said that they had seen the Lord raised from the dead, so we understand that in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places through the Church, which he accomplished in Christ, ascending with the signs of the passion, he made a strange and completely unaccustomed spectacle for the powers above. At any rate, they were astonished seeing him ascending, and indeed they said: "Who is this that comes from Edom? is interpreted In Greek, Edom means "fiery," or "earthly: and Bosor, either "of flesh," or "fleshly. "Who then," he says, "is this from the earth," that is, earthly, "with redness of garments from Bosor," that is, with his clothing crimsoned as if from flesh, or rather, from blood? "This one is beautiful in his robe. For the mighty and wise powers, and those full of God-befitting glory, were contemplating Christ, even though He was in the flesh, yes, and indeed full of invincible strength, for this, I think, signified the divine.

⁴⁰ Therefore, when the angels asked, or perhaps when they were saying to one another, "Who is this? he answers and says: "I speak righteousness, and a judgment of salvation: and he says righteousness is either the evangelical and divine proclamation, or that every word of God is just: and perhaps he calls a judgment of salvation the judgment upon us, for He has vindicated the world under heaven and Satan who wronged it, and has saved those who were oppressed by unbearable greed: and He has cast out the apostate and alien from his rule over them: for he said just now that "Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out, and I, if I am lifted

up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. When Christ had said these things, they ask again, and say: "Why are your garments red, and your clothing like that from a trodden winepress, full and trampled? Here, recall for me the patriarch Jacob saying: "He will wash his robe in wine, and his cloak in the blood of a grape. For his garments appeared reddened with blood, and as if stained from wine to a crimson color. Then immediately again the Savior: "And of the nations there is no man with me: he holds to the statement, and connects these things after it: "For I," he said, "speak righteousness, and a judgment of salvation, and of the nations there is no man with me.

⁴¹ "For no one stood by me when I was suffering," he says, "from any nation was there one who grieved with me," and as far as men were concerned, he was completely unaided, when both the cohort of soldiers and the ferocity of the officers attacked him, "who also led him away to Caiaphas, as the evangelist says, at that time all the disciples deserted him and fled," but Christ also foretold this: for He said: "Behold, the hour is coming, and has come, that you may be scattered, each to his own, and you may leave me alone, and I am not alone, because the Father is with me. And he said also through the lyre of the Psalmist: "My soul expected reproach and misery, and I waited for one to grieve with me, and there was none, and for one to comfort me and I found none, and they gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Therefore, "There was no one with me," he says, "from all the nations. So then, since you were alone, and bereft of fellow-combatants, were you overcome by the hand of your enemies? Have they prevailed, and of your strength who, having grown great, then rejoice as if they have conquered? By no means, he says. And yet, though I had no one to stand by me, I trod them down in my fury, and I crushed them like earth, I brought down their blood to the earth:

⁴² for after Christ's ascent into the heavens, every kind of unbearable calamity from divine wrath was brought upon the people of the Jews. " For a day of recompense," he says, "has come upon them. For those who had the opportunity to seize the faith, and through it to be enriched with grace, then having become indifferent, or rather arrogant, and insolent, and fighters against God to the very end, how have they not very reasonably come into every evil? However, the time of His recompense was one of redemption for those who had acknowledged His manifestation. For in this, the unruly was

punished, but the obedient and submissive was redeemed by Christ. "For I looked," he says, "and there was no helper; I took thought, and there was no one to help: and my arm rescued them, and my fury came upon them. "And I trod them down in my wrath. It seems in these things to make an outcry against the indifference of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were appointed to lead the people, and to guide them to righteousness, and to instruct them very well towards what is pleasing to God. But they were so indifferent and supine as to help none of those under their yoke, and to correct them with admonitions, but on the contrary to lead them away into unbelief. For they have dared to say concerning Christ the Savior of us all:

43 " We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he is from. And again: "He has a demon and is mad; why do you listen to him? Therefore, since there was no one, he says, helping or assisting, my arm, that is, my power, saved them, for very many, as I said, from among the Jews have believed. But upon those who were unwilling to help, my fury came; they became a thing to be trodden down by wrath. For the evil have perished evilly, and have paid penalties equal to their charges. I remembered the mercy of the Lord, the virtues of the Lord in all things, which the Lord repays to us. The Lord is a good judge to the house of Israel, he brings upon us both according to his mercy, and according to the multitude of his righteousness. God saying that fury came upon the disobedient, and wrath trod them down, and that their blood was brought down to the earth, the prophet has intervened, and does not permit despair for those against whom the words are, but he pursues the matter, and very skillfully. For I remembered, he says, to myself, that the judge of all is not harsh. For I know his mercy and his virtues, that is, his mighty acts in all things, with which he repays us.

44 For even if He has turned away, he says, from an Israel that has acted insolently and has been chosen to disobey, and as he repays us with things from wrath, not unrestrained but rather held back by gentleness, nevertheless I know well his virtues, that is, the mighty works that happened at various times for the redemption of Israel. "Therefore," he says, "the Lord will be a good judge to the house of Israel," not rather strict, but kind, that is, good. For it would be the work of a strict judge to demand from those who have sinned penalties corresponding to their offenses; but of a good one, to have mercy as on those who have become weak. Therefore, since he is a good

judge, he brings upon us according to his mercy, that is, he will measure what comes from wrath, and mixing it with mercy he will create the indignation. For a multitude of righteousness is in him, that is, he has passed through to the end of all righteousness. For this reason, and very reasonably, he will not let Israel go completely unpunished, but rather with gentleness, as I said, he will mix what comes from wrath. For the remnant has been saved. And the Lord said, Surely they are my people, children that will not deal falsely. And he became to them salvation out of all their affliction: not an ambassador, nor an angel, but the Lord himself saved them, because he loved them, and spared them:

⁴⁵ he himself redeemed them, and took them up, and exalted them all the days of eternity. But they disobeyed, and provoked his Holy Spirit: and he turned to be an enemy to them, the Lord himself warred against them. Consider now for me again the person of God introduced immediately, all but crying out against the disobedience of Israel. For the Lord said, he says, that is, the God of all himself: Did I not reckon the people in the rank of children? Since this is true (for he said that "Israel is my firstborn son"), one would not doubt that he would not be hard and disobedient. But he will rather receive the Son who was sent. But this did not come to pass, and the one who knows all things was not mistaken in his hope; for he knew what was to come. For nothing at all escapes him. But the form of the speech has been fashioned in a human way. The prophet, taking up these things that God says, indicts Israel for both insensibility and ingratitude, and shows that they have completely forgotten the good things that came to them. "For he became to them," he says, "salvation out of all their affliction: and no one else besides him saved them, not an ambassador, not an angel, but the Lord himself through himself. For he worked wonders in Egypt, with Moses acting as mediator, yet he himself was performing the marvels.

⁴⁶ And so when Israel made the calf, then God was grieved at this, and promised to send an angel with them, Moses was displeased, saying: "If you yourself do not go with me, do not lead me up from here. He himself therefore through himself saved them, having received absolutely nothing from them, but only because he loved them and cared for them. And this is a clear demonstration of his incomparable love for mankind, and of his divine serenity: he therefore redeemed them from the house of is it? That is, they forgot, and they did not seek him, that is, by remembering and loving him.

Where is he who brought up Moses with his right hand? Great was Moses, both renowned and exalted in glory: this is what "who brought up" hints at, as the right hand of God was working through him. "The arm of glory prevailed," or it struggled and conquered the nature of the waters, making them firm. For it brings up the waters as a wall, it says, that is, it prevailed over the waters, so that they endured solidification, even though they have a liquid nature. And he fulfilled this also, it says, that he might make for himself an everlasting name: for if anything happened, that is, was also worked through the all-wise Moses, this was done for the glory of God. Having solidified the waters, it says, as a horse, or as a beast, he led them through the sea, as through a plain. This the Psalmist also teaches, saying:

⁴⁷ "And he brought up his people as sheep, and he led them as a flock in the desert. And he led them, as I said, by the Spirit of the Lord. Thus you led your people, to make for yourself a name of glory. For two things were done at the same time. For not only was Israel saved and delivered from the hand of the oppressors, but also the conclusion of the wondrously accomplished things procured for the God who rules over all the glory fitting for him. Look from heaven, and see from your holy house, and your glory. Where is your zeal, and your strength? Where is the multitude of your mercy, and of your compassions, that you have restrained from us? For you are our Father, because Abraham did not know us, and Israel did not acknowledge us. From the beginning your name is upon us. Why have you caused us to wander, O Lord, from your way, have you hardened our hearts from fearing you? Here, then, the prophet makes prayers on behalf of the whole nation, and from the person of those of Israel he raises up the supplication: for he calls on him to cease from his anger against them, and to end his turning away, and as it were to return to them, he who had departed from them, since he is not some one [among those] on earth, but rather the true God, and has heaven as a house of glory.

⁴⁸ But if it should be said somewhere that God dwells in heaven, let nothing bodily be thought of him. For we do not say that the Divine is in a place and circumscribed, because it is also simple and incorporeal, and fills all things. But since he rests upon the spirits above, as upon holy ones, for this reason we say that heaven is his throne and his house. Return then, they say: "For where is your zeal, and your strength? And surely no one would say, I think, that the God of all was in lack of such things, but they say such things

as no longer partaking of them. For by always using zeal and strength befitting God, he saved Israel. What I mean is, they had been enslaved to the Egyptians who were also distressing their life [alt. distressed their life] with clay, and brick-making, and with the of the people of your inheritance, that we might inherit some small part of your holy mountain. We have become as from the beginning, when you did not rule us, nor was your name called upon us. They ask again for his return to them, I mean through gentleness and loving-kindness. They say they are slaves and an inheritance: not as having done anything befitting a slave, that is, having submitted their neck to his yokes, nor as being counted in the inheritance allotted to him, having practiced obedience.

⁴⁹ But since they were once called his, and were rich in their intimacy with him in the beginning, for this reason alone they ask to be saved: "For 'Return,'" it says, "that we might inherit some small part of the holy mountain. The holy Scripture, therefore, very often calls the Church a holy mountain, of which those from Israel have become a small part: for if they had accepted the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the system of the Church would have been gathered from them into a very large part, with the multitude of the Gentiles also being brought to them. But since through much disobedience they have fallen behind the Gentiles, and the multitude of the latter is greater in number, while they themselves are indeed very few: for the remnant has been saved: for this reason they have inherited a small part in the holy mountain, that is, in the Church. But if anyone should say that the city above, the Church in the heavens, the mother and nurse of the saints, is called by them a holy mountain, and that in it they wish to receive a share of the inheritance, you will understand correctly, also in this way: and it says to become as from the beginning, when he did not rule them, nor was his name called upon them: and the saying is very plausible: for having once fallen from his mercy and protection, they returned to their state in the beginning. And what is this?

⁵⁰ They were enslaved to the Egyptians with clay and brickmaking, and they were continually abused by the labors for this purpose: and now they have fallen under diabolical feet, and are defiled by the passions of the flesh and worldly desires: for this might reasonably be understood as the hidden brickmaking. In Egypt they served wicked spirits, and now the unclean spirit is in them. And the Savior himself taught us this, saying concerning them, "

But when the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finds none. Then it says: I will return to my house from which I came out. And when it comes, it finds it empty, and swept: then it takes, it says, seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. So shall it be," he says, "to this wicked generation. If you open the heaven, trembling will seize the mountains from you, and they will melt, as wax melts from the face of fire: and fire will burn up the adversaries, and it will be manifest the name of the Lord among the adversaries. From your face the nations will be troubled, when you do glorious things. Trembling from you will seize the mountains.

⁵¹ It is a custom for the holy prophets to make supplications on behalf of Israel, when at times it was sinning, and about to pay the penalties for its accusations, and as if putting aside the effects of wrath, they would beseech that it be sent upon others, and be turned upon the heads of foreigners. And so the divine Psalmist, in the seventy-eighth psalm, was lamenting the ravaged Jerusalem, and indeed he was saying: "O God, nations have entered into your inheritance, they have defiled your holy temple. And bringing in other things in addition to these, in the middle he says: "Pour out your wrath upon the nations that do not know you, and upon kingdoms, that have not called upon your name. Something like this the prophet now also says: "For if you open the heaven," that is, by the descent of wrath, just as indeed also at the time of the flood: for the floodgates of heaven were opened: then trembling from you will seize the mountains, and they will melt, "as wax melts from the face of fire. And by mountains in these words he means, not at all, of course, the perceptible ones, but rather the evil powers, which on account of their very great arrogance, are very well compared to the highest mountains. Trembling therefore will seize these powers that are companions of arrogance. "For they will be melted down as by fire. Being adversaries to your ordinances, obviously, wrath falling upon them like fire would burn them up.

⁵² "And the name of the Lord will be manifest among the adversaries. And what is this? For the God of all often works wonders, making manifest the greatness of His inherent power and excellence. Through this He punished sinners at times, and through the wrath upon them He made Himself manifest: something like what happened when He sent fire upon the Sodomites, or when He subjected the stupefied Pharaoh to many and unbearable

plagues. Therefore, O Master, they say, do not make manifest your glory or name, through wrath against us: but rather bring it upon the evil powers, that is, upon those who openly fight against your glory, and have been carried to this point out of very great arrogance. For you will be manifest even in this way. For when you do glorious things, trembling from you will seize the mountains: and again he means those mountains, which we just now mentioned. From of old we have not heard, nor have our eyes seen a God besides you, and your works, which you will do for those who wait for mercy: for he will meet those who do righteousness, and they will remember your ways. The Divine is indeed invisible by nature: "For no one has ever seen God," according to what is written: yet it is seen with the eyes of the mind, from what He may work wondrously, and beyond reason.

⁵³ "For the invisible things of him," he says, "from the creation of the world being understood by the things that are made are clearly seen men, and we have all become as unclean ones, and all our righteousness as the rag of a menstruating woman: and we have fallen away like leaves because of our iniquities: so the wind will carry us away as dust, and there is no one who calls upon your name, and one who remembers to take hold of you, because you have turned your face away from us, and you have delivered us over because of our sins. It seemed to some of the commentators, according to another meaning to the preceding Therefore, be not exceedingly angry with us. They are not ignorant that they have stumbled, but rather they confess that they have shown themselves worthy of punishment, having savagely denied the Son: for this reason they, as it were, check their prayer, and do not make their approach completely free: having somewhat restrained their boldness, they do not pitifully ask God not to be angry with them at all, but rather that his wrath be mingled with calmness. For "we are confessedly worthy of wrath," he says, "we who are held fast in such terrible evils, but it would be worthy of your gentleness to shorten for us the things that come from just wrath.

⁵⁴ "In the time," therefore, "of affliction," he says, "remember not our sins, considering that we are all your people, and the city of your Holy One," that is, in which is your sanctuary. And by these things they mean the temple. Zion has become a desert, Jerusalem has become as a desert, our holy house has become a curse, the glory which our fathers blessed, has been burned with fire, and all our glorious things have fallen. And at all these

things you held back, Lord, and you were silent, and you humbled us exceedingly. Having announced beforehand the losses in the soul, and having foretold that they have become easily captured by sins, and carried astray, and like leaves tossed hither and thither by every wind, they finally also call to mind the external calamities brought upon them: and they seem to be lamenting the sack of Jerusalem, and the burning of the temple: for after the cross of the Savior, all these things were indeed accomplished: "Therefore Zion has become a desert," he says, she who was so distinguished, and renowned, and once populous. "And our holy thing has become a curse: and "a curse," they say, instead of, for denunciation and reproach to those who do not know God: for the worshipers of demons, when holy things suffer—that is, things in any way dedicated to God—laugh loudly and exult, and they mock the glory of the one who saves them.

⁵⁵ For perhaps they think his hand has suffered from not being able to save them, and they do not understand that they have fallen under judgment, having done some of the things that displease him. "Therefore our holy house is a curse. For the temple was holy among them, and it has also been burned with fire, he says, the one proclaimed beforehand by the voice of the holy fathers, so as to be famous and renowned: and they say that all the glorious things have fallen together: for there was no reverence at all for the holy vessels lying in the divine temple from those who were plundering and burning them: "But you held back," he says, "at all these things, and you fell silent, and you brought us down to the ground. For since, though he was able to ward off the attack of the enemies, he permitted them to prevail, and to overrun even the temple itself, they thence infer that they have been neglected on account of wrath, and as the wages of sins, they have had silence over these very things.

⁵⁶ For though it was possible to easily put a stop to the insolence, then letting this go, and allowing the terrible things to proceed to their end, he would surely be manifest as having brought a harsh wrath upon them, so as to disregard even his own glory, and to endure the laughter of enemies, when it turns out well that punishment is exacted from those who ought to be chastised for their great sin. I was made manifest to those who did not seek me; I was found by those who did not ask for me. I said: Behold, I am, to a nation that did not call upon my name. I stretched out my hands all the day to a disobedient and contradicting people, who did not walk in a true

way, but after their own sins. These things are necessarily added to what has already been said. For since they were saying: "Why have you made us wander, Lord, from your way? You have hardened our hearts so as not to fear you: and they added that "Zion has become a desert, Jerusalem has become a desert, our holy house a curse. therefore, the person of Christ himself necessarily enters, as if announcing the reasons for which they have justly suffered these things; instead of attributing the reasons to themselves, they complain, as it were, against the one bringing just punishment upon them. "For I was made manifest," he says, "even to those who did not seek me;

⁵⁷ I was found by those who did not ask for me: for the Savior of his own accord, running into the synagogues, taught them, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people, as it is written. For what was not done by him that is beyond both word and wonder? Lepers were cleansed, both by the touch of his hand and by his divine command; the dead were raised from tombs, the blind received the much-desired light, the lame leaped like a deer. And indeed, to those who had seen these things, Christ said: "If I do not do the works of my Father, do not believe me; but if I do, even if you do not believe me, believe my works."—"I said" therefore, he says, "I am to the nation that did not call my name: for he is found at one time saying, "I am the light of the world," and at another time again, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his belly will flow rivers of living water': but they were not willing to call upon his name, although he said "I am" explicitly on many occasions. And that they have become unadmonished and perhaps on a par with those who have no ears, hard and disobedient, he shows by saying that "I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contradicting people:

⁵⁸ for we are always somehow accustomed when conversing with the disobedient to spread our hands with a shout, and to make the strongest possible rebuke against them: "but they did not walk," he says, "in a true way. For they in no way accepted the saving proclamation, "but rather followed their own sins," that is, they were swept away with an irresistible impulse toward a careless and a most lawless life, a cause of both judgment and destruction for them. This again the Savior is found saying to them: " Truly I say to you, if you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins. For they acted contrary when admonished, and they ordered those under their authority

saying: "He has a demon, and is mad, why do you listen to him? Yes, and in addition to this they shouted that: "For a good work we do not stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God. This is the people that provokes me, they are before me continually. They sacrifice in the gardens, and burn incense on the bricks to the demons, which do not exist. And in the tombs, and in the caves they sleep for the sake of dreams, who eat swine's flesh, and the broth of sacrifices, all their vessels are defiled: who say, Keep away from me, for I am pure, do not come near me. This is the smoke of my wrath, a fire burns in it all the days.

⁵⁹ He convicts those of Israel of being unholy, and not only at the time of His advent, but from the beginning, and as it were from the root, and from their fathers who rejected His divine law, and all but bade farewell to the commandments through Moses, have worshipped idols, and have sacrificed to falsely-named gods, and have become servants of unclean spirits. "This people has always been," he says, "provoking me. For they have sacrificed unceasingly," that is, for long periods of time, "before me. Then how was it possible for them to escape notice, when God oversees all things? For He said somewhere, also through one of the holy prophets: "I am a God who draws near, says the Lord, and not a God afar off, shall anything be hidden from me? Therefore if nothing is hidden from him, how could some who were burning incense in gardens, that is, in thickets, and mountains and glens, have escaped notice? What then does "before me" mean, instead of, even in the very temple dedicated to me. For He said something like this also through the voice of Jeremiah concerning Jerusalem: "What has the beloved done in my house, an abomination? And it is the custom in the Holy Scriptures to call the idol an abomination. Therefore, before my eyes "they burn incense," he says, "both in the gardens," that is, in the mountains, as I said, "underneath an oak, and a poplar, and a shadowing tree," according to what is written.

⁶⁰ And they sacrificed, as is likely, having followed the passions of the Greeks, to certain demons, which they call nymphs, hamadryads and oreads: but they are not, he says, not because the wicked demons do not exist, but because they are rather not gods, according to the suppositions of those who sacrifice to them. And they sacrificed both in tombs, and in caves, practicing what are called necromancies, as is likely. And they slept in tombs, being deceived by certain dream-sendings and phantoms, and meddling with the

knowledge of future events. For such are somehow the inventions of the unholiness of the Greeks. That also the p of the law a blessing is in it: thus will I do for the sake of him who serves me. For this reason I will not destroy them all. And I will bring forth the seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah, and it shall inherit my holy mountain, and my elect and my servants shall inherit it, and they shall dwell there. Indeed, the things from divine wrath were brought upon the Jews, and they have paid penalties equal to their own transgressions, yet not all have been utterly and indiscriminately destroyed. For the judge is just, and would not destroy the good with the wicked: but he makes as it were a bright image, and receives as an example a cluster of grapes in which one berry is saved, although the others have been spoiled:

61 then he brings in the husbandman, that is, the master of the field, saying to someone: "Do not destroy it, for a blessing is in it: thus will I do," he says, "for the sake of him who serves me," that is, I will use such precision, that even if in one city all the others have turned to destruction, and one and only one is found faithful and obedient, this one will receive mercy, and would not share the danger with the others against whom the judgment justly goes. "For I will not destroy all," he says. For the Lord's wrath leaped down, as it were, upon the arrogance of the Jews, all but consuming the disobedient and intractable: but by the providence of God was saved whoever among them was worthy of salvation through Christ: and indeed the divine Paul says that a remnant chosen by grace has come into being, and as it were, a selection from the whole land of the Jews, the remnant of Israel, was caught by the net for the faith. "Therefore I will not destroy them all," he says, "but I will bring forth the seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah. But as for "I will bring forth," you will understand here, not so much "I will destroy," but "I will show to be high and conspicuous: for sometimes "to bring forth" is "to exalt.

62 And such, I say in my opinion, have the divine disciples become, high and conspicuous to all everywhere, and like a city set on a hill, and a lamp set on a lampstand, and shining to all who are in the house, according to the voice of the Savior himself. This, then, is the seed from Jacob and from Judah: "It shall inherit," he says, "my holy mountain: and it is clear that this means the Church. For thus also somewhere else the all-wise Isaiah signifies it, speaking about those who through faith in Christ have been called to participation, that is, and communion of his divine nature: "For they shall

drink gladness, and they shall drink wine, they shall anoint themselves with myrrh on this mountain. Deliver all these things to the nations. For this is the counsel upon all the nations. On this mountain, therefore," he says, "there will be an inheritance for my elect, and on it all shall dwell, as many as run under the yoke of my kingdom: and it is not at all unlikely to say that the city above, the heavenly Jerusalem, is called a mountain, in which is the inheritance of the saints, as God distributes to them goods beyond mind and reas aqa/. "For eye," he says, "has not seen, and ear has not heard, and it has not entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love him.

63 And there will be in the forest folds for flocks, and the valley of Achor for a resting place for herds for my people, who have sought me. It is the custom for the divinely-inspired Scripture to compare with very leafy forests, and with thick flowers the populous cities, or countries at times, and so indeed one of the holy prophets said, as to the mother of the Jews, I mean, Jerusalem: "Open, O Lebanon, your doors, and let fire devour your cedars: howl, oaks of Bashan, for the dense forest has been cut down. And surely one would not say that he commands pines and indeed oaks to howl: for the thing is utterly simple-minded: but with trees, as I said, he sees fit to compare the multitude beyond number of those in the cities and countries. But the Jews howled, falling under the swords of the enemies on account of their impiety toward Christ. And somewhere the divine David also sings in a psalm, since Christ was about to appear to the world: "Then all the trees of the forest will rejoice before the face of the Lord, for he is coming to judge the earth. Therefore, " In the forest," he says, that is, in the multitude of the nations, or in their cities and countries, "there will be folds for flocks," that is, the Churches of Christ. "and the valley of Achor for a resting place for herds for my people, who have sought me. This Achor was one of the blood of Israel:

64 and when Jericho had been sacked, then God having commanded to put under a ban all things in it, he stole from the accursed thing. And when he was exposed by God, a bitter penalty was exacted: for he perished with his whole household, Joshua the son of Nun having determined the penalty for him. Therefore, then, the valley of Achor was for a curse. And such in a way were also the lands of the nations: for they were accursed, and hated by God, as there was no one in them who knew the God by nature: but the accursed land, he says, according to the ancients will be for a resting place for herds,

that is, folds of spiritual sheep, under the hand of Christ the chief shepherd of all, who has spoken to the people of the Jews, saying concerning the nations, "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will become one flock, one shepherd. For those who were once wandering sought him through faith, and indeed having found him, they have become his own, and fellow citizens of the saints, and fellow heirs of the good things promised to them. But you, who have forsaken me, and have forgotten my holy mountain, and who prepare a table for the demon, and who fill a drink offering for Fortune: I will deliver you to the sword, and you will all fall in slaughter, because I called you, and you did not listen;

65 I spoke, and you did not hear, and you did evil before me, and you chose the things I did not want. Just as it has not been without penalty for those of the blood of Israel to disobey Christ, for they are given over to slaughter, the remnant having been saved by the mercy and loving-kindness of God, so also you will understand regarding the calling of the nations. For those who have seized the salvation through Christ, have been outside of both fire, and judgment, and the things from divine wrath: but those who have remained in their own ignorance, and have kept the stain of their old accusations unwashed, through wishing to be attached to the worship of idols, will be given over to slaughter. For they will dwell in Hades, and they will have unending punishment through sleepless fire. You therefore, he says, who have forsaken me, that is, the apostates to the end, and those who have been brought down, as it were, into complete forgetfulness of my holy mountain. For some of the deceived do not endure, and of those who have worshiped creation, to know, so to speak, the name of the Church: "those who prepare tables for the demons, and fill mixed drinks for Fortune. And those who have their heart filled with diabolical darkness did something like this. You will be handed over to slaughter, and if anyone dares to say for what reason, I will say to him:

66 I called and you did not listen, but you have a persistent and unremovable wickedness, doing only those things that are discordant with my laws, and debasing every way of doing good, but being eager to do rejected things, through which one might become full of every filth. Therefore, thus says the Lord: Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry. Behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty. Behold, my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame. Behold, my servants shall exult in gladness,

but you shall cry out for the pain of your heart, and you shall howl from a broken spirit. For you left your name for a reproach to my chosen ones: but the Lord shall slay you. He always necessarily sets alongside the crowns the evil things, by both leading to the necessity of choosing the things that please him, both to think and to do: for just as rewards entice towards the pursuit of virtue, so the bitterness of judgment sometimes removes one from the ways of wickedness, and drives one towards better things. Most skillfully, therefore, he runs under the minds of those who are called, both promising them rewards, and threatening punishments. "For my servants shall eat," he says, "but you shall be hungry, and they shall drink, but you shall be thirsty. And while they are rejoicing, you will be put to shame:

⁶⁷ for those who have known God who is by nature and in truth, and have leaped away from those falsely named, and have marveled at the beauty of true worship, will truly luxuriate in the blessings from above, being fattened in their hearts, and approaching the life-giving table of our Savior of all, Christ, and eating the bread of life, and the divine drink, through which they might be of the gladness from above partakers: for He cleanses from sins, and puts away what causes grief, and does not allow the fear of punishment to prevail over our thoughts. For we rejoice rather in the hope of good things, which the holy Scripture says have been prepared for those who love God, "But you," it says, who have remained in error, "will cry out because of the pain of your heart, and from a broken spirit you will wail. For when our Savior of all, Christ, has descended from heaven, and then gives to each according to his works, all will mourn, and those who have not known God will lament. the true one, but rather having died in their own sins. For you have left, it says, your name for a surfeit to my elect, the Lord will destroy you. Observe for me again the depth of the thought. It is a custom of the divinely inspired Scripture to sometimes say "for a surfeit," instead of "for satiety," and "hatred. For God said somewhere to those of the blood of Israel: "I will no longer bear your sins:

⁶⁸ you have become a surfeit to me. You, therefore, it says, who have neither departed from the falsely named gods, but are dead in your own sins, have left your name for a surfeit, that is for hatred, to my elect: for to those once chosen, no one considers the name of the superstitious acceptable. And everyone flees from being called God-hated, and an unholy and profane idolater: but rather desires to be called a holy people, a chosen nation, a royal

priesthood, according to the voice of the divine Peter. But if someone should wish to apply what was said to those of the blood of Israel, so that to them would be said, "You have left your name for a surfeit to my elect: we say that Israel was indeed called children of God, and His people, and His inheritance: but since they slid uncontrollably into willfulness, they have fallen from such glory, while those called from the nations have inherited it, as it were: and this, I think, is what God said through the voice of Hosea: "I will call what was not my people, my people, and I will say to what was not my people: You are my people. But to those who serve him, a new name will be called, which will be blessed upon the earth: for they will bless the true God. And those who swear upon the earth, will swear by the true God: for they will forget their first affliction, and it will not come upon their heart.

⁶⁹ For the heaven will be new, and the earth new, and they shall not remember the former things, nor shall it come upon their heart, but they will find gladness and rejoicing in it. All things have become new in Christ, both worship, and life, and legislation: for we are no longer attached to shadows and useless types: but we rather perform for the God over all the worship and service in spirit and in truth. But we are not named according to those of the blood of Israel, as from the patriarchs, or fathers, Ephraim, or Manasseh, or as from they struck the heads of the poor with their fists, and they turned aside the way of the humble. I will rejoice, therefore, he says, over my people, seeing them to be workers of true righteousness. For no one among them will weep, clearly because he is being defrauded; and again, no one will cry out as one who has been wronged. "And there shall not be there, he says, an untimely-born or an old man who shall not fulfill his time. For the youth shall be one hundred years old, and the sinner who dies at one hundred years old shall also be accursed. But I think the mind of the prophecy wishes to signify something like this. For it seems to consider as untimely-born the people from the gentiles, who are still young, concerning whom David says: "The people that shall be created will praise the Lord: and to these also the disciple of Christ writes, saying:

⁷⁰ "Like newborn babes, long for the spiritual and pure milk. Therefore, the young one is untimely-born, but the old man is he of the circumcision, that is, Israel by blood, since he was called beforehand and, in the spiritual Church, had precedence: But in the calling, he says, that is through Christ, and in the times of his coming, neither the untimely-born nor the old man

will have a distinction between them in this very respect: for all will be perfect, and all will fulfill their time, that is, they will ascend to a perfect man, and to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. For the young one, that is, the people from the gentiles, will be one hundred years old, meaning, perfect, and mature in mind, and having reached the end of spiritual age: for the number one hundred years is a sign, or a symbol, of perfection. Then he says, that "the sinner who dies at one hundred years old shall also be accursed. In these words he shows that even the perfection according to the law is useless to those who have it, if they have not accepted the faith that is through Christ, and the redemption through holy baptism, through which alone we cast off the thoughts that come from sin. Therefore, even if someone is one hundred years old, he says, that is, he should have the perfection according to the law;

⁷¹ then he should die a sinner, that is, not having received the righteousness that is in faith, he will also be accursed, meaning, he will also be found guilty of transgressions of the law. For no one among the Jews has become so great as to fall away in no way: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace. And that this zeal is useless even to those perfected according to the law, if the grace through Christ has not been received, the all-wise Paul shows very well by having written to some, that he considered all things in the law to be rubbish, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him not having my own righteousness, that is, that which is in the law, but that which is through faith in Jesus Christ. And he writes as if to the Jews for their foolishness, saying thus: "For being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. And he said again: "We are Jews by nature, and not sinners from the Gentiles: but knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed in Christ.

⁷² For this reason Christ was called a curse, so that he might redeem from the curse of the law those who had come to be under it: for it is written, that "Cursed is everyone who does not abide in all the things that are written in the book of this law, to do them. And they will build houses, and they themselves will inhabit them: and they will plant vineyards, and they themselves will eat their fruit. And they shall not build, and others inhabit: and they

shall not plant, and others eat. For as the days of the tree of life shall be the days of my people: the works of their labors will grow old. But my chosen ones shall not labor in vain, nor will they beget children for a curse: because they are a seed blessed by God. And it will be before they cry out, I will hear them. While they are still speaking, I will say: What is it? He promises to them unshakable peace, forbearance and goodwill, kindness and philanthropy. For of old those of the blood of Israel, through too much folly, and manifold wickedness, and of not enduring to live rightly, they continually provoked God who rules over all: for this reason they were tormented in many ways: for sometimes the things in the fields were destroyed, and enduring the sweats of agriculture in vain, they were worn out by famine: for it is written, that "And he gave their fruits to the blight, and their labors to the locust.

⁷³ And it has been said somewhere to them also through one of the holy prophets: "You shall sow, and you shall not reap: you shall press the olive, and you shall not anoint yourself with oil, and you shall not drink wine. And again: "You shall build polished houses, and you shall not dwell in them: you shall plant desirable vineyards, and you shall not drink their wine. For at times attacks of wars were also brought upon them, so that some were consumed by their own swords, and others, fearing to suffer this, fled from their own homes and from the land that bore them, and migrated to other regions: but the ancients suffered these things, and not once, on account of great sin: but those who in Christ have seized the grace that is through faith, and have washed away the defilements of sin through holy baptism, will not fall into their evils, nor will they suffer an unapproved loss of the things they have spiritually labored for: but rather they will delight in their own right actions, according to that which is sung in the Psalms: "You shall eat the fruit of your labors: the wrists being called the flesh beneath the palm. For no one casts them out: nor will anyone ever drive them away from the dwelling that will be given to them by God. For there are many dwellings with the Father: but not even if they they shall be of the lot to be given and fitting for their spiritual fruitfulness:

⁷⁴ for, he says, their life will be according to the days of the tree of life, that is, holy. For such it was before the transgression in the first-formed humans, when it was also possible for them to partake of the tree of life, when the most abominable and God-hated sin had not yet found a place in them.

The word of the prophecy adds something else of this sort: "For the works, he says, of their hands will grow old," that is, they will have an unchangeable way of things to be done. What do I mean? For the law was given to those of Israel through Moses: but in it was shadow and type, having the form of the truth, but not yet the truth itself. But when Christ shone forth, the types changed to truth, and as it were the shadows have passed away and grown old, that is, the power of the way of life in the law has not prevailed forever. Therefore, those of the blood of Israel did not make their works old—for the legal worship was unprofitable, at least as far as types are concerned—but those in Christ will make them old. For another law will not be given to them, so as to transfer the power of the evangelical ordinances to something better. For it has been said somewhere to the Savior of all, Christ, through the voice of the Psalmist:

75 "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your law is truth. -But my elect, he says, will not labor in vain, nor will they beget children for a curse. He teaches again as if by comparison, that is, by contrast with what formerly happened to the Jewish teachers: and these are Scribes and Pharisees, who, having abandoned the law and teaching as doctrines the commandments of men, became fathers of children, that is, in respect to learning, but in vain and for a curse: the Savior taught us this also, rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees: for he said that "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna as yourselves. Therefore they begot children for a curse and in vain; but my elect, he says, that is, the divine disciples, or in short, the ministers of my ordinances, will not beget children for a curse, nor indeed in vain, like them: for their seed will be a blessed seed, and blessed by God. And that he will be very attentive to them, giving gifts out of gentleness and love for mankind, and holding his ear most ready for their supplications, he shows by saying that "Before they call, I will hear them. While they are still speaking, I will say: What is it? Then wolves and lambs will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like an ox, and the serpent, earth like bread.

76 They will not do wrong, nor will they do any harm on my holy mountain, says the Lord. It was understood in two ways of life: that therefore He rather lays claim to worship in spirit, and He deems that which is in shadows and types as completely worthy of no account, He teaches clearly: but besides

this He also wants them to know something else, how they raise their eyebrow, and have grown proud over none of the necessary things, having raised the temple in Jerusalem: For they thought that the Divine is also contained by a place, and dwells in handmade temples comprehensively, just as the falsely named gods of the nations, being nothing at all, except that they are wood and stones: and for this reason He says: "O you who do not know the excellence of the divine glory, O you who do not understand the greatness of the dignities that belong to me," "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? Or what is the place of my rest? For the Divine fills all things: and with it, earth and heaven? Let it be said then in a human way, that having heaven as a throne, He makes the earth as a footstool. What space then will receive Him? Or what house will suffice to contain Him? "For all these things, He says, my hand has made: and all these things are mine. But what are these things?

⁷⁷ It is clear that it is both the things seen, and what is beyond the things seen: for all creation is His, and by His nods things that once were not were brought into being. What then shall we offer to Him as if it were not His? He says something like this also through the voice of the Psalmist: "If I were hungry, I would not tell you: for all the beasts of the field are mine, cattle on the mountains and oxen. I have known all the beasts of the field, and all the birds of the sky, and the beauty of the field is with me. "On whom then shall I look," He says: "Or in any case upon the humble and the quiet, that is, the yielding and meek, and the genuine minister of my will, so as even to tremble at the words that might come from me? And through these things He signifies the evangelic and saving proclamation: He deems these worthy to watch over, and to visit as humble. For he is bold and boastful who rises up against His divine laws, and through much disobedience, he stretches out to Him, as it were, a proud and hard neck of his own mind: that He makes the worship through the law unacceptable, and holds it in hatred, He will make clear by saying: "He who sacrifices a calf to me is as one who kills a dog: and he who offers fine flour, is as one who offers swine's blood:

⁷⁸ and he who gives frankincense for a memorial, as one who is blasphemous. See then how the things that are as in shadows and types, He not only makes rejected, but has indeed also hated, as I said: for He considers the slaughter of a calf as the death of a dog, and the fine flour mixed with oil as unclean. For He means, I think, this by comparing it to swine's blood: and

the swine is unclean according to the law: and the smoke from frankincense He puts on a par with a blasphemous voice. He therefore through these things moves them toward the will to live evangelically, and thus [these] somewhere rather according to the existing of the Songs, that "Your breasts are better than wine. But first of all to those accepting the faith in our God Jesus Christ food suitable for infants is offered, that is, the tender and simple word of catechesis: for thus Paul also somewhere addressed some, saying: "I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it, nor are you able now. But that it is not fitting to always be and be seen as infants, those who drink up the word of catechesis, but that they should rather advance, both to a perfect man, and to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that they might then be able to understand the precise and examined word about him, he taught by adding:

79 "That having been weaned you may delight yourselves, from the entrance of her glory. And when he says, "having been weaned," it is instead of, "having gone beyond breasts and the nipple," that is, having been weaned from milk, that is, no longer remaining infants, but being, as it were, already among youths and men, and desiring solid food, you shall delight from the entrance of her glory: and he calls Christ "glory" for thus somewhere the Psalmist also says concerning him, "That glory may dwell in our land": and "entrance," the mystery of the economy with the flesh: being God by nature, he became man, and, as it were, entered into this world through the incarnation. Therefore they delight who know [or, give] the precise account of the faith concerning him, and who learn in what manner glory, that is, Christ, has entered into the inhabited world: for this reason the divine prophet immediately, and in connection, makes his appearance with the flesh clear: for he presents his person speaking, that "Behold, I am turning upon them, like a river of peace, and like a torrent flooding the glory of the nations. Christ, then, is a river of peace, and a torrent of delight for thus the divine David also names him, saying: "How you have multiplied your mercy, O God; and the sons of men will hope in the shelter of your wings: they will be drunk from the fatness of your house, and you will give them to drink of the torrent of your delight. And again:

80 "The rushings of the river make glad the city of God.": And he has turned, and as it were with most abundant streams has flooded the glory of the nations, that is, the honored part of the nations, or, all that has been

glorified. For not all have believed, nor indeed have been glorified, but as Paul says concerning God the Father, "Those whom he foreknew and predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, these he also called; and those whom he called, these he also glorified. Indeed, in saying, "turning," he gives such a thing to be understood: For his way and his course, according to the purpose and good pleasure of the Father, was toward those of the blood of Israel: for he said that "I was not sent, except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But since they rejected the faith, he turned away from them as it is written, and to those of the nations and flocks he bestowed the comfort from the sacred streams, that is, the evangelical and saving proclamation, through which they have gained peace with him, and through him have been joined in spiritual kinship to God the Father. Their children will be carried on their shoulders, and they will be comforted on their knees. As a mother might comfort someone, so I will comfort you. And in Jerusalem you will be comforted, and you will see, and your heart will rejoice, and your bones will flourish like grass.

⁸¹ And the land of the Lord will be known to those who revere him. He promises to us the most abundant comfort, and a giving of all gentleness, so as to be able to accomplish what is pleasing to him even without any labor. For those among them who are still infants, he says, and not yet perfected in their minds, will be carried on their shoulders like small infants, and will be comforted on their knees: for it is the custom of mothers to care for infants in this way. Therefore, I will concede little to a mother, he says, but I will so comfort those who for now have a weak mind, that they will lack nothing of those things that contribute to their rest: and being so nursed, he says, and going through all gentleness and love, in due time you will see both the city above, the heavenly Jerusalem: you will be filled with gladness, and all your bones will flourish like grass. For the dead will be raised, and those in the tombs will rise up, having become rich with the dew from Christ, that is, the life-giving spirit: for so says the Psalmist somewhere to God concerning those who lie in the earth: "You will send forth your spirit, and they will be created, and you will renew the face of the earth. As, therefore, the things that have flowered in the fields after a short while fall and wither, but when the spring season has arrived, they rise up again and appear:

⁸² so the remains of the dead in the earth, at the time of regeneration, by the ineffable power of God will rise again. For they will be raised, as I said.

"Then indeed, then the hand of the Lord will be known to those who revere him. By hand, in these things, he means either his power, or our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and in whom are all things. For through him again is also the revival of the dead. For it would be a result of his power, both to have the strength to bring into existence things that never were, and having suffered corruption, to renew them again to their original state. And he will threaten the disobedient: For behold, the Lord will come as fire, and his chariots as a tempest, to render vengeance in wrath, and rebuke in a flame of fire. For in the fire of the Lord all the earth will be judged, and by his sword all flesh: many will be the wounded of the Lord, those who sanctify and purify themselves for the gardens, and in the porches eat swine's flesh and the abominations and the mouse, they will be consumed together, said the Lord. And I their works and their reasoning I know their.

⁸³ Having sufficiently exhorted those in the new Zion, that is, in the Church, and having promised them the most lasting consolation, and a supply of spiritual goods, and in addition to these the revival from the dead, and the mansions above, and the glory there, he says that the attempt in these matters will not be without penalty for those who choose to disobey him. For he shall come as a fire, he says: for he shall descend from heaven, in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. For this is his chariot, according to what is sung in the Psalms, "The chariot of God is ten thousandfold, thousands of the prosperous. And he will come to render vengeance in wrath, and a casting away in a flame of fire. The casting away signifies the rejection: for he will say to those who have died in sins: "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for thus, he says, the whole earth will be judged, and as if struck by the sword of divine wrath many will be wounded. These would be those who receive the inescapable penalty, and run into the unquenchable flame, and are bound by the chains of their own transgressions:

⁸⁴ but especially of all, he says, will be subjected to the penalty those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves for the gardens, that is, those who have rejected the redemption through Christ, and have dishonored the grace through holy baptism, which justifies the ungodly, and frees from every charge those who have been defiled by sins: but rather loved to walk in error and ignorance, and to worship gods that are not, who also use unclean and filthy instruments of sprinkling. For they purify themselves, as indeed they

suppose, deceiving themselves and being deceived. For either they were sprinkled with waters, or, carrying firebrands around in a circle, they thought to cleanse their own souls from evil thoughts [or defilements]. And that there is absolutely no account of decency and fairness among such people, nor even a mind befitting a human, but they were rather compared to senseless beasts, he shows by saying, that they sanctify themselves in gardens, that is, in the groves, or thickets, under the oak and the poplar, and the shading tree. For there by them are built altars and precincts to the demons, and in the entrances of the precincts they ate swine's flesh. And this too is proof of luxury. And they worshipped the abominations and the mouse. For perhaps some of the superstitious descended to such a madness as to even have establishments and images of mice in shrines. But all these, he says, will be consumed together, that is, along with those who were disobedient from Israel:

85 " For I knew their works and their thought. And by thought he means their reasonings, by following which they became inventors of shameful enterprises, on account of which to them also the of the abom of things has been made, although it is necessary to worship the one God by nature and in truth. I am coming to gather all the nations, and the tongues. And they shall come, and shall see my glory, and I will leave signs upon them, and I will send forth from them those who have been saved to the nations, and to Tarshish, and Phud, and Lud, and Mosoch, and Thobel, and to Greece, and to the islands far away, who have not heard my name, nor have seen my glory, and they shall declare my glory among the nations. Christ makes, as it were, a certain recapitulation of the whole discourse, and of all prophecy through these things, and as in brief and concise terms he announces the things from the beginning to the end, and the power of the economy in the flesh. For he also remembers the calling of the nations, and the appointment of the holy apostles, and that he will be worshipped by all under heaven. For the old law gathered one and only one nation, that is, clearly, the one from Israel, and it called one tongue.

86 But our Lord Jesus Christ did not bestow the power of the economy in the flesh on those of the blood of Israel alone, but indeed on every nation and all tongues. For He said through the lyre of the Psalmist: " Hear these things, all nations: give ear, all you who inhabit the world: therefore I will gather all, he says: " They shall come, and shall see my glory. For they have

been called through faith, and those who were once far off have become near, and they have seen his glory: how, or in what way? For they have heard through the evangelical proclamations that he is both equal in work and equal in strength to God the Father, and he has become the accomplisher of things beyond reason, so as to raise the dead from their tombs, and to give light to the blind, and in addition to these things to have done other things worthy of all account and wonder. Or in another way: they have seen his glory, having been initiated that the Word was God, and became man: for the Gentiles have not said, as the Jews did: "Why do you, being a man, make yourself God? But rather, having recognized the mystery concerning him, they cry out those sacred words: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," and indeed also that which was said by the holy apostles, "Truly you are the Son of God. And a sign has also been set upon them:

⁸⁷ for as Paul says, " We were sealed with the Spirit of redemption, and Christ was formed in all our hearts through participation in the Holy Spirit. And from those who have been saved, he says, I will send them to the nations, to these and those. And these nations are some towards the west, some towards the east, and some in the more northerly regions, that is, according to the land of the Greeks, and to the islands beyond. " There, he says, they will declare my glory. For the disciples have not been silent, but have proclaimed everywhere the Gospel of the kingdom, and of the sacred proclamations

P A R T T W O

Hosea and Joel

The first two of the twelve prophets.

Commentary on the Twelve Prophets: Hosea to Joel

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

c. AD 376–444

Cyril wrote his Commentary on the Twelve Prophets verse by verse, taking each prophet in turn and giving first the plain sense and then the meaning for Christ and the Church. The prophets stand here in the order of the Greek Bible: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. This volume holds Hosea to Joel.

HOSEA

Introduction

Someone might think it somehow superfluous and ill-advised, and not at all especially necessary for benefit, to attempt to all but dig up again things already said by many, and to add other labors to the labors of those who have gone before; even though theirs are very sufficient to be able to make very clear the writings of the holy prophets; but I would say the matter is not so; far from it. For I will recall Paul exhorting those instructed by him, "To write the same things to you is not tedious for me, but for you it is safe. But consider how true the saying is. For if something necessary for knowledge should be set forth, and then many discourses by many people are made on this very thing, there will be no harm at all; but it would benefit the hearers as much as possible. For if those accustomed to interpret make their discourses agree with one another, a more secure knowledge certainly enters into those eager to hear; but if something novel appears in each, and what was perhaps not very clearly discerned correctly and blamelessly by one person should come to the mind of another, what is the harm? Or rather, how is it not better that the presentation of the thoughts becomes richer and clear-

er? Therefore, even if many have written before us, interpreting the things in the holy prophets, we will not be silent for this reason;

but rather we will drive away hesitation as inactive, and the grace which the one who reveals deep and hidden things might grant to us ourselves, this we will make manifest to others as well, remembering Christ who says, "Freely you have received, freely give. Beginning, therefore, the clear interpretation of the blessed prophet Hosea, I will set forth first those things also concerning the writing of the other prophets. For it is the custom for all of them to easily reshape the discourses they make according to what seems good to the Holy Spirit, so that sometimes from history, that is, from sensible things and matters that are, as it were, in plain sight and have happened, they pass easily to the innermost and spiritual things; and at other times, again, to come back down, and very obscurely indeed, to matters of sense; and among them there is also a very great introduction of persons, complaints and exclamations, and the remembrance of things already past, and the foretelling of things to come. It is necessary, therefore, for those who love to judge each thing clearly as far as possible, to observe the order of the thoughts and the difference of the persons; for thus our discourse will surely be clear and unconfused, and free from all difficulty.

But I think it necessary to narrate beforehand some of the things that happened to those of the blood of Israel, so that the mind of the readers may not be disturbed, when hearing at one time of Ephraim and Israel and also Samaria, and at another time of Judah and Benjamin; for the mention of such names among the holy prophets is very great. In order, therefore, that they may know each thing clearly, let them hear that Solomon, administering his father's kingdom at times in Jerusalem, did indeed build for God that famous and admirable temple; but although he had become very distinguished both for the splendor of his wealth and his abundance of possessions, having come to old age, through his regard for women he offended God. And what the manner of his transgression was, the holy scripture will relate to us; for it runs thus: "And the king took foreign wives, and the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabites, Ammonites, Syrians and Idumaeans, Hittites and Amorites, from the nations of which the Lord forbade the sons Israel. You shall not go in to them, and they shall not go in to you, lest they turn away your hearts after their idols. To these Solomon cleaved in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. And it came to

pass in the time of Solomon's old age that his foreign wives turned away his heart after other gods;

and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. And Solomon went after Astarte, the abomination of the Sidonians, and after Baal, the idol of the sons of Ammon. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not go after the Lord, as David his father did. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the idol of Moab, and for Baal, the idol of the sons of Ammon, and for Astarte, the abomination of the Sidonians. And so he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their idols. And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because he turned away his heart from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this matter, that he should not at all go after other gods; and to keep and to do what the Lord God commanded him. Therefore, the audacious deeds of Solomon in his old age were beyond all impiety. For what could be more grievous than such outrageous transgressions? Or how is it not beyond all reason, to neglect the honor and love for the one who is God by nature and truly, and to assign the dignity that belongs to him and to him alone to herds of demons, or rather to attach it to stones and wood?

But since he was caught having thought and done things which it is not even lawful to say, and was detected being guilty of such shameful transgressions, the God of all then said to him: "Because these things were done by you, and you have not kept my commandments and my ordinances that I commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from your hand and give it to your servant. Nevertheless, in your days I will not do it, for the sake of David your father; from the hand of your son I will take it. Yet I will not take the whole kingdom; I will give one scepter to your son, for the sake of David my servant, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen. For since, as I said, being overcome by desire for women, although Solomon was exceedingly wise, he all but tore asunder the kingdom of God, so to speak, as far as the power of his undertakings went, by attaching to idols the honor and glory that is most fitting to Him alone, for this reason, and very fittingly, God threatened to tear apart his kingdom, repaying him with like sorrows, according to what is written in the prophet Ezekiel: "As you have done, so it shall be to you; your recompense will be returned upon

your own head. And when Solomon died, his son was called to the kingdom, that is, Rehoboam.

Then indeed Israel was finally torn apart, and the ten tribes departed from Jerusalem, and the half-tribe of Ephraim. For the sons born of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, were counted as one tribe, since the forefather Jacob willed this to be so. For it was said to Joseph: "Now therefore your two sons, who were born to you in Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. Therefore the ten tribes, and the half of the one, that is Ephraim, departed to Samaria, and were outside the kingdom of Rehoboam; but those from the tribe of Judah and Benjamin remained in Jerusalem. But since those in Samaria, remaining without a king and without a general, were suspicious of attacks from Rehoboam, and expected to be utterly destroyed along with their dearest ones, they sent for Jeroboam. And he was a servant of Solomon who had fled to Egypt to king Shishak. And indeed when he came they immediately appointed him as leader, and they honored with the scepter of the kingdom the sinner. And Jeroboam was from the mountain and tribe of Ephraim. But when he had been appointed king, he then contrived in what manner the affairs of the kingdom would be established for him, and would remain secure, so that the opinion of those who appointed him would not shift to some other counsel and consideration.

Then, fearing lest Israel, brought to remembrance of the worship according to the law and of the feasts celebrated in Jerusalem, might choose to return to its original state, and be brought under the yokes of Rehoboam, he made two golden calves, and leading Israel back to the worship in Egypt, he commanded them to worship them and to offer whole burnt offerings. "And he placed," it says, "the one in Gilgal, and the other in Dan; and these were cities more conspicuous than the others, which were in the land of the Samaritans. Therefore the apostasy of the ten tribes and of the half-tribe of Ephraim became twofold. For they departed not only from Jerusalem, but also from piety towards God itself, worshiping golden calves, sacrificing and serving "the works of their own hands," as it is written. But those who remained in Jerusalem, I mean Judah and Benjamin, had some respect and regard for the ordinances given through Moses. For they sacrificed in the temple; yet they did not entirely hold to the love of God, but were themselves also divided towards apostasy. For they sacrificed to idols "on every

high hill, and under every "leafy" tree," according to the voice of the prophet. Therefore, whenever you hear the holy prophets naming Israel or Ephraim, then understand me to mean those in Samaria; but when Judah and Benjamin, those who remained in Jerusalem. And there were also prophets among them, prophesying indiscriminately concerning both those in Samaria and those in Jerusalem;

and some were in Jerusalem, while others, inhabiting the land of the Samaritans, delivered the words from God to their hearers. But it must be known that after the ten tribes and the half-tribe of Ephraim had broken away from Jerusalem, both those in Samaria and those in Jerusalem had their own kings. And this prevailed until the time of the final captivity, when they returned to Jerusalem, Cyrus having conquered, and having granted them their return, with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, who was of the tribe of Judah, leading, and Joshua the son of Jozadak serving as priest. Then they also rebuilt the temple, and came under one rule, and dwelt in Jerusalem, all division having been removed. But as many captivities as occurred from time to time among the ten tribes, and indeed of the half-tribe of Ephraim, and of those in Jerusalem, I mean Judah and Benjamin, the discourse will clearly show as it proceeds. And the times in which each of the holy prophets spoke have also of necessity been recorded, so that we might know precisely in what state of affairs, and in what condition they were, the words from God came to them.

Book 1

The word of the Lord that came to Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah and Jotham and Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel. Therefore the blessed Hosea prophesies in the days of Uzziah and Jotham and Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel. And the time of the prophecy is understood to have been extended up to this point. But I think it is necessary to narrate clearly what happened in each case, so that we may understand, as I have already said, what sort of men these were, whether they were good and well-disposed towards God, or had turned aside to what was not so; and what things happened in each case, both to those in Samaria and to those in Jerusalem. For we shall know in this way, and very easily, wherever the scope of the prophecy is looking. Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, was therefore named last; but he came before Azariah, who is

also Uzziah. It should be known, however, that he is different from the first one, who lived in the times of the reign of Rehoboam, son of Solomon; however, he was of the same character as that one and similar in impiety. For it is written thus about him: "In the fifteenth year of Ama-"siah son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam son of Joash "reigned over Israel in Samaria, for forty-one years.

"And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord; he did not "turn away from all the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who "caused Israel to sin. Do you see how he became an imitator of that one's ways, following the same path, as it were, and coming, so to speak, in the footsteps of that one's impiety? Then, what does the sacred scripture say? "In the twenty-seventh year "of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah son of Amaziah, "king of Judah, began to reign. He was sixteen years old when "he began to reign, and for fifty-two years "he reigned in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was "Jecoliah of Jerusalem. And he did what was right in the "eyes of the Lord, according to all that Amaziah his "father had done; except the high places were not removed, the "people were still sacrificing and burning incense in the high places. "And the Lord struck the king, and he was a leper until "the day of his death. Uzzi-ah was pious and God-loving, but not entirely; for he did not remove the high places, it says, but they burned incense in them and those who were deluded offered sacrifices to demons. Then Azariah, that is, Uzziah, being carried away into improper thoughts, thought it fitting to the glory of his kingship also to perform what was ordained for God, and to undertake the sacred liturgy; and indeed he sacrificed by himself, having disregarded the laws given through Moses.

But when he ascended to the liturgy that was in no way fitting for him, I mean the sacred one, "The Lord," it says, "struck him, and he was a leper until "the day of his death. The leper, then, is unclean according to the law, and those seized by such an affliction were sent out of the camp. For God once said to the hierophant Moses, "Speak to the sons of Israel, and let them "send out from the camp every leper and everyone with a discharge, "and everyone unclean on account of a soul. And he was rebuked by the disease, having dared what was not lawful, and God decreed dishonor for the king who had seized the sacred glory. But since the power of the prophecy does not look only to Judah, that is, those in Jerusalem, but it comes also upon Israel, that is, the ten tribes in Samaria, come, let us speak of necessity of those who

reigned over it in the days of Azariah, who is also Uzziah, and what calamities it befell them to be caught in, having been grievously sick with profane idolatry. Now therefore in the twenty-eighth year of the reign of Uzziah, who is also Azariah, another Azariah, son of Jeroboam, had reigned over Israel for six months. And since he also walked in the way of his father, and did evil in the eyes of the Lord, he was given over to some of his own household for slaughter, and so he is destroyed.

Then as time went on, in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Uzziah, Shallum is anointed again over Israel, and had reigned for a month of days; for he was immediately killed by Menahem son of Gadi from Tirzah. And the sacred scripture noted that they became sons, and both were from the blood of Jehu, who killed Ahab and his sons and Jezebel, to whom God also promised, saying "Sons to the fourth generation shall sit on "your throne. Menahem therefore had reigned over Israel, having killed Shallum. "And he did," it says, "what was "evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not turn away from all "the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. And while he was reigning, I mean Menahem, and offending God, because he was excessively devoted to the false worship of idols, Pul king wages war against Samaria of the Assyrians; whom Manaim, being unable to ward off with weapons, persuaded with much money to depart from the land and to end the battle. But when Manaim died, then in the fifty-second year of the reign of Ozias, Jotham was again anointed over Judah in Jerusalem after the death of his father, concerning whom it is written, that "He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, "according to all that his father Ozias had done; except "he did not remove the high places; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on "the high places; and over Israel, Pakeas the son of Manaim.

"And he reigned," it says, "two years, and did "what was evil in the eyes of the Lord. Then conspired," it says, "against him Pakee the son of Romelias, his third-in-command, "and struck him in Samaria, and reigned "in his place over Israel, and he did what was evil in "the eyes of the Lord; he did not depart from all the sins "of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, who made Israel to sin. While he was reigning, Theglaphalasar, king of the Assyrians, came up, who, having taken all Samaria by force, deported Israel to the Assyrians. And Pakee also died, when Osee, the son of Ela, formed a conspiracy against him, who also reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Azarias. But "In those days," it says, "the Lord began "to send against Judah

Raason the king "of Syria, and Pakee the son of Romelias. The account goes back in these matters; for we said that Pakee died, when Osee the son of Ela formed a conspiracy and a plot against him; but it brings forward a narrative that happened in his times. "For the Lord began," it says, "in "those days to send against Judah Raason the "king of Syria, and Pakee the son of Romelias. For Pakee the son of Romelias made war on the people of Jerusalem as being his neighbors.

But when he saw their resistance was formidable and unbreakable, he persuaded Raason the king of the Syrians to become his ally and helper, and to besiege Jerusalem with him. So, when the war was underway, Jotham the son of Azarias died; and Achaz his son succeeded to the kingdom, being exceedingly wicked and an idolater, and so drunk with the error of idolatry, that he even made his own son pass through the fire, and inclined to every kind of abomination, and burned incense "on the high places and under every leafy tree," as it is written. Achaz therefore, being troubled, gathered all the wealth found in the house of the Lord, and sent it by messengers to Theglaphalasar king of the Assyrians, and begged to be saved by him. The Assyrian therefore took up arms against the kingdom of Raason, and took Damascus, which is the metropolis of Syria, and killed Raason. Then Achaz went down from Jerusalem to Damascus to see the Assyrian. And having seen in the precincts of the idols an altar having a certain new and unusual design, and being greatly pleased with it, he took a copy of it and sent it to Urias the priest in Jerusalem, and ordered one to be made according to it. And having brought it into the house of the Lord, and all but dishonored that which was made by Moses according to the will of God, he ordered the customary rites to be performed on it;

and besides these things he made other innovations in the temple, according to what seemed good to him, thoughtlessly and displeasingly to God. But also in his times, while Osee son of Ela king of Israel was still living, Salmanasar king of the Assyrians came up against Israel, who, having laid waste Samaria, resettled Israel in the mountains and rivers of the Medes; and he also killed Osee himself. And for what reason? Because he had not brought him the manaa, it says, which was a symbol of submission; but rather called upon the ruler of the Egyptians for aid. Then after this, when Achaz died, Ezekias his son reigned over Judah in Jerusalem. This man became devout, and one of those who especially cared for righteousness, as to

have an incomparable difference in this compared to the others. "He himself tore down the high places, and the groves," he says, "he cut down; and the Lord was with him. While he was reigning, Sennacherib king of the Assyrians went up against the fortified cities of Judea; and having besieged them, he took them without effort. then also the Rabshakeh leaps upon Jerusalem itself, and opening his ungated mouth against God, he sends forth those all-blasphemous words; then also one hundred eighty-five thousand have fallen from the camp of the Assyrians in one night, being consumed by the hand of an angel. These things have been usefully said for the present; for the word of the prophecy would skillfully apply to each of the things that have happened.

for sometimes he rebukes those in Samaria, and at other times he threatens those in Jerusalem with invasions; he foretells the captivities; he forewarns of the fear; he promises assistance; he calls to repentance; and no word or manner of things necessary for benefit has been left out of the prophecy for those who at that time were led astray. Therefore he says; The beginning of the word of the Lord in Hosea; and the Lord said to Hosea; For God begins in the prophet to reveal mysteries surely in that way, which was clearly spoken through another prophet, "I will stand on my watch and "I will set myself on the rock, and I will look out to see what "the Lord God will say in me. for he reveals to the saints, putting into their mind the knowledge of things to come, the God of all things. And so the blessed David says, "I will hear what "the Lord God will speak in me, for he will speak peace to "his people; and no less the blessed prophet Zechariah comes to us through similar words; for he said, "And the angel who was speaking in me answered. for it was the custom for the holy prophets to call the Word of God an angel, as announcing to them and making clear the will of God the Father.

And the prophet Isaiah will also bear witness concerning him, saying, "Because every garment "gathered by deceit, they will repay with a change, and "they will wish they had been burned with fire; because a child "was born to us, and his name is called Angel of Great "Counsel. But that the revelation in the saints was subtle and indistinct, and not accomplished by tongue and words such as ours, Paul will assure us, writing, "Or "do you seek proof of Christ speaking in me? Therefore, that the word of God came to be in Hosea, would be, as far as I can understand, signifying nothing else to the hearers, than that a revelation occurred in Hosea, and the knowledge of

things to come flashed like light, not illuminating the eyes of the body, but the mind and heart. But to say again, And the Lord said to Hosea, leads us to such thoughts. for indeed the command was not common to all who would encounter it, nor was it set forth for those willing to carry it out from time to time, but it was spoken specifically and to Hosea alone. For it is not, just as the command, "Thus says "the Lord, Do not learn according to the ways of the nations, and from "the signs of heaven do not be afraid," is common and beneficial, so would it be understood as good and profitable to take a wife of fornication, and children of fornication; but that one would usefully apply to all;

this however would be fitting to be said to the prophet alone by God. This, I think, is "and he said to Hosea," just as if he were to say, this sort of word is not for everyone simply, but for Hosea alone. for it was not necessary for what was spoken providentially to one person at a certain time to become for many an excuse for a shameful and pleasure-loving life. What then did God say to the blessed Hosea? Go, take for yourself a wife of fornication and children of fornication, because the land commits great fornication, departing from the Lord. And he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. No argument will persuade us to dismiss the letter, and to condemn the narrative as random, and to define the ugliness of the matter itself, or even to suppose, according to some, that it was not done this way, nor that Gomer was taken in marriage, that is, marital union, where the sacred letter says that a conception took place, and indeed also a birth, and it mentions the name of the child, and it speaks of the woman's father, and in addition to these things, the name of the woman herself.

But since it was necessary to confess, for those who choose to agree with the truth of what was done, that these things truly happened in this way, come, let us set forth the arguments of those who are accustomed to mock, and then finally let us introduce in due course the narrative of the divine plan. I happened upon a treatise, therefore, of a not-insignificant man who wished to clarify the things concerning this passage; who made no moderate condemnation of the history, and of those who say it happened this way; and he said that on this very point especially, fearing nothing, the lovers of self-control must clearly cry out The letter kills. For as if condemning the letter in its absence, and coming down as if from a steep place, he composed cer-

tain arguments of this kind. "For Moses," he said, "the divine, was once commanded to lead Israel, redeemed from the slavery of the Egyptians, "to the holy land long ago promised to the "fathers, I mean that of the "promise; but also the prophet Jeremiah heard God saying "clearly, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew ""you, and before you came forth from the womb I consecrated you; I have appointed ""you a prophet to the nations. How then are they not worthy of admiration," "he says, "who refuse so august and all-beautiful a ministry, "and do not refuse to delay? For the one "said, "I pray, Lord, appoint another who is able, ""whom you will send;

and the other, putting forward his youth, "tried to dissuade God. But also the prophet," he says, "Ezekiel, "having been ordered to make bread for himself with cakes of human dung, "was not a little displeased, and for this "reason he heard, "Behold, I have given you cakes of cattle in place of human ""cakes, and you shall bake your bread on them. And "indeed also the divine Peter himself, when the sheet was let "down from heaven, on which all the four-footed animals and "the beasts were written, heard God saying, "Rise, Peter, kill ""and eat," refused, he says, speaking thus, "By no means, ""Lord; for I have never eaten anything common or unclean; nor ""has any profane meat entered my mouth. But Hosea, "having heard that he must be joined to a woman who is shameful and has been "prostituted and has an accursed life, does not refuse the matter, "does not admit hesitation, does not bring supplication, "asking to be released; but like one of the most licentious, most readily "and without delay, he all but snatches the thing, perhaps "being overcome by pleasure for the woman. Then, concluding his arguments into absurdity, he added to these a few insipid things. For he pretends to advocate for the prophet, and again he says, "that he would have made the greatest possible "refusal, if he had known that God commanded a bodily union;

"but since what was being done was something spiritual, out of exceedingly great "love for God, he all but comes as a volunteer to do what was "commanded. Besides," he says, "the God of self-control "would not have wished such a thing to happen, that so great a man "should be defiled by such shameful and most abominable "unions, I mean those with a woman, and that a lewd and "prostituted one. And reshaping, as it were, the force of the "history into spiritual concepts, he said that Gomer "was a type of a soul that has chosen to live shamefully and indecently; "and that the prophet fulfills the image of the one from above and from "heaven, that is, of the Word of

God from the Father, who, being joined to "our souls intellectually, implants the seeds of a life that loves "virtue. And these are the findings of his plausible reasoning; but I have been not moderately amazed, first, that disregarding the concepts that lead to truth, he has dared to say that the letter kills; Then in addition to this, that he has presented Moses and those we have just now mentioned, as having spoken against what was divinely revealed from above; but that those who dared to look against the divine decrees were not without blame, he has wrongly kept silent.

For when the hierophant Moses excused himself, and hesitated at his mission, and put forward his slowness of speech, God rebuked him as being weak in faith, saying thus, "Who has given a mouth to man? "and who has made the dumb and the deaf? the seeing and "the blind? Is it not I, the Lord God? And now go, and "I will open your mouth; But when after this he still drew back and hesitated, "the Lord," it says, "was angry with Moses," and said, "Is not Aaron your brother? I know "that he will speak fluently for you; And again, when Jeremiah had said previously, that I am younger, and I do not know how to speak, God no less replied, saying, "Do not say, that "'I am younger,' for to all to whom I shall send you, you shall go, and according to all that I shall command you, you shall "speak. For it was not at all without danger to say, or even only to think, that the highest counsel had erred from proper reasoning, in calling a young man to prophecy. Likewise the divine Peter heard, when the sheet was let down from heaven, "Arise, Peter, kill and eat; but when he cried out in a Jewish manner, "By no means, Lord; for I have never "eaten anything common or unclean," he was immediately rebuked, and as one who dared to oppose the divine decisions, he heard clearly, "What God has cleansed, you must not call common.

For even if the God of all wished to reprove gently, and was not immediately embittered against them for speaking against Him immoderately, yet their refusal was not without blame for them. But I say that it is necessary to assign to the decrees from above the quality of being right and blameless without delay, and to hasten to carry out what has been commanded, even if the matter is not very pleasing to our souls; for instance, what I mean is, the God of all commanded Saul to slay Agag, as one who had committed unholy deeds against the people of Israel. But he thought to decide what was good for him, and deemed worthy of sparing the one who had been condemned by the decrees. And so in this he offended God, and greatly. For he took care

of the one commanded to die, all but crying out and saying through the very deed, that God had not made a just decree against him. For this reason the blessed Samuel was greatly grieved and indignant with God, and he himself slew Agag, proclaiming the reasons; "Because," he says, "your sword has made women childless, so shall "your mother be made childless among women; and he foretells to Saul that he will also be driven out of the kingdom, and will pay a bitter penalty for his disobedience.

And if it is necessary to adduce besides this the narrative of other histories, it is written in the third book of Kings, that Hadad, the leader or king of the Syrians, once made war against those of Israel. And while Ahab, who was king of Israel, was not a little distressed, and feared the attack, expecting to be captured before long with his whole army, God promised through a prophet to deliver the enemy to him; then that man, having taken him, deemed him worthy of sparing, contrary to what seemed good to God. And what after this does the sacred writing say? "And one man from the sons "of the prophets said to his neighbor in the word of the Lord, "'Strike me, I pray'; and the man was not willing to strike him. "And he said to him, 'Because you have not listened to the voice "of the Lord, behold, you are departing from me, and a lion will strike you'; "and he went away from him, and a lion finds him and struck "him. And he finds another man and said, 'Strike "me, I pray'; and the man struck him, striking and "wounding him. And the prophet went and stood for the "king of Israel on the road, and he bound with a bandage "his eyes; and having said a few things in between to Ahab as he was returning, he added again, "Thus "says the Lord:

Because you have let a man of destruction go out of your "hand, and the shall be your soul for his soul, "and your people for his people. Do you hear how he who refused to strike the prophet was miserably destroyed, having fallen prey to a terrible beast? And yet how is it not true to say that it was the fruit of reverence not to dare to strike a holy man and a prophet? But it was by the word of the Lord, and disobedience became an inescapable offense. Ahab also unreasonably spared Ben-hadad, although God had commanded to destroy him, and he himself was given for his soul. Therefore it is necessary that what may please God be carried out by us without hesitation or delay; but to do anything else than this, or even to choose to think it, brings the charge of contempt. For such people have all but resolved to rebuke God at last, as one who at times does not deliberate correctly. We say therefore to

those who do not place the story outside of slander, and who unwisely criticize it: Does it seem unseemly to you, O sirs, for a prophet to have become a table companion to a lewd woman? But what of this, is it not much more unseemly for some to be slaughtered by holy prophets? How then did Samuel slay Agag, and Elijah the prophets of Baal, although they were many in number?

And what of this, tell me, the prophet Isaiah, having removed the sackcloth from his loins, running about Jerusalem naked and barefoot? For would not one immediately mock a man in such a state as being indecent and out of his mind and deranged in his wits? And how is this doubtful, if it is full of praise that all things be done by us in a fitting manner? But you will say that, yielding to divine commands, they did such things at that time. But what, tell me, is one to think of the blessed Hosea? For does he go of his own accord to a harlot and make one so shameful his wife, or was he commanded by God? And I have marveled no less at that one who wishes to scoff at the things written about him, and who has dared to ridicule the unpleasantness of the story. For in explaining away the matter because of its absurdity, and insisting very clearly that the prophet did not have fellowship with a harlot, but that the divine Word is at times joined to souls that have committed fornication, he has not likely understood what nonsense he has fallen into. For he wishes, it seems, for the prophet to be more reverent, at least, than the all-holy God. For would not one say, tell me, that for the prophet to be joined to a wicked woman is on the same level as for the Word of God to choose to have fellowship with an unclean soul?

But I think there is absolutely no difference. Either, therefore, let them explain this away along with that because of its absurdity, or let them allow human things to follow after the divine will. But I think it is necessary to adduce something from the evangelical writings as well. Our Lord Jesus Christ reclined with tax collectors and sinners, but the fault-finding Pharisees criticized him again, and went to the holy disciples, saying openly, "Why does your teacher eat and drink with sinful men? What then did Christ say to this? "Those who are well," he says, "have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. That God, therefore, out of his immeasurable love for mankind, receives even those who are defiled and have not yet washed away their sin, one would in no way doubt. But it is especially necessary not to define as unseemly the story that took place concerning the blessed Hosea, since it

writes for us most beautifully in itself, that even while we are still abominable and unclean, the divine Word grants us spiritual fellowship from himself. So then the God of all said to the blessed Hosea: Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and children of harlotry. And he takes Gomer, not making the matter an occasion for pleasure, but fulfilling a work of obedience and ministry, and becoming a servant of the type, which we will indeed fully explain, forming, as is possible, spiritual things in carnal and more earthly ones.

And no one, I think, would henceforth fittingly blame the prophet's purpose. For to choose to marry, and to be joined to a wife, and to desire children, the word of the divinely-inspired scripture does not forbid; rather, of blame and it frees from slander everywhere; "For marriage is honorable, and the bed "undefiled," according to the voice of the blessed Paul; and it was permitted for those willing to live rightly, and to achieve a virtuous and pious life, even if they longed for the generation of children. For thus lived the blessed Abraham; and those after him were also well-pleasing to God. What then, tell me, is absurd, or how could it at all be slandered, not to refuse marriage, when God commands something spiritual and necessary to be written for the benefit of those who will read it in bodily and perceptible things? And I would say, fearing nothing, that the prophet also saved Gomer. For a woman so shameful and common, he persuaded to be attached to one man alone, and her who formerly grieved nature itself; because she was not subject to the generation of children, but selling her beauty to the pleasures of those who happened by, she was a springboard of death, and a door and a way leading down to the deep and final darkness itself; he persuaded her to abstain from such utterly detestable incantations and undertakings, and made her a respectable mother of children.

But indeed, not to care greatly for his own affairs, but rather to choose to accomplish what is useful and necessary for another's salvation, would appear to be a holy and admirable endeavor. For shall we not thus deem the blessed prophet Isaiah worthy of all praise, if, having taken off his tunic, and untied his sandals, and esteeming propriety of almost no account at all, he walked naked, in order to show the image of the coming captivity to those of Israel, to prepare them to adhere to God and persuade them finally to love the cessation of sins? And what, tell me, did not our wise Paul say clearly, "For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ, "for my brethren, my

kinsmen according to the flesh? And does he not also say that he "became all things to all men, that I might by all means "save some," and became to the Jews as a Jew, "to those who are without law as without law (not being without law to God, but under law "to Christ), that I might save those who are without law? And why do I say these things, omitting what is still greater? That even the Only-Begotten Word of God Himself, in order to save the human race, "did not consider it robbery "to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, "and coming in the likeness of men.

And being found in appearance "as a man, He endured the cross, despising "the shame. Therefore, it is not at all surprising if, having departed a little from what is proper, the prophet saved Gomer, and brings back the lost woman to propriety. But that God commanded him to be joined to the woman for the sake of a useful and necessary matter, he has immediately made fully known, affirming that He commanded those things for this reason. Because, he says, the land will certainly commit fornication, departing from after the Lord. And he speaks to the prophet not of a fornication of the land that will be, but of one that has already happened. For indeed the heifers were in Dan and Bethel, and the precincts of Baal had been raised, and the rites of Israel were practiced throughout the whole land of the Samaritans. Therefore the God-inspired scripture makes no distinction in the tenses, or rather, as is more true to say, those who have interpreted it for us; just as, for instance, the very person of Christ is introduced through the voice of Isaiah, saying, "I gave my back to the scourges, and my cheeks "to blows. And the prophet himself says of him, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before "its shearer is silent, so He opens not His mouth. "In His humiliation His justice was taken away.

Do you see how the word of prophecy has brought to us what is to be in time as if it has already happened? Therefore, "The land will certainly commit fornication," must be understood as, "the land has committed fornication. And in what way has it committed fornication? "From after the Lord," that is, having rejected the following that one would make, as toward God. For it is written, "You shall walk after the Lord," that is, you shall follow without turning aside to the by laws from above and from God. She has committed fornication therefore, away from the Lord, not enduring to follow. For she has become an apostate and profane, and having been added to

the worship of idols, she has offended the Master. For this reason, therefore, the prophet Hosea is joined to Gomer, because the land has committed fornication away from the Lord. For what is done might be understood, as I said, as a type of a mystical matter. Then Gomer gave birth; And the Lord said to him, "Call his name Jezreel, because yet a little while and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel on the house of Judah, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel; and it will be in that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. In these things the discourse travails with a twofold contemplation for us.

But another reading is also offered by some, which is necessary to mention now for the sake of accuracy; for it is of no small benefit for us to mention both accounts. Our version then, that is, that of the Seventy, says, "And I will avenge the blood of Jezreel on the house of Judah; but the other says, "And I will avenge the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu. And if some should choose to understand it thus, it is necessary to make the narration more historical. And it is thus: Ahab became king in Israel, who also had Jezebel as his consort. But since he was seeking the vineyard of Naboth, the latter responded to this, saying, "Far be it from me to give you the vineyard of my father; he was murdered, having fallen into the wicked ways of Jezebel. Since, therefore, he had been murdered, Ahab inherited the vineyard of Naboth, and he was also otherwise devoted to the worship of demons, and this excessively, so the God of all was indignant. Then he commanded Elisha the prophet to anoint Jehu king over Israel. And the prophet, having sent the young servant, fulfilled the divine oracle. Then Jehu, having been anointed, goes down to Samaria and fulfilled the divine wrath upon those who had caused grief. For having killed Ahab, he cast him into the vineyard of Naboth; then after this Jezebel, and he also killed seventy sons of Ahab, who were throughout all Samaria. And to these he added Baal;

for he burned his pillars, and shook down the precincts, and he slaughters the priests themselves. For these things God accepts him; and indeed he also promises, saying that "sons to the fourth generation shall sit on your throne. But Jehu, who had thus become well-pleasing, nonetheless offended God. For he did not remove the calves, but was himself also caught walking impiously in the sins of Jeroboam. Then there came from Jehu a first son, Jehoahaz, a man who was also an idolater, and who worshiped the calves. But in his time, it says, "the Lord was angry with Israel, and he gave them into

the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-hadad son of Hazael. A second from Jehoahaz reigned, Joash; and this man was wicked. A third, Jeroboam, during whose reign the prophecy of Hosea begins. A fourth, Azariah from Jeroboam, also an idolater; Shallum killed him. Therefore, since Jehu was anointed to avenge the blood of Naboth, who was from Jezreel—this is a city of Samaria—and so that having removed the idolatry of Israel, he might then persuade them to be devoted to God, then he himself also became a worshiper of the calves, and his children who came from him were no less impious, "I will avenge," it says, "the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu. For just as he avenged the house of Ahab through the kingdom of Jehu, so he will also avenge the house of Jehu.

For in the days of his sons, Hazael king of Syria warred, and indeed also Ben-hadad, and they conquered Israel, and they sacked very many of the cities in Samaria. Therefore a child is born to the prophet, whose name is also Jezreel; as if God were somehow recalling the sin committed against Naboth; for a just and pious man having been unjustly killed, how could the champion of the just remain quiet? he will break therefore he proclaims the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. For the tribes of Israel were conquered, as I said, by both Hazael and indeed by Hadad. And so the account is in these things, of what has been done historically; but come, let us say what is fitting for the other writing, bringing now to a spiritual contemplation the things spoken by God. The synagogue of the Jews is noble on account of the fathers. For those around the divine Abraham served a living and true God; and indeed they became caretakers of righteousness, and very well crowned with all good works, and excelling in genuineness; and unshaken in faith, and having practiced every form of gentleness. But when, with a famine pressing down, they mingled with the Egyptians, and then spent long periods of time there, those from them became different in manner and different in mind, choosing henceforth to follow the customs of the inhabitants; and they cared very little for the piety practiced by their fathers and uniquely accomplished.

For they worshipped the creation rather than the creator, and the works of their own hands, as it is written; and they descended to such a point of abomination and profane life, that there was perhaps no manner of wickedness at all unpracticed by them. And they seem to me to have suffered something such as a wise and noble woman might suffer, who has abandoned her own

way, and all but bid farewell to the practices of decorum; but choosing rather to be seen in the appearance and gestures of prostitutes. For in the same way that such a woman fulfills the pleasures of all upon herself, with all difficulty removed, so too the soul of a person, turning away from the pursuits of piety, and disregarding love for God, and inclining towards Satan, fulfills the desires of the evil spirits. Therefore, the synagogue of the Jews has committed fornication in Egypt in a spiritual sense; for it was set before, as I said, the desires of the demons for anything whatsoever that was pleasant to them, being easily carried away; but God visited and had mercy on her who was so cast down, and wished to make her temperate again; and the all-holy and pure one all but made the profane woman his spouse, and made her a mother of children, and deemed her worthy of love, on account of the firstborn who came from her, that is, Jezreel, which is interpreted seed of God.

See, then, how Hosea is set as an image and type of the things so wisely arranged by God. A holy prophet is joined to Gomer, a prostitute. And she bore him Jezreel. Thus also God called the synagogue of the Jews to intimacy through the all-wise Moses, and into spiritual communion, on account of the firstborn who would be from her, that is Christ, who is the seed of God according to the truth; for the Son has been begotten of the Father, even if he became flesh. But since the presentation of the spiritual contemplation would not otherwise become clear and most distinct, unless the historical events were brought into the middle, come, I shall mention them again. That Jezreel is a city, the account has clearly announced to us beforehand, but as from the city of Jezreel it signifies Naboth. And he himself would be a type of the economy understood in Christ; and he himself is also interpreted, The Coming One. And by such a name the holy scripture most often signifies Emmanuel. For it was said to the blessed prophet Habakkuk "Yet a little while, the one who is to come will come and will not delay; and David also sings somewhere, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; and indeed the divine baptist himself sends some of his own disciples to our Lord Jesus Christ, and he inquired, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect another?

And that he was in the image of Christ, we will know this clearly from the things written about him. For Ahab desired to acquire his vineyard, and to convert the so excellent plot into a vegetable garden. But he was indignant at this, and said that he would never give up the vineyard of his father, he

was affirming clearly. "For far be it from me," he says, "to give to you the vineyard of my father. But when the god-hated and profane Jezebel, she who persecuted the prophets and plotted against the righteous, learned this, she contrived the murder of the righteous man with wicked devices; and indeed, having arranged for him to be killed, she commanded her husband, I mean Ahab, to inherit. At these things God was rightly indignant, and indeed He promises to avenge the blood of Jezreel. For Ahab was killed by Jehu, as we have already said before; and to him was added the all-wicked Jezebel. Come now, therefore, let us refer to Christ the things that happened to those of old as in a type. For the prophet Isaiah says that "A vineyard came to be for the beloved on a horn in a fruitful place. "and the vineyard was the man of Judah, a new plant, beloved. But the leaders of Israel, of whom the ruling Ahab would be a type, desired to have his vineyard; not that it might be a special inheritance, that is, a vineyard;

but that it might become a desolate garden of vegetables, that is, that it might be brought down to something incomparably less; for very great is the difference of a garden of vegetables compared to a vineyard. And what is still greater in these things is not unclear. For having become the peoples of the Jews under Christ, how were they not destined both to be and to appear equal to vines with goodly branches, and indeed most fruitful? But living by the customs and ways of the Pharisees, and learning doctrines that are the precepts of men, they in no way differ from the lowliest vegetables, which also very easily fall and wither. Therefore the teachers of the Jews coveted to have Christ's vineyard as their own inheritance, and for a garden of vegetables; but they did not persuade him to betray to them the vineyard of the Father. Then, what did the god-hated Jezebel do, that is, the common multitude under the hand of the leaders, or the Synagogue, running together with the griefs of the leaders? She pursues the righteous one, the holy Naboth, with deceit, that is, the one who is coming, and indeed arranged for him to be killed. For Emmanuel was killed, being falsely accused. But that the matter was not tolerable to God would be clear from what was said by the prophet Hosea:

Because yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Judah, and I will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease. For, as I said, the blood of Christ has been avenged on all Israel. For since at that time, in which the prophecy also occurred, they were named separately,

Judah being those who remained in Jerusalem, and Israel again those in Samaria, in order that he might be seen to signify "from all Israel," he says that he will necessarily avenge the blood of Jezreel from the house of Judah; and that he would also cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease. This also the divine Jacob foretold, saying, "A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a leader from his thighs, until he comes for whom it is reserved, and He is the expectation of nations. For when Emmanuel shone upon us, the expectation of the nations, then indeed then also the kingdom of Israel was taken from the midst. And indeed Herod, the son of Antipater, an Ascalonite, was leading the country of the Jews when Christ was born. And he promises to shatter the very bow of Israel on that day, that is, at that time. "For the bow of the mighty has grown weak," according to what is written, although they supposed they would overcome Emmanuel. and "the swords of the enemy have failed forever; and the sinews of their arms were loosed; for they have not conquered the unconquerable.

But as if preparing the depth of the spiritual contemplation, he comes down immediately to the things done historically, saying that I will shatter the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. For there Hazael the king of Syria conquered Israel leading out their forces against him. But since I suppose it is fitting not to divert the discourse from the necessary and spiritual contemplation, I say this: it is in no way distressing, as I think, for the valley of Jezreel to be understood, that is, of the seed of God, or of Christ, the tomb in the garden, in which the resurrection, following upon the passion, has conquered every kind of Jewish audacity. For through the resurrection, their perverse and God-hated and murderous audacities have been undone. For they thought they could do away with the Son, so that they might also have his vineyard as their own inheritance. But having been placed in a tomb, he lived again, rendering the plots of their scheme ineffective, and all but shattering their bows, by being able to suffer no more. And he casts them out of the vineyard as God-hated and wicked and killers of the Lord; but he gives it to other husbandmen, good and well-disposed and most diligent, according to the parable of the Gospel. And she conceived again and bore a daughter. And he said to him, Call her name, Not-pitied, because I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, but setting myself against them, I will oppose them.

But I will have mercy on the sons of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God, and I will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by war, nor by chariots, nor by horses, nor by horsemen. After Jezreel was born, a little daughter is born to the prophet from Gomer, to whom he also commands a name must be given, Not-pitied. And he immediately adds the reason for this, and straightway makes the cause clear, saying that Israel would no longer be deemed worthy of any mercy; but would, as it were, rise up against them, and be in the ranks of the most hostile, and nobly oppose their successes, so that they would slip into the utmost misery, and truly endure an unbearable misfortune. For with God opposing, there could be no help from anywhere for those who suffer. "For if he shuts a man in, who can open it? he says; and as the prophet says, "His high hand, who shall turn it back? or who will have mercy on one condemned by the decree from above? For all things follow the divine nods. And whatever the Master chooses to accomplish, this is achieved without delay in every way and manner, with creation working together with him, and following the decrees of the one who rules.

Thus he has punished the Egyptians, with the waters being transformed into blood, and the soot into gnats, and an unbearable hail coming down, and for a short time a three-day darkness poured down, and all the other things brought upon them. Therefore the name for the little girl, Not-pitied, is useful and necessary; so that, by always eagerly inquiring into the cause of the matter, and indeed by learning it, those who at that time had offended God through the error of polytheism, might be persuaded to think and to do better and more fitting things, and for the future might turn to choosing wisely, and at least in the second place shake off the wrath, having rendered the grieved God of all well-disposed and gentle toward them. But again the prophetic word seems to indicate to us in these things the captivities of Israel that happened, both under Tiglath-pileser, and also Shalmaneser, kings of the Assyrians, who deported Israel from Samaria to the borders of the Persians and Medes, having destroyed the cities in Samaria. But they would not have fallen into such terrible misfortunes, if God had been willing to defend them; or rather, if He had not, as it were, led out against and stood in the ranks of the enemy. For He said clearly, that "Setting myself against them, I will oppose them. But he promises to have mercy on the sons of Judah, and to save them, not by the law of war;

for this is the meaning of, 'not by chariots, nor by horses'; which indeed was also fulfilled, when Sennacherib surrounded Jerusalem, at which time Rabshakeh also spoke foolishly against the divine glory, saying that God would not be strong enough to save both Jerusalem and those in it; and he brought forward as proof that they too would in every way and manner be captured, the fact that the gods in Samaria had not been able to rescue their own people, but Judah was saved miraculously, that is, the two tribes inhabiting Jerusalem. "For an angel of the Lord went out, he says, and he destroyed from the "camp of the Assyrians in one night, one hundred and eighty-five thousand. And so those who were saved sang; and they recounted the ways of the mighty work that had been done for them, saying "Some in chariots, and some in horses; "but we will be magnified in the name of the Lord our God. "They were entangled, and they fell; but we have risen, "and have been set upright. But let these things be said by us historically; let us go again to other thoughts, I mean again those concerning Christ Himself. For after Jezreel was born, that is, the seed of God, that you may understand Emmanuel, whose blood He promised to avenge, a daughter is born to Gomer, that is to the prostituted synagogue of the Jews, that is, a multitude, whom it would be fitting to call Not Pitied; for she killed Jezreel, that is Christ.

For this reason she justly finds God an enemy and most hostile; and she immediately endured incurable misfortunes, being sacked by the Roman forces, and having undergone the infamous war, when women even laid hands on their own children, and as the prophet Jeremiah says, "The hands "of compassionate women have boiled their own children," and having disregarded the laws of human nature, with the famine compelling them to be neglectful of unconquerable affection. But all these things have happened to the impious; but he promises to have mercy on the sons of Judah, that is, those who have become sons of Christ of the tribe of Judah through instruction and regeneration through the Spirit. For if some are born in Christ to the holy apostles through the Gospel, how much more so through Christ Himself? concerning whom he also says "Behold I and the children whom God has given me. Therefore they are saved in Christ the Lord and God of all, not moving earthly and carnal weapons, but in the power of the one who saves and casts down principalities and thrones, who triumphs by his own cross over the hosts of the adversaries, and destroys wicked powers, and gives to those who love him "to tread on serpents and scorpions, "and over all the

power of the enemy. And he very aptly compares the disobedient and stubborn and deicidal multitude of the Jews to a woman, I mean to Not Pitied.

For a woman might be understood as a sign of weakness and a type of an unmanly and broken spirit, and very clearly so. And such are all those who did not receive the instruction through Christ, nor indeed endured to follow after his divine and holy ordinances. And so the prophet Hosea says, "Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, "because you have grown weak in your iniquities; and again concerning the commandments of the Savior, the same one says, "Because the ways of the Lord are straight, and the righteous will walk in them; but "the ungodly will grow weak in them. And the same Hosea somewhere says concerning those who killed Jezreel, that is Christ, "And the pride of Israel will be humbled to "his face; and Israel and Ephraim will grow weak "in their iniquities. And she weaned Not Pitied, and she conceived again, and bore a son. And he said, Call his name Not My People, because you are not my people, and I am not yours. Another child is born to Gomer immediately and not long after, whom God said must be called Not My People. And a reason is immediately set next to such a name again. For you, he says, are not my people, and I am not yours. And it should be clear from this hereafter, that such things were done historically for the reproof of those who had sinned, and for the sure correction of those who chose to be contemptuous and had inclined to error.

But they were types of the things that would happen in due time to those of Israel, when the Only-Begotten had already become man, and endured the precious cross for us. But if it is necessary to narrate the historical things before the spiritual, we say that when Israel was relocated from Samaria, to the borders of the Persians and Medes by Tiglath-Pileser king of the Assyrians, and indeed also Shalmaneser, those who still remained, and the remnant of those who had been in peril, completely slipped away from being called the people of God, because of holding to the same endeavors toward apostasy from God. For they in no way ceased adhering to the most abominable worships of demons. But you will understand otherwise with respect to the meaning and the true word concerning Christ. For after that unholy multitude, which rightly has not received mercy; for it has killed the Lord; those who became sons immediately after them, or who were already of the Synagogue that has committed fornication, have clearly fallen away from being and being called the people of God. For the Roman war did not des-

stroy the entire multitude of the Jews; but a very great multitude, and one beyond number, was destroyed; but those of them who were saved, and who fled the net of death, were scattered to every wind, as it is written, and were dispersed in the lands of the nations, no longer being called, as I said, the people of God.

For grace has passed over to those from the nations, with whom the remnant of Israel was also mixed, that is, those who were saved through faith in Christ. For not a few in number from this group have also believed. And that when Israel kicked him away, God himself, the God of all, departed from his kinship with them, he showed by saying not only, "You are not my people," but necessarily adding to this, "and I am not yours. But concerning us, who have been justified in Christ and sanctified in the Spirit, and have been enriched with kinship to him, through the voice of the prophet he says, "And I will be their God, and they will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. And to the Jews Christ said, at one time, that "Yet a little while I am with you," and at another time, "Behold, your house is left to you; but concerning those from the nations, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life. And the number of the sons of Israel was as the sand of the sea, which shall not be measured, nor shall it be numbered. The blessed Isaiah explains this to us in another way: "And if," he says, "the people of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant shall be saved.

For he is bringing a word to completion and cutting it short in righteousness, because God will make a shortened word in the whole inhabited world. But whether it be perhaps understood thus, or otherwise, though Israel be numerous and countless, and equal in measure to the sands of the sea, they are of little account with God, since they have chosen to be impious; and yet even one righteous and pious person is specially deemed worthy of love and mercy from him. For he looks upon even one humble and quiet person and who trembles at his words. And this is not enough for the good and gentle, and those who fear him, and genuinely serve him, but indeed they are also able to benefit others, and to deliver those who have offended from the punishment that is sometimes impending. And you might take as proof of such a matter the words concerning the Sodomites, when the all-powerful God promised to relent for them from the judgment by fire, if only five righteous men were found among them. And so Lot was saved together

with his wife and children. And why do I speak of five righteous and good men? When, having threatened Jerusalem with wrath, "Run to and fro," he says, "in the streets of Jerusalem, and see and know and seek in her broad places, if you can find a man, if there is one who executes judgment, and seeks faithfulness, and I will be merciful to them, says the Lord.

Do you see, then, how he holds on to even one righteous man, and does not overlook him praying for a whole city? But he has no regard for even a countless multitude, as I said, if it is seen to be profane and has turned aside to what is evil, and is fiercely entangled in the deceits of demons. And it shall be in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," they themselves shall be called sons of the living God. Very near indeed to the most severe angers is the release from grievous things, and the end of gloomy things, insofar as he came to speak, not at length. For that Israel would be rejected in due time, he clearly foretold through what has just been said by us; but that he will not be gone for ever, nor utterly perish, but there will be a time for them of return to their ancient state, and a recovery of love for God, that is, through faith in Christ, he has again fully assured us. For it was necessary, it was necessary for those who were to hear the prophetic words, to know clearly the whole mystery, and not to be ignorant of the ways of the divine economy. It shall be, therefore, he says, in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," they themselves shall be called sons of the living God. What the "in the place" might mean, let us say precisely.

For those of Israel became captives at times, and were carried off, as I said, to the land of the Assyrians. but there they were weeping and wailing and inactive concerning the law; and this the blessed David made clear to us, saying, "By the river of Babylon, there we sat down, and wept when "we remembered Zion; and he said again, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? But having returned to Jerusalem, by God's pity, they were no less and were called the people of God, and continued in prosperity, serving freely, and performing the sacrifices according to the law. For it was not at all permitted to fulfill the appointed rites anywhere else, but only in Jerusalem and in the temple, as the law through Moses clearly commanded, "Take heed to yourself, that you do not offer your whole burnt offerings in "every place, but in the place which "the Lord your God shall choose, for His name to be called upon there, "there you shall bring your whole burnt offerings. Therefore, returning at times to Jerusalem, and leaving the land of the for-

eigners, they again fulfilled what was established by law through Moses, and were called the people of God; but after the cross of the Savior, and the siege and sack that happened to them, they were scattered with their whole households in the cities and countries of the gentiles. How then shall they in time become the people of God?

Will it be by returning again to Jerusalem, and being gathered in the temple? Or by being in those places, wherever each of them may be scattered? What does the prophet say? In the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," they themselves shall be called sons of the living God. For they lost their state of being God's people, and were scattered in the lands of the gentiles, which one can see preserved to this day. But in the last times of the age, "when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in," then indeed then also the rejected Israel himself will be received as sons of God, even while dwelling in the places wherever they may happen to be and be found; for there is no compulsion to go up to Jerusalem, and to still seek the temple made of stones; because he will not honor God with the ancient customs, I mean with sacrifices of oxen and slaughters of sheep; but their manner of worship will be faith in Christ, and his ordinances, and sanctification in the Spirit, and the regeneration through holy baptism, which procures the glory of adoption for those worthy of it and called to this by the Lord. And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land, for great is the day of Jezreel.

And we shall find this to have come to pass both historically and spiritually. For in the territories of the Persians and Medes were those who had been taken captive from Samaria, that is, Israel, and in addition to these also those from Jerusalem, that is, Judah and Benjamin. But when Cyrus son of Cambyses, having taken Babylon and transferred the rule of the Persians to himself, released both Israel and Judah from captivity, and commanded them to go home together with the sacred vessels, they arrived in Jerusalem, and dwelt there from then on not divided, as they were before the captivity; nor indeed did they each have their own kings; but they lived all with one mind only in Jerusalem, led at that time by Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, who was from the tribe of Judah, and with Jesus the son of Jozadak the high priest officiating, when they also rebuilt the divine temple, and were occupied with the concerns of the house. Therefore, he says, the sons of Judah and

the sons of Israel will be gathered together, and they will appoint for themselves one head, and they will go up from the land; that you may understand the land of the foreigners, to "which they were also carried away having become captives. But the phrase *For great is the day of Jezreel* will not fit the historical account. Therefore we say this:

for when Israel is called the people of God, although named 'Not-my-people' on account of so much impiety, as we have already said before, then they and the sons of Judah will be gathered together, that is, the whole multitude of the Jews found in the last days, and they will all be under one head, that is, Christ. And the God of all has proclaimed something of this sort through the voice of Ezekiel, saying about Christ, "And I will raise up over them one shepherd, and he will "shepherd them, my servant David, and he will be their shepherd. And he calls David the one born from the seed of David according to the flesh, Christ. Therefore, when the flock of the nations has already been called, Israel will be brought in last, and all will be under one head, and they will go up, he says, from the land. And this, I think, indicates to those who understand correctly, either that in every way and altogether those who have accepted the yoke of the Savior will henceforth cease from thinking about the things on the earth, and will be superior to carnal thinking; for such are all who have come to be under Christ; and the blessed David will confirm this, saying, "For the mighty ones of the earth of God "have been greatly exalted," and indeed also Paul, "But those who are of "Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its "passions and desires;

that is, that they themselves will also attain to the resurrection of the dead. For Christ said somewhere, "Amen I say to you, that everyone "who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. And yet, how is it not necessary to say: for those who do not believe, tell me, will they remain dead, and not be brought back to life along with the others? What then is the abundance for those who have believed, the Savior himself has shown us, saying thus, "The thief does not come "except to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come, "that they may have life, and have it more abundantly. Therefore, all will be raised, both the evil and the good; but not all have the abundance. For those who are not of Christ, because they are seen to be entangled in the crimes of disobedience, will have in the last days a life more grievous than death; for they will give an account both for their transgressions and for their disobedience. But those who are his, and through the Spirit have been enriched

with intimacy with God, and are good in their ways, in addition to the common resurrection, and to returning to life, will in every way and altogether have the things that follow, that is, the gifts, the honors, the crowns, the rewards, the splendor. And Paul will testify, saying, "Behold, "I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep;

"but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at "the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be "raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. Therefore, he says, they will go up from the land, that is, they too will live the life of the saints. For great is the day of Jezreel. For truly great is the day of Christ, on which he will raise all the dead, and will descend from heaven, and will be seated, as it is written, on the throne of his glory, and will repay each one according to his works. But if someone should wish to understand 'day' as the time of his advent, in which the remission of sins was given by Christ to both Greeks and barbarians, and to the Jews who had sinned against him, this person too will walk straight in the paths of truth. Thus also David indicates the time of our Savior's advent, saying, "This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Say to your brother, My people, and to your sister, Having obtained mercy. He very necessarily adds these things to what has already been said.

For since he has said that all will be under one rule, with nothing any longer walling them off or dividing them into discord, but rather with unanimity prevailing, and with faith in Christ gathering all into the unity that is in the spirit, then the Spirit necessarily commanded those who had already been enriched with the faith and had come under Christ, no longer to be fond of rejecting peace with those who were justly called Not my people, and Not having obtained mercy. For once Israel had been received, and had obtained remission, and had come under Christ, how was it consistent to still be in discord, and not rather to continue in harmony, those who had been called into brotherhood by the one Spirit of adoption? O then, he says, you who have been made radiant by faith in Christ, and have received the boasts of authenticity, say now to your brother who was formerly and justly called Not my people, the words My people; and to your sister, Not having obtained mercy, say the words Having obtained mercy. For it is necessary that the peoples under his hand appear to be of one mind with the master, and that those called to sonship through grace wish the same things as the father;

and rather to rejoice that the remnant of Israel has been saved, and that those formerly cast off because of great disobedience have now become acceptable and are now sanctified in Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever, Amen.

Book 2

Plead with your mother, plead, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Having said before that Israel will be justly cast off, and in addition will be called Not a people; and indeed that the Lord-slaying multitude will surely be in every way Not having obtained mercy, and very reasonably so; then, having added to these things, and not at great length, the return through faith in Christ that will take place in the last times of the age, by saying, "And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one ruler," and having narrated the entire economy from beginning to end, he proceeds in these things to lay bare the accusations of those justly cast off, and clearly brings to light the things for which it happened that they suffered those things. Therefore he says to those who have obtained mercy and have been received and have become the people of God, but who have sprung from the Synagogue as from some harlot, Plead with your mother, plead. For if you wish, he says, to learn the reasons for which you became and were called Not my people, and Not having obtained mercy, in the times before your return, you will not find me to have been harsh toward you or neglectful in affection; but plead with your own mother, because she did not preserve the genuineness of love for me, but denied our relationship;

and she considered the purity of spiritual communion with me to be of very little account; and she was not willing to bring forth the fruits of my desires. She has become not my wife, and I therefore am no longer her husband; she did not bear you for me, but for others; for otherwise I would have recognized my own; the one who is by nature a father is not slow to mercy, but he hesitates to be good to an illegitimate offspring. And these things, one might perhaps say, are as from the person of God; but one will consider again, and reflect well, that since the Synagogue had turned to apostasy from God, and had chosen the worship of demons, and, just like a harlot, was spreading her legs for them, those born of her became neither purely and steadfastly God-loving, nor indeed gentle in their ways; but rather, having been reared in the customs of those who bore them, they heedlessly went on

to things that grieve God; on the one hand sacrificing to Baal, and to the heifers golden ones; and this they do, rushing heedlessly into every kind of impurity. They will therefore blame, and very rightly so, their own mother, and not rather the truly virtue-loving and all-holy Master, who does not deign to have as a consort the one who has committed fornication. But the manner of the fornication is in every way spiritual, even if it is spoken of physically.

And I will take away her fornication from my presence, and her adultery from between her breasts, so that I may strip her naked, and restore her as in the days of her birth. For those who do not turn to God of their own will, nor endure to fulfill what is pleasing to him, but cling fast to a depravity that is honored by them I know not how, a certain penalty and punishment is devised, which then transfers them by necessity and fear to that very thing to which it was better to be brought of their own will. For just as difficult and hard-to-treat wounds on the body, even if they do not yield to the power of medicines and accept some change for the better, are either cut with a knife, since the experience of physicians calls for this manner of remedy, or else are overcome by fire; so also the soul of man, having inclined much toward apostasy from good things, even if it does not yield to the voices of those who admonish, nor chooses to migrate from baser things to the better, is overcome by judgments, and being caught in the snares of punishment, makes its return a matter of necessity. Such is that which is said through the voice of Jeremiah, "By pain and by scourge you will be disciplined, O Jerusalem.

And the divine David also sings something of this sort concerning those who have loved to be exceedingly led to sin, "With bit and bridle you shall restrain the jaws of those who do not draw near to you. For those who are accustomed to breaking colts turn the hard and unruly irrational animals with bridles toward what seems to be good; so also does God usefully deal with those who are very fond of sin. Therefore, prophets and righteous men advised the Synagogue to depart from the worship of idols, and to abstain from the error devised I know not whence. And not only this; but God himself also threatened to inflict upon them the most shameful of all evils, if they did not choose to return to thinking and doing the things that are pleasing and dear to him. But they were still terrible and unyielding, and inflexible in their mind. For this reason, having become captives to the Assyrians and

Medes, they spent long periods of time. Being there, and burdened by the yoke of slavery, they no longer sacrificed to the heifers; for how, or from where could they? But they were already in inescapable evils; nor did they call upon Baal himself, but rather they continued, bewailing their own misfortunes. For this reason the Master of all says, And I will take away her fornication from my presence, and her adultery from between her breasts.

For she will go away captive, he says, and I will no longer see her sacrificing to Baal, nor offering whole burnt offerings to the golden heifers, almost baring her breasts to her own lovers out of excessive arrogance. But I will rather take pleasure in her being distressed and wretched, and having an incurable misfortune, in a land not her own, and having come under terrible and bitter masters. And I will do these things, having stripped her of my help, and leaving her disgraced, just as she was seen to be in the beginning, when, bearing the yoke of the Egyptians' oppression, she was continually bare of my grace and love, and of legal wisdom. Therefore the Synagogue came to a turning back, and as it were going backwards again into the state she was in, forfeiting through ignorance the honor and glory that was in between. This the Savior himself also taught us, saying, "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finds none. Then it says, I will return to my house from which I came. And when it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it "seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they enter and "dwell there, and the last state of that man becomes "worse than the first. So shall it be also to this "wicked generation.

For while the children of Israel were still sojourning in Egypt, the wicked spirit dwelt in them as idolaters, but it was cast out in the meantime; for they were called to the knowledge of God through Moses. But since they became killers of the Lord, and guilty of countless crimes, their last state has become worse than the first, a herd of demons, not just one any longer, dwelling in them. For a soul that has cast off the protection of heavenly grace will be in every way and altogether vulnerable to Satan. And I will make her as a desert, and set her as a waterless land, and I will kill her with thirst, and I will have no mercy on her children, because they are children of fornication. Because their mother has committed fornication, she that bore them has brought shame. He says that the one who has committed fornication will be fruitless, dry and thorn-bearing, thirsty and waterless, deprived perhaps not of earthly

waters, but of the richness from above and from heaven, that is, of the provision through the Spirit, which he distributes to every wise and good soul. For somewhere the blessed David sings to God, and says "But the sons of "men will hope in the shelter of your wings. They will be "inebriated with the richness of your house, and you will give them to drink of the torrent "of your delight. For with you is the fountain of "life.

Worthy of such a venerable and abundant provision would be those who are genuine and have lived rightly, and have put nothing before the love for God; but he says that the one who has committed fornication will become both waterless and will indeed die of thirst. And this, I think, is what was said about her through the voice of other prophets; for one said, "Behold, the days "are coming, says the Lord, and I will send a famine upon the land; "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing "the word of the Lord; and they will run to and fro from east to west, "seeking the word of the Lord, and they shall not find it; and Jeremiah again, as from the person of God, "With pain and "scourge you shall be disciplined, O Jerusalem; lest my soul depart "from you, lest I make you a trackless land, which will not be inhabited. For to each of us, as I said, God sends into the mind words through the Spirit, which have the power to turn us to eternal life, or he often makes them drink through the voice of saints. He said, then, that the children must perish along with the mother who has committed fornication, and without pity. For what reason? Because they are children of fornication.

And we do not say, surely, that a child is subject to the transgressions of the mother, for that which is through the voice of Ezekiel will apply to us wherever it may be: "Fathers shall not die "for children, nor shall children die for fathers; each "shall die for his own sin. But it should rather be understood that even if the person of a fornicating mother is conceived as a type of the Synagogue, nonetheless they themselves would again be those from her. But by saying that they are children of fornication, he showed clearly that they have become guilty of the crimes of spiritual fornication; and this, having been impious from their very swaddling clothes and womb, as it were, and having never at any time touched the works of piety, and having virtue completely unpracticed, and not having honored the path pleasing to God. So also the psalmist says, "Sinners were estranged "from the womb, they went astray from the belly, they spoke lies; although every pious person, and one

nourished in the works of righteousness, is able to cry out clearly to God, "On you I was cast from the womb; from my mother's belly "you are my God. And just as sons of light and sons of day would rightly be understood as those who live their lives splendidly and becomingly as in light and day;

so also if some are called children of fornication, you will again understand those who live as in fornication and a most exceedingly strange life, whom he does not deem worthy to pity, Because their mother has committed fornication, she that bore them has brought shame. And she brought shame, clearly, on herself and on the children that sprang from her. For just as it is among boasts the righteous one for those tending to virtue; so every impious person is in shame and disgrace. For she said, I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water and my garments and my linens and my oil and all things that are due to me. He says her lovers are the unclean demons, concerning whom the manner of fornication might also be said to be practiced. For to follow their opinions, and to fulfill what seems good to them, this, I think, is to be licentious in sins, and to live shamefully, and to be filled with the utmost worthlessness; and all but to be in labor with every form of uncleanness. For just as those who are in labor with the divine fear have cried out to God, "Through fear of you, O Lord, we have conceived in the womb and have been in travail and have brought forth, we have brought forth the spirit of your salvation upon the earth;

so also those who have given their mind to the desires of demons immediately have it full of all impiety, those who depart from the divine laws and are practitioners of all worthlessness. Therefore, wicked and sinful lovers of those who have inclined to impiety are the apostate demons, to whom if anyone should choose to pay attention as to gods, he will be terribly impious. For he ascribes to them the grace even of what he might have, and often honors them with praises, and offers thank-offerings, having abandoned the one God by nature, the one who supplies the means of life, who clothes us with grace as with garments, and overshadows both mind and heart with help from above, who fattens as with oil, and nourishes with the spiritual bread for a glorious and unending life, who nourishes us with the life-giving water for spiritual well-being. But he who has inclined to impiety, just as, of course, also the Synagogue that has committed fornication, said that one must follow her own lovers, and to them attribute the gifts, and to consider that from them he has received what is for food and clothing. For this, I

think, is the meaning of For she said, I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water and my garments and my linens and my oil, and all things that are due to me.

But the wise and good, and those known to God and most intimate with him, would surely ascribe to him both the provision of heavenly goods, and the supply of earthly ones. For they will say, and very wisely, "Is there among the idols of the nations one who gives rain? And if the heaven will give its abundance, are you not the one? And we will wait for you, because you have made all these things. And they will cry out together with the divine David, "You visited the earth and watered it, you enriched it abundantly. Therefore, behold, I will hedge up her way with thorns, and I will build up her paths, and she shall not find her path; and she shall pursue her lovers and shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them and shall not find them. For since she has planned, he says, evil things against herself, and has left out none of the things that are by nature unjust; for she said one must choose to follow her own lovers, that is, to give the inclination of the mind to the unholy opinions of those who have deceived her, so as to fulfill only their things; and since, in addition to this, of the things gifted to her by me, she attributes the thank-offerings to the demons who have helped in nothing, for this reason I will show her thought to be vain, and I will oppose her completely.

For I will hedge up her way with thorns, and I will wall her path, so that she might neither follow her own lovers, nor indeed find useful those who deceived her, even if she should perchance choose to pursue them, that is, to press on zealously in the honors and worship toward them. And he says the thorns are the difficult things that have happened to Israel, I mean the wars, the captivities, the famine, the dangers, the wearing away in slavery. For once they were under the Medes and Persians, they did not approach Baal at their leisure, nor the golden calves; but there was in a way a necessity, that, being deprived of their most cherished freedom from above, and seeking the things at home, but being poor, and by the pressed by the greeds of those in power, they are no longer able to fulfill their usual obligations; but rather to lament, and to be intoxicated with incurable misfortunes, now condemning those who led them astray, as they had no part in enjoying any of the things in their vain hopes. For they were not helped at all, either by Baal defending them; for what could the voiceless wood have done? or by the heifers con-

triving some kind of help for them; for it was gold, "the works of men's hands," according to what is written. Therefore the roads are blocked up;

God not smoothing for the lovers of sin the path to wickedness, but usefully making it rough, and not permitting them to rush with ease towards what seems trivial; so that they might be unwillingly thwarted, and might turn to what is better, having learned from experience itself that for everyone to transgress is not without penalty. And she will say, I will go and return to my former husband, for it was better for me then than now. The discourse still preserves the manner appropriate to it; for it has been composed from beginning to end as about a harlot woman. For this reason, he says, that she will repent and will say, I will go to my former husband, for it was better for me then than now. Yet observe in this also the God of all chastising even in wrath, and helping in various ways, and by the inflictions of terrible things drawing back those who have gone astray, and transforming them for their benefit. For when, he says, she sees her own ways blocked up with thorns, then indeed she will change her mind, and what it was better to choose to do before the grievous things had invaded, she will seize, even if late, and after the experience;

for then she will love the things from God, and having disregarded the intervening transgressions as from a sober mind, she will at last turn to willing what was in the beginning, and will marvel at the things from God, and she will perceive, as if having sobered up from drunkenness, that they differ by incomparable differences. Therefore, to be chastised is not without benefit, even if it happens to be grievous for the moment. And knowing this the prophets say, "Chasten us, O Lord. And the divine Paul also writes, "If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? And he shows what is sweet and beneficial from chastening, saying thus, "Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. And she did not know that I gave her the grain and the wine and the oil, and multiplied silver for her; but she made silver and gold things for Baal. That she would not choose, he says, to still follow her own lovers, no one would doubt. For she will achieve this, and very easily, since her road is being blocked up, and her paths are being walled up, and she is prospering in absolutely no way.

But since, in addition to supposing that Baal is a god, she has also dedicated to him the thank-offerings for the things supplied to her by me, for this too I will devise what is fitting, so that she may learn who is the giver, and has authority over all things. For I have given the things that sustain life: grain and wine and oil and I have multiplied silver for her. But when it was necessary to give thanks for my bounties, these things have been made for the glory of Baal. which indeed is a clear proof of the utmost insensibility and ingratitude alike; and the matter is not unable to justly and strongly provoke God, even if he were thought to be the source and origin of all gentleness. It is therefore altogether terrible and not without punishment, to seek to attribute the bounty of God's gifts to those who destroy his glory, that is, to the unclean demons, which indeed some in the world do; and these are Greeks, and heretics. For the ones, though God gives wisdom and reason to man, grant the power of eloquence to the opinions of the demons; while the God-hated and unholy hordes of heretics by the discoveries of complex notions harm some, and subvert that of the more simple mind, "and they set snares to corrupt men," according to what is written. Therefore both have honored Baal; and they almost offer things concerning God as a splendid dedication to his glory, as if from intelligible wealth.

And this, I think, is what is very well understood spiritually, I gave her the grain and the wine and the oil, and I multiplied silver for her; but she made silver and gold things for Baal. Therefore, one must dedicate to God the things that are his; for it is fitting to adorn with gold the giver and provider of every good to us through the things we have from him, whether it be a splendid word, or a mind well-suited to be able to understand true mysteries. Therefore I will return and take away my grain in its season and my wine in its time, and I will take away my garments and my linen cloths so as not to cover her shame; and now I will uncover her uncleanness before her lovers, and no one shall deliver her out of my hand. Do you see how he threatened the removal of the things that are known to bring gladness, and this usefully. For just as the roughening of her way with thorns led her to choose to think better things, and prepared her, as it were, though unwillingly, to say, I will return to my former husband, for "it was better for me then than now; for she knew through experience what leads to benefit, and in what things it was better to be engaged;

so if I take what is mine, he says, then she will certainly seek the provider, she will cease from having to offer thank-offerings to demons, and from thinking that they are truly gods, able to save those who have come under them. And he says that he will take the grain and the wine and the linen cloths in their season, perhaps when the fruits fail at times, and the ripe produce is late for them; so that even the labors of farming are endured in vain. But if someone should choose to understand that the Jews will be deprived of grain and wine at times, having fallen from the mystical blessing, he will understand well. And he says linen cloths, meaning as it were the clothing and the help from above, under which one will be decent. But if he is carried outside it, he will no longer be beautiful, but will continue to be very unseemly and, as it were, naked in the world. Thus then you will understand the removal of the linen cloths, so that her shame might not be covered. And he promises to reveal her uncleanness, and before her lovers, in what sort of manner? We were just saying that having fallen into thorns, that is, into the evils of war, and calamities most capable of terrifying, she will neglect even the supposed gods, not being at leisure to offer them sacrifices, nor indeed being able to perform the customary rites for their glory;

but rather mocking them, as having no benefit from them, and somehow reproaching their utter powerlessness, "I will return," she says, "to my former husband, because it was better "for me then than now. When, therefore, he says, I strip her of my help, and she, having fallen into terrible things, neglects the honor and love for them, then she will appear unseemly even to them, having spurned them with a corrupt and faltering mind. For as far as it concerned what was pleasant and dear to them, she ought to be seen as more enduring, and not even in the most extreme calamities forgetting what seemed right to them. Therefore, as far as their will is concerned, Israel is unseemly even in their eyes, having chosen not to love to the end those whom he considered to be gods. And the blessed Elijah seems to me to say something like this: "How long will you limp "on both your hams? If the Lord is God, "go after him; but if Baal himself, go "after him; which he says elsewhere, "Either Baal, Baal, or to God, God. And that no one would deliver those who have once fallen under divine wrath, nor could anyone set upright one cast down by God, he has shown by saying, no one shall deliver her out of my hand. And I will turn away all her gladness, her feasts and her new moons and the her sabbaths and all her feasts.

For those who are altogether caught up in such harsh and inescapable evils, as to fall under a barbarian hand, and to serve enemies in the lot of the spear-won, how could they celebrate a feast? or what season of gladness could they have, who are weighed down by such bitter cares, and steeped in unbearable griefs? And yet, how is it not better to think this, that it would be more fitting for those brought into this state of misery, to cry out what is so well recited to the psalmist's lyre, "By the river of Babylon, there we sat down, and we wept when we remembered Zion. And having the celebration of feasts as something completely unsuitable, they nonetheless say, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? since the Babylonians, I suppose, did not permit them to perform their customary acts of worship, and the things dear to them at home and as was their custom. But perhaps someone will say this: If Israel had inclined to the worship of idols, how could they not also fall away from the feasts according to the law, both sabbaths and new moons? To this then we say, that they had indeed slipped from the love of God, and had worshipped Baal and the golden calves, but they did not entirely cast off the things given through Moses;

but rather they continued going on both feet and limping, according to the prophet's voice, so as to choose to worship neither Baal completely, nor yet the God of all purely. Therefore, he has fallen away from feasts and festive gatherings and seasons of gladness and sabbaths, being permitted neither to fulfill for God the things in the law, nor yet to celebrate for Baal the customary festivals. And in another way it would be true and very likely, that it is necessary for those who depart from God, and who have despised the love for him, to be gloomy, and to continue outside of all that knows how to rejoice; "For there is no joy for the wicked," says the Lord; for whom the worm has been kept for eternity; but for the gentle, and those having a pious and God-loving purpose, it would be fitting that they should rejoice over all good things; "For everlasting joy shall be upon their head," as it is written, "sorrow and pain and groaning have fled away; to whom also the divine Paul writes, saying, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, "rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to all men. For just as it follows that sinners must be punished, so also for those to be enriched with good things from above, whose purpose it would be to live splendidly. And I will destroy her vine and her fig trees, of which she said, 'These are my wages which my lovers have given me';

and I will make them a testimony, and the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky and the creeping things of the earth shall devour them. This, again, is another way of saying, "I will take away my "grain in its season, and my wine in its time. For since Israel, assigning the fruitful seasons to the powers and ambitions of demons, and acting most foolishly, offered thank-offerings to them, and not rather to God, for this reason he says that I will destroy and ruin the things by which she has been more wickedly deceived, saying that she has received them as wages from her own lovers. And the saying is cleverly crafted as if about a wanton woman, whereas in truth for Israel, the reward and payment for the honor and worship of idols was the abundance of ripe fruits and encountering a fruitful land. And that they thought that the participation in all other gladness was available to them for this reason alone, one might know very easily by encountering the words of Jeremiah. For Jerusalem was captured, and some who had escaped the height of the war went down to the land of the Egyptians, and with them the prophet, according to a divine oracle. There, at any rate, he advised them, saying that they should cease from the pollutions of idolatry, and choose to return to God.

Then a wretched and most foolish multitude of women again contradicted the prophet's words, and indeed said shamelessly, "The word which you spoke to us in the "name of the Lord, we will not listen to you, because we will surely "do every word that proceeds from our "mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out "libations to her, just as we and our fathers and "our kings and our rulers did in the cities of Judah "and outside Jerusalem; and we were filled with bread and became "prosperous, and we saw no evil. And when we stopped "burning incense to the queen of heaven, we all "were diminished, and perished by the sword and by anger. Do you understand then how he says he has obtained the necessities of life, and in addition to this prosperity, almost as a reward for having gone astray? Therefore, he says, "I will destroy what she said, 'These are my wages, which my lovers have given me,' and I will make them into a witness. For these things, having been taken away, will bear witness, as it were, against the wickedness of Israel, and will make their punishment more conspicuous, and will make the wrath manifest. And the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky and the creeping things of the earth will eat them. But this might be understood not just in one way; rather, what is signified will be taken in three ways.

For either he means that the things in the fields will be food for beasts, since there is no longer an inhabitant of the land, because very many people have been driven from their homes and cities and fled unwillingly to Babylon and Media, and as many others have been consumed by the war, so that the land is now inhabited only by the beasts and creeping things of the Samaritans, or again, that the Babylonians, like certain beasts, will feast upon the fruitfulness of the land, while the inhabitants of the land are held within the walled cities, not daring to go beyond the gates, so to speak, even though famine is destroying them. But if it seems good to someone to understand spiritually, one might also go by another path. For the instruction through the law that brings one to Christ should indeed be compared to a vineyard and a fig tree. For it acts as a tutor to this end, according to the saying of the blessed Paul. And the vine might be understood as a symbol of gladness, and the fig tree of sweetness. And how could anyone doubt that for a God-loving soul the law of God is truly sweet and knows how to give great joy? Therefore Israel has of necessity remained without a share in the good things from above and spiritual things;

but they have been given for participation to those who are like beasts and creeping things, I mean, those from the Gentiles, who before the advent of the Savior might have been supposed to differ little from beasts and venomous serpents, on account of the brutishness of their ways. However, they have not remained in these things, having chosen to follow Christ who says, "Learn from me, 'for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find 'rest for your souls.'" And I myself would add this to what has been said: that it is necessary for those who lead an accursed and God-hated life both to be deprived of every good thing and to be in the uttermost miseries. And I will punish her for the days of the Baals, in which she burned incense to them, and she put on her earrings and her necklaces and went after her lovers, but forgot me, says the Lord. He immediately brings forward again the cause of such a terrible, or rather, and exceedingly fitting, indignation against them. For since they have spent long periods of time in going astray, in equal extensions of time, he says, they will suffer the wrath. This, I think, is the meaning of 'I will punish her for the days of the Baals,' that is, of the idols. For, he says, the things from punishment and justice will by all means be equal in measure to the days of wandering in which she burned incense to Baal.

For she has not ceased beautifying herself and pleasing her own lovers in many ways. And the adornment for souls that have chosen to worship idols is to fulfill those things which seem good to the unclean demons. For just as we say that a human soul is admirable, in which is seen the quality of excelling in virtues; so also the sin-loving soul must be supposed to be exceedingly beautiful to the hordes of demons, having chosen to think and to do everything that is both pleasant and dear to them. It might be compared such a soul would be like a woman of no good character, or even is fadedly gilded; and she almost bewitches the heart of her lovers with ornaments for the ears and neck. Therefore, every form of impurity makes the wicked respectable. That it is both customary and necessary for those whose aim is to look to those things to slip away from the very memory of God, he has shown by saying, *"but she has forgotten me, says the Lord."* For since she became sick with clinging, he says, to demons, or rather with completely departing from the desire and zeal for the good, she also slipped from the very memory of God; and this is a clear proof of complete impiety. Therefore, behold, I will cause her to wander and I will set her in a desert. For since, he says, she has gone astray in many ways, I have sought the penalties of her apostasy quite rightly;

"for I have taken vengeance on her for the days of the Baals," and I have inflicted a wrath equal to her transgressions; for this reason, I will hereafter turn to mercy, and I will transport her to what is better, and to being able to fulfill the things by which she might become beloved of God. What then, he says, will be the manner of healing? Behold, I will cause her to wander, not from what is necessary and useful for life to what is not so, but from the more shameful things and those by nature harmful to that which results in benefit. For just as a soul wanders from virtue to depravity, in the same way, I think, going backward as it were from the ways of depravity, it would seem almost to have wandered, having been turned aside from its own purpose, and no longer traversing the path set before it. And just as her ways were usefully blocked with thorns, that she might not overtake her lovers, so also now, running as it were headlong into ruin and destruction, by the mercy of God she seems to be made to wander, being changed towards the desire of virtue, and receiving the light of the true knowledge of God into her mind and heart, and no longer finding, as I said, her former path. But it must be

known that the phrase "I will cause her to wander" is spoken differently by the other interpreters; however, it ends up with one and the same meaning.

For some have rendered it, "That behold, I will lead her away; others, "That I will deceive her," signifying, as I said, in another way this very thing, I mean "I will cause her to wander," understood beneficially. And being an accessible and, as it were, a well-watered land for the hordes of demons, he promises to set her as a desert, teaching that he will render her hard and untrodden and waterless to their wills, so that they, finding no longer any place of rest, both refuse and depart. So also our Lord Jesus Christ says that the unclean spirit that has gone out of a man passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and does not find it. For just as a waterless place is not habitable for men, so also to unclean spirits, the soul beloved of God and holy might reasonably be thought a wicked and hateful and, as it were, an impassable and waterless land, not tolerating to think or do the things that are pleasing to them. Therefore, the wandering spoken of here is a manner of assistance, and indeed also the being set as a desert land, according to the arguments just stated by us. And I will speak to her heart, and I will give her her possessions from there.

In these words, the Word clearly promises us salvation through Christ, and mentions the times of His sojourn, in which we say was fulfilled, "In those days, and in that time, I will put my laws into their mind, and on their hearts I will write them. For so also the most wise Paul writes to those who had been enriched with such a truly brilliant and noteworthy grace, saying, "You are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by all men, showing that you are a letter of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God. For we who have believed have been taught by God; and indeed the divine John has addressed, saying "And you have an anointing "from the Holy One, and you have no need that anyone "should teach you; but as his Spirit teaches you about "all things. Therefore, having received the Spirit, and henceforth having Christ himself dwelling within our hearts, the guide of things necessary, we are at once enriched with the form of every virtue, and the abundant and inalienable possession of spiritual gifts. And indeed, Paul confirms us in this, writing: "That which eye has not seen, "and ear has not heard, and has not entered into the heart of man, "what God has prepared for those who love him. Therefore he promises to speak to her heart;

for the Synagogue of the Jews will be called to knowledge, receiving the divine laws engraved on her mind through the Spirit, just as the church from the Gentiles did; and her possessions will be from there, instead of from here, that is, of this thing. For indeed from God speaking in us and sounding through the Spirit whatsoever things are necessary for life and the knowledge of God conceived in Christ, through whom and in whom we have seen the Father, we have been enriched, as I said, with the unfading hope, the glory, the boasts of adoption, the grace, and reigning together with Christ himself; these are the possessions of the saints; this is the heavenly wealth. For they endure thinking nothing of earthly things; but they have hated the world and the things in it. And the valley of Achor to open her understanding. "I will give" follows the word again. For "I will give," he says, "her possessions from there; and likewise I will give the valley of Achor to open her understanding. And what it wishes to signify is this: we who have believed, being eager to make what happened to the ancients a certain pattern of things to be done, we on the one hand avoid offending God as a cause of destruction; and on the other hand we rather seek and have made it our care to accomplish what is pleasing to him. For the most wise Paul also urges us to this, saying thus:

"Now these things "happened to them as a type; and they were written for our instruction, "upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore, it is a way of instruction into virtue, to think it necessary to observe the things that happened to the ancients. That, therefore, the disobedient and unruly, and those who despise the divine commandments, will fall into a terrible and inescapable judgment, when Christ judges, could be shown, and very easily, as in the types, the things done concerning Achar at that time, who, having disregarded the divine command and stolen from the devoted thing, was punished with his whole household, Joshua the son of Nun having inflicted the ultimate penalty on him, who fulfills the image of Christ. For he was general after Moses, and he himself brought the sons of Israel across the Jordan, and he himself gave them the land of promise as an inheritance. The things written about Achar are as follows. For when he was caught having stolen, and confessed the sin, "And Joshua," it says, "took "Achar the son of Zarah and brought him to the valley "of Achor, and his sons and his daughters and "his calves and his donkeys and his sheep "and his tent and all his belongings, "and all the people with him, and they brought them up "to

Emekachor. And Joshua said to Achar, 'Why have you "destroyed us? May the Lord destroy you, even as today.

"And all Israel stoned him with stones, and they raised "over him a great heap of stones. Achor, then, is interpreted as troubling; and with the addition of "Emek," it is again understood as valley of troubling; there the sons of Israel killed Achar as one hated by God and a lover of wealth, adding to him also all his things; for it is written that "The wicked "shall be utterly destroyed from the earth. Thus it will also be in the last times of the age, when Christ comes down to us from above and from heaven, to render to each according to his works. For those who have chosen to disobey the divine commandments, and have loved the things in the world more, having brought Hades down as into a deep ravine, he will miserably destroy the wicked. Therefore, "I will give," he says, "the valley Achor or Emekachor, to open her understanding. For it will be, he says, one of the most useful things for her to become sober and to finally open the eye of her mind from its ancient hardening, the things done from time to time in the valley of Emekachor; he called the place the valley of perversion, for there not a few of those from Israel fell, when those from Gai pursued them, and a great perversion happened to occur, when Jesus thought that Israel had slipped away from God's care and help.

The things done, therefore, he says, in the ravine of perversion against the one who dared to transgress the divine commandment will open her understanding so that she may know clearly what sort of end will result for those who wish to despise the undertaking. But observe how the valley, Achor, is not given to open her understanding until he has spoken to her heart. For the peoples of the Jews would not understand the divine commandments, nor would they perceive in types the mystery of Christ, unless indeed, like us who have already believed, they should be enriched with the participation of the Holy Spirit, and be shown to have partaken of the illumination from above. And the blessed Paul writing about those of the blood of Israel will convince us of this: "For to this very day the same veil remains at the "reading of the old covenant, not being unveiled, "because it is taken away in Christ. But to this day, "whenever Moses is read, a veil lies upon their "heart. But whenever one turns to the Lord, "the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, "and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. First, therefore, he promises to speak to her heart, inscribing on them the divine

laws and the instruction from above of the Holy Spirit; then thus she will understand also the things done typically and historically in the valley of Emekachor, which are not unable to open her understanding and finally deliver her from her ancient hardening.

"For a hardening "in part has happened to Israel," as the wise Paul also writes. And she will be humbled there according to the days of her infancy and according to the days of her coming up out of the land of Egypt. When I speak to her mind and heart, he says, and give the valley of Achor to open her understanding, there, that is, at that time, she will be humbled, not being subjected to or sinking under any of the things that are accustomed to cause pain, but rather finally abandoning her disobedient and stubborn manner, which is liable to the charges of arrogance; for the disobedient one is arrogant, and as it were steep and unbridled, and has practiced holding in no account the reverence for fulfilling the law; but the one who is inclined toward obedience is very humble, and as it were approachable, and greatly beloved by God. And indeed, he said somewhere through one of the holy prophets, "And upon whom shall I look but upon "the humble and quiet one, who trembles at my words? When, therefore, I speak, he says, to her heart, then indeed, then she herself will be humbled, just as in the beginning, when Moses was calling, and the merciful God had commanded them to depart from the land of the Egyptians, they were very eager to do this, and fled from the land of their oppressors.

And when he was establishing the laws in Horeb, having gathered with Moses on Mount Sinai, they promised, saying, "All that the Lord our God has said to us, we will do "and we will hear. Therefore she will be humble and obedient, just as in the beginning, when having received her birth into the knowledge of God through the law, she gladly accepted what was pleasing to God. The days of infancy, therefore, he says, is the rebirth into the knowledge of God through the law; wherefore he also said, "Israel is my firstborn son. And it shall be in that day, says the Lord, she shall call me, My husband, and she shall no longer call me Baalim. And I will remove the names of the Baalim from her mouth, and their names shall no longer be remembered. Day, therefore, in these things, the one of the he calls the time of the visitation of our Savior. For the time of the Incarnation of the Only-Begotten will be called a day, properly and truly, during which the mist in the world is dispelled, and the darkness has vanished; and brilliant rays, as it were, rise up in

the mind for those who have believed, and the sun of righteousness has shone, sending the light of true knowledge of God to those who know how to open the eye of their understanding. At that time, therefore, he says, having been called to the knowledge of the God who truly is, she will cease from that ancient and hateful levity;

and she will no longer be easily carried away to apostasy. From what source? Rather, having stepped correctly and soundly, she will have a mind unshakable in piety, so as not even, so to speak, to bring the names of the idols into use in speech. For she will call me, he says, My husband, and will no longer call me Baalim, that is, she will cease from being wanton, and she will refuse to fornicate any longer, but will greatly value being legitimate, and will confess the relationship, that is, clearly, the spiritual one. And she will in no way call upon the Baalim, thinking that things made of stone are gods, and things skillfully forged by certain people into a human form. Therefore, he says, she will call me My husband. For like a prudent and most gentle woman she will make her turning to me, and she will henceforth love no other, and will no longer call upon the Baalim. And in another way, if it seems so to anyone, what was said may be understood. For Baalim is admittedly signified by the idols. But it was a custom for Hebrew women to call their own husbands by the names of the falsely-named gods, and this was an extraordinary way of honoring them. And they say that Ninus the Babylonian began such a practice, who renamed his own father Belus, after the idol among them, I mean Bel.

That she will cease, therefore, even from such a shameful custom, he has indicated by saying, She will call me My husband, and will no longer call me Baalim. For if she should choose, he says, to name me as husband, she will by all means say, My husband, and will no longer call me with the names of idols, honoring me. For this reason, he says, I will also take away the names of the Baalim from her mouth, and their names shall be remembered no more. And I will make a covenant for them in that day with the beasts of the field and with the birds of the air and with the creeping things of the earth; and I will break the bow and the sword and the war from the earth. In the passages already read before, he said, "And I will destroy "her vine and her fig trees, of which she said, These are my wages "that my lovers have given me; and he added to these that "the beasts of the field and the "birds of the air and the creeping things of the earth will devour them. And interpreting the

saying, we said that beasts and birds and creeping things were obliquely indicated as the enemies, who were plundering the land of the Jews, Persians and Medes and Babylonians, and the motley crowd of other enemies, who would be thought to differ little from wild beasts, on account of their bloodthirsty manner, and indeed birds on account of the swiftness of their running;

and creeping things, because they are terrible and exceedingly wicked and sharp in evil. These men, when Israel was shut up in the cities of Samaria, devoured everything in the fields, leaving nothing of the outlying places unworked. But when, he says, I cast out the names of their idols from the land, then I will also make a covenant of peace for them with every cruel and barbarian race. For the things from enemies will then be inactive, and they will remain inexperienced of war and terrors. For I will break the bow and the sword, which indeed we will find has been brought to a conclusion historically. For when the most illustrious generals of the Romans obtained rule over all, and made the world under heaven subject to their hand, with God providentially assigning glory to them, the Persians were concerned only for their own rule, and the incursions of the other barbarians against lands and cities ceased. and he remembers clearly of such a matter the blessed Isaiah says "And they shall beat their swords "into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: and nation shall not "lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn "war any more. For as though already under one yoke, they turned rather to beneficial industry and refashioned the instruments of war into things useful for agriculture. There will be peace, therefore, he says, and the terrible fears of old will cease, as God calms them, and gladdens those who love him with the good things that come from peace.

But I think it will be necessary to add that as well. For formerly when we continued in error, and were called children of wrath, just as certain evil beasts and flesh-eating birds and indeed the most grievous dragons, the evil and opposing powers, were destroying us. But when in Christ we came to know God by nature, and through faith washed away the accusations of the ancient deceit, then we were saved, and received authority "to tread on serpents "and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy," then we also stepped upon the asp and the basilisk, and we have trodden upon the lion and the dragon, with Christ defending us, and with unconquerable power fortifying his own, and sending his own peace into our mind. "For my peace," he

says, "I give to you; my peace I leave with you. And Paul also writes, "And the peace of Christ, which surpasses all understanding, "will guard your hearts and your minds. And I will make you dwell in hope, and I will betroth you to myself forever. Not only, he says, will I deliver from the terrors of the enemy, but I will add to this also that the remainder of hope for good things be in a good state, so as to have a secure and established and unshakable cheerfulness. For I will betroth you to myself, and this forever. And what is this?

For in a way he was betrothed to ancient Israel, that is, the Synagogue of the Jews, and called it to a relationship, I mean through the law, with Moses ministering and angels mediating. But the manner of the betrothal was not perpetual, nor indeed forever, far from it; for the types were not going to prevail forever, nor the things "imposed until the time of reformation; but at the time of reformation, that is, of the coming of our Savior, another manner of betrothal has been revealed, perpetual and unshakable, and much more splendid than the first, and of the shadow in better things. For the God of all bestowed as a bridal gift to the bride the putting away of carnal slavery, and through shadow and types called her to spiritual cleansing. However, he set a time for the betrothal; for the first was not blameless, according to the voice of Paul, nor was it ageless and far from abolition. For this reason also a place was sought for a second, that is, for the new, I mean the gift and grace through Christ, bringing us not a temporary, nor a carnal freedom. For it enrolls among the children of God, and lavishes "the pledge of the Spirit," and establishes perpetual laws. And indeed the divine David somewhere said to him, "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your word is truth;

openly, I think, declaring that neither do the things in the law remain forever, since the shadow will be transformed into truth, nor indeed can one behold the beauty of the truth in the letters of the law; for, as I said, the law was a shadow and a type. Therefore he betroths her, having set aside the first and original marriage. For the law is not able to unite to God perfectly and purely; but we approach him through the Son, and through his ordinances, that is, those of the gospel, which also have a spiritual union or connection; for we are united to God in the Spirit, and we are enriched with the participation of his divine nature. But it is likely that the phrase "I will betroth you to myself" elegantly suggests something else to us; for you will understand it thus again. For either he says "to myself" instead of "through myself," not, as

in the past, with angels mediating, nor indeed with any minister being employed for this, according to the of the in the manner of Moses. "For not an "ambassador, not an angel, according to what is written, but the Lord himself," the Word from God the Father who became man according to us, presented the church to himself, and "created the two "peoples into one new man, making peace, and "reconciling them both in one spirit to "the Father," according to the voice of the blessed Paul. Or, if you wish, you may understand what was said in another way.

For, as I said, he once betrothed the Synagogue of the Jews in Egypt; but in a certain way to another rather than to himself, I mean to the divine Moses, to whom he said somewhere, "Go, go down quickly from here; for your people, "whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, have transgressed. Do you hear how he has assigned to Moses the betrothed, that is, the people, not yet deeming them worthy of intimacy with himself; for the law, that is, Moses, as I said, was not sufficient to join them purely and completely to God; for it was truly reserved as the best and most God-fitting of achievements for the mediator between God and men, that is, Christ, through whom and in whom we are united to God. For "he is our peace," according to the scriptures, who removed the sin lying in between, and joined us, clean and washed and sanctified in the spirit, to himself, and through himself to God the Father. And I will betroth you to myself in righteousness and in judgment and in mercy and in compassion, and I will betroth you to myself in faith, and you shall know the Lord. He explains clearly what the manner of the union would be, and through what things the mystery of the economy would proceed. For it will be, he says, in righteousness and in judgment, and moreover also in mercy and in compassion.

What, then, is righteousness, and what is judgment, and indeed also mercy, it is necessary, as it seems, to say. Therefore we wretches were taken advantage of, with satan snatching us like a wild beast, and carrying us off into error, and casting us, as he pleased, into the pits of sin, as we were unable to defend ourselves at all. For the beast is truly most difficult and very violent and a murderer of men. And since human affairs were brought down to this misery, the blessed prophets made frequent prayers to him who is able to help, and fashioning for themselves, as it were, the common mask of humanity, they called upon the Son to come from heaven as a helper and an assistant. For example, the divine David said, "Arise, "O God, judge the earth;

and again, "O God, in your "name save me, and in your power you will judge "me. God therefore judged in righteousness, and saved the wronged, but drove away the blood-guilty and wicked satan, and repelled his advantage over us, and brought down the arrogant and hard to encounter rule of demons. And he himself clarified this mystery for us through himself, saying, when he was about to endure the cross for the life of all, "Now is the judgment of this world, now the ruler "of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from "the earth, will draw all people to myself.

And we certainly do not say that he said that the judgment of this world would happen by him at the time of his sojourn. For as he himself said again, "God did not send the Son into the world to judge "the world, but that the world might be saved through him. But he says that judgment is, as it were, the right and blameless proceeding. For, as I said, he has judged rightly and in a God-fitting manner for both us and him. And he has saved us, by drawing us to himself; but he has cast out from his tyranny over us the one who took advantage of us and destroyed us in various ways. We have been saved, then, by God having mercy on us and pitying us. For we have been justified, "not by works of "righteousness which we have done, but according to his great "mercy," as it is written; and we have been called to spiritual intimacy through faith; and being so called, we have known the God who is God by nature. For this reason, he says, and I will betroth you to myself in faith, and you shall know the Lord. Therefore faith has entered beforehand, And thus we have been enriched also in the knowing of Christ. And this, I think, is what was said to some: "For if you do not believe, you will not understand.

And that brilliantly understanding the mystery of Christ provides participation in eternal life for those worthy to choose it, the Son Himself will confirm, saying to the Father and God in heaven, "And this is "eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, "and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. And it will be in that day, says the Lord, I will answer the heaven, and the heaven will answer the earth, and the earth will answer the grain and the wine and the oil, and they will answer Jezreel. So then, in these things he again calls "day" the time fitting for the calling; for this is the custom of the divinely inspired scripture. Therefore, that Israel itself, at the proper times, will be in participation and abundance of every good thing, and of the gifts from above and from God, made glorious by faith in Christ, he indicates enigmatically. For he says there will be an abundance of rains,

by His assent; for this, I think, is "I will answer the heaven"; and indeed also on the earth below, that the most useful and necessary fruits will be given forth for us. For without God and the will from above, neither would the heaven itself ever rain upon those on the earth, nor would the earth bring forth its own fruit at the proper times. And knowing this, the prophet Jeremiah entreated, saying, "Is there among the idols "of the nations one who brings rain? And will the heaven give its "abundance?

Are you not the God? And we will wait for you, for you "have made all these things. For with the Creator assenting, as I said, and stretching out His hand to those on the earth, the heaven will be the giver of rain, and the earth the mother and nurse of necessary fruits. Therefore, he says, "I will answer the heaven," instead of, I will assent to send down rains upon those on the earth; and when this has happened, it too will answer the grain and the wine and the oil, that is, it will give forth abundant fruit to its inhabitants, with nothing lacking of what is necessary and life-giving. But these things historically; but from the corporeal things, it is necessary to pass over to the spiritual, as from a most clear image. For as long as Israel was still unruly and disobedient and fighting against God, the vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth, "the "beloved new plant," God commanded the clouds not to rain upon it. And by clouds we must understand the holy and rational powers, those from above and from the heavens, through which the word of comfort would come to us, clearly from God. For they are ministering spirits, according to the voice of the blessed Paul, running up and down, and "sent forth for service, for the sake of those "who are to inherit salvation.

But since the time of judgment has passed, the one who was formerly a lord-killer has been saved through faith, was then received in righteousness and in judgment and in mercy and compassions, God, who richly distributes all things to all, sent down to him the blessings from above. For He commanded the clouds to send down the rain, I mean the comfort for the mind and heart. Except that the very nature of angels has nothing of its own, but is rich in all things from God, He taught by saying, "I will answer the heaven," that is, I will make the heaven full of things from me, that is, those who are in heaven, clearly the rational and holy powers, so that they too may be able to comfort those who have received mercy, and then certainly the earth will answer the grain and the wine and the oil; instead of, those on the earth will bear the fruit of hope for life and gladness and cheerfulness. And grain is a

type of life, wine of gladness, and oil of cheerfulness and well-being; for indeed there is in those who have believed a good hope, both firm and established. And one departs from wickedness, and longs for every good thing, and bears his neck under the yokes of the Savior, being nourished by a good and indubitable and truly certain hope of the life to come, and that he may rejoice mixed with the other saints, and have a most cheerful heart.

he said For somewhere concerning the saints the prophet Isaiah says that "And "everlasting joy shall be upon their head; for upon their head "shall be praise and exultation, and joy shall overtake "them, pain and grief and groaning have fled away. Therefore, in hope of life and cheerfulness, and indeed of joy, the earth will certainly obey the consolations from above, that is, the spiritual rains; that is, the people who inhabit the earth. But that the fruit of the life of the saints will also be for the glory of Christ; "For one died for all, that those who live "might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died "and was raised; he has made clear by saying, and these things will hearken to Jezreel; for to him, as I said, we shall bear fruit, owing our own life to him. And it has been said many times, that Jezreel is interpreted as "seed of God," and this is the Son, as begotten of God the Father by nature and ineffably, even if the matter is spoken of in a bodily way. And I will sow her for myself on the earth, and I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy, and I will say to that which was not my people, 'You are my people,' and he shall say, 'You are the Lord my God.' The "for myself" you will again understand in two ways. For I will make, he says, as it were, both flourishing and fruitful;

clearly the Synagogue of the Jews, no longer fulfilling the law against my will, nor indeed choosing to cling tightly to the types; but choosing to accomplish that which is especially dear and pleasing to God, and is considered to be right. Therefore, I will sow for myself; for she will receive my seed "that we might understand the evangelical decrees, and no longer that through Moses, as also in the beginning; for of old she was cultivated by the types. Or rather, the "for myself" you may also understand in another way. For I myself will be the worker, he says, for her care, and as a certain rich and well-ploughed land, not through another but by myself will I sow. For God the Father has spoken to us in the Son; although in former times He spoke through the holy prophets "in many portions and in many ways. And to the crops in a field the Savior himself also likens the countless multitude of those

who have believed. And so He said to the holy apostles, "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then "comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your "eyes, and see the fields, that they are white "for harvest already; and he who reaps is receiving wages, and "gathering fruit for eternal life; and again in other places; "The "harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the "Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his "harvest.

Therefore, when our Savior Jesus Christ sent down for us the spiritual rain, we became a "delightful land," according to the voice of the prophet. For he sowed us for himself, and Israel has been called "God's field. For he will have mercy on her who had not received mercy, and he will call him who was once Not-a-people, a people. And he himself, ceasing from the ancient error, will recognize the true God, and will say, 'You are my God,' although formerly crying out from immeasurable madness, "We know that God has spoken to Moses; "but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from. Therefore, not knowing the Son, they did not know the Father either; and the Savior himself will testify, saying, "If you knew me, you would "have known my Father also. But since they have been called to knowledge, and have confessed the Son, they have therefore seen the Father through him and in him. For it is true, that as the wise John says, "He who denies the Son, does not have the Father "either; but he who confesses the Son, confesses the Father "also. And the Lord said to me, Go yet and love a woman who loves evil things and is an adulteress, just as God loves the sons of Israel, and they look to other gods and love raisin-cakes. Fitting. For I think it necessary to investigate such things and to examine them in detail.

For after the first one, the lewd and driven one, another woman is introduced to the prophet, being liable to the charges of adultery. And what is the reason? For the multitude of the Jews, the one before the coming of our Savior, since indeed also more unguardedly and very readily going towards error, and worshipping the golden heifers, and bowing down and sacrificing to Baal, that is, to Baal-peor, might be compared to a harlot, and very fittingly, as if exposed to every wicked and unclean spirit, wanting to fulfill its own pleasures; for they also accepted the objects of worship of the neighboring and surrounding nations, according to what seemed good to each, impiously and without examination. But she, for readily going towards apostasy, was justly punished, being sent into captivity and falling under the feet of her enemies; yet God made it clear to the prophet, that in the time of the day of

Jezreel, which is truly great, they will come up out of the land, that is, they will flee from the country of the foreigners. And this was to suggest again in a riddling way, that they will cease to be strangers and sojourners, or rather, captives of the spear, and dwelling in a foreign land not freely. For the Savior proclaimed "release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind," according to the prophet's voice.

And that they will also be received through faith in mercy and compassion, and will be called the people of God, and indeed also 'having obtained mercy,' he has clearly signified. For after the advent of the Savior, and the passion on the cross, and the resurrection from the dead, the remnant has been saved; for no small number of those from Israel have believed; but again the disobedient multitude has remained, which must be compared to an adulteress, because of not choosing the bridegroom from heaven, and rejecting the one who courted her in faith, but giving up her mind as to certain adulterers, to the scribes and Pharisees. "For they were teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. Just as, therefore, the prophet was with the harlot, as a type of God enduring the fornication of Israel, and punishing moderately for their conversion, and bringing them back to knowledge; in the same way, I think, through the preceding things the mystery is elegantly fashioned for us again. For as a type of God the prophet takes the adulteress who loves wicked things; and he cherishes her, as it were, fattening her well with promises and good hopes, not allowing her to fall into despair. For that the whole mystery is in these things, God showed by speaking thus to the prophet: Love the adulteress who loves wicked things, just as God loves the sons of Israel; and they look to other gods, and love cakes with raisins.

For although, he says, they choose to disobey, and assign their love to falsely-named gods, and wish to fulfill for them things that are pleasing, from his innate goodness God loves them, "Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. And somehow the Word of God gives us to understand, that even at the time of his advent there were perhaps many among the Jews still wavering, and neither adhering purely to the commandments through Moses, nor indeed being entirely free from the filth of error, but rather also looking to other gods, to whom they also brought cakes with raisins, perhaps sacrificial cakes, and honey-cakes. For they offered such cakes as a sacrifice to demons, and experience is a witness. So I bought her for myself for fifteen pieces of silver, and a homer of barley,

and a skin of wine. And I said to her, "You will stay with me for many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you be for another man, so I will also be for you. The prophet therefore hires the woman, and makes her sit at home, and commands her to abstain from her customary baseness, and to cease from the pollutions of adultery;

and he promises, if she chooses to be chaste and is chosen to look to him alone, that he himself also will be for her, that is, he will make her his own in marriage, and will be one with her, "For the two," he says, "shall become one flesh. And what is the riddle? The multitude of the Jews, the disobedient and deicidal, the adulterous and profane, after Christ ascended into the heavens, God makes to sit, without a husband, indeed; unless she should still commit fornication, that is, unless would walk again towards the necessity of choosing to honor foreign gods, he promises to join to himself in due time, the multitude of the Gentiles having evidently been judged beforehand. For those from Israel have been placed at the back, that is, as a following and behind and in the last things. But observe how no marital union at all took place for the prophet with the adulterous and wicked woman, but a promise of the matter after many days, if she would not again belong to another man, that is, if she would abstain from the crimes and defilements of spiritual fornication. For, as I said, in due time the bridegroom from heaven will receive the adulterous multitude, not having worshipped idols. For indeed after the Savior's cross, Israel is attached only to the laws through Moses, very unsoundly, however, and negligently, yet it has not turned aside to choose to honor the false worship of demons.

But what is the way of life for the one who has committed adultery and is awaiting in due time the fellowship of the prophet? or what were her wages? fifteen [shekels] of silver, he says, and a homer of barley and a nebel of wine. For Israel has continued through the time between its last calling, being fed with a worthless word, and paying attention to mythical and truly old-womanish teachings of their own teachers; and its life has become beast-like, and its mind in drunkenness and darkness. And the silver would be a very clear type of a teaching word, according to what was said to them through the voice of Isaiah, "Your silver is worthless," and according to the voice of the Savior justly rebuking the wicked and lazy servant and saying, "You ought to have deposited my silver with the bankers. Therefore you will take the silver to mean the word of the teachers. But if someone should choose to

refer it also to the law itself through Moses, he will say it is fifteen, either because the law is at once both perfect and imperfect; and perfect, if it is understood spiritually; for it speaks to us the mystery of Christ; but imperfect, on the other hand, if the mind of those being instructed goes only as far as the letter. for in a way the denseness of the history is in a half-knowledge.

But the number ten is a symbol of perfection, being all-perfect, according to, "Be over ten cities," and, "To whom he gave ten talents; but of that which is not so, five would be understood; for, as I said, it is half of ten. Or also in another way you will approach the things that have been said. The number fifteen is comprehensive of the seven, and indeed also of the eight. and in a way it is always signified in the God-inspired scripture, through the seven, the whole time of the law up to the holy prophets, because of the sabbath-rest on the seventh day, and through the eight, again, that of the new covenant, according to which is the resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, which happened on the eighth day. And I think this is what is shown by the enigmatic saying, "Give a portion to the seven, and also to the eight," that is, let them have a place with you, both the law and the prophets after it, honoring the sabbath-rest on the seventh day; and let the eight also have a place, that is, the Apostles and Evangelists after the resurrection day of the Savior. and with this agrees what is indirectly indicated through the voice of a prophet, "And there will be raised up against him seven shepherds, and eight bites of men. For when our Savior Christ shone upon us, both the legal and prophetic proclamations and the apostolic instruction rose up in a way against Satan who had paralyzed us.

For indeed through these things he was in a way bitten down and has been plundered. and according to the voice of the Savior his goods were plundered, as those who were once deceived have departed from slavery under him, and have come to know the one who is by nature and truly God and Lord of all. Therefore "seven shepherds and eight bites of men" rose up against him, that is, those before the advent, and those after the eighth day, through legal and new writings calling the deceived to salvation. So Israel has continued, as I said, with the worthless voices of its own teachers, that is with the bare being nourished by the letter of the law, although it also contains the things of the eighth day, that is, the mysteries of Christ. But that his life is also like a beast's, and has inclined only to fleshly things, the barley being given to the adulteress for food would indicate very well. For the food

is fit for beasts, and the wine would be a sign of drunkenness. And it was said to them, "Hearing you will hear, and you will not understand; and seeing you will see, and you will not perceive. These are the afflictions of the drunk, and the crimes of the debauched, to neither see while seeing, nor be able to understand anything while hearing; but to have a mind that is, as it were, thickened, and filled with hardness.

For the sons of Israel shall sit for many days, with no king and no ruler, with no sacrifice and no altar, nor priesthood nor manifestations. And after these things the sons of Israel will return and will seek the Lord their God and David their king, and they will be amazed at the Lord and at his good things in the last of days. Clear then and having it without dispute, as at least in these things, is the declaration that the adulteress was taken, and to remain at home for many days, until the prophet should be with her; for it is written thus. And what was done was a prefiguration of what was to happen in due time to the adulterous Synagogue of the Jews. For since our Lord Jesus Christ willingly endured the cross for the salvation of all, when those from Israel had acted insolently toward him, then indeed, when their land was ravaged, they were scattered as if to every wind; and to this day they are inactive regarding the law, since the temple in Jerusalem was burned, and the altar taken away, and sacrifice abolished, and the priesthood idle, and the manifestations not seen. For with no high priest sacredly attired according to the law, how was it still possible to see the manifestations? And what might the manifestations be considered? Perhaps the eager learner knows, but it is not unprofitable to recall it briefly.

When the God of all commanded the things for the adornment of the high priest to be made, then he said to the sacred Moses: "And you shall make a breastplate of judgment, a work of a weaver, a span in length, and a span in width; it shall be a square. Then he commanded twelve stones, named for the tribes, to be skillfully and artfully woven into the work; and indeed two others among the rest, whose names were the manifestation and the truth. Then this breastplate of judgment hung from the ephod by golden chains; and it was laid upon the breast of the high priest, and the manifestation and the truth were a type of Emmanuel. For all the things that he heard from the Father, he announced to us. and he has manifested the will of the one who begot him; and he has made clear the way of salvation. That he is also the truth, how could anyone doubt, when he himself says clearly, "I am

the truth? For this reason it also hung upon the very heart of the high priest, the type all but shouting and openly crying out that the priestly race will have the Savior and Redeemer of all, the truth and the manifestation, in mind and heart. that is, that there is every necessity for the ministers to always be mindful of Christ, and to bear him dwelling within through the Spirit; and his house is a pure mind, and a cleansed heart.

So then, he says, the sons of Israel will sit for many days with no king and no ruler, that is, without a king and without a governor. For neither will those from the tribe of Judah reign as kings, nor indeed will the rulers who preside according to the law, that is, the priests. But neither, he says, will there be an altar or a sacrifice, a priesthood and manifestations. Yet not in these things forever, nor will Israel be utterly sent away; for it will be called in due time, and it will return through faith, and it will know the God of all, and with him David, that is, Christ according to the flesh from the seed of David, the king and Lord of all. Then indeed they will be astonished at the greatness of the honor, and the immeasurable grace of his gentleness. they will partake for of the hope prepared for the saints, and mixed with the flocks of the faithful, they will be pastured in a good pasture and in a rich place. For the time of this so brilliant and admirable grace is for them the last and in the last times, and in Christ, through whom and with whom to God the Father be glory with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

Book 3

Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel, for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God upon the earth. Cursing and lying and murder and theft and adultery are poured out upon the land, and blood touches blood. It is necessary for us, wanting to make clear the meaning of what lies before us, almost to take up again what was in the beginning, and as it were to ruminate on the whole scope of the prophecy. Therefore, as far as possible, and bringing it together in brief, I say this. For it was "the beginning of the word of the Lord in Hosea. But in interpreting such things, we rightly said that the words came from God to the blessed prophet Hosea, as though initiating him and foretelling what was to come through types and words. For this reason Gomer was taken in the beginning, and she bore both Not-my-people, and She-who-has-not-obtained-mercy. Then after her a second

adulterous and wicked woman was taken, and on each of these things the prophet, as I said, was instructed subtly and accurately.

As he had therefore gathered within himself a sufficient power of the mystery, he begins at last to proclaim to those of the blood of Israel the things that are to come, and to make plain the reason for the disaster that would all but befall them, and to make very clear the things at which God was grieved, so that those being punished might know that they justly suffered whatever should happen to them. For since they were about to be captured by enemies, and to be set forth as a laughing-stock to those who had the highest opinion of them, and who thought Israel to be the most difficult of all other nations to conquer, lest they should think in themselves that the hand which defends and saves had grown weak, but should rather repent, and choose to return to better things, understanding that they had foolishly offended the one who knows how to save, for this reason they had also fallen under divine wrath, he necessarily proclaims their charges to them even before the expected events, and says Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel, for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. But God judges men, rebuking, not being judged, and setting forth the bare charges to those who have acted impiously against him, according to that which is sung somewhere in the psalms:

"I will reprove you, "and set before your face" your iniquities, so that they may not say that the wrath was brought upon them in vain, but rather as in the order of a debt, and as necessarily befalling those who are accustomed to transgress in the greatest matters. And what does he say, judging or rather refuting? There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God upon the earth. Therefore, to say that there is no truth would very likely imply that among all at that time there was much false accusation, and perjury and deceit and treachery, the most shameful of all evils; and that they were without love for one another and without compassion, unyielding and relentless, and had hardened their minds, would indicate that there is no mercy; and that they were lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, and were wholly devoted to falsely named gods, he will again make clear by saying that there is no knowledge of God upon the earth. And besides, it would be fitting for those entangled in such terrible absurdities, to seem somehow no longer even to know God; if indeed we say we know him by thinking rightly those who follow his divine will. He adds to this, that cursing and lying and

murder and theft and adultery are poured out upon the earth, and they mingle blood upon blood.

Do you hear how those of whom the discourse is have come to the end of all evil, and henceforth beyond unholy undertakings, leaving nothing of the most exceedingly outrageous things unpracticed? And what is still more unreasonable than this, he says they mingle blood upon blood. And this would be a clear sign, that neither is any respite introduced for their evils, nor indeed do the perpetrators come to a repentance of what they have dared; but sin is drawn out, as it were, continuous and in succession. But let these things have been said for the more readily available clarification. But again the blessed prophet seems to make for us a more mystical narrative, and to accuse Israel for its drunken outrages against Christ, and its murders against him and the saints. For the Lord has a judgment against the inhabitants of the land. For what reason, and on what grounds? For our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to us, and was sent, as he himself says, "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," that by the torch-bearing of the Spirit he might enlighten those in darkness, that having delivered them from the shadow of the law, he might set them on the ways of true worship, that having justified by faith those entangled in sins, he might unite them through himself to God the Father. But it did not seem right to those of Israel;

for they cast out, they rejected the one who had come from heaven for these purposes, they were not willing to have among themselves the truth, the mercy, the knowledge of God the Father. For that Christ is truth and mercy, I think will not require long arguments for proof, since the God-inspired scripture is sufficient for this, from top to bottom naming for us Christ as mercy and truth. But that he is also the knowledge of God, one could learn quite effortlessly, since he cried out most clearly and plainly, "He who has seen me has seen the Father. Therefore, he says, the Lord has a judgment against the inhabitants of the land; and it is clear that he means the land of the Jews; because truth and mercy and the knowledge of the Father are not among them. He is judged, then, against those who do not have such things; but those who have accepted the faith have escaped being judged by him, or rather from him. And this itself would be clear, from Christ saying again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, He who believes in me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment. What then is poured out upon the land? Curs-

ing and lying and murder and theft and adultery; and they mingle blood upon blood. And what is the cursing? Slander and insult;

for the peoples of the Hebrews in no way ceased insulting Jesus, assailing him with an unguarded and unbridled tongue, so as to call him at one time a Samaritan, at another a drunkard, and one born of fornication. For in their view they supposed the holy Virgin had committed adultery; therefore, the cursing is in these things. And they also lied against his glory, saying that he had a demon, and attributing the divine signs to the powers of Beelzebul. But that they might be convicted of also having a murderous disposition against him, one would know from the fact that Emmanuel was often stoned by them; and was taken even to the very brow of the mountain, that he might be cast down. And the accusations are not limited to these things. And the matter of theft was also held in very high esteem. For they hired against him the traitor Judas, the one most greedy for base gain and most thievish. And the Pharisees, having become like certain wicked adulterers of the Synagogue of the Jews, drove away from it the bridegroom from heaven, that is, Christ; and committed fornication with it, persuading it to serve their own pleasures. And they also mingled blood upon blood. How, or in what way? For having killed the holy prophets, they added to them the very Lord of the prophets. And so the blessed Stephen in the Acts of the Apostles rightly reproaches them, saying, "Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?"

And they killed those who foretold about the of the coming of the Just One, of whom you have now become betrayers and "murderers. But the Savior also, reproaching the Pharisees and scribes for their bold deeds, said, "You also fill up the measure of your fathers. Therefore the land will mourn, and will be diminished with all who dwell in it, with the beasts of the field and with the creeping things of the earth and with the birds of the sky, and the fish of the sea will fail, so that no one may judge and no one may reprove. For since, he says, they have lived such a God-hated and very harsh life, impious and unbridled, and have thought and done what is not lawful, acting insolently toward God; for this reason, and very justly, they will go away to destruction, with the land, as it were, mourning; for it will be laid waste, and will change its form, and will wear a joyless look, with cities having been burned, and houses shaken down, and fields cut down; and the inhabitants will be disposed along with the land, both lamenting together and wailing

together. For they too will mourn, that is, they will become very far removed from all cheerfulness and prosperity. And who are the inhabitants? Both beasts and creeping things, and in addition to these, flying creatures. And surely we will not think, if we understand correctly, that the prophetic word cries out to us against wild beasts, or creeping things, or birds;

for it is utterly simple-minded, and full of foolishness to think in this way; for we think rather, having decided to think correctly, that the ways of the Jews are likened to the things just mentioned by us. and through the beasts, the word might signify the most powerful and those sufficiently able to terrify others, the savage and aggressive, and those accustomed to commit murder, and having very much that is uncivilized; but through the creeping things, those who have practiced bitterness in their ways to the extreme, and have already reached the end of all wickedness. For in this way, I suppose, the wise John also reproved the most wicked crowd of Pharisees and scribes, crying out and saying, "serpents, brood of vipers; and through the birds you will understand well those readily stirred up to apostasy from God, or else suffering from accursed arrogance, and being carried aloft somewhere and being accustomed to think lofty thoughts. And he seems to call fish the rabble and the herd-like, those submerged in the cares of life, and having a mind as if underwater, the voiceless and most irrational; for the creature of the fish is most voiceless. And in another way, those who, as it were, swallow the weaker; for eating one another is especially honored among fish. Therefore, he says, the land will mourn together with its inhabitants. And what is the reason for this? So that no one may judge, nor may anyone reprove.

For since curse and falsehood, For since, he says, they have lived such a God-hated and very harsh life, impious and unbridled, and have thought and done what is not lawful, acting insolently toward God; for this reason, and very justly, they will go away to destruction, with the land, as it were, mourning; for it will be laid waste, and will change its form, and will wear a joyless look, with cities having been burned, and houses shaken down, and fields cut down; and the inhabitants will be disposed along with the land, both lamenting together and wailing together. For they too will mourn, that is, they will become very far removed from all cheerfulness and prosperity. And who are the inhabitants? Both beasts and creeping things, and in addition to these, flying creatures. And surely we will not think, if we understand correctly, that the prophetic word cries out to us against wild beasts, or

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For to judge and to reprove would be nothing else, as I think, than to accuse and condemn some, that is, to bear false witness. This is what another of the holy prophets of the blood of Israel cried out to us, saying, "Woe is me, O soul, for the godly man has perished "from the earth, and he who acts rightly among men is no more; all "are judged for blood, each oppresses his neighbor with "oppression. But these things in a historical sense; but directing the word of the prophecy to the innermost meaning, we say this. For since in the land of the Jews, that is, among the Jews themselves, there is "no truth nor mercy nor knowledge of God; and we have said that Emmanuel is and is called these things; but rather a curse and falsehood have prevailed, and theft is honored, and they mingle blood with blood; for having killed the proph-

ets, as I said, they also killed Jesus himself; therefore the land, being burned by Roman hands, will mourn together with its inhabitants. And these things will be, he says, so that no one may judge, nor may anyone reprove. which is clearly blaming the Jews, as having judged unholily and convicted, or rather, borne false witness against Christ. For the leaders brought him to Pilate, judging and accusing him. And some came forward and testified against him, and they all but dared to convict him; the wretched ones speaking falsely, at one time, that he perverts the people;

at another, that we have heard this man say that in three days he will destroy the temple of God, and raise it up again. Therefore, he says, justice will be taken away, and conviction, that is, testimony against, and a vote that is not true; there being no king, nor a ruler accustomed to judge. For this reason, as I think, the prophetic word also likens the peoples of the Jews to the kingless animals, I mean beasts and reptiles and birds and fish. Thus also the blessed prophet Habakkuk said somewhere to the God of all, "Why do you look on those who despise? "Will you be silent when the wicked swallows up the righteous? And "will you make men like the fish of the sea, and "like the reptiles that have no ruler. But my people are as a priest spoken against, and he shall be weak for days, and a prophet shall also be weak with you. Observe for me, then, the blessed Prophet bringing forth in another manner the things said to him by God. For he heard clearly that "For many days the sons of Israel shall sit, "with no king and no ruler, with no sacrifice and no "altar, nor priesthood nor manifestations; but he himself, as if anticipating the unbridled anger of his hearers, reproveth covertly, and overshadows his word with measured obscurities. For that they will continue for times without leaders and a king, and will remain untutored, slightly he hints, comparing them to the ungoverned among animals.

But that they will also be cast out from sacrifices and sacred ministry, he suggests, saying, that they have become equal to the contested priests. And who might these be again? Or who is the contested priest? The one having a blemish, and a bodily infirmity; for this very reason also being excluded from the ministry. For either on account of a leg, or an injury of the eyes, or on account of a broken foot, or for another reason, some were sent away from the duty of being a priest, although they were from the tribe and blood of Levi. For thus the law through Moses has prophesied. Thus therefore, he says, shall my people be. For although being holy on account of the fathers,

and deemed worthy to sacrifice, he will sit outside the holy tabernacle, outside the ministry and sacred rites. For he will not offer sacrifices, nor indeed will he offer a sweet-smelling savor to God; for he has no longer moderately suffered the injury to his mind, and his heart has been maimed, and he has justly become already rejected, and detested. But that it will also befall those of Israel that the prophets will be silent, he has indicated, saying, And a prophet will also grow weak with you, surely according to that which was said by God to the blessed Ezekiel: "And I will bind your tongue, and you shall be mute, and "you shall not be to them a man who reproves, that is, who rebukes, because "it is a rebellious house.

But all these things will happen because of their impiety toward Christ, and the crimes against the prophets. Yet he says that Israel will not be weak forever, but for days; for a time of salvation and of repentance as in faith has been reserved for him. I have likened your mother to the night, my people has been likened as one having no knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you from being my priest; and you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. The word, therefore, is as if to the immoderate and unholy multitude of the Jews. Indeed, he calls her mother the Synagogue, just as indeed also the Church of those justified in Christ. Therefore, he justly compares the Synagogue of the Jews to darkness and gloom. For this reason also the most wise Paul says very well concerning himself and those who have been enlightened in the faith, "We are not of the night nor of "darkness, but sons of light and of day. But my people, he says, is like those who have no knowledge, although it was enriched with the guidance through the law. For it has been called to the knowledge of the truly existing God, it has been fully convinced by miracles, and nothing at all has been left out of all that is able to enlighten those in darkness, and it is not unable to impart admirable knowledge to the more teachable.

But since, he says, you rejected knowledge, that is, Christ, through whom and in whom the Father is both accessible and known, you will henceforth be cast out from being holy, and from offering sacrifices, as profane. And since you slipped into forgetfulness of the divine laws, neither understanding the things of Moses spiritually, nor indeed applying a keen and quick mind to the teachings through Christ, I also will be brought into a kind of forgetfulness of your children, that is, I will no longer remember, at least so as to

deem them worthy of forbearance and care; for to those whom God deems worthy to remember, to these he bestows his own loving-kindness. But Israel also in another way forgot the divine law, and rejected knowledge by practicing idolatry. According to their multitude, so they sinned against me; I will turn their glory into shame. The divine and ineffable nature is the source and origin of all gentleness, and goodness itself; yet it does not entirely endure those who transgress; but upon those who proceed unrestrainedly to this, it inflicts the punishments that are fitting for them. He insists, then, that Israel has come to this point of depravity, so that their desperation is no longer bearable, and their sin is seen as equal in number to them. For they were "as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand which is "on the seashore," according to what is written; but he said that their transgressions were in no way less than their multitude.

This, I think, is the meaning of *According to their multitude, so they sinned against me*. But since they had slipped into this of misery and ill-counsel, and they have not ceased to offend God, I will turn their glory into dishonor, that is, in that very thing in which they have decided to take great pride, in this very thing they will be put to shame. How or in what way? For they will fall from their boasts in their great multitude, as war consumes along with the fighting men also every other age group; for houses and cities will remain empty of men. And for this very reason the prophet Jeremiah lamented Judea, saying, "How the city that was full of peoples sits alone! She who was ruler among "the provinces has become a tributary. And in another way, by offending God, we will be laid as far as possible from all good repute by doing what is not lawful; and in those very things for which one ought to be ashamed, in these very things we are at times boasting, and raising a high brow, so that it is justly said also concerning us, "whose glory is in their shame. Therefore, according to this sense you may again understand what was said, I will turn their glory into dishonor. For that some are delivered over "to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting," how can one doubt, since the blessed Paul has clearly stated it.

They will eat the sins of my people, and in their iniquities they will take their souls. And it will be, as with the people, so with the priest. Having written the causes of the wrath against the multitude, he transfers the discourse to the sacred order. And what has just been said by us would fit the discourse, I think, "I will turn their glory "into dishonor. For the glory of the Jewish

Synagogue is the renowned priesthood, and the preeminent and holy race in it, that is, the Levitical; for some ruled from the tribe of Judah, but human affairs were secondary to the priesthood and very much inferior. Therefore, the glory of the Jewish Synagogue is the sacred and chosen race. It will therefore be clothed with dishonor, he says, and will change to what is unseemly. And for what reason? Because having neglected what was most fitting for them, they were carried away to apostasy. They have not kept their own authority, they did not know the way of the priesthood, they have not understood that they will eat the sins of my people, and in their iniquities they will take their souls. But since the saying has much obscurity, come again, let us say as best we can how it ought to be understood. A male goat from the goats was therefore slaughtered for sin; and for this reason the sacrifice was also called sin.

But the priests of the time, bringing the male goat to the altar, offered up the entrails and the fat, but ate the rest themselves, as the divine law commanded this. Therefore the priest is taken as a mediator, as it were, between God and men, receiving the gift-offerings from the peoples, and sharing them with the altar, as it is written; performing a sacred service, as it were, for the trespasses of the people, just as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ also did. That what I say is true, I will set forth the law concerning the male goat itself. It is as follows: "And Moses diligently sought the male goat for "the sin, and behold, it had been burned up. And Moses was angry with Eleazar and "Ithamar the sons of Aaron who were left, saying, 'Why did you not eat the sin offering in a holy place?' "For it is most holy, and this He has given you to eat, that you might "take away the sin of the congregation, and make atonement "for them before the Lord." Do you see how those who stand by the divine altar mediate by eating the offerings for sins, and with purest prayers assuage the wrath against sinners, and almost consecrating their own souls for the trespasses of the people to God as a fragrant offering? Just as indeed the divine Aaron did, when the destruction of the people began. For it is written thus:

having seized the censer, and put on the incense, "he stood," it says, "between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed. Thus mediating also, the blessed Moses was appeasing God, when the children of Israel had made a calf in the wilderness; for he, as it were, submitted himself to the with justice, beseeching and saying, "If you will forgive their sin, forgive; but

if not, "blot me out of this book which you have written. They shall therefore eat the sins of my people, that is, the sacrifices offered for sins. and in their iniquities, that is, in the time of their iniquity; it is clear, that of those from Israel or of the peoples; they themselves shall take their own souls, instead of, they shall offer to God. For the divinely inspired scripture accepts the word as signifying such a thing; for what is offered to God, and prepared for sacrifice, was said to be taken. And the word is especially set to signify this, as I just said. And indeed in Numbers, when he was setting the laws concerning the red heifer, God said somewhere to the hierophant Moses, "This is the ordinance of the law, which the Lord has commanded, saying: Speak to the sons of Israel, and let them take for you a red heifer without blemish. Do you hear 'let them take'? that is, let them offer or let them bring. But concerning the leper who is about to be cleansed, he says again thus:

"And the priest shall go forth out of the camp, "and the priest shall look, and, behold, the plague of leprosy is healed from "the leper. And the priest shall command and they shall take for the "one who has been cleansed two living, clean small birds. Therefore, when it says 'they shall take' also of the priests, the word would reasonably be understood instead of 'they shall offer'. Therefore in the time of iniquities, clearly of the people, they themselves shall take, that is, they shall offer as a spiritual sacrifice and a sweet savor to God their own souls, clearly living rightly, and having a most lawful life, and having been most zealous to think and do what is fitting for priests. For such a one is sufficient to save peoples who have offended God and wronged the law. But those chosen for this, he says, have slipped down with the others. For this reason the sacred rites will justly cease, the chosen and honored race will be stopped, the people shall be as the priest. For there will no longer be anything between the people and the priest. And this then was, "Their glory I will turn into "dishonor. And I will punish him for his ways, and I will repay him for his plans. Ways, it seems, he calls the goings as in works; and plans, in turn, the stumblings from strange reasonings.

Since, therefore, he says, he has not walked rightly, having departed from the straight path, and having driven, as it were, on a path of all unholiness, and has planned the most shameful and outlandish things of all, dishonoring the God of all, and turning aside himself to worship idols, I will punish him, that is, I will bring a punishment that is of equal weight to his transgressions And that for those who depart from the love of God, to be in every

evil will in every way and entirely come to pass, how is it possible to doubt? For he will neither travel a straight and blameless path, nor would he ever plan wisely, not having the divine wisdom and power to assist him. And they shall eat, and shall not be satisfied; they have committed fornication, and shall not prosper. He has again kept the remnant for those of the blood of Israel. For that the matter will not entirely disappear for the priests, he makes clear, saying: that they will eat, but they will not be filled. For whether someone should consider those ancient migrations and captivities of Israel, or the desolation of Judea at the time of Christ by the hand of the Romans, he will find both Israel itself and the worship according to the law preserved in remnants.

For when at that time they were carried away both by Shalmaneser and by Tiglath-pileser to the Assyrians and Medes, no less did the few and small and remaining of those from Israel bring the customary things to the priests, honoring those at hand; and not being entirely outside of what was customary. In the same way, also in the final war, I mean the one under Caesar Augustus, when their country was laid waste, they were scattered to every wind, and in every country and city; yet still moderately honoring the sacred and chosen a race, they offered according to their ability; and they are still in these things, although the ancient sacrifices have been overturned; for to those who are outside Jerusalem it is still unlawful to sacrifice. Therefore, he says, they will eat and not be filled, that is, they will receive little and with difficulty, and what is not sufficient for satiety. And this shows no less the removal of their ancient honor, and the loss of their former cheerfulness. But since they have committed fornication, he says, they shall not be guided aright. For it is impossible, as I said, for those who depart from God; for this, I think, is the name and substance of spiritual fornication; either to have a full supply of divine goods, or to be able to gather the foods from heaven and from above, or to be guided aright in counsels or in deeds.

For God is the giver of every good thing to us, and the rudder of the mind that is in us. Because they have forsaken the Lord to keep, fornication and wine and drunkenness, the heart of my people has received. Here he states the reasons why the ministers will neither be filled with food, nor yet be guided aright. For since, he says, they themselves also departed from the Lord, and the teachers slipped away with those being taught, those appointed to lead with those under their hand and authority, for this reason they will

justly be under divine wrath, and will suffer punishment for their incessant transgressions. For they have kept fornication, that is, they have arranged for error to be preserved for those under their hand, although they ought rather to cast it out from their midst and make it disappear. For the sobriety of teachers is to eagerly remove from the midst what harms the people, and to destroy without delay what is hateful to God. But if they do not endure to do this, and they themselves allow the works of error to remain and be preserved, as it were, or rather they even establish them from the opposite things, then certainly the mind of those being instructed will receive wine, as it were, and drunkenness.

For from where, or how could the disciples be sober, and be able to open the eye of their mind to the true God by nature, if their instructors and the proposers of what is advantageous also still confirm them in the need to wander? And this, I think, is what was clearly said through another prophet: "The priests did not say, Where is the Lord? And those who held to my law did not know me, and the shepherds acted impiously against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal; and again, "My sons and my sheep are not, there is no place for my tent, a place for my skins. For the shepherds have become foolish, and have not sought the Lord; for this reason the whole pasture did not understand, and they were scattered. They inquired by signs, and by their staves they reported to him. In what way they have forsaken the Lord, and have kept fornication, he makes clear. For he shows the teacher to be a fellow-willer with those who are led astray; and those whom it was fitting, or rather even necessary, to follow the divine laws, and to bring those under their yoke to this, these, as I said, he clearly shows as fulfilling the crimes of error. For some went to them wishing to learn, he says, either things to come, perhaps, or things concerning themselves, and in what times or situations they might be.

But they impiously persuaded those who came to them no longer to wish to seek such things from God, but they inquired by signs, that is, they sought to learn through certain signs and observations from unclean spirits; just as, indeed, Balaam once attempted to divine against those of Israel. For Balak son of Beor ordered him to do this. And he said, "Make for me here seven altars, and slaughter for me seven bullocks and seven rams," and I will go to meet the omens. For either they examine the smoke rising from the sacrifices, where and how high and upwards they shoot; or the wretches ex-

amine the twitchings in the liver; or they curiously observe the flights of birds of omen. And augury, and divination, and such things of the accusations of the evils of the impiety that has come to an end, and they come into the lowest recesses of idolatry. And in their rods they reported to him. To those from Israel who came to them, he says, and were eager to know something of their own affairs, they reported to them not only in symbols, but also in their rods. This is another method of deceit; the matter is rhabdomanancy; and perhaps it is an invention of the meddling of the Chaldeans. For thus Nebuchadnezzar divined against Jerusalem, as the inspired prophet Ezekiel also says. For setting up two rods, then enchanting them with some of their secret spells, they caused them to incline by the energies of demons;

and they watched them as they fell, to see where they would be carried again, whether forward or backward, or to the right or to the left; and so then they reported what seemed best to the ones who approached. This is what "they reported in rods" means. Truly terrible, then, when the instructors of others, who were able to lead them to what is dear to God, also caused them to wander, and as the prophet says, "They have fixed madness "in the house of the Lord. For he calls false divination madness. For those accustomed to doing this pretend not even to know, then, where they are. For some said that they were mad and possessed, as if filled with the divine. For they did not know that the heart of the deceived is like a house, and a cave of unclean spirits. They have been led astray by a spirit of fornication, and they have gone whoring from their God. Upon the tops of the mountains they sacrificed, and upon the hills they burned incense, under oak and poplar and a shady tree, because its shade was good. That such things are not done without unclean and wicked spirits, he teaches clearly. For every form of depravity comes from them, and nothing of the most shameful things is left unpracticed by those who have chosen to fulfill what seems good to them.

Therefore, he says, they have been led astray by a spirit of fornication, and have become as far away as possible from God, being lovers of pleasure, and making the works of idolatry an occasion for love of the flesh. For they sacrificed, occupying hills and mountains, and on earthly high places they served the groveling nature of demons. Then, raising altars under oak and poplar, they offered libations, sending honors to nymphs, perhaps to the hamadryads, according to the myths of the Greeks. For the poets and prose writers of the Greeks say that the unclean demons, whom they named

nymphs, love plants and trees, according to what seemed good to them, I know not how. Therefore it seemed good to them, he says, to accept the shades, and to revel under the most flourishing groves; and to praise and say, "because its shade was good. Therefore, the lover of pleasure cannot also be a lover of God. And Paul will testify, saying of some, that they are "lovers of pleasure "rather than lovers of God. "Blessed therefore are those who mourn "now," as the Savior says, and who have been zealous to honor and love especially patient endurance in beneficial labors. Therefore your daughters shall commit fornication, and your daughters-in-law shall commit adultery. And I will not visit upon your daughters when they commit fornication, nor upon your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery; because they themselves were mingled with harlots, and sacrificed with the initiated.

For since it seems admirable to you, he says, to revel under a plant and in shades, and you have made a pleasure of what grieves me, that is, the accursed error and impurity; for this reason your daughters shall commit fornication; and your daughters-in-law, that is, the wives of your sons, shall be adulteresses. And even if these things should happen, he says, I too will be quiet, and I will not visit. And through these things he seems to foretell the harms that would come from the war upon those who had sinned, and the things that follow captivities. For those who have once conquered and been victorious do what they please to the captured, using unbridled authority, and with unreprouvable impulses proceeding to anything whatever that comes to them according to their pleasure, and neither taking law into account, nor enduring to consider what is reasonable or fitting; but as if hardened, and having a mind much inclined towards savagery, they deem those who have acted wretchedly worthy of no pity. It has therefore clearly indicated that the children of those who have fornicated will be set before their enemies for insolence and shameful acts. But if someone should choose, he will also understand it in another way. For the God of all visits those whom He might wish to honor and to love;

and if He sees them carried away into indolence, and willing to do what is not right, He rebukes them moderately, persuading them to return to better things and to what is necessary for their benefit; for this reason the divine Paul also says to those called to an approved life: "If you endure discipline, God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? and indeed the most wise writer of proverbs testifies and says, "For

whom the Lord loves, he disciplines; and he scourges every son whom he receives. Therefore those whom He disciplines, He also deems worthy of His oversight, as being in every way good and beloved; but He in no way watches over those who have greatly offended Him, almost saying, "I do not know you." For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous," as it is written. Therefore, even if they sin, He says, I will not visit, that is, I will not care for, I will not turn them to myself, I will consider them worthy of nothing. For what reason? For you yourselves, He says, who are in the rank of fathers, have stood so far from wishing to rebuke both yourselves and your children, even if they should lay claim to the utmost depravity, as to mingle with prostitutes. For you have sacrificed together with the initiated. And he calls prostitutes specifically the priestesses of Beelphegor. Beelphegor is the one called Priapus.

And the women who honor so shameful an abomination are consequently prostitutes by confession. And again he calls "the initiated" the hierophants of Beelphegor, and they were men not enduring to be what they are, but rather changing to an effeminate mindset, being unholily effeminate in words and ways. And some call such men womanish and soft, who, using women's ululations and cymbals, and running around certain ones together with little torches, pretended to initiate, fulfilling the shameful rites of Beelphegor. Therefore, he says, they sacrificed with the initiated, that is, they have been initiated into their rites, and together with those so corrupted they offered sacrifices to Beelphegor. And the people that understands was entangled with a prostitute. He transfers the discourse to Judah, that is, those from the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, who still inhabited Jerusalem, and had the divine altar; for the temple still stood; they claimed to keep the commandments of Moses, and to have the understanding that comes through the law. But they themselves also have served "Astarte, the abomination of the Sidonians. And they say that Astarte is the one among the Greeks called I know not how Aphrodite. And the statue stands naked, and as in the form of a prostitute, shamelessly exposing to the eyes of all even the unseemly parts of the body. Therefore not only, he says, Israel, although sick with the greatest folly. "mingled with prostitutes, and sacrificed with the initiated;

but also the people itself that understands, that is, the one pretending still to preserve the understanding from the law, was entangled with a prostitute.

For they have worshipped, as I said, Astarte. For Solomon built a sanctuary for her, fulfilling what was pleasing to a wanton and foreign woman. But you, Israel, do not be ignorant, and Judah, do not enter into Galgala, and do not go up to the house of iniquity, and do not swear, "As the Lord lives. I have already said many times that the words of the prophets call the ten tribes in Samaria, Israel; and sometimes they call the two tribes in Jerusalem Judah and Benjamin, I mean the tribe of Judah, and that of Benjamin. The discourse therefore at present has been about both, and it refutes the disease of the multitude of each. For see how he rebukes Israel as utterly without understanding and foolish, for this very reason having become also an apostate, if indeed the crime of utmost lack of understanding might be reasonably thought, to love being devoted to the worship of idols, and to be estranged from the love of God. Here, therefore, "do not be ignorant" means, "do not be foolish," nor be full of a senselessness that has reached its end. And again he rebukes those in Jerusalem, that is, Judah, as a hypocrite and one who acts impiously, by going on both, or rather by limping on both hams, according to the prophet's voice.

For he pretended to practice and to love piety towards God, and he performed the sacrifices according to the law; but he was by no means free from hastening to worship even the demons themselves, even if not very openly, yet at least secretly and covertly. And so the blessed prophet Ezekiel was commanded to dig in the wall; then he saw all the idols of the house of Israel depicted on the walls. And what does the God of all say to him? "Have you seen, son of man, what the elders of the house of Israel are doing here? Each of them in their secret chamber, because they said, 'The Lord has forsaken us, the Lord does not see the land.'" And the prophet says that he saw women sitting and mourning for Tammuz, who is Adonis in the Greek language. See, then, how although they frequented the divine temple, and pretended to partake in the worship according to the law, they were secretly defiled, being divided towards strange and demonic worship, and things hateful to God. Therefore, you, Israel, who have completely turned aside, he says, "do not be ignorant," that is, refrain from ignorance, cease from such a vain and profane mind; receive the understanding that is through the law and the prophets, that is, the one that is through Christ and is evangelical. And, Judah, do not enter into Gilgal; for it is a city that greatly practices idolatry;

and do not go up to the house of iniquity, and do not swear, "The Lord lives. For it is one of the absurd things to make God an oath, and to have on the tongue "the living Lord," but also to be devoted to idols, and to choose to worship lifeless heifers. For Jeroboam placed one in Bethel, and the other in Dan. Therefore, he does not permit them to pretend piety towards God by naming the Lord, but to be carried away to strange false worship, by going up to Gilgal, and to the house of iniquity. And he calls Bethel the house of iniquity. For what reason? For Bethel is interpreted as "house of God. But it became a house of an idol, with both the thing itself and its very name having been, in a way, wronged. For, as I said, the house of God has become the house of an idol. And so he said somewhere through the voice of Jeremiah concerning the multitude of those from Israel: "What has the beloved done in my house? An abomination? And the God of all might rightly say concerning those of Judah and Benjamin, "This people draws near to me, with their lips they honor me, but their heart is far from me. For as a gadfly-stung heifer, so was Israel stung by a gadfly; and now the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a wide place.

One of the saints wisely leads us to the pursuit of what is profitable, saying, "Son, let not your heart envy sinners, but be in the fear of the Lord all the day long. For whom one would blame, how could he choose to emulate? The God of all says something of this sort to Judah: Let not Israel's being stung by a gadfly become for you a pretext for apostasy, and as it were to run away from the herd like heifers, upon which if a gadfly, that is, a horsefly, should settle; this is a type of insect that bites intolerably; it carries one away from the herd, and then causes it to be carried away in a swift course, wherever it may happen. Or shall we not find that Israel has suffered this? For he departed from Jerusalem, and leaving his own shepherd, that is, God, he made a terrible and accursed apostasy. Therefore, do not be envious, O Judah, he says; for even if Israel, stung by a gadfly like the heifers, has gone off to apostasy, yet the attempt will not be without penalty for him. For he will go away captive, and leaving the land that bore him, that of the Persians and Medes he shall no longer be grazed insolently, and as it were, unbridled and herd-despising; for such a goaded heifer always is. But he will be on equal terms with the most gentle lambs.

For the state of captives is always humble and very fearful, and not far from the expectation of suffering ill, and burdened by the greed of the con-

querors. He calls the land of the Persians and Medes spacious, as if saying something like this: he will be grazed in a wide and incomprehensible land, and he will change many countries, not always having the same master, but being removed to that of the one who receives him. The soul of a man might suffer this very thing, having disregarded the love for God. For it will be carried about to anything whatsoever that is loved by demons, captive and cowardly and weak, and indeed it will justly hear God saying, "Your apostasy will chastise you, and your wickedness will convict you. Ephraim is a partaker of idols; he has laid stumbling blocks for himself. He chose the Canaanites; committing fornication, they fornicated exceedingly. They loved dishonor from their snorting. You are a whirlwind in her wings, and they shall be ashamed of their altars. Still the prophet's word is to Judah, pretending, as I said, to be concerned with the law, and not holding piety towards God in small account, but having secretly assented to the necessity of honoring the images of demons. Therefore, he says, Ephraim, that is, Israel, has become an admitted partaker of idols. And he is named thus from the ruling tribe among him, I mean that of Jeroboam; for he was from the mountain and tribe of Ephraim.

And just as he calls the one in Jerusalem Judah, having kept the name for the royal tribe, so also in the case of Israel, when he names Ephraim, he makes the designation from the royal tribe. So then, he says, Ephraim partook of idols. For he worshipped the object of reverence of the Egyptians; and their object of reverence was Apis, that is, a calf. And he partook no less of the impiety and immeasurable madness of the Canaanites, who are known to attend to and worship the shameful idol, Baal-peor. But by doing this also, Ephraim has set stumbling blocks for himself. For he has offended God, who defends and knows how to save. He chose the Canaanites, instead of, he has made the customs of the Canaanites electable and worthy of being taken up; and these are neighbors of the land of the Jews, impious and idolaters. And in addition to these things, they of Israel, committing fornication, fornicated exceedingly; it is clear that it is because they practiced spiritual fornication beyond measure and beyond what is reasonable, and the charges against them come to the end of the shamefulness of their apostasy. And they have loved dishonor out of their snorting, that is, out of their high boasts, which they had in God and in the glory from him. Therefore they

have truly become dishonored and cast down, pitiable and trampled, having slipped from their ancient boasts;

for they will no longer be called free, but will rather walk into insolence and dishonor, and will be under bitter masters. But even if, he says, the most senseless multitude of Ephraim was subjected to all these things, yet, O Judah, you have become to it like a whirlwind in the wings of a bird. And it is surely clear to everyone that in every way whatsoever things that fly, when a violent wind pushes them, and not just forcing them, then make a swifter flight. Therefore Israel, having inclined towards apostasy, ran aground, but you became for him a whirlwind in the wings. How, or in what manner? For since he has seen you who are still being instructed by the law, who sits at the divine temple, and who performs the sacrifices according to the law, being lazy and falling back, and being held in the same offenses, he made his departure swifter. But to their shame; they will find, their altars to be the cause of disgrace and dishonor. Therefore, when those who seem to stand, who ought to live well and irreproachably, are sluggish and lazy about this we are found; or rather, having chosen equally with others to reject what is pleasing to God, we shall not only wrong ourselves, but by also destroying others, we shall endure a double punishment.

For when it was necessary to be set before those who have been led astray, or those who are unwilling to live rightly, as an image and model of virtue, we have become an occasion of stumbling. What then does Christ say? "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe "in me to stumble," He says, "it would be better for him if a millstone "were hung around his neck and he were drowned in the "depth of the sea. Hear this, O priests, and pay attention, O house of Israel, and give ear, O house of the king; for the judgment is for you, because you have become a snare at Mizpah, and like a net spread upon Tabor, which those who hunt the prey have fixed. He had previously accused Judah of having become a perversion of spirit to Israel, in the manner just mentioned by us; but now he shifts the word of rebuke to the inventors of deceit and error, and those who caused them the disease of madness. And these were the falsely-named priests, not of the blood of Levi, but holding a purchased priesthood, and having bought with money the right to officiate for idols. For it is written concerning Jeroboam, that "Whoever wished filled his hand, and became "a priest of the high places. The argument, therefore, rightly proceeds against both the priests themselves and

against the house of the king, with Israel itself also being included in the charges.

For some of them both said and did things for the establishment of idolatry, setting up altars, offering libations and sacrifices, and widening the path of destruction for the deceived; and the kings were the inventors of the error. Therefore he says to them, that you have become a snare at Mizpah. And by Mizpah he means the multitude overseen both by the priests, if they were indeed priests, and by the leaders themselves; for they watch over their subjects; or they are looked up to by those under their hand, and wherever it might seem good to the rulers, they turn aside their subjects; and what is yoked under them follows the wills of the leaders. You have therefore become, he says, like a snare to the multitude overseen by you, or perhaps to the one looking to you. And you have become like a net spread upon Tabor. This is a very conspicuous mountain located in Galilee, having a very large and abundant catch of beasts and birds, because it is raised high and is extremely overgrown with oaks and thickets. But I am your instructor; I have known Ephraim, and Israel is not far from me.

The priests, therefore, and indeed those of the royal blood, have become a net and snares and a prey to the peoples, commanding them to burn incense to demons, and doing so themselves before others, and persuading them to think what is not lawful, and leading others to the impiously invented ways of error, I mean the high places, Baal-peor, the abomination of the Sidonians, Baal, Chemosh; and He promises that He Himself will be their instructor, and not for long, as He is about to inflict upon them evils from His wrath and anger. And the word has its accuracy. For those of the royal house, being held in terrible and inescapable calamities, some have utterly perished, according to the testimony of the sacred writings; while others departed to be subjected to the greed of the Babylonians and Medes. And the falsely-named priests and those who were priests for money have died miserably, or rather even piously, some by Jehu, others by Josiah, who was of the tribe of Judah, that is, of David. For this the man of God also prophesied, when Jeroboam was once sacrificing and standing at the altar, saying: "O altar, altar, thus says the Lord: Behold, a son shall be born "to the house of David, Josiah by name; and he shall sacrifice "on you the priests of the high places, who burn incense on you, "and he shall burn the bones of men on you.

Therefore, He threatened to discipline in wrath and anger those who had become a snare at Mizpah, I mean both the priests and those of royal blood; But in no way did he leave the deceived one unblamed, that is, Israel. For this reason he says: I have known Ephraim, and Israel is not far from me. This is indeed equivalent to that, "Who is this that hides counsel from me, and holds words "in his heart, and thinks to hide from me? For I have known Ephraim, he says, and I have not departed from Israel. "For I am a "God who draws near, says the Lord, and not a God from afar. "If a man shall hide himself in secret places, shall I not see "him? And again, "Shall anything be hidden from me? "For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than "any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of "soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and is a discerner "of the thoughts and intentions of the heart; and no creature is "hidden from his sight, but all things are naked and laid bare "to his eyes, to whom we must give account. Because now Ephraim has committed fornication, Israel has been defiled. They have not directed their plans to turn to their God, because a spirit of fornication is in them, and they have not known the Lord.

For since the God of all sees into the reins and hearts, and nothing is at all hidden from him, he has known that Israel, that is, Ephraim, has indeed committed fornication and has reached the extreme of worthlessness; yet not so much as to say did he admit into his mind and heart that he ought to repent, on account of being overcome by the spirit that persuades him to fornicate, and not being willing to seek the true Master. It is true therefore, as the Savior says, "No one can serve two "masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, "or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. And the pride of Israel will be humbled to his face, and Israel and Ephraim will grow weak in their iniquities; and Judah will also grow weak with them. He here calls pride the cursed arrogance; for the arrogant man is insolent. Therefore he says that the arrogance of Israel will be humbled when he suffers those things, and very justly, which were going to show him to be humble, pitiful and cast down, and bereft of boasts in God, and deprived even of their ancestral freedom from above. But that the pride will be turned to his face must be understood because every form of dishonor is somewhat like blows to the face. And he says that those of Israel will grow weak together with Judah.

For after the kings of both Syria and the Persians had ravaged Samaria, they did not permit Judah to remain unscathed, adding to the cities of Israel also some of those belonging to the men of Judah and Benjamin. And that their impiety and pride towards God was confessedly the harbinger of every misfortune for them, he has taught by saying that the suffering of weakness would not happen to them otherwise, but only because it was in their iniquities. Therefore piety towards God is indeed useful and most precious, through which one might be able to rule over nations, and to be strong to accomplish all things easily. And the Savior spoke truly when he said, "Without me you can do nothing. And David, having chosen to think rightly, somewhere also sings, "The Lord is my strength and my song. They shall go with sheep and calves to seek the Lord, and they shall not find him; because he has withdrawn from them; because they have forsaken the Lord; because strange children have been born to them. Now the rust will devour them and their portions. It is seen to be true through events, that as the divine Paul says, "It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away "sins," and God is unapproachable through the law. And by law I mean the worship according to the law, through blood and sacrifices.

Therefore, even if those of Israel should offer the customary sacrifices, asking for forgiveness for their unholy offenses, that is, seeking reconciliation with God, they would not attain it, he says, nor would they accomplish being able to find God, nor would he be accessible to those repenting in this way. For he is found only through the life in Christ, which Let the word of faith be understood as a first assault, and in addition to this the saving baptism, which brings about familiarity with God in the Spirit. Therefore Israel would not find the Lord through the worship according to the law. For he has turned away from them, because they also have abandoned him, leaping away so far as to become fathers of strange children. And by strange children he means those who, as it were from the womb and from their very swaddling clothes, are dedicated to the opinions of idols, with their parents perhaps offering thank-offerings and sacrifices for their birth-pangs to demons. Therefore, strange children are those not in God; or also in another way, those from foreign women. For the men of Israel mingled indiscriminately with the daughters of the nations, who were still idolaters, although the law clearly said that one must not be joined in marriage to foreigners. "For your daughter," it says, "you shall not give to his son, and his daughter you shall

not take "for your son. For he will turn your son away from me, and "going he will serve other gods.

But since they have done these things, the blight will devour them. And through this it signifies again enigmatically the mistreatment and harm that will come to them from the attack of war, which is not incapable of destroying terribly, like a blight, both them and their possessions; for this is what their lots are. But that the war is not for postponement and truce, but immediate and at their heels, he has fully informed them by saying, Now the blight will devour them. It is as if he were to say, The experience of grievous things will come after the words; the disaster is already near and at the gates. Therefore it will remain for those who grieve God neither to be able to find him, even if they should choose to seek; and to become fathers of strange children, that is, not to have noble and genuine fruits; and these would be the fruits of virtue and a holy life; but rather to be destroyed, as if shattered by some blight of their own evil and misery, and in addition to these things to be deprived of their lots from God; concerning which the divine David also sings in psalms to God the Savior of all, "In your hands are my lots. For all our lot and every portion is in the power of God, and he himself is the distributor of crowns. Blow a trumpet on the hills, sound it on the high places, proclaim it in the house of On. Benjamin was distraught;

Ephraim became a desolation in the days of rebuke. Among the tribes of Israel I have shown faithful things. It has been clearly stated before that, in addition to the golden calves, the accursed Jeroboam introduced other ways of idolatry, destruction, and error to those of Israel. For they worshipped on mountains and hills Chemosh, Baal-peor, "under oak and poplar and a shady tree; and there were, as I said, also in Bethel and in Dan the golden calves. But this was the error of Israel; but Judah, that is, Benjamin, that is, those from the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, had erred no less, and had served "Ashtoreth "the abomination of the Sidonians; and they also worshipped the sun. And this will be clear to us again through the voice of Ezekiel. For he was brought, as he himself says, to Jerusalem, "in a vision of God; then he beheld the error of the inhabitants. "For I saw," he says, "about twenty-five men, their backs "toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces opposite, "and these were worshipping the sun toward the east. See then how they divided destruction among themselves, offending in many ways and grieving God. Therefore, to those wishing to ravage, and who were expected at any

moment, Samaria, and who were about to disturb Jerusalem not moderately, I mean both the Assyrians and the Persians, and those from Damascus, I mean the Syrians; for both attacked at times, being provoked to this at different times and in different ways;

he all but reproaches the delay of the attack, and has now commanded the war to begin, sounding the trumpets, and instilling the first fruits of terror into the souls of those who have gone astray. Since For he said, "Now mildew will devour them and "their portions; and we said that the ill-treatment and devastation from the war was called mildew; teaching that it has come to the gates, and will happen, and not long from now, he has commanded to sound the trumpet well, as I said, and before all else against the places of the idols, either as being about to be burned down and shaken at any moment, that is, because they themselves have become the pretext for the war and for the incurable calamity for those who have been led astray. When, therefore, he says that it is necessary to sound the trumpet against the hills and against the high places and in the house of On, you will understand the places of the idols. It should be known, that the Seventy did not agree with the other interpreters regarding "in the house of "On. For some have said, to the house of the useless, that is, of any idol; but others, "in the house of On.

We shall suppose, therefore, that the prophetic word now wishes to signify this to us, that they must sound the trumpet, not only against the hills and the high places, that is, not only against the idolatry of Israel, namely of the ten tribes in Samaria, but also against that which is in Jerusalem among both Judah and Benjamin. For they were worshipping, as I said, the sun; and On is the sun; casting God behind them, and turning away from his things. For this, I think, is what is meant by having their backs to the temple of the Lord, and their faces opposite, clearly, to the sun. When, therefore, you hear "in the house of On," you will understand the house or precinct of any falsely-named and man-made god, that is, of the sun. And it would not seem absurd or incredible to anyone for those who worship the sun to be understood and named the house of the sun, just as, of course, those who think and do His will and offer worship to Him would be understood as the house of God. But if someone should wish the golden calf also to be called On, in this way too the argument will bear a plausible meaning. For the God-hated Jeroboam made the calves after the worship of the Egyptians, I mean Apis.

And the Egyptians have honored Apis, saying that he is the child of the moon; therefore he also had a crescent-shaped sign on his forehead;

and they believe him to be, as it were, the offspring of the sun, because, according to their opinion, the moon is illuminated by the sun. Therefore, they honored Apis as the child of the moon, and the offspring of the sun; and the resourceful dragon, that is, Satan, led them away into this error and wretchedness of reasoning. Therefore, he has commanded to sound the trumpet against the hills and the high places and in the house of On, that is, of the golden calf. And what the charges against both were, and the reason why they must be punished, he makes clear, adding immediately, "Benjamin is beside himself," instead of "He has departed from his own customs," that is, "He has lost his best mind; for this is what "being beside oneself" would truly be understood to mean in the case of evil things. And Ephraim has also been destroyed. But he does not say these things in this way. For in the days of rebuke for the transgression of both, I have shown faithful things, having declared my words to be firm and true. For what I have already foretold has happened to them, and none of my words have been proven false. For since they departed from their ancient customs, and went out of their good mind, they were also driven out of their own country, and have fallen away from the love of God, and from all prosperity at the same time.

And in another way, it follows for those who abandon God that they must also depart from every good thought, and indeed from every deed turned toward virtue. And they will go to destruction, as God reproves and rebukes them, and demands punishment for their negligence. It is useful, therefore, and necessary for life, to be with God, and all but cry out that verse in the psalms, "My soul clings close behind "you. For then the right hand of the one who is all-powerful will readily take hold and help, from which no one will snatch, according to the voice of the Savior. The rulers of Judah have become like those who move boundary markers; upon them I will pour out my wrath like water. This is, enigmatically, the meaning of "Benjamin is beside himself. For they have become, he says, equal to those they move boundaries, and wish to transgress those established long ago. For those who transfer to others the things fitting for God alone, and justly dedicated to him, I mean love, honor, and worship, by worshipping the sun, for example, or the moon and the stars, would likely be doing nothing other than in every way moving boundaries. That Judah, that is, Benjamin, has

dedicated to the sun and moon and stars the glory fitting for God, would be clearly understood, from God saying to the prophet Jeremiah, "Or do you not see what these are doing in the "cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? Their sons "gather wood;

and their fathers kindle a fire, and their wives "knead dough, to make cakes for the host of heaven, and they poured "libations to other gods to provoke me to anger. Therefore, the leaders from the tribe of Judah have moved the boundaries, that is, those who are clothed with the highest and royal glory, whom the common multitude was likely to choose to follow when they were led astray. But he says, like a most violent flood, I will pour out my fury upon them. For the things from divine wrath are intolerable and unbearable and completely irresistible, just as, of course, the great and abundant flow of waters is also something hard to withstand. Ephraim oppressed his adversary and trampled judgment, because he began to walk after vanities. And I will be like confusion to Ephraim, and like a goad to the house of Judah. In what way Benjamin went astray has been clearly shown. For he said that "the rulers of Judah have become like those who move "boundaries. And how "Ephraim came to ruin," he explains again, adding, "Ephraim oppressed his adversary. And the word now seems to have been composed for us with a certain character. What, then, is the accusation against those from the tribe of Ephraim, or what adversary does the divine oracle say to us that Ephraim oppressed? I will try to explain as far as possible. For those from the tribe of Judah and Benjamin still had some reverence and regard for the laws given through Moses, and practiced righteousness.

For not all had turned aside, but there were not a few weeping and lamenting the apostasy of those who had gone astray, and being not moderately distressed, since some, dishonoring the God of all, practiced the ways of idolatry. And indeed, as the blessed prophet Ezekiel says, some were sent against Jerusalem, with axes raised, and they clearly heard God saying that they must follow the one girded with the linen robe, and spare no one. And I saw, he says, "And behold, six men "came from the direction of the gate which faces north, and "each had an axe in his hand, and he said to the man," he says, "who was girded with the linen robe, 'Go through the midst of Jerusalem, "and set a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh "and groan over all the iniquities that are done in its midst.' "And to these he said in my hearing, 'Go into the city after him, "and strike and do not spare and

do not pity; and kill "old man and young man and infants and women to destruction, "but do not go near anyone on whom is the mark." Do you hear that some were marked as being outside of judgment and wrath and every accusation, on account of choosing to think rightly, and indeed to live according to the law, and to lay hold of righteousness, and to love the love for God blamelessly?

But in Samaria, Israel ran completely aground, not even, so to speak, deeming the things of Moses worthy of memory, but practicing a life as if at war, and in every way set against them, so as to consider the law of God an enemy, so to speak, as not even wishing to know it, but dishonoring the tutor, even though he knew how to save, and was well able to bring them to a straight and blameless life. This, then, it seems, the prophetic word hints at to us, and it is composed with character, as I said. 'For Ephraim,' he says, 'oppressed his adversary,' instead of, 'a victory' Ephraim has conquered a most strange thing and a harbinger of destruction, he has oppressed it as his own enemy, that is, he has generally contended against the law which he has hated. But since the meaning is obscure, he clarifies it in another way, saying: he has trampled on judgment, that is, he has not cared at all for the righteousness in the law; for what is trampled upon is always somehow understood to be in dishonor, and is found to be worthy of no account. And so our Lord Jesus Christ says, "Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, with what will it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. Therefore when he says judgment, you will understand the law.

Thus also the divine David, naming it, cries out to God, "You have executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob. For the law is of God, even if spoken through angels. But what the pretext was for both considering the law an enemy and trampling on judgment, he showed again, immediately adding that he began to go "after vain things. The beginning of such a disease, he says, is to choose to honor vain things, and to follow idols. For it is impossible to be able to follow God and at the same time the wicked and unclean spirits; for this reason the divine Paul also writes: "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. For the God-loving man is single-minded; but the two-faced and shaken one who knows how to walk on both sides, is insecure, and walks easily wherever he may happen to go. Therefore the

rulers of Judah have become, he says, like those who move boundaries, and Ephraim has oppressed his adversary, and he has trampled on judgment; but I will henceforth be like a disturbance to Ephraim and like a sting to Judah. And what this is, it is necessary to investigate. Now, some of the other interpreters, instead of "disturbance," have said "devourer"; and instead of "sting," "rotteness"; but the Seventy have named it "disturbance" and "sting."

For when Ephraim, that is, the ten tribes, was not moderately troubled by the war that had burst upon them, on the one hand by the neighbor from Syria, I mean, and on the other by the Persian one coming from the land of the Assyrians, Judah was in pain and not in moderate fear, but rather also in great agony. For he expected, and not in the distant future, to be caught in the same, or perhaps even much worse, evils; for as the war weighed heavily, and descended upon the cities around Samaria, there was every necessity that the neighboring ones should be destroyed along with them, I mean those of Judah and Benjamin. Therefore, the "disturbance" indicates the attack of the war, and the "sting" in these things indicates the pain from grief and despondency, from which those who are willing to think the things of Christ would surely be free; through whom and with whom to God the Father be glory with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

Book 4

And Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his pain; and Ephraim went to the Assyrians, and sent ambassadors to king Jareb, and he was not able to heal you, and will not stop the pain from you. When God had become like a disturbance to Ephraim, and indeed also like a sting to the house of Judah, Ephraim indeed saw his own sickness, that is, his lack of strength and his weakness; and indeed Judah also his pain; for, as I said, the borders of Benjamin were also ravaged along with those in Samaria; then Ephraim, having despaired at this, and with his own powers not being able to oppose the things that had happened, nor indeed being able to shake off the damages from the war, he has once again offended the all-powerful God, not having considered what was expedient even in the scourges themselves, so to speak; but when the time had come, in which he ought rather to have returned to God, then indeed he chose especially to grieve him and to depart more fiercely. For he was not ignorant of the provider and ruler of all their glory, God, the eternal giver of the ability to overcome those who oppose; but he considered the matter of no account, although the all-wise Moses had cried

out, "The Lord shatters wars, "The Lord is his name," and teaching clearly that through him and in him "One shall chase a thousand, and two shall move "ten thousand.

Then, when it was necessary to ask for the customary help again from him and him alone, and with prayers to persuade the savior to come to his aid, he plotted bitter things against his own head. For he sent embassies to foreigners, and called for alliances from enemies, that is, persuading the invading Assyrian with money, they thought they had been delivered from the impending evils. And so, when Menahem was reigning in Samaria, Pul king of the Assyrians came up against Israel; then with money and embassies they persuaded him to keep away from the land. This is the meaning of *Ephraim went to the Assyrians*. But again Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, once hired Rezin king of the Syrians and made war on Judah and those from the tribe of Benjamin, when Ahaz the son of Jotham was reigning, who, fearing the attack, with embassies and money persuades the Assyrian Tiglath-pileser to aid Jerusalem; and he, taking Damascus by force, also did away with Rezin himself. But even if, he says, Ephraim has gone to the Assyrians, and with money and prayers has purchased a postponement of the attack; and even if Judah sent ambassadors to king Jareb, that is, an avenger or vindicator; for this is what Jareb means; but they have not conquered the divine wrath, nor indeed will they overcome God as he demands justice for so terrible an apostasy.

For he was not able, he says, the one persuaded by money to be quiet for a little while, nor any other of the mercenaries, to heal you; but the sting of pain will in no way cease. It is therefore a most terrible thing not to desire rather to be saved through the gentleness from above, but to take courage in helps from men; although the Spirit cries out through the voice of the blessed David, "It is good to trust in the Lord rather than "to trust in man. It is good to hope in the Lord rather than "to hope in princes; and again through the prophet Jeremiah, "Cursed is the man who has his hope in "man, and shall make the flesh of his arm his support, and whose "heart departs from the Lord, and he shall be as the wild "tamarisk in the desert, which shall not see when good things come. "And blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, "and the Lord will be his hope; and he shall be as a thriving "tree by the water, and he will cast his roots toward moisture, and he will "not be afraid when the heat comes, and upon it will be "woody branches, in

a year of drought he will not be afraid, "and he will not cease bearing fruit. It is better, therefore, to be reconciled to God, and to say that wise thing from a good mind: "I am yours, save me, for I have sought your statutes.

Because I am as a panther to Ephraim, and as a lion to the house of Judah; and I will seize and will go, and I will take, and there will be none to deliver. I will go and will return to my place, until they are made to disappear. He makes clear the reason why those who aided Ephraim benefited him not at all, and their pains will not cease. For I am, he says, as a panther to Ephraim and as a lion to the house of Judah. It is therefore manifest that, when God weakens, there is no one who can save; "For who will turn back the high hand? according to what is written. But that also, with all gentleness removed, the things concerning them have come to pass, he has shown enigmatically, to those who are especially terrible and comparing his own impulse to the most valiant beasts. For the panther rushes with an exceedingly swift course against whomever it may choose, and it leaps with feet so light that perhaps no track is seen, nor is anything marked upon the ground; but the lion roars in the mountains a terrible and heavy sound, similar to thunder, and is able to strike terror into those who hear. "For a lion, he says, will roar, and who will not be afraid? It has an irresistible attack, and a very difficult impulse to withstand. And if it should seize something, this is immediately destroyed, and no one could rescue what has been seized.

But that the panther is a swift beast, and flies away as it were, having seized what it chanced upon; but the lion is an unbreakable thing, and fearless and difficult to withstand, as I said, he himself showed by adding And I will tear and go away, I will take away, and there will be no one to deliver. For this will be fitting for the might of lions; but 'I will tear and go away,' the panther might do, as I said. But that the Lord will also depart from those who have grieved him, and will all but withdraw his help and remove his favor, he has declared by saying I will go and return to my place until they are consumed. For the divine is completely unlimited by place; but it is said to be present to some, when it bestows favor; and again, to be absent from sinners, when it turns away from them, and cuts off its gentleness. For things concerning God are spoken of in a human way; but they are understood, as would be fitting for him. And they will seek my face when they are afflicted. That the terrible things from God are not brought upon those who have an unbridled inclination to what is more shameful, or even upon those accus-

tomed to sin unceasingly, for no reason, but rather for their benefit, and as in the manner of a cure, he teaches again.

For the despisers of the divine gentleness, and those who are ignorant that the greatness of forbearance calls to repentance, will not escape the motions of wrath; from where? But being rather broken by the savagery of calamity, they recognize what is beneficial, and those whom philanthropy did not help at all, being tormented by labors leads to the knowledge of what is beneficial. For in the way that the savage passions in bodies, and as many as do not yield to gentle medicines, are often overcome by fire and steel; in the same manner and way, I think, also the passions that occur in human souls, if they are not driven out by good words, nor overcome by sober reasoning, yield to labor and scourge and incurable calamities. Being afflicted, therefore, then indeed with difficulty, he says, they will seek my face. For when good things are in their power, there is not much perception of that which brings joy for the foolish; but if it should happen that they are deprived of such most desirable things, then indeed especially we come upon them with keener desires, and we receive a great and irresistible perception of that which causes pain. When, therefore, they are afflicted, then they will seek my face. And the word seems conveniently to ascend to the mystery of Christ, and to declare very well the redemption through him and the return to God.

For the face of God that is sought would be understood to be, and very rightly so, the Son, "Who is the image and the radiance and the character of the Father's substance. The Son, therefore, is the true face of God and the Father, if indeed he is known in him; and "he who has seen him has seen the Father. Thus also the divine psalmist names him, crying out to the God of all and saying "Make your face to shine upon your servant; and indeed also as from the person of those who have believed and have now been formed into the Son through the Spirit, "The light of your face has been signed upon us, O Lord; for as the prophet says, "The light of our face, Christ the Lord. They will rise early to me, saying Come and let us return to the Lord our God, for he has torn and he will heal us, he will strike and he will bind us up, he will make us whole after two days; on the third day we will rise, and we will live in his presence before him, and we shall know; we shall pursue the knowledge of the Lord, as the morning we shall find him ready, and he will come to us as the early and late rain to the earth.

The 'rising early' in these words seems to signify, that as if awakened from the sleep of their inherent folly, and somehow brought forth from night and darkness into light and day, they will henceforth eagerly exclaim to one another that it is now fitting to return to the Lord. And this is a return to soberness for those who had slipped into deceit, and were entangled in the worship of idols. For it is already the fruit of sobriety to seek to be outside the mist, that is, the demonic one; and, as if filled henceforth with the divine light, to press on with a right purpose toward the knowledge of the God and Lord who is so by nature and in truth, although they were long disposed to believe that there are also "many gods and many lords" in the world, so as to arrive at such a degree of folly as to even "say to the wood, You are my Father, and to the stone, You have begotten me. But the discourse persists in the figure of speech. For see how, as if speaking of a lion, or some other beast, they say, He himself has torn and will heal us.

For since he had said, "And I will be as a panther to Ephraim, and as a lion to the house of Judah, and I will seize and go away and take, and there shall be none to deliver," they have kept the form of the metaphor, and say that the one who seized will surely heal. For just as anger has caused grief, so the good things that come from gentleness will surely bring gladness to those who have suffered. At the same time we shall also understand this, that when God afflicts someone, no one else could help; but the affairs of those who have suffered would need him and him alone for their restoration. But if it is necessary to extend the power of the prophecy to all who are on the earth, we shall understand this. For in the beginning Adam seized human nature. For He immediately declared it accursed, subjecting it to death and corruption. Therefore wrath struck, but grace applied a bandage. For he healed in Christ, he has called us to the knowledge of the true vision of God, he made us steadfast through the Spirit for the keeping of the commandments, he showed us to be zealous again, both placing us beyond corruption and delivering us from our ancient infirmities, I mean sin and the passions. And such things have happened to those on the earth, not so much in the first, that is, or in the second time, but as in the third, that is, the last and final one.

For all times are numbered as three: first, middle, and last, in which Christ appeared to us. For this reason they say that the things of our bandaging will be for us, as if from medical experience, after two days; with

the prophetic word measuring a day for us as a season. Then, it says, we shall pursue the knowledge of the Lord; and they say 'we shall pursue' is used for 'we shall hasten'; then we shall both rise and live before him. For we have been raised together with Christ. And since "one died for all," we live his life, no longer lying outside the eyes of God because of the transgression, nor indeed cast behind because of sin, but henceforth brought into his sight, and having confidence before him, through the righteousness that is in Christ. And that through him we have also known the Father himself, and that the Son, having become as we are, is for us the fulfillment of every good thing, they confess, saying, We shall find him ready as the morning, that is, as a light rising, as the sun, as the dawn, when the darkness has passed away. And he will be to us as the early and late rain. For he waters us who have received the faith, and have rightly understood his appearing, in a twofold manner, I think. For in the Spirit he reveals the knowledge of the ancient and legal and, in addition to these, the prophetic teachings. And this, I think, is the early rain;

but as the late rain following that he gives the understanding of the evangelical teachings, and the much-desired grace of the apostolic proclamations. And we have become, as the prophet says, a land of delight. And perhaps the blessed David sings about us, saying, "You have visited the earth and watered it; you have abundantly enriched it. and so it has given its fruit of her a hundred, sixty, and thirty, according to the Savior's voice. What shall I do to you, Ephraim? What shall I do to you, Judah? My mercy is as a morning cloud and as the early-morning dew that passes away. The word is not of one who is at a loss; for God would not be ignorant of what is useful for those who have gone astray; nor would he be too weak to accomplish what is naturally beneficial for those caught in the devil's snares. Rather, he accuses them because nothing was lacking for their healing, but they rather turned away with willing impulses to do what is not right. For it is as if he were to say, for instance: "What way of sparing and assistance has not been devised? And what shall I do after that? How will you ward off the sickness? Or with what medicines, then, will you be healed? For it was possible for you, as of a fattening cloud, and very richly, and as of a watering morning dew, to be able to partake, and this abundantly, of my gentleness and incomparable love for humankind.

But you deemed the matter, he says, worthy of no account; you have made of no account such a venerable and much-desired grace. The power of the prophecy would fit especially well with the gift through Christ. For he is the watering cloud, the fattening dew; and morning, because after a kind of night, which is conceived as being in a diabolical mist and darkness, he has come down from heaven; for the Word has come to us from above and from the Father. And "that passes away," because it comes over all that is under heaven. For the saving proclamation is very broad, and it extends over almost all that is under heaven, although the law was in a way constricted, and patrolled only the land of the Jews. "For God was known in Judea," according to the voice of the psalmist; but the whole world has known the Savior and Redeemer of all, that is, Christ. Therefore I have hewn your prophets, I have slain them by the word of my mouth. The destruction of those who lead astray is proof of sparing and love towards them. For there have been false prophets at times in Israel, who attended at the precincts of Baal, leading astray and being led astray, according to what is written. But they were destroyed at times, as God foretold this also, and pronounced a holy sentence upon them; for some Elijah destroyed beside the altar of Baal, as they were talking nonsense and saying, "Hear us, O Baal, hear us;

and others Jehu killed, whom the blessed prophet Elisha anointed king over Israel through one of the young men, with God commanding that this also be done. He, when he was anointed, with God being wrathful against those who lead astray, first destroyed Ahab, and after him Jezebel, then his sons who were in all Samaria. And pretending to want to hold a feast for Baal, he gathered all the false prophets, and pretending to sacrifice, he slaughtered to a man those gathered in a house; and he tore down Baal himself, and burned his pillars; for so it is written. Therefore, that the destruction of the false prophets was a proof of sparing and love for Israel, as I said, he taught by saying, "Therefore I have hewn your prophets. And he says "I have hewn" very well indeed. For they have fallen in a multitude, being reaped like ears of corn. And my judgment shall go forth as the light. For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than whole burnt offerings. He explains to us another way of sparing and love towards them, which if it had been accomplished according to what seems good to him, all Israel and Judah would have been saved.

For not only did he cut down the multitude of the impious false prophets, defining the death fitting for them, but God the Father also sent his own Son at times to make clear, and before all others to those of the blood of Israel, his good will, and to make his judgment manifest. Therefore he also said through the voice of David, "But I was appointed king by him on Zion his holy mountain, proclaiming the Lord's decree; But he, having become according to us through himself, that is, a man, "Of myself "I do not speak; but the Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment "what I should say and what I should speak. Therefore my judgment, he says, will go forth as a light, that is, my will is not overshadowed by riddles, but will be placed nakedly and unconcealedly in the minds of all. But that Emmanuel, having arrived in due time, will not transfer the erring ones to legal worship, nor will he persuade them to honor the things that are still in types and shadows, but will rather bring them to gentleness and kindness and compassion, and to love toward one another, and to a true and unadulterated knowledge of God, makes the purpose of the judgment clear, and he says, that I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than whole burnt offerings. For what did the Savior say? "Therefore, whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them likewise;

and showing that love is a thing most honorable with God, "By this all will know, he says, that you are my "disciples, if you have love for one another. But that he brought back the mind of those who approached him to the knowledge of the God who truly is, how could one doubt? For he presented himself to us as an image of the one who begot him, saying to his genuine disciple; this was Philip; "Do you not believe that I am "in the Father and the Father is in me? He who has seen me, "has seen the Father. I and the Father are one. But if someone should choose to say that the Son himself is the mercy of the Father, which is above sacrifice and whole burnt offerings, he will understand well. For he is so called in the divinely inspired scripture. For God the Father himself said somewhere concerning him to us, "My righteousness is near to come, and my mercy to be "revealed; and the prophets to him: "Show "us, Lord, your mercy, and grant us your salvation, Lord. For Christ is truly the mercy from the Father, as taking away sins, as pardoning transgressions, and justifying by faith, and saving the lost, and showing them superior to death; and what of all good things does he not grant?

Therefore, the knowledge of God, as perfected in Christ, is better than sacrifice and whole burnt offerings;

for through him and in him we have known the Father, and we have been enriched with justification by faith. But they are as a man transgressing a covenant. Since we are diligent in investigating the truth from all sides, it is now necessary to say that the Hebrew version, instead of 'as a man,' has said 'as Adam' transgressing a covenant, so that the transgression of those of Israel might be understood as being of the same kind as that which happened in Adam. For although it was possible for him to have fellowship with God, and to abide in incorruption, and to delight in the pleasures of paradise, he neglected the divine commandment; then he slipped into worse things, being unexpectedly deprived of his former state. So also they; I mean again, those of Israel; though having the God of all as benevolent and friendly, saving and presiding over them, and setting forth his mercy to them as a morning cloud, and as the early dew that passes away, and bringing forth his judgment as light, and crowning them with a worship beyond the law, they became indifferent about what was necessary and useful for their own prosperity and glory, they too despised the God who rules over all, although he spoke clearly through the all-wise Moses, "You shall not make for yourself "an idol, nor any likeness of anything that is in heaven "above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters "under the earth.

And again, "You shall have no other gods "but me. But since they slipped into apostasy in the same way as the first, that is, Adam, they too will surely fall outside of him who knows how to make glad; for they have transgressed a covenant. But if the oracle should be understood more mystically, as concerning Christ, we will say that again, making the sense of what is said manifest: God the Father sent the Son from heaven to enlighten those of Israel, and to make his judgment manifest, and that he might cease persuade you of ancient sacrifices and whole burnt offerings according to the law; but He will rather have mercy, justifying by faith, and will call you to the knowledge of the truly existing God; for through Him and in Him we have beheld the Father, and we have had access, as sacred scripture somewhere says. But those of Israel have become as a man transgressing a covenant. And what this is, I will say again, as best I can. He who transgresses a covenant written by another, either does not himself approach the inheritance assigned by the one who wrote it, or he deprives others who are inscribed of what is owed to

them. The Jews have done some such thing, and this with respect to Christ. How, or in what way? For God the Father bestowed upon the Son, as a certain brilliant and choice inheritance, the leadership over the nation.

For He cried out, as I said, "But I was appointed king by Him on Zion, His holy mountain; and He has given to the Son the spiritual vineyard, that is, Israel; "For the vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth," according to what is written, "is the man of Judah, a beloved new plant. But, as the blessed evangelist John says, "He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. For they cast Him out of the gate and delivered Him to death, saying, "This is the heir; come, let us kill Him and have the inheritance. See, then, how they have become as a man transgressing a covenant. Have you recognized the heir? Then give Him the inheritance that has been assigned. They have therefore transgressed the covenant of the Father, as far as it was in their power, by depriving the heir. But neither did they themselves approach grace, nor did they accept the inheritance given to them by God. For God said through the prophet, "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. But if the new were to be compared with the first, a very great difference in the things promised will be understood.

For there He promised them the land of the Amorites and Gergesites and Hivites, and indeed also of the Jebusites; but the new covenant, that is, the ordinances through Christ, called them through faith to sonship with God, to glory, to incorruptibility, to unending life, to a sharing in God through the Spirit, to the kingdom of heaven. But they were not willing to have the inheritance assigned to them through the Son from God the Father. Therefore, they have grieved in both ways by transgressing the covenant, both by thrusting out the heir, as I said, as far as it was in their power, from the inheritance given to Him by the Father, and by having themselves fallen away from the gifts bestowed upon them by God in Christ. There Gilead despised me, a city working vanity, troubling water, and your strength is as that of a robber. The discourse returns again to the narration of accusations, for which the impious multitude of their false prophets has been rightly destroyed. For it says "there," that is, at that time when Israel turned away, and came to be in such a state as to choose to worship demons; for this is what

"there" is to be understood as referring to in fact, and not rather topically; Gilead has utterly despised me; this is one of the cities beyond the streams of the Jordan, which was also assigned to the Levites, according to the law of Moses; it was therefore a city of Priests and Levites.

But those who ought to have brought the others away from error, and to have instructed them in truth and in the knowledge of what is profitable; "For the lips of a priest," it says, "shall keep judgment, and they will seek the law from his mouth; they themselves have become the inventors of idols, and the craftsmen of vanities. For they worked vanities, that is, idols. And they troubled the water, that is, again they became a cause of confusion to the common people. For it is a custom in holy scripture to compare the countless multitude of people to water. And so, since Babylon was exceedingly populous, and Nineveh, he says, "Her waters are like a pool of water," instead of, as a pool full of waters, so is her multitude. Or also in another way they troubled the water, setting forth to those who approached a teaching as it were turbid and muddy, and dulling the mind of the more simple; for they taught to worship idols. And so through the voice of Ezekiel the God of all again accused them, and as to rams and leaders of the flock, He addressed them, saying, "And you, "sheep, thus says the Lord: Behold, I will judge between "sheep and sheep, and between rams and goats. And is it not "enough for you that you fed on the good pasture, and trampled the remainder "of the pasture with your feet? and you drank "the settled water, and troubled the rest with your feet?

"And My sheep fed on what was trodden by your feet, "and drank the water troubled by your feet. For those of the blood of Levi, being learned in the law, and having as it were the finest pasture, and fine and clear water, the instruction through Moses which was not incapable of leading to truth, they trampled the pasture in a certain way; and they also troubled the water, setting forth a certain thick and muddy teaching, full of earthly impurity, to those who follow them as rams in the order of sheep. Therefore the citizens and inhabitants of Gilead are accused as troubling water, and they are also convicted as having the strength of a pirate. But how it is fitting for us to understand this, we will make clear, by interpreting what follows. Priests have hidden the way of the Lord, they have murdered Shechem, because they have wrought iniquity in the house of Israel. I have seen a horrible thing there, the fornication of Ephraim; Israel and Judah are defiled. The word of the

holy prophets sometimes makes mention of certain histories, which if one chose to be silent about, he could not make clear the meaning of what was said. Therefore, it is necessary for those who wish to interpret such things clearly to be superior to hesitation, and from all sides to love to work out for the hearers that which contributes to their benefit. For this reason we will now come to something of this kind.

Shechem, then, is a certain small city beyond the streams of the Jordan, a neighbor and bordering on Gilead, which we said before was given to those of the blood of Levi, when Joshua son of Nun was dividing the land of promise. It happened then, when there was a holy feast, I mean the Feast of Tabernacles according to the law, when it was the custom for all to go up from everywhere to Jerusalem, and the law commanded this to be observed, that some of those from Shechem, either having been pricked in the heart, and repenting of their error, or even called to sobriety by God, finally wished to obey the divine laws, and sought to go up to Jerusalem, and wished to offer sacrifices, and to complete the feast there according to the laws. And this was a kind of beginning of a turning, and of ceasing to wish to adhere to the worship of idols. For so that some of those from Israel, that is, from the ten tribes, might not go up from Samaria to Jerusalem for the sake of sacrifices and feasts according to the law, and then little by little change to their original state, and come under the kingdom of Judah, Jeroboam devised the calves in the beginning, and commanded them to fulfill the accustomed rites upon them, that wretched man assigning the glory due to God to his own inventions; so that he himself might have his kingdom securely, and God might be deprived as it were of His own.

Therefore, some from Shechem attempted to go up to Jerusalem; but those from neighboring Gilead prevented them from doing this, although, as I said, they were of Levitical blood, and appointed according to the law for priestly service. But since they worked at vain things; for they were craftsmen of idols; as their craft was all but gone to nothing, if Israel should henceforth refuse to worship idols, they were embittered to anger. But when they did not persuade them with words, they came to unholy counsels and deeds. For they prepared some in the middle of the road with robber-like to use ambushes, and to murder savagely the people of Shechem, if they chose to go up to Jerusalem contrary to their will. And very many were utterly destroyed; and those who were saved at all, and were strong enough to escape their

hand, having been deprived of what they were carrying for sacrifice, returned with difficulty to their own land. Therefore the Master of all accuses those from Gilead, because although they, as Levites and Priests, and having been allotted the leadership of the others, were rather obliged to show clearly to the straying the way of piety according to the law, on the contrary they hide it, not allowing those of their own counsel, that is, also from the good will from above, who were moved to choose at last to cast off the error of demons, to think rightly. Therefore, he says, priests have hidden the way of the Lord.

This again is another way of what was clearly said through another prophet: "The priests "did not say, 'Where is the Lord?' and those who handle my law "did not know me, and the shepherds sinned against me. But the crimes of the Gileadites do not stop here. For in addition to hiding the way of the Lord they have also killed the Shechemites, bringing to bear the hands of robbers. For because of this he also said to Gilead, "And your strength is as that of a pirate. But see how God brings us to the memory of the ancient history, and recalls the old crimes of Levi. And what I am saying is something like this again. For Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, that is, of Israel (for Jacob was renamed Israel), once went out of her father's tent; for she desired to see the daughters of the natives; and she was in Shechem. Then Hamor, the son of Shechem, finding the virgin, unexpectedly violated her; for he deflowered her. Therefore, the maiden's brothers, Levi and Simeon, being greatly distressed at this, devised a plot; for they persuaded the men of Shechem to be circumcised. When this had happened, while they were still in pain and overcome by suffering, they killed them utterly, saying this to their father who was accusing them of their unbridled anger, "But "should they treat our sister as a prostitute?

He now brings us to the memory of such a history, saying with a certain moral tone, they murdered Shechem, because they committed iniquity in the house of Israel. This, he says, they alleged at that time, that they had sinned against the house of Jacob, that is, of Israel, by deflowering the maiden. For this reason we too killed the Shechemites. But now, he says, they resolved to turn to God, to love the things in the law, to fulfill sacrifices, to celebrate feasts, to depart at last from the defilements of idolatry. What then of the Levites? They hid the way of the Lord and murdered the Shechemites. Or perhaps do they now have cause to accuse them, that they committed

iniquity in the house of Israel? What maiden has now been violated? Against what Dinah have they sinned, what are the crimes of the Shechemites, of those who have honored God, of those who have loved to choose at last to think rightly, and to hasten to carry out the things in the law. Therefore I have seen, he says, the most horrible fornication of Ephraim there. For one would be amazed, and very rightly so, seeing the sacred and chosen race so far turned away from the love of God, as not only to become inventors of idols for the others, but also to hinder them, if they should choose to love the things of God. Therefore, he says, Israel and Judah are defiled.

So that if they should suffer any of the expected things, let no one blame God for being indignant. Begin to harvest for yourself when I restore the captivity of my people, when I heal Israel. Again the word is to the inhabitant of Gilead. And it teaches that I, as God, began to both heal and restore Israel. And so the Shechemites desired at last to submit their neck to God, and to celebrate feasts, no longer those of Jeroboam, but rather those according to the law, and to escape the deceit that was devised I know not how; but you, O Gileadite, all but sheared them, or rather, harvested them, and made unjust wealth from robbery. And again he exclaims with a moral tone 'begin to harvest for yourself', saying something very much like this, 'Or rather, even if He does not say it, subtly implying that, 'I also will make you the first-fruits of those who are punished.' For when I begin to shear Israel, and to harvest those who practice such terrible impiety, I will make you the first victim of my wrath. For it is necessary to know that Pul, king of the Assyrians, was the first to come against Samaria and Israel, and he carried off into captivity first the tribes beyond the Jordan. And one of the cities there was Gilead. Therefore, just as when I was turning Israel back and beginning to heal it, you, O Gileadite, harvested for yourself the fruits of banditry;

so I, when I hand Israel over to the Assyrians, will make you the first-fruits of those who are sent away. And the ancient crimes are related to the charges of the Jews against Christ. For God the Father was calling all of Israel to choose at last to think better things, and to cease from the worship in the Law, and instead to choose the new and evangelical worship. But they opposed not moderately those who were turning back and being called to healing. For it is written that, 'The Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess him to be the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.' And their leaders also heard, 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves do not enter, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.' Therefore, they have been given over to enemies, and have paid a bitter penalty for their drunken insolence against Christ. And the iniquity of Ephraim shall be revealed, and the wickedness of Samaria, because they have wrought falsehood. And a thief shall enter in to him, a robber stripping him in his way, so that they may sing in harmony as those who are in accord in their heart. Good by nature and long-suffering, 'long-suffering and of great mercy' is truly the Lord of all. But while He is still long-suffering with those who sin, their crimes are somehow still concealed;

but when He now proceeds and brings justice and no longer tolerates inaction, then they are manifest, and seem now to be revealed, and are wont to be seen brought into the midst, all but before the eyes of all. This, he says, will now also happen against Ephraim and Samaria. And Ephraim here you will understand as the royal tribe in Samaria, from which came Jeroboam and his successors; and Samaria, those in Samaria, that is, the ten tribes. And he says their sins will be revealed, for such reasons as these. That they also wrought falsehood, practicing a cold and stale worship, and having become, as I said, craftsmen of idols, and that a thief, that is, a robber, shall enter in to him, instead of: a thief entered and rested and lodged with him, stripping him in the way; so that from this it might be shown, he says, that they have a heart that is in accord, that is, clearly, harmonious and of one mind. For some robbed those wishing to go up to Jerusalem; and others shared the crimes with them, having impiously partaken of the things that were stolen.

And the teachers of the Jews also rejoiced when those who believed in Christ were fiercely warred against, and they became partners in the assault and robbery of others, gloating over the persecuted faithful, and receiving a certain robber, as it were, Satan, into their mind and heart, who strips their mind of all piety, so that they might have a heart in harmony with him. For just as 'He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit,' in the same way, I think, he who is joined to Satan will have one heart with him. I have remembered all their iniquities; now their own counsels have surrounded them, they have come to be before my face. As long as we sin in ways that are tolerable and measured, as human beings, having a nature prone to slip into sin, God passes it over out of his innate love for mankind. For he knows 'our frame, he remembers that we are dust,' according to the voice of the psalmist. But

whenever something great and extraordinary and truly unbearable is done by us, which and sometimes it finally sharpens the very gentleness of the judge, and all but forces it, even unwillingly, toward anger; then it runs to the recollection of all, so to speak, of the sins committed by certain ones. For this reason, he says concerning Ephraim and Samaria, that I have remembered all their wickedness. And it is likely that in these words the prophetic oracle again wishes to indicate to us that very thing.

For I have benevolently overlooked, he says, the slaughter of those in Shechem who were destroyed by Levi, on account of the violation of Dinah, the daughter of Jacob. But since now they have also killed, I will remember their ancient injustice as well, and as now a murderer and cruel, I will demand punishment for their former sins. For their own counsels, he says, have surrounded them; just as if he were saying, They are finally besieged by their own thoughts and unholy considerations. For they once killed those from Shechem by deceit and trickery, but now by robberies, although they were turning to God. But since their transgressions have now become beyond description before My face, for I will not overlook, he says, such evils, nor by putting them out of sight any longer will I be slow to punish. Their own counsels have surrounded the Jews, especially in the things concerning Christ. For they killed the prophets, while God was still forbearing; but since they also became slayers of the Lord, their own counsels surrounded them, and the God of all remembered all their wickedness. In their wickedness they have made kings glad, and in their lies, princes. They ought rather, he says, by doing good and choosing to live according to the law, to have appeased the redeemer for themselves, and to have gladdened the one who saves, who has invincible strength for this.

But this they have not done, but having become exceedingly slothful concerning what is necessary for their own life and useful for their well-being, they have made it a matter of no account to offend God; and they acted hypocritically with their own kings and rulers, gladdening them by their compliance with whatever seemed good to them, and offering the things that grieve God as pleasure and delight to those who lead them astray. And again he accuses them, as having run together with Jeroboam and the rulers under him, and as having without delay consented to the profanation he devised concerning the golden calves, and to his wishing to impiously lead them away to another worship. For they should have, they should have, in response

to their schemes and utterly outrageous undertakings, generally brought forth the genuineness of their love for God, and tried to restrain them in their folly, not gladdening them by readily going into agreement. And the saying is true, even if it is understood again of those who crucified Emmanuel. For by lying and slandering him, they caused Herod and Pontius Pilate and the leaders of the Synagogue to rejoice. For somewhere the divine Peter also said to the Father and God of all, "For truly in this city there were gathered together "against your holy child Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod "and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel.

All of them are adulterers, like an oven heated for baking, that ceases from burning from the flame, from the kneading of the dough, until it is leavened. a day of your kings. In what way they gladdened kings in their wickedness, and princes in their lies, he explains clearly to us in these words. The account of the history is as follows, which if someone should happen to know it, he will certainly understand the meaning of the prophecy. When, therefore, after the ten tribes had broken away, the accursed Jeroboam reigned over them, he was greatly afraid, lest somehow by going up to Jerusalem for the feasts according to the law, they might be persuaded little by little to choose the scepter of Judah again, and being brought to the remembrance of their ancient customs, they might either kill him, or rather, drive him out, and not willingly then, from ruling over them. For this reason the god-hated and wretched man planned to dedicate the golden calves to them, and devised the manner of the impious false worship, and he undertook to innovate the feasts for the heifers, as the account of the Hebrew tradition has it.

Therefore, in the beginning he was exceedingly fearful, lest, agreeing with the worship that had come to them from above and from their fathers, they might either thrust him from the throne, or even destroy him, as I said, and, rejecting the undertaking, choose to return to their former state, being grieved and justly indignant, as though Moses had been insulted and the divine commandment given to them had been trodden underfoot. For this reason, being bitter in deceits, he sent many throughout Israel to spread rumors and say that they should also make calves, and innovate their own feasts, and to ask this very thing from the king. And when he learned that the crowds were very readily disposed to this, consenting and rejoicing with those who had advised such things, he gathered everyone together and

clearly proclaimed that it was fitting to worship the golden heifers, and he revealed the day of the feast, the fifteenth day of the eighth month, as it is written. When Jeroboam said these things at that time, the people acclaimed him and cried out, "This is the king's day; we too will follow this purpose"; and they wished to cheer him with certain other such praises. And those chosen to be leaders were carried along with the crowds, echoing and consenting with them. The word of the prophet reminds us of these things at present. For he says, all are adulterers, like an oven burning for the baking of a burnt offering from the flame.

For having inclined towards spiritual fornication, that is, apostasy from God—for this is fornication—they were like ovens already fired and ready for baking whatever one might cast in; for they were filled with flame, that is, of a hot and, as it were, burning desire. And they were like a lump of dough, already having the leaven, but completely leavened on the day of their king; when, as I just said, Jeroboam had openly declared that it was necessary to sacrifice to the heifers and to celebrate the feasts for them, they themselves cried out, "This is the king's day," just as, as I said, the account of the tradition has it. Then it was also completely leavened, that is, it was entirely possessed by impiety. Therefore, with their minds pre-heated by hot and unrestrainable desires for transgression, and pre-leavened as it were in this very manner on the king's day, they slid into the limit of wickedness. The Jews did something like this again in the case of Christ. For by speaking falsely against his glory, and little by little drawing the crowds away from their love for him, the scribes and Pharisees committed spiritual fornication, causing the common multitude to apostatize from him. The rulers began to be angry from wine; he stretched out his hand with plagues, because their hearts were kindled like an oven. Wine, as it seems, he here calls that from the vine of Sodom, which intoxicates hearts, and clouds the mind and fills it with a destructive and abominable mist.

Therefore, when some were displeased with both the innovation of the heifers and indeed of the feasts, certain of the rulers were provoked to anger. And so that the more sober multitude of those who were silent and did not tolerate the acclaim might not be seen, they themselves stretched out their hands with the crowds, and cried out even more loudly, "This is the king's day," and they approved the ways of impiety. Therefore, he says, they were enraged, being drunk with an unholy drunkenness, and they gnashed their

teeth at those not running along with such shameful things, stretching out their hands with plagues. And he calls the crowds plagues. For he says they applauded, as I said, although they were obliged to lead them to piety and to reveal the path of what is profitable. But, he says, they themselves were also hot in heart, having received into their mind the destructive flame of the desire for transgression. While they were dashing them down all night, Ephraim was filled with sleep; in the morning it happened, he was kindled like the light of a fire. I said that the God-hated Jeroboam was exceedingly fearful, in being still only in the thoughts of his unholy undertakings. For he thought, and very reasonably, that Israel would be indignant if it should learn of such a thing, and would not make small account of the transgression of the ancestral customs.

But when he himself had addressed the crowds, that they must worship the heifers, and they gladly accepted the thought, and together with the rulers applauded, as men who had chosen to think and to do things right and expedient, he was free from fears, he departed from suspicion, and was thereafter cheerful, and was full of luxury. Therefore, in their being dashed down, that is, at that time, when they were falling into ruin and destruction, assenting and consenting to him, and holding in honor the transgression of the love for God, then, it says, Ephraim, that is, Jeroboam of the tribe of Ephraim, slept the whole night. As if it were to say, although formerly he had been kept awake by fears and suspicion, he was without care, he lived luxuriously thereafter, and was in soft beds, sleeping the whole night. But when morning came, he was more fervent than the others. For he was kindled like a flame of fire, and was heated along with the crowds, not deeming the matter worthy of any delay, so to speak, but bringing to fulfillment, and very eagerly, the display of his unholy undertakings. They were all heated, their hearts were as an oven, and it devoured their judges; all their kings have fallen, there was none among them that called unto me. True, then, are the things I said; for those around the accursed Jeroboam were heated, and "were kindled like a flame of fire.

Has then the matter of impiety advanced only as far as what was dared by him? By no means, it says; for they were all heated, both those after him still, and the destructive fire of such heat consumed all their judges; and it also destroyed all those who reigned in succession after him. For there was not among them one who wished to worship me, and deemed it worthy to sup-

plicate the God of all, and who had for himself the boasts of the true knowledge of God. Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake not turned. He strongly blames those of the tribe of Ephraim who have been invested with the royal honor over Israel in Samaria, as being accustomed to think nothing better than those under their hand and the common herd; but running with them and being easily carried away with them in everything, although it was necessary, as leaders, to guide them to the good, and with higher considerations to see what would contribute to their salvation. But this they did not do; instead they were mixed up with the crowds, all suffering one and the same sickness of folly, and in addition to this, persistence in wickedness, and the unchangeable nature of a mind that in no way gives up what it has chosen to do, even if these things are agents of ruin and destruction for them.

Therefore, he says that Ephraim has become a cake not turned, as from the image or example of breads baked on stones, which if someone does not turn, there is every necessity that they be burned and be seen as useless thereafter, and that what is edible is lost by the abundance of the flame. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knew it not; yea, gray hairs are sprinkled upon him, yet he knew it not. He calls strangers those of other tribes and different races, I mean Persians, and their bordering and neighboring Moabites and Idumaeans, and the nations of the Syrians, who have all but devoured Ephraim. For since he called him a bread, a cake, he has remained in the figure of speech. And by his strength he means the multitude that is beyond number; for the tribe especially of Ephraim, being very populous, and on this account raising a high brow, thought perhaps it would be terrible and irresistible even to the leaders or generals of the Assyrians. But when they arrived, having taken up the war against them, they were consumed without a struggle, and were led into captivity. But 'he knew it not,' it says, that is, he did not understand the cause of the calamity, although it was necessary for him at least through what had happened to come to his senses. which For what is not seen, trials often, by foresight, place it before their eyes. And it is better to consider what is expedient, without waiting for the trial.

But if one should fail in this, at least for those who have suffered, it will then remain to be able to understand from the trial itself what is necessary and beneficial. Ephraim, he says, therefore did not know, although grown

grey, that is, after a long time had passed, and it was not unable to teach and persuade him to learn, in what way such things had happened to them. And because he had offended the one who is able to save, they slipped into terrible and unexpected evils. And the pride of Israel shall be humbled to his face, and they did not return to the Lord their God, and they did not seek him in all these things. He interprets clearly what he said; for what Ephraim did not know, although grown grey, he again makes plain. For the pride of Israel, he says, that is, the apostasy, which he has contracted from contempt, because of which he has also turned away to foreign gods, dishonoring the God who is by nature and truly God, will be turned against his face. It is as if he were to say, it will prove to be a cause of pride and dishonor for him; for this is what it means for something to be turned against someone's face.

But although he suffered such things, again he did not know God, nor indeed did they, being hard and unyielding, and very sick with the lack of love for God, and seen in the midst of terrible things, make account of returning to him. This is an accusation of the utmost insensibility, and a clear proof of a foolishness that has reached its limit. And Ephraim was like a senseless dove, having no heart; he called upon Egypt, and they went to the Assyrians. As they go, I will cast my net upon them; like the birds of the sky I will bring them down; I will chastise them by the hearing of their affliction. It is necessary to recall again what is written in the fourth book of Kings; for we will thus easily understand the meaning of the things before us. Hoshea, therefore, son of Elah, reigned in Samaria over Israel. Shalmaneser the Assyrian sent messengers to him, demanding the customary gifts more tyrannically, and all but wishing to exact tribute from Israel. But he refused the servitude, and rather planned resistance, even if he should happen to choose to impose the law of war on Israel. Then he sent an embassy to So, the tyrant of Egypt, asking for aid; for he thought that with him he would overcome the hand of the Assyrians. But he being very grieved at this, takes up war against Israel. Then Hoshea became his servant, and Israel itself, taken captive by the spear along with him, was removed from Samaria.

Therefore Ephraim became like a most senseless dove, not having innocence for a good purpose. Therefore Christ also says, "Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. For simplicity of character, and a free mind, would rightly be worthy of all account; but in the absence of understanding, simplicity is harmful, and the thing is then foolishness. Ephraim, therefore, is senseless;

how, or in what way? For he called upon the Egyptians; but they went captive to the Assyrians, since So was weak in providing aid. Then how was it not better for him to seek not rather the care from men, but that which is from above and invincible? Therefore the God of all also said through the voice of Isaiah, "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who trust in horses and in chariots. And that not without God did the hand of those who came to their aid also weaken, he has shown by adding that wherever they commit fornication, he will bring them down like sparrows, casting a net or a snare upon them, and not allowing them to be boastful, but bringing them down as from on high to the earth, that is, from a very high and lofty brow to a pitiful and humble mind, and to that which would be fitting for those who have fallen under the hand of their enemies. Then he says, that I will chastise them by the hearing of their affliction, wishing, I think, to signify that.

For the rumors of what was to come preceded for them the experience, and a dreadful report surely terrified those in Samaria. Therefore they were being chastised, hearing of the affliction that was all but upon them. But if they had been wise, this would have been enough for their conversion; but being exceedingly insensible to pain, they were not even shamed by the experience itself, having a disobedient mind that was hard, unbreakable, and very sick. Woe to them, for they have strayed from me; they are wretched, because they have acted impiously against me. That the pretext for their calamities was their apostasy from God, He makes clear to us through these words. For just as those who are physically ill would be found to be the cause of the severity of their diseases, if they did not accept the physicians and the things by which the pain could be soothed, so also we, by removing ourselves from the love for God, will do no small injustice. For nothing saves the one who offends God. Therefore, because they have fled from God, for this reason they are wretched and accursed; and having acted impiously, by worshipping the falsely-named gods and offering reverence to them, they will be subject to the woe. "For if God shuts a man up, "who can open it? according to what is written. But I redeemed them, yet they spoke lies against me, and their hearts did not cry out to me, but instead they wailed in their beds;

over wheat and wine they gashed themselves. That He brings punishments commensurate with each one's transgressions, He intimates again. For they spoke against the God who redeemed them, who had led them out of the house of bondage "with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm," as

it is written, and had delivered them from the oppression of the Egyptians. They spoke against His glory, assigning the praises for the good things they had received to the unclean demons and to the works of their own hands, just as when they had carelessly made the calf in the wilderness, all but impiously insulting the Redeemer, they said in their madness: "These are your gods, O Israel, who "brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Therefore it is indeed insolence and drunken violence against God, and a most manifest contempt, to attribute reverence to carved images and demons, and to offer them thank-offerings, and to bring down the excellence of the highest glory to them. And not only did they speak against God, as I have just said, but they also turned away completely from even thinking at all that things which sustain life in the world are from Him. For their hearts have not cried out to me, He says, that is, they sought nothing from me, although being disposed and having believed that I am the provider and giver of every good thing.

And that God does not require a shout, but rather a disposition of the mind and heart, we shall know also through these things. Therefore, they have not cried out to God. But indeed they have also turned away unbridledly to extravagant love of the flesh, so as to wail upon their beds. And this is a demonstration of shameful ways, and of an unrebuked inclination to fornication, and of a mind broken towards pleasures. And it would be fitting only for those who have practiced forcing the distinctives of men towards the habits and appearances and voices of women to slip into such a shameful and most abominable state. But these are effeminate, and very exceedingly enervated, and having come to the end of uncleanness among men. Moreover, to say that they cut themselves over wine and wheat, seems to me somehow to signify that. For giving thanks to their own idols for the fruitfulness of their fields, I mean both of wheat and of the vine, they wished to practice the so-called rites; as if being possessed and raving, and cutting their chests and both their hands with iron, so that also perhaps by sacrificing, as it were, their own blood on the spot to the carved images, they might at last be convicted of the ultimate godlessness. At these things perhaps another prophet also smiles, saying, "Sacrifice men, for calves have failed.

And such things are sufficient to grieve most exceedingly the God who has authority over all, to whom they ought rather to have brought thank-

offerings, and not to have foolishly assigned the glory due to Him to wood and stones. They were disciplined in me, And I strengthened their arms, and against me they devised evil things. They turned away to nothing, they became like a bent bow. He adds another manner of their ingratitude to them, showing them to be unholy and senseless. For I, he says, although formerly they differed in nothing from irrational beasts and were utterly without understanding, have both instructed them by law, and I have shown them to be wise, knowing what is profitable and the way of righteousness, and not ignorant of the accomplishment of all good order, so that they even now say, rejoicing in themselves, "Blessed are we, Israel, because the things pleasing to the Lord are known to us. And the generosity towards them did not stop at these things; but indeed I also made them most valiant, and sufficiently equipped to be able to subdue anyone willing to make war and resist. for they have conquered many and great nations, and this without toil; but towards me, the God who was the giver of such things to them, they have become wicked, that is, scornful and apostates; and the manner of their turning away has become for nothing. For a man-made image from tangible matter is nothing at all.

But if they had found something better, their transgression might reasonably have some justification. But since such things are absolutely nothing compared to God, but are absurdity and foolishness and whatever is close to these, there is no reason for their turning away, having a plausible cause. Therefore they have turned away to nothing, and in addition to this they have become like a bent bow, not relaxed towards repentance, not slackening the tension that carries them to such shame and folly. It should be known that others, interpreting this, have published, they became like a treacherous bow, so that Israel might again be understood as having done such a thing. For those who should have rather, like a bow, been bent against enemies, and vigorously shoot those who practice resisting, have unwittingly struck themselves bitterly as if with the points of bows. For by offending God, at least in the ways already mentioned, what else could they be found doing, than arming their own hands against themselves? The passage at hand might be understood, if it seems good to anyone, in another way also. For the God of all bent Israel, as it were, like his own bow, fighting against the tyranny of the devil, and leading them out against the deceit of idolatry; for Israel alone, out of all the nations in the whole world, at least according

to what seemed right to the law, shook off the worship of idols, and was devoted to the one who is by nature and truly the Lord of all;

but they turned to the opposite. For those who were obliged to do that, have warred against God for the glory of idols; they have therefore become like a treacherous bow, using their archery in the opposite way. Their rulers shall fall by the sword because of the unruliness of their tongue. The things from wrath will not come only upon those who are subject to the leaders, he says, but it will seize, and very swiftly, also those who are accustomed to revel in the highest honors. for they will fall by the sword, and the pretext for their suffering will be the licentiousness of their tongue. For it is truly unruliness to say to the wood, "You are my God; and to the stone, "You begot me. And it would be very fitting to say such things to Emmanuel, against whom the scribes and Pharisees have moved their unruly tongue, although he was both instructing and strengthening, it is clear that this is spiritually; taking none of which into account, they also turned away to nothing. For they turned to "teachings, the commandments of men. and they have become like a treacherous bow, impiously shooting their own Lord, for whom they should rather have striven universally, and hasten to conquer their opponents, just as did the true disciples of those who believed. This their derision in the land of Egypt to their bosom. as earth, as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they transgressed my covenant, and acted impiously against my law.

These things have been said very obscurely, with the Hebrew language, as I suppose, causing the interpreters much difficulty; but we, following the order of the thoughts, will say what comes to mind. This disparagement of them, therefore, he says in the land of Egypt, that is, since me, who am always saving and chastising and rendering unconquerable to those who oppose them—for I strengthened them—they impiously scorned, allotting their worship to demons, and growing bold in the land of the Egyptians, and thinking that the aids from there would suffice them for prosperity, for this reason their undertaking will also turn back into their own bosom, and they will find no good rewards for their own foolish counsel. But they will receive their just dues as if into their bosom. For he will come, he will come, he says, the one who will ravage them, the tyrant of the Assyrians, having a multitude of warriors greater than can be numbered. And he will come to them as a whole land and country and fatherland, so that one might think

that the entire land of the Persians and Medes had moved from its place and come to Samaria; this is what "as the land" means. And he will come also as an eagle to the house of the Lord, that is, he will fly up swift and terrible even against the temple of God itself, and will overrun the kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem, seizing without toil, and carrying it off to his own land.

For first the country of the Samaritans was sacked, and in it somewhere, certainly, was Israel, and later, finally, the renowned city itself was taken, over which the prophet Jeremiah also lamented, saying: "How the city sits solitary, that was full of people! She who was great among the nations has become a tributary. For that the temple was also burned with the city is in no way doubtful. But these things will happen to them, he says, because they have transgressed the divine covenant and have acted impiously against the spoken law. For holding in very little esteem the things decreed through the all-wise Moses, they were eager to live according to their own wills, and each made what seemed good to him both his mode of worship and his law. They shall cry to me, O God, we know you; for Israel has turned away from good things, they have pursued an enemy. Those who cut themselves over grain and wine, and who celebrate feasts to unclean demons, those who have not cried out to God with their hearts, nor indeed have they acknowledged the giver and governor of all cheerfulness to them, but neither have they honored him with fitting thanksgivings, since in the breadth of their prosperity they have ignored him, yet they will know him when they have suffered what they must, and when they come to a bitter and abominable end of their own ill counsel, they will cry out and will call upon him with difficulty, having slipped into terrible and incurable calamities.

But having received, as it were, the experience of their own terrible things as a counselor, they will then accuse their own foolishness, saying something like this: Israel has turned away from good things. For when it was possible to have them, and that richly, being established with God, and having been very zealous to carry out the things that seemed good to him, they pursued an enemy, that is, they themselves have almost voluntarily run to their enemies, and have come under the hand of those who hate them, having grieved by their apostasies the God who always saves and makes them superior to their opponents. It is therefore all-wise and truly beneficial not to await the experience of terrible things, but rather to refuse it while it is still absent,

and to hasten to contemplate what is profitable before it comes. They have made kings for themselves, and not by me; they have ruled, and they did not make it known to me; their silver and their gold they have made for themselves idols, so that they might be utterly destroyed. He denies the kingship of both Jeroboam and of those who reigned in succession over Israel in Samaria, although he himself had expressly said, "For this thing is from me; and he threatened Solomon himself, who had followed the opinions of foreign women and had impiously dedicated precincts and altars to their objects of worship, that "I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. What then shall we say?

That the God of all is a liar? May it not be so; but we will turn rather to what it is necessary to think rightly, considering that. For it is written, "Shall there be evil in a city, which the Lord has not done? And by evil he means the affliction. For some things He does according to His own will, but others He allows to happen, punishing some, even if it happens somehow against His will. Since, being able to prevent it, He often allows something to happen providentially, He is said to be the author of these things as well. For example: for we shall now proceed to Solomon himself; for He gave him the ability to build the temple of stone in Jerusalem, He made him wise, and distinguished for incomparable understanding; this was a work of His own will. He allowed his kingdom to be broken, not Himself bringing matters to this point according to His own will, but as it were being silent, even at what was not willed, because of His indignation against him. Therefore, although Jeroboam reigned, and those after him, it was not at all with God's assent. For things that happen as a punishment out of anger toward some have a different character, and would not by chance be understood to be of the same sort as those that are truly according to His will. Therefore they have made kings for themselves, and not through me. And since they ruled, it was almost as if God did not know it;

for what is against His will He seems not even to know; their rule became weak and easily overthrown, and unable to resist, and not such as to save those subject to it. "For through him kings reign, and tyrants through him hold the earth. But that they suffer from great insensibility in this, and used the things given by God to grieve Him, or rather even for the destruction of their own souls, He taught by saying: Their silver and their gold they made into idols for themselves, that they might be utterly destroyed. For from

where it was possible for them to prosper by having compassion on their brethren, from there they offend God, and unwillingly change the way of salvation to the necessity of being destroyed by Him. Cast off thy calf, O Samaria; my wrath is kindled against it: how long will they be unable to be cleansed in Israel? A craftsman made it, and it is not God; because your calf, O Samaria, was a deceiver. How very well he says "cast off," as if of a stain and pollution and of the utmost impurity. For this is truly the nature of idolatry, rendering the soul of man abominable and foul and hateful before God. He therefore counsels as one compassionate and good, to change for the better, and to put away wrath, and henceforth to curtail the causes of what is to come, and by repentance to cut short the terrible things, even if they have sobered up late.

For He says He was provoked clearly by the calf, showing that, being philanthropic, He sometimes overlooks the failings that arise from human weakness, but He always punishes apostasy, and considers the turning away of the insolent to be unbearable, I mean the need to worship demons. For how long will you, having been in impurity, remain unchanged? What time will be sufficient for you to put away your foolishness? For what a craftsman has made, you believe to be God; and what is of no help, but rather leads to ruin and destruction, you consider venerable and worthy of acceptance; for the calf deceives, and nothing else. Because they have sown the wind, and their destruction shall receive it: a stalk having no strength to make meal; and if it should make any, strangers shall devour it. By a comparison with those who labor in vain in agriculture, He shows the fruitlessness of their inherent ill counsel and their zeal for vain things. For for some to choose to labor over these things, and sometimes to worship them diligently, to honor them with offerings and sacrifices, would be nothing other than to gather seed that has been ruined by the wind, which is completely unable to benefit the one who labors. For what is the reward for zeal in idolatry? Or what benefit from carved images? Or in what way will those things delight anyone, which must certainly come to destruction?

Therefore, those who are accustomed to do such things and devote their zeal to the honors of idols are like those who sow what is ruined by the wind, and to a handful of grain stalks to one who has no wheat, and has not prepared it for the need of flour. But if anything should come from them, that is, even if they should seem somehow to be zealous and genuine concerning

the works of error, this also will go from them to strangers, and will in no way please God. And by strangers he means the falsely named gods. Therefore our zeal is utterly without reward in those things that grieve God, and the ways of equity will be wholly and completely slandered before him, falling short of the pursuit of the good.

Book 5

Israel is swallowed up, now he has become among the nations as a useless vessel, because they went up to the Assyrians; Ephraim blossomed by himself, he loved gifts, therefore they shall be delivered to the nations. He says that Israel is swallowed up, as having endured a miserable shipwreck, and drowned in the waves of his own sins, and as if shattered against some rock by the movements of divine wrath. Or, in another way, he says he was swallowed up, as by a terrible and insatiable dragon, Nebuchadnezzar; for another of the holy prophets also spoke thus to us, taking on the persona of Israel, being already captured by the spear and serving his captors, "He has devoured me, he has divided me, a subtle darkness has seized me, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has swallowed me like a dragon, he has filled his belly from my delicacies. And in another way it is true, that the many-headed dragon in a way swallows up those who fall away from the love of God, and makes them his own food, whom the voice of the psalmist also says was given as food to the peoples of the Ethiopians. "For you," he says, "shattered the head of the dragon; you gave him as food to the peoples of the Ethiopians. For those who have a most black and lightless mind within themselves, are fittingly both thought of and called Ethiopians both by ourselves and by God. these feed the many-headed dragon, and they in turn are fed upon by him.

Therefore Israel is swallowed up, and has become among the nations as a useless vessel. for having been carried away to the Assyrians and Medes, he was made completely useless, having been forced, perhaps, to think the things that seemed right to them. or, because he became a useless vessel, for this reason he was also swallowed up, and leaving the one who bore him, he migrated to the nations. The Master of all says something of this kind also through the voice of Jeremiah concerning one of those who had reigned in Samaria over Israel: "Jeconiah has been dishonored as a vessel for which there is no need, because he was cast out and thrown forth into a land which he did not know. O earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord, write this man down as a proclaimed man. Therefore Israel was made useless. For what need

has God of a soul that is wandering, and sin-loving, and easily turning aside to anything whatsoever that is amiss and to that which is beyond all evils, the turning away from slavery under God? What then is the cause of Israel suffering such things? That they themselves went up to the Assyrians. For he all but says, they have run as deserters to the enemy. how or in what way? For fearing their attack, they did not rather seek God's help by repenting, but rather persuaded them with gifts to be quiet for a short time.

Then he in a way mocks this kind of consideration, as being rash and useless for them, speaking about those who had reigned from the tribe of Ephraim, who also sent gifts to the tyrants of the Assyrians, Ephraim blossomed by himself. It is as if he were to say: the one from the tribe of Ephraim, about to be cut down like some tree trunk having reigned, and as it were withered by the fire of divine wrath, he sprouted up again by himself, that is, without me, and not having my accord, he thought, it says, that he would live and put down a root deep, and would not slip from his own thrones. For he purchased a temporary and short delay of the evil, by loving gifts; not rather to receive, but to give. And what was the result? No benefit at all, but they will be handed over to the nations, and through the very things that will happen, he might learn that no one can sprout up again by himself; nor would it profit those who offend God to give gifts to their enemies. For they will be subject, and not for long, to justice. Now I will receive them, and they shall cease a little from anointing a king and rulers. Those from the tribe of Ephraim who reigned over them have been, so to speak, the cause of all the depravity of Israel.

For first the accursed Jeroboam became the inventor of the apostasy, setting up for them golden calves, and of the so-called high places, that is, of the precincts on mountains and hills, appointing priests, those not from the tribe of Levi, but rather whoever "filled their hand," as it is written. Then after him, when the Assyrians were expected, in the time of the reign of Menahem, they sent money, persuading them to keep away from the land. For this reason, the divine threat has been justly made against the kingdom from the tribe of Ephraim that was established over Israel. For 'now I will receive them,' he says, not as having a good character, nor as having chosen to live best, nor indeed as desiring the polity according to the law, but as a disciplinarian, and demanding justice, and already calling them to judgment. For out of gentleness I allowed the things from divine wrath to be post-

poned, during the past time, but 'now I will receive them,' he says, so that by the experience of terrible things they may scarcely learn that they are also under a Master, and not outside my hand. And that the things from wrath are no longer postponed, he has confirmed by saying 'now.' Therefore, having been received so that they may be disciplined, they will henceforth cease from anointing a king and rulers. For while serving the Assyrians and Medes, what leisure would they have to perform the works of apostasy? They who indeed were continually lamenting and bewailing the unexpected disaster.

But it should be known that after Cyrus son of Cambyses released Israel from captivity, they no longer anointed in Samaria those from the tribe of Ephraim, but all came under one yoke, with those from the tribe of Judah reigning in Jerusalem. For they dwelt no longer dividedly, but all in Jerusalem. And the first to rule after the times of the captivity over the kingdom of both, I mean, of both Israel and Judah, or rather of all twelve tribes without exception, was Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel from the tribe of Judah, with the Levitical orders being led and the ministry of the high priesthood being administered by Jesus son of Jozadak the high priest. Because Ephraim has multiplied altars for sins, beloved altars have become his; I will write for him a multitude and his statutes. His beloved altars were accounted as strange things to him. He explains the reason for which he now justly brings upon the rulers the necessity of falling from their rule. For Ephraim has made very many altars for sins. And the discourse rushes also to the first Jeroboam, who reigned from the tribe of Ephraim, and after him to his successors, who, on every mountain and hill setting up altars to demons, persuaded those of Israel to sacrifice.

Then, when it was necessary to be grieved at such outrageous undertakings—for they multiplied altars for sins—he says they made them also beloved, and in addition to these things, the beloved altars were accounted as strange to him, it is clear that to Ephraim. And it certainly indicates the things in the ancient tabernacle, that is, in Jerusalem, located in the divine temple. And these were two: the one for burnt offerings in the first tabernacle, and the other, the golden one, for incense, in the second and innermost. Therefore many of those from The crimes of Ephraim when they were kings; first, that they multiplied altars for sins; then that they have also made beloved the things for which it was fitting to lament and mourn, as ones who have given offense; and what is yet greater, as one having turned to des-

pair, he has made alien the beloved altars, which one truly ought to love and hold in all esteem. and he cast in the midst, the "I will write for him the multitude and his laws. and it implies something of this sort: for he says the multitude of the altars made by them for sins, and their laws, that is again, the sacrifices customary for them, or the times or manners of the sacrifices, according to which they offered their profane rites; for they cut themselves over wheat and wine, and were eager to do certain other things like these; "I will write down for them for sins and for crimes.

It is therefore a saving thing to hold to the divine altars, and to partake of the things from God, and not to seek the things of others, which are indeed for sin. This is what those who are not genuine Christians do, falling away after the saving baptism to Greek customs and observances, to whom it is fitting to say through the voice of Paul, "You cannot "partake of the Lord's table and the table of demons; and indeed also those who attach themselves to the unholy heretics, and partake of their altars, for whom in truth the beloved altars have become alien. for they have multiplied for themselves things for sins, sacrificing the lamb outside the sacred and divine court, that is, the Church. Because if they offer a sacrifice and eat meat, the Lord will not accept them; now he will remember their iniquities and will avenge their sins. That the altars for sins have come into being and have been multiplied by Ephraim, he makes very clear also through these things. For what they sacrifice, he says, is offered by them not to God, but rather to the precincts of idols; and even if they celebrate at the sacrifices, filling themselves with food or drink, the matter is nothing to God. For they do not perform the festival for him, because the divine and undefiled nature would in no way accept what is done for the glory of demons, but rather is provoked as having been insulted;

and she is all but unwillingly forced to bring down the judgments of wrath upon those who call for this, and to proceed to the remembrance of all, so to speak, of the things committed by those who offend. And when this has happened, sharp is the anger, judgment is at hand, and there is no one who is delivered. "It is therefore a fearful thing "to fall into the hands of the living God. But it is more fitting, and incomparably better, and for us the cause of all prosperity, to offer sacrifices to God, spiritual ones, that is, and for him to fulfill festivals, choosing to live rightly, and earnestly avoiding to fall away at all in any respect. But they returned to Egypt, and in Assyria they

will eat unclean things. He again accuses them, as wishing to live in a completely senseless and unholy manner, and as having entirely ignored the path of what is expedient. For I, he says, threatened to bring under my wrath those who had come to this opinion, and to avenge their sins, and to remember all their lawlessness. And in the beginning what was expected to happen was this, with the war already terrifying Israel, and all but attacking the country.

Then, when they ought to have been propitiating God with prayers and repentance, and to be re-educated in what seemed good to him, and to put his wrath to shame by their recourse to what is better, as to something exceedingly useful, and able to deliver them, they turned back to Egypt, calling for aid "an Egyptian man "and not God, the flesh of horses," according to what is written. But, "A king is not saved through great power, and a giant "will not be saved in the multitude of his strength. A horse is false for "salvation. It is good to trust in the Lord rather than to trust in "man. It is good to hope in the Lord rather than to hope in "princes. that for them the things of such a kind, he says has resulted from foolish counsel, they will know from experience itself; for being carried off to the Assyrians and Medes, there they will eat unclean things, that is, they will live having cast off the remnant of reverence for the law, and eating whatever is at hand without guard. But perhaps someone will say: then how would this have grieved the from Israel, who chose to worship idols? To these things we say, that they have admittedly been deceived, but there was still in their minds some small care for the law, and they had not completely lost the Jewish customs, even though they worshiped in the temples of idols.

For this reason also the blessed prophet Elijah once accused them of limping on two houghs, and of being willing to adhere neither completely to Baal, nor indeed perfectly to God. Therefore Israel, having become captive, has completely cast off reverence for the law, following out of necessity the customs and laws of their rulers. And this I think is what Christ himself said, that "To everyone "who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance; but from "him who has not, even what he seems to have will be taken away from him. Therefore we must not despise the divine gifts; but whatever we have from God, we should take the greatest account of; for the gift will dwell with those who care for it; but if we become lazy and negligent concerning it, it will surely fly away. And Israel forgot him who made him, and

they built shrines; and Judah made walled cities; and I will send fire upon his cities, and it shall devour their foundations. He rebukes both kingdoms, I mean the one in Samaria, and that of Judah, that is, the one in Jerusalem. For what both have done, it is necessary to observe and to say at the same time.

For when the war was expected to happen, and when the terror was practically already at their very gates, when it was necessary for them, both those in Samaria and the kings from the tribe of Judah, to seek help from God the Savior, they turned to strange and useless opinions and, when they ought to have healed with repentance, they provoked against themselves even more greatly the God who rules over all. For Israel, that is, the ten tribes and those who held their power, offered yet more acts of worship, as if to aggrieved demons, or rather to those able to avert the capture and to overturn the phalanxes of the enemies; and as if appeasing them and making them benevolent, they built shrines, and they set up altars, and they honored them with still more sacrifices; but Judah made his own cities more fortified, trusting in stones rather than in God, although He says clearly concerning Jerusalem, that "I will be to her, says the Lord, a wall of fire round about, and I will be for glory in her midst. But this thing did not help Israel at all; and for the future God threatened to bring fire upon the cities of Judah, the Babylonians clearly burning them, who became ministers of His wrath against them. Therefore, nothing at all will save the one who offends God; and it is admittedly a loss and a charge of ignorance for the future, or rather of the highest impiety, to trust in the powers of demons;

and with God being grieved and rendering them powerless, it is no less ignorant to be deceived by earthly aids. But rather one must ward off His wrath with prayers and repentance; for He is "merciful "and good and repents of the evils" according to what is written. Do not rejoice, Israel, nor be glad like the peoples, because you have committed fornication against your God; you have loved gifts upon every threshing floor of wheat. The threshing floor and the winepress did not know them, and the wine deceived them. They did not dwell in the Lord's land; Ephraim dwelt in Egypt, and in Assyria they will eat unclean things. They did not pour out wine to the Lord, and they were not pleasing to him; their sacrifices are to them like bread of mourning, all who eat them will be defiled, because their breads for their souls will not enter the house of the Lord. To the to the herds of the nations, since in-

deed they suffer from the greatest folly; for they had admittedly gone astray; it was the custom for those beginning their farming and about to plow the earth to offer sacrifices to the demons, and to ask from them the fruitfulness of the fields; and reaping again, when the season called for it, and indeed also putting the grape cluster in the wine-presses, they poured libations, they sacrificed to the seasons, they sang the wine-press songs, offering up their thank-offerings, and they continued rejoicing and making merry.

God finds fault with those of Israel for doing this. For he clearly insists that he should not rejoice, just as the rest of the nations. For what reason? For those who were completely ignorant of the God who is by nature and truly is, but were rather born in error, perhaps have a not implausible reason for their weakness or ignorance; but Israel, though instructed by the law, and having known the Master of all, has committed fornication into apostasy. Therefore, he might be understood as being reasonably under a heavier charge, and having an inescapable accusation of impiety; for knowing the will of his Lord, he neglected it, he did not do it. He shall therefore be beaten with many stripes; while the one who did not know, and then did not do it, will be beaten with few, according to the Savior's voice. Therefore, do not rejoice as the peoples, he says. For they have gone astray from the womb; but you, having been instructed by the law, have committed fornication away from God. And what was the manner of his fornication? He loved gifts, he says, not from God rather, but those from the heifers and Baal; although they give nothing to those who ask. And for what things did he seek gifts from them? On every threshing-floor of wheat. For it seemed unholy and foolish to them to ask for the fruitfulness of the fields, as I said, from their empty objects of worship. So, then, did Israel seek gifts from the idols;

and did his requests turn out according to his prayer? Not at all; for the threshing-floor and the wine-press did not know them, and the wine failed them. And it is not debatable to any of the more eager students that there were famines in Samaria, and crop failures and long droughts. He therefore missed his hope, not receiving his requests; and in addition to this, they also departed from the holy land, and entered Egypt, as into a land fortified and with even more gods; for there were countless objects of worship in Egypt, and a certain wonderful reputation for power among those who served them, as being able to accomplish all things easily through magical experiences. They therefore gave up dwelling in the land chosen by God, and they ex-

changed it for the land of idols. But even if they have done this, they will go to the Assyrians. They did not pour out wine to the Lord. For having gathered the fruit of the vine into the wine-presses, they poured out the first-fruits to the demons, and not to God who gave it. And they also offered up loaves, as a first-fruit of the harvest. But the thing will become for them a pollution and a profanation, he says, and what is brought will be reckoned as bread of mourning, that is, detestable and profane and hateful. For what reason? For the law made unclean the one who approached a corpse; approaching, that is, either through blood relationship, or even through physical contact itself.

It was therefore necessary for those who were near in kinship, or friends of the deceased, to be defiled in their mourning, attending to the corpse, and wishing to perform the customary rites over it; and all things which they happened to touch were unclean. Therefore, the bread of mourning is that which is set before those who mourn a corpse for food; and to taste of it seemed utterly dreadful to those who had practiced avoiding the pollution associated with a corpse. Therefore, defiled and rejected, he says, are the loaves themselves, which might be brought as a first-fruit of the harvests, and those who eat them will be defiled. But they will be useful rather for their souls, that is, for their own eating. For they will not enter the house of the Lord. But one must know that the law also commanded to bring a first-fruit of the harvest, both sheaves and bread, as a sacrifice. But Israel transferred what was for the glory of God to the carved images, even though God says clearly, "My glory I will not give to another, nor my praises to my carved images. Therefore it is necessary to ask from God the things that give life, and to confess him as the giver and provider of all bodily and spiritual fruitfulness to us.

for there is no other besides him who sends rain, according to what is written, but by his commands, the seasonal crops also spring up in the fields, and we are filled with the blessing from above, being nourished by the spiritual bread, and having the wine from heaven, "which gladdens the heart of man. Having chosen to think these things, we will inhabit the holy land. For we will be with God, and we will not eat unclean things among the Assyrians. For "the world-rulers of this age, the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" feed in uncleanness those who approach them. What will you do on the day of a festival and on the days of the feast of the Lord? For

since, he says, you have arrived at this point of ill-counsel and impiety, and have become so abominable and hateful, what manner of help will there be for you? or what will you have done and planned to escape so terrible and savage a calamity, when my festival is celebrated, with war consuming those who have caused grief? Therefore God names his own feast, clearly the time in which Israel would be required to pay the penalty for the sins committed against him. Therefore one must not simply and thoughtlessly do what seems best, and take pleasure in present things, being carried away by desires into offending God, but rather to look around at what is to come, and to hasten to escape the things that come from divine wrath.

For in this way we will be wise, and knowledgeable of what is beneficial. Therefore behold, they shall go forth from the misery of Egypt, and Memphis shall receive them, and Michmash shall bury them. And destruction shall inherit their silver; thorns shall be in their tents. When the Babylonians were ravaging Samaria, those who were strong enough to escape barely fled to the land of the Egyptians; but also when they captured Jerusalem itself, in the times of the prophecy of Jeremiah, a very small number were left from the tribe of Judah and Benjamin. These entered into Egypt, although God was commanding them through the voice of Jeremiah, and saying clearly, that they should not go to the land of the Egyptians, having abandoned the land that bore them, and he had threatened that if they should do this against his will, they would fall into equal, or even more burdensome things. For what is written is as follows: "Thus says the Lord: If you set your face "toward Egypt and enter there to dwell, the sword "which you fear on its account "will find you in Egypt. For since, taking courage in the help of the Egyptians, they opposed the Babylonians, for this reason being grieved, after the capture of Jerusalem and Samaria, the Babylonians turned against the Egyptians, and conquered them without a struggle, then it happened that the remnants of the Jews perished along with the Egyptians.

And indeed those who were strong enough to escape the misery in Egypt, barely fled beyond, going to the land of the Arcadians, and they dwelled in Memphis and Michmash as in a most fortified city; and this is another neighboring city, surely, and more distinguished than the others; and there they died, having clearly passed long periods of time, and not being able to return to Judea. And again the prophet Jeremiah spoke thus: "Therefore thus says the Lord: Behold, I am setting "my face to destroy all the remnant "in

Egypt, and they shall fall by the sword and by famine, "they shall fail, from the least to the greatest, and they shall be for "a reproach and for destruction and for a curse. And I will "visit upon those dwelling in the land of Egypt as I visited "upon Jerusalem with sword and with famine and with "death, and there will be no one saved of the remnant "of Judah who are sojourning in the land of Egypt, to return "to the land of Judah, for which they hope with their souls "to return there; they shall not return. Do you hear that they died in to Egypt, and there the divine wrath was brought upon them? When therefore, shunning the misery in Egypt, they should arrive at Memphis as if to a famous city, it will receive them, but in Machmas they will die. For this is the meaning of "Machmas will bury them.

When therefore God pursues, no one will save the one in danger, but wherever one might go, there he will encounter His anger. And he says these things will happen to them in Egypt. But since they have also grieved him with their own wealth; "For their silver and their gold they made for themselves idols," he says; for this reason justly destruction will inherit it, that is, it will be an inheritance for the destroyer. For he calls the Assyrian "destruction," as one who has savagely and cruelly destroyed and fought. and thorns, he says, will grow in their tents. for the cities have come to such a state of desolation as to become full of thorns; and this is a sign of land impassable and uncultivated. When therefore one does not use rightly the good things given by God, whether physical or spiritual, nor indeed for His glory, but thoughtlessly does things by which he might give offense, and is caught grieving Him, he will depart into destruction, and will be an inheritance for the plundering Satan, and a dwelling-place of thorns, that is, of savage and misplaced desires; and he would not have cultivated fruits in his mind. And heretics, before others, would suffer this, impiously spending the use of reason to lead brothers astray; and "to strike their weak conscience," although Christ suffered for us.

The days of vengeance have come, the days of your recompense have come, and Israel will be afflicted like the prophet who is out of his mind, the man who is spirit-borne. It was the custom of those of Israel to cast off the words of the holy prophets, and to consider the things from God as nothing, although many times He had foretold that terrible things would happen to them. And indeed the God of all has addressed the prophet Ezekiel somewhere saying, "Son of man, behold the rebellious house of Israel, they are

saying, 'The vision which he sees is for many days to come, and he prophesies of times far off.' Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord Adonai: None of my words which I shall speak shall be prolonged any more; for I will speak a word and I will do it, says the Lord Adonai.'" He says something like this here also; for he says the days of vengeance have come. It is as if he were to say, The judgment is near, and the contest is already at the very doors, disaster is a neighbor, and the war is before our eyes. The day of recompense is at hand.

And when you are afflicted, he says, O Israel, every false prophet in you will certainly be afflicted with you, and in like manner will partake of the judgment, the man who is out of his mind, that is, the inspired and mad one, and who has lost his senses, whom you have considered to be spirit-borne. For along with the others have perished both the priests of the high places, and the worshipers of idols, and all who were false speakers and false prophets in Israel. For since they pretended to be mad when making their prophecies, and feigned to be inspired, for this reason he also calls such a one a man who is out of his mind. By the multitude of your iniquities your madness was multiplied. He speaks of a multitude of iniquity as it were, the manifold and multiform religion of Israel. For in one word, they were deceived, and all were idolaters. But they divided the ways of their error, some brought their rites to some, others to others, and for those who came to them they made false prophecies. For some served the heifers; others Chemosh, the idol of Moab; and others Astarte. And there were those who served both Baal and the host of heaven. For this reason God reproached them, saying through the voice of Jeremiah, "For according to the number of your cities were your gods, O Judah. For each city among them confessed to having its own god. This very thing he rightly calls a multitude of iniquity.

For it is truly an iniquity and an outrage against God, to depart from him, and to adhere to wood and stones, and "to the by the works of their own hands," as it is written. But by madness he means divination. Therefore, since a multitude of iniquity is found in you, he says, for this reason madness has also multiplied in you, that is, false divination, with each of the false diviners likely having his own way by which he prophesied. Truly, therefore, it is absurd and unlawful and profane, and not incapable of grieving and terribly provoking the God of all, to love to adhere to the false words of those accustomed to speak things "from their own heart," as it is written, and not

"from the mouth of the Lord. Therefore Christians must guard against this transgression. For to suffer from such things would be fitting only for the servants of demons. A watchman of Ephraim is a prophet with God, a crooked snare over all his ways. It is the custom of divine Scripture to call watchmen those who preside over and are set before the people, and are lifted up high on account of honor, whom one might also look to, if indeed he wished to live a straight and blameless life. And indeed, God said somewhere to the blessed prophet Ezekiel, "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel, and you will hear a word from my mouth, and you will warn them from me.

For it is the custom for such watchmen not only to set forth their own life to those being instructed as a model of virtue or lawful conduct, but also to introduce useful things and to interpret rightly what is pleasing to God. But those under good watchmen, going straight toward what is fitting, were saved; but those assigning the inclination of their own mind to wicked and vile men, continued "deceiving and being deceived," and had a mind alienated from all good work and true knowledge. He now also accuses those from the tribe of Ephraim, that is, Israel, of having suffered this. For, he says, a prophet with a god has become a watchman for him. It is as if he were saying, for each of the falsely named gods, there is also a particular false prophet. For as I have already said, they were divided into a manifold error. And some have served Baal; others Chemosh, that is, Baal-peor; and in each sacred precinct something was fabricated, and there was a man-made statue and image, and attending each was a particular false prophet. And the manner of divination among them was varied. And they simply belched out to those who came to them whatever seemed useful and necessary. Therefore, since a particular prophet with each of the falsely named gods has become a watchman for those from Ephraim, for this reason they have now turned aside unrestrainedly to everything that is most shameful. This has become for him also a crooked snare.

For it was not possible for those who had slipped into such great polytheism ever to be directed and to be able to walk rightly, so as to have a particular prophet with each god; and in addition, to make a watchman of one who carries them away from piety toward God and casts them into the pits of destruction. Therefore those who wish to live lawfully must pay attention not simply to those who teach, nor to those who speak things from their own

heart, but to those for whom the divine and heavenly grace bears witness to the genuineness of their love for God. Therefore Christ also says, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. For speaking truly, we say that the inventors and leaders of unholy heresies differ little from wild beasts, "Those who devour Israel with their whole mouth. For they consume, as it were, the souls of the more simple, crushing them with the teeth of deceit. Let it be said, therefore, also by us, "God will break their teeth in their mouth; the Lord has shattered the molars of the lions. They will be regarded as nothing, like water that passes by; he will bend his bow until they are weakened. Like melting wax they will be destroyed. They have planted madness in the house of the Lord. They were corrupted according to the days of the hill; he will remember his iniquity, he will avenge his sins.

Here too, by madness he usually means false divination. And the house of the Lord He names Israel. And so it is said somewhere through the voice of Jeremiah to the Synagogue of the Jews, as from the person of God "Have you not called me as a house and a father and the guide of your virginity? He is astonished, therefore, at the magnitude of the frenzy, and the excess of their absurd undertakings. For they have reached such a point of impiety, he says, as to establish madness in the house of the Lord, that is, false prophecy, and to transgress what is forbidden by the divine laws. And he says well "they have established"; for what was once dared has not ceased, but the matter of impiety has, as it were, become fixed and entrenched. For Israel has not ceased having false diviners and false prophets. But since they have dared such things, being justly called to account for what they did, they were destroyed in the days of the hill. For He will remember their iniquity, and will avenge all their sins. And what this is, "they were destroyed in the days of the hill," come, let us briefly recall. Something of this sort is written in the book of Judges; I will make the whole narrative cursorily, as is possible, and I will condense it, since it is rather long. "In those days," he says, "there was no king "in Israel; a man did what was right in his own eyes.

"And there was a young man from Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah, and he was "a Levite, and he was sojourning there. And the man went "from Bethlehem, the city of Judah, to sojourn wherever he might find "a place, and he came to the hill country of Ephraim, and to the house of Micah, "to make his way. And Micah said to him, 'Where "do you come from?' And the

Levite said to him, 'I am from Bethlehem "of Judah, and I am going to live wherever I might find a place.' "And Micah said to him, 'Stay with me, and be a father and a priest to me, "and I will give you ten pieces of silver "a day and a change of clothes and things for your life.' "And the Levite went, and began to sojourn with the "man. And the young man was with him as one of his sons. "And Micah consecrated the Levite, "and he became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Micah, then, was an idolater, and yet he hired the one from the blood of Levi, and made him a servant of a graven image, and assigned him to the services of the idols. And what happened after this? The sacred scripture again spoke thus: "And in those days the tribe of Dan was seeking for itself "an inheritance to dwell in, because an inheritance had not fallen to it until "that day among the tribes of Israel.

Then selecting five men, they persuaded them to go before them, and to spy out the land which they might be able to take and make their own inheritance. And they came, he says, "to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there. While they were in the house of Micah, they recognized the Levite, as their kinsman, because he used their language. For since they were Hebrews, he spoke as a Hebrew. And having asked the reason, and learned how Micah had hired him, though he was from the tribe of Levi, and had appointed him a priest of his own objects of worship, instead of sympathizing with him as a captive and a deceived and wandering man, they immediately slipped into the snares of deceit, and thought it right for him to speak, inquiring of the idol if their enterprise would turn out according to their mind, I mean the conquering of the land they had come to spy out. And he spoke what seemed good as from God. And when the messengers had spied out the land, they reported to those who had sent them that it was good and fertile, and could be taken without sweat. And when those from the tribe of Dan heard such words, six hundred in number, being in arms, went up. And they themselves also came to the house of Micah.

"And the five men," he says, "who had gone to spy out the land "of Laish answered and said to their brothers, 'Do you know that "in this house there is an Ephod and Teraphim and a graven image "and a molten image? And now know what you will do.'" Now Ephod is interpreted as redemption, and Teraphim again as release or one who heals them. For it was an idol, having a false notion about itself, that it was able to heal some. For sometimes the children of the Greeks invest handmade objects with such opinions. Having

learned this, those from Dan take up the graven image, and they also persuade the one from the bloodline of Levi to follow them, departing from Micah. And having drawn up for battle and conquered, and having taken the land in hand, they built a city, which they named Dan, inscribing upon it the name of their forefather. For they were of the tribe and blood of Dan, as I said. And having also set up the idol in it, they brought sacrifices, and along with the land they also acquired a god. To this their mind was brought down by foolishness. For this reason God was henceforth indignant, and very rightly so, as having been insulted.

Then, when it was necessary for all those of Israel to consider those from Dan as enemies and most hostile, and to demand an account for their impiety towards God, they perhaps even colluded with them, and saw fit to praise them, as having not sinned at all. And what wages came to them for this indifference, come, let us say in order. When Israel remained without a king, a certain Levite man, dwelling in the hill country of Ephraim, took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem. And when the woman ran away to her father, the Levite followed; and he persuades her again to return with him, and to be at home from then on. When this had happened, while going along the middle of the road, he lodged with the woman in Gibeah, which is interpreted as "hill. Now those from the tribe of Benjamin inhabited Gibeah, that is, the hill. And when he was lodging with a certain old man, lawless men from the tribe of Benjamin, coming in the middle of the night, as it is written, wanted to force both the Levite himself and others to lewdness. But having been shamed with difficulty out of the excess of their absurdity, they seize the Levite's concubine, and indeed they killed her, committing lewd acts against the woman all night long. And he, having divided the body into pieces, distributed it to those of the tribes of Israel, making manifest both the sin of those from the tribe of Benjamin against strangers, and their unbridled licentiousness;

and that they had imitated the sins of the Sodomites. From this, all Israel, being indignant, was gathered together, and they marched against the tribe of Benjamin in Gibeah, that is, in the hill; and so they destroyed it, although it was very populous, so that very few who were saved barely escaped into the wilderness. And not a few of the fighting men from all Israel also perished. But God would not have allowed those of Israel to clash with each other, if those from Dan had not honored the graven image from Micah's house, and

those from the other tribes had not been unreasonably quiet. Something of this sort also happened when God was grieved by the golden calves. For the two tribes of Judah and the ten of Ephraim clashed with each other; and as in the days of the hill, countless numbers fell, and the defeated were destroyed along with the victors, as divine wrath called them to this. And these things were done when Amaziah was reigning over Judah, and Joash over Israel, who so captured Jerusalem as to also tear down a part of the wall for four hundred cubits. I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness, and I saw their fathers as the first-ripe fruit on the fig tree; they went in to Baal-peor, and were estranged into shame, and the beloved became as the detested. That their being destroyed did not happen to them in vain, but in justice, he now attempts to teach.

For I, he says, chose them, as one finding grapes in a desert, and as one plucking a ripe fig from a fig tree; for I brought them out of the land of the Egyptians, which was entirely idolatrous and deluded, and suffering a great lack of every good thing. What then of the chosen ones, those snatched by my hand? They have attached themselves to Baal-peor, they have departed from intimacy with me into shame. This is the meaning of "they were estranged into shame. And he calls shame the Baal-peor. for he was in the most uncomely form of all the others, and indecent to behold. Therefore, loving to be with God, and honoring him as one who has called and chosen, and as one who has snatched from a desert and thorn-bearing land of the condition in this world, as having loved a grape and an early fig, we will preserve unbreakable the union with him, that is, clearly, the spiritual one. But if there should be some turning away to what is uncomely, and to what grieves him, we will in no way differ from the nations. for we who were loved will be as those who were detested who also have been reasonably hated. "For the righteousness, he says, of the righteous man "will not deliver him, in the day that he sins. and very wisely the blessed Paul writes "Therefore let him who "thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall. Ephraim has flown away like a bird.

Such birds as are not tame and domesticated, when caught are kept, and delight their owners. but if an opportunity to escape should arise, without delay it departs, and is carried in swift flight to its accustomed habitat. Therefore Israel was hunted in a certain way through Moses like a bird, and was brought to God, and was in a good state of prosperity, being instructed

by the law and enjoying the care and providence from above. But it flew away again to what it was in the beginning, all but escaping the hand of its captor. Or you will also understand what was said in another way. Many birds, not bearing the local winters, migrate to other lands, untaught, having the knowledge of what is beneficial, according to the will of the Creator. But in the same way Ephraim also, fearing the calamities from the war, flew away to the Egyptians. Their glories are from births and pangs and conceptions; because even if they should raise their children, they will be made childless from among men; because woe also is to them. Israel fled to the Egyptians, having left the one who bore it, and called upon the ruler of the country to assist it. Was it because God was weak, and not able to save them? Not at all; for the divine is all-powerful, and not unable to ward off the war of the Assyrians.

It happened that those from Ephraim, that is, Israel, suffered such things, because, having abandoned God the Savior, and mocking as stale the idea of being proud in him and in him alone, they thought that on their own they would become terrible and invincible to their enemies, because they had expanded into a great multitude, and had an innumerable abundance of children. For their women gave birth according to the promise, and in the order of blessing, Moses having said before, "There shall not be a barren man or a barren woman among the sons of "Israel. But it was utterly foolish, on account of a multitude of bodies, to disregard the help from God; but they should rather have understood, thinking rightly, that with him and through him "one will chase a thousand, and two will move ten thousand. Therefore, he says, they pride themselves not in God rather, but make their glory the births and conceptions and pangs of their women. Let them know, therefore, that even if they should bear sons, and even if they should labor raising children, they will repent, having labored in vain. For they will in every way and altogether lament their childlessness. And the Babylonian sword will suffice to easily destroy all of their offspring. Because woe also is to them. This is as if he should say, When God casts woe upon them, who will bestow cheerfulness? "For if he shuts up a man, "who can open? as it is written.

"It is therefore a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; and it is necessary to appease the one who has been grieved with gentleness, and to seek salvation from him, trusting in no one, but rather crying out, "I

will boast in God my Savior; "the Lord God is my strength. My flesh is from them. As God was threatening and indeed saying concerning Ephraim, that is, all of Israel, that it would be utterly destroyed, root and all, and would lament its childlessness, and would labor in vain in the rearing of its children, the prophet withdraws himself from the judgment, and prays to be outside of the wrath, saying My flesh is from them. and you will understand "from them," instead of far from them. For outside of them and far away, he says, may I myself be, and my entire race. For sometimes "flesh" also signifies race. For thus we will correctly interpret what was said through the voice of Paul. For he wrote thus: "But I say to you, the Gentiles: inasmuch therefore as I "am an apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry, if somehow "I might provoke my own flesh to jealousy and save some of them. It is a custom for the holy prophets, when they often see the accusations of some to be terrible and unbearable, to then separate themselves from their abomination.

And so the prophet Jeremiah, seeing the Jews had fallen into so many accusations and had offended God, says, "O Lord "Almighty, I did not sit in the council of those who jest, "but I was in awe before your hand; I sat alone, "because I was filled with bitterness. Therefore, we must indeed marvel at the blessed Paul, when he commands us, saying, "Keep yourself pure, and do not share in the sins of others. Every pious person, therefore, might reasonably say concerning those who offend God and are about to be punished, My flesh is from them. Ephraim, as I saw, has presented his children as prey, and Ephraim to bring out his children for the slaughter. And now the prophet pronounces Ephraim, that is, Israel, wretched, saying that he himself has become the cause of his own childlessness and incurable disaster. For as I have seen, he says, both from your words, O Master, and from the events themselves, Ephraim himself has presented his own children for hunting and for slaughter. And he would not blame others for this, nor would he cry out against the divine wrath, if he should choose to think reasonably; but he will rather blame his own ill counsel and apostasy. For since he has grieved not moderately the God who defends and saves, he has all but willingly handed over his own seed with his own hand to the savagery of the nations, and has presented it for deportation and captivity.

For this is "for hunting," and indeed also "for slaughter," that is, for massacre; for some of those from Israel the Babylonians killed, and others they carried away to their own land. Therefore, when we sin, thinking rightly we

will blame ourselves rather, and not the divine wrath. For we have despised what is fitting, and have become slothful concerning what is pleasing to God. But it is necessary for the insolent and unbridled one to be punished, the one who all but says to the Master of all, "Depart from me, I do not wish to know your ways. Give them, O Lord; what will you give them? Give them a childless womb and dry breasts. If indeed, he says, those of Israel are not to know God, but are rather to be carried away toward a useless and unprofitable hope, and to think that they will overcome their enemies because of the multitude of their children, and that the fighting race among them is numerous, and for this reason it is not necessary for them to be helped by your hand, let the women among them not give birth at all. For this is the childless womb. And even if they should give birth, let them not be raised, that is, let them be destroyed before their time, and before they come to puberty, let the offspring fall.

For with the arrogance that is in them from this cause thus being cut away, and the hope in the multitude of fighters being finally removed, they will have recourse to your mercy, and will acknowledge you as Savior and redeemer. But the prophet says such things even now out of love for God. And at the same time he seeks both the glory of his own Master, and the return out of necessity of those of the blood of Israel, if they do not have the fruit of a good choice. But a childless womb and dry breasts might be fittingly understood also for the workers of evil, and for everyone who deceives and leads astray from the straight path those who are accustomed to walk uprightly, in faith I mean, "and who go straight in their ways. For their mind giving birth to nothing, neither false word nor spurious doctrine, nor could they nourish in error their own children, I mean those in respect to learning, with the breasts of those who practice evil being dry churches, they would not become mothers of the deceived. All their wickedness is in Gilgal, for there I hated them because of the wickedness of their doings; I will cast them out of my house, I will no longer love them. Again the God of all begins to recount the accusations, and he remembers Gilgal. This is a city, in which the handmade idols were worshipped in a most terrible and strange manner. And what he says is something like this again.

For in many ways those of Israel are abominable; but one might see the excess of the worthlessness within them, having considered Gilgal. There I have seen all their wickedness, there I have hated them, not because of the

place; for that is foolish; but rather hating the things that happened in it. Therefore, he says, I will banish them, and I will drive them from my court, and I will cast them out of my household. And having hated them justly, I will henceforth oppose them, and I would not change my mind again to choose ever to love those who have committed such sins. But I suppose someone will say, 'How then did he bring them back to Judea from the land of the Assyrians, or how did he release them from captivity?' Was he not changed to gentleness, and deemed them worthy of forbearance and love? Yes, I myself would say that the statement is true. For they have been shown mercy out of gentleness, admittedly. But those against whom the word was spoken went away into captivity, and have died in their judgment, after a long time had passed. And just as he promised through Moses in Egypt to those of Israel, to bring all of them into the land which he swore to their fathers, but some did not enter because they were disobedient, 'whose limbs also fell in the wilderness,' but rather the land was inherited by those born of them; so you will understand it here also.

For those against whom the word was spoken have died, but at the appointed times those from among them returned to Judea, when Cyrus reluctantly permitted it, when their seventieth year of dwelling in a foreign land was fulfilled. But they will be cast out of the house of God, or rather have been cast out, both those who dared terrible things against Christ, and impieties beyond all reason, and those who loosed a bitter and blasphemous tongue against him; and they will endure an unchangeable wrath. For they are caught having behaved insolently not against one of the prophets, but against the very Lord of the prophets. Therefore, with their other sins which they have committed against themselves being passed over in silence, one might see all their wickedness and the excess of their depravity, as being in those things alone that were done against Christ. All their rulers are disobedient. Ephraim is afflicted; his roots are dried up, he shall bear no more fruit; wherefore even if they should bear children, I will slay the desired fruit of their womb. God will reject them, because they did not listen to him, and they shall be wanderers among the nations. He says that no one good, that is, obedient and tractable, was found among them, not small, not great, not a leader, not one under authority and subordinate.

For this reason he strongly affirms that it must utterly perish, as if uprooted, having henceforth become like withered and stricken trees, which

need only to be cut down, as if openly confessing their fruitlessness. And that it is fitting for fruitless trees to be cut down, the Savior himself also taught, commanding that the fig tree which had no fruit, as a type of the Jewish Synagogue, must be cut down; 'For why,' he says, 'does it even make the ground useless?' Therefore Israel, having been found fruitless, he says, would rightly be cut down; for it will not produce fruit. But even if this should happen, he says, I will destroy what is born from them. And this is the desired fruit of their womb. But I think it is also necessary to consider that point, what the matter of the statement is; and why does he say, that all their rulers are disobedient? For why at all did it require the submission of the rulers? Therefore the statement has a reference to a certain history of the ancients. And what this is, I will say again. Israel made a calf in the wilderness, when Moses was absent; for he had gone up on Mount Sinai, to receive the law. Then having come down, he was greatly grieved by the trespass, he smashed the calf, and he in a way appeased an indignant God by his own sincerity and virtue. For he fell down and begged, saying, "If you will forgive them "their sin, forgive it;

but if not, blot me also out of "this your book, which you have written. And God granted to the prophet clemency for all, and indeed he said, "I am merciful "to them according to your word. Do you see how much the love of God of the one presiding profited Israel, and one being sufficient on behalf of all to persuade God, through submission and obedience? Therefore he reasonably accuses Israel as having completely turned aside. and then having none of the leaders among them, to rebuke those who stumble, to turn them from error, that is, one able by his own brilliance in manner and virtue to turn away wrath, God having been entreated, just as indeed happened in the times of Moses, for this reason also he says they will be cast out and will be wanderers among the nations. This happened to them both then, when they were carried away to the Assyrians, and now no less, being detested for their outrageous deeds against Christ. For those from Israel continue in the world homeless and as strangers everywhere, and having no city. "For I will scatter them to every "wind," God also said through the holy prophets. If, therefore, we have a care and concern for intimacy with God, let us submit our neck to him, and let us approach Christ who says from good obedience, "Come to me "all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you "rest. Take my yoke upon you.

For thus we will be both fruitful and unstricken, our root not withering, our fruit not falling to nothing, not wanderers and far from God, but near him and with him, and having the city that is above and in the heavens, the mother of the first-born, the nurse of the saints, the pure dwelling-place of the spirits above. A luxuriant vine is Israel, whose fruit is abundant; according to the multitude of his fruits he multiplied altars, and according to the goods of his land he built pillars. They have divided their hearts, now they shall be made to disappear; he himself shall tear down their altars, their pillars shall suffer. Having said that the roots of Ephraim were diseased, and that he would be fruitless and like those who have never borne at all, since the savagery of the Assyrians consumes what is born, he shows necessarily both what he was of old, and that he had been fruitful, when he wisely partook of the life in the law. For being seen by the surrounding nations like a beautiful and luxuriant vine, he was reasonably admired. And somewhere concerning it the blessed David says in the book of Psalms to the Savior God of all, "You brought a vine out of Egypt, you cast out nations and "planted it; you prepared the way before it. It "stretched out its branches to the sea, and its shoots to the "rivers. For it was planted "on a horn "and in a fertile place," according to the voice of the prophet.

But it did not produce grapes, but rather brought forth thorns. For with the multitude of good things given to it, it showed an injustice as it were concurrent and equal; and it is clear that this was against God. For he multiplied altars and built pillars; and as much as he abounded in the good things from above, so much was he eager for profanation, by worshipping demons and raising altars and as it were dividing his own heart into a polytheistic error. But he says these things will not be so; whence? For he himself will tear down their altars, and their pillars will suffer, that is, being smashed and pulled down. And you will wisely refer "he himself" either to the God who has power over all, or to the person of the Babylonian, as has already been shown many times. For it happened in the cities in Samaria that the temples themselves were burned down along with them, and the carved images were plundered. Therefore we ought, rejoicing in what we might have from God, to kindle the thank-offerings, and not in the breadth having slipped from cheerfulness, to be carried away somewhere toward what is discordant with him; but rather to seek and to hasten to accomplish, and very eagerly, the boasts of virtue, not being divided toward the passions in the world, and sub-

mitting the neck to Satan. For what Christ said is true, "No one can serve two masters;

for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other; but if we are divided, we will also be "portions for foxes," according to the voice of the psalmist; and we shall be in every way and altogether in want of him who knows how to make us glad. Therefore now they will say, We have no king, because we did not fear the Lord. And what will the king do for us? Speaking words, false pretexts, he will make a covenant. He said not only that their altars would be shaken, and their pillars would suffer affliction, but adds that they will also repent and lament over their own evil counsels. And having missed their hope, and been deceived by the falsehoods of their rulers, late and with difficulty will they understand. For those among them who administered the thrones of the kingdom used to say that the golden heifers and the security from other idols would be sufficient for their aid, even if they did not have the divine law, even if they did not choose to do the things through Moses. But experience has shown them to be speaking falsely. For they have seen those who long ago arranged such things for them, and spoke foolishly, fall under the hand of enemies. For this reason they say, We have no king, because we did not fear the Lord.

For behold, behold, they say, there is no one to defend us, that is, to stand against the invasions of the Babylonians; but all have become weak, the leaders are undone and have fallen. And the pretext of the weakness for them and for us is not having feared the Lord. What then is the benefit from the rulers? he says. There was nothing then in them, except false words, and the vanity of covenants, that is, of promises. For it is a custom in the divine scripture to call promises covenants. It is wise therefore and full of all praise, to trust rather in God, and not to be carried away by the words of deceivers to the point of offending God, but rather prudently to depart from wrath before experiencing it, and not to lament late after suffering, coming with difficulty to unprofitable afterthought. Judgment shall spring up as couch grass upon the fallow of a field for the calf of the house of On. Couch grass grows in fields, especially in unplowed and fallow ones, and it seizes, and very vigorously, the chance neighboring land. For it somehow spreads out widely, and is moreover difficult to combat for those who wish to check its ever-onward course beyond the adjacent lands. Judgment therefore, he says; and it is

clear that it is from God himself; just as couch grass springs up on a fallow field for the calf of the house of On. It is as if he should say:

A decree of destruction and a punishing nod will be from me, and it will seize like couch grass upon the calf, that is, of the objects of worship of the existing temple in Bethel. For this is what the house of On signifies. For other interpreters have again rendered it, of the calf of the house of Bethel; but the Seventy, instead of the house of Bethel, have said the house of On. And we have already stated the reason above, but we will not hesitate to remind you. For the Egyptians in their myth-making said that the Apis was a child of the moon, and an offspring of the sun. And according to them, On is the sun. And the heifer which Jeroboam made was a type of the Apis among the Egyptians. Therefore, like couch grass seizing, he says, and overcoming all that lies nearby, judgment will come from me upon the calf of the house of On, that is, Bethel. For the divine is always all-powerful, and to its nods nothing will be able to resist. "For who will turn back the high hand? according to what is written. The inhabitants of Samaria shall sojourn, because his people mourned for him; and as they provoked him, they shall rejoice over his glory. Behold, he now makes clear the judgment that seizes the calf, and of couch grass punishment is wont to be extended, against whomever God wishes; and now he recalls a story, which it is necessary to tell;

for thus, and not otherwise, shall we understand what is prophesied. It was the custom for all idol-worshippers, when time was pressing and enemies were at hand, if they came to be in need of money, to lay hands even on the votive offerings in the sacred precincts. It is written, therefore, in the Books of Kings, that when the king of Syria was besieging the cities in Samaria, Menahem, who was at that time ruling over Israel, then being unable to oppose him with equal forces, sent an embassy to Pul, the king of the Assyrians, and with gifts persuaded him to come to his aid and to make the Syrian withdraw, which indeed was also accomplished. For that one took Damascus by force, and he also slays Ader himself. They say, then, that when a very great weight of gold was sought, matters came to such a necessity for Menahem that he even took one golden calf and sent it along with the ambassadors. And Israel indeed lamented, seeing sent away that which it considered to be a god. Yet he thought, consoling himself with cold reasonings, that it would be in greater and more splendid temples that the Babylonian would enthrone it. And besides these things, he was disposed to think that it would

be worshipped also by more nations; for countless are the nations of the Persians and Medes. Menahem, therefore, sent the calf as if it were entirely of gold through and through; but Pul, upon taking it, smashed it to pieces;

for among them the object of worship is different, and they do not tolerate a calf. Then, they say, it was found not to be golden, but rather bronze underneath, gilded over with gold. From this, he says, the Assyrian laughed at Ephraim, that is, Menahem who was ruling from the tribe of Ephraim. And in addition to this, he despised the foolish counsels of Israel. Having therefore related the account of the history, that is, of the Hebrew tradition, let us now of necessity run through the text; for the composition of the saying is very difficult to perceive and extremely troublesome. He said therefore that the inhabitants of Samaria will sojourn; the word "will sojourn," instead of "will be removed," that is, they who are now in Samaria will be removed, he says; and he speaks of the calves, or the heifers. For they were sent away, as I said, to the Babylonians. And his people indeed mourned over them. But whose "his"? Is it not clear that it is of the "being," that is, of Apis? Nevertheless, just as they were seen, he says, provoking and dishonoring it by sending it to others, so also they will rejoice over its glory. For they will think that it will be very much more famous, being worshipped by more nations. But they have missed their hope; for it was shattered, and it was an occasion of laughter for the Babylonians. Therefore their monument has suffered miserably according to the voice of the prophet himself.

And they provoked the calf, not that it was provoked in truth; for how could insensible matter have suffered this? But because the force of their undertakings would have angered it, if it were truly God and had the sensation to suffer the things that happened. For it was removed from him, and they carried it away bound to the Assyrians as a gift to king Jareb; in a gift Ephraim will receive, and Israel will be ashamed of its counsel. The prophetic word interprets itself for us. For what it has said obscurely, this it attempts to make clear. For the calf was removed from Israel, and having bound it; and the word is being witty; they carried it away as a gift to king Jareb, that is, to an avenger. For he was called for aid, and as it were to avenge Samaria which was being destroyed by the Syrians. But Pul will receive the calf as in a gift from Ephraim. And by Ephraim he means the king of Israel. Nevertheless, he says that Israel will be ashamed of its own counsels. For because, as I said, it had turned away from the all-powerful God, and chose rather to worship

calves, it was ridiculous, and was caught having fallen into an old-womanish and cold and unprofitable foolish counsel.

Therefore the prophet, or rather God, speaks the truth, if he should say through of the voice of the saints concerning those who have served the works of their own hands, "Behold that their heart is ashes and they go astray. But the saying would also be fitting for those who pervert the correct doctrines of the Church. For just as the heifer, being ground to powder, exposed the foolish counsel of Israel, so too their doctrines, being ground down by investigations and shattered by the power of the truth, will be for the shame and disgrace of those who composed them, and impiously devised them, and most foolishly receive them into their mind and heart. Samaria has cast off her king like a twig upon the face of the water, and the high places of On, the sins of Israel, shall be destroyed; thorns and thistles shall come up on their altars. This again would easily show both the instability and the unseemliness of the manner of those of Israel, that is, of those in Samaria, even concerning those whom they supposed to be gods. And it is no wonder. For those who impiously insulted the one and true God, God by nature, with apostasies and with running away to everything that is most shameful, how could they have become genuine concerning many and falsely-named gods made of stones or wood? He says, therefore, that the calf was cast off by those in Samaria, the one in glory among them of both God and king;

and that it was cast off in such a way, as if a twig, having fallen into the eddies of the waters, would then be carried away to wherever seemed best to those pushing it away. And that the shrines will perish along with their objects of worship, and the altars will be destroyed, and they will become places of thorns, with their whole land having been ravaged—how could it be doubtful? But he calls the altars the sins of Israel, and very appropriately, as they were impiously raised as a memorial of their impiety toward God; and again by On, he named Apis, that is, the heifers in Bethel and Dan, for whose glory the altars also were. Therefore, what God does not establish, this will in every way and altogether be destroyed. And I suppose that what was clearly said through another prophet indicates something of this sort: "They shall build, and I will tear down. And they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us. The carved images were not worshipped in the two cities alone, I mean Dan and Bethel, but here were the golden heifers,

and on the mountains and the hills, the objects of worship of the neighboring nations: Baal, Beelphegor, Astarte, and Chemosh. Therefore, through these words he indicates that not only will the altars of On be shaken down, that is, of Apis, or of the heifers, but that in every way and altogether the shrines on the hills and mountains will also fall.

For their affairs will be reduced to such a state of misery and terror, that they would choose rather to be under the mountains and hills themselves, than to live to see what they were necessarily, and not willingly, to suffer. But it must be known that Christ himself, announcing to the Jews the calamities that would be brought upon them because of their outrages against him, used the same words. "For then," he says, "you will say to the mountains, Cover us; and "to the hills, Fall on us. For evils that have reached their limit, and the excesses of terrors, although death is bitter, sometimes show it to be most desirable to the many. Therefore, indeed, to the very mountains and hills, in which were the false worships, and where the crimes of impiety against God were committed, he says they will all but say, Fall on us, and anticipate the savagery of the Babylonian sword, and the inglorious and unbearable misery of the captivity. From the time of the hills, Israel has sinned; there they stood. War shall not overtake them on the hill; he has come to chasten them for the children of iniquity; and peoples shall be gathered against them when they are chastened for their two iniquities. He says that the apostasy which took place on the mountains and hills is older than the error concerning the heifers. And indeed, when the ten tribes had taken Samaria, having shaken off the yoke of the kingdom of Rehoboam, then Jeroboam brought in the heifers;

in But those in Jerusalem practiced the error in the mountains and on the hills, as Solomon yielded and consented to foreign women, at that time also raising altars and finally precincts for their objects of worship. From the time, therefore, that the hills were devised and the playthings on them, and the false worships, from that time Israel has given offense. And this would be a not-unclear indication of the divine gentleness, which does not endure to punish the impious in a long time, but rather holds back and awaits perhaps the repentance of those who have gone astray. But they were harsher and were found suffering from even worse things. For they added to the hills also the inventions concerning the heifers. And sacrificing to demons in mountains and on hills, and seeming to be pious concerning vain things, perhaps

they also thought to themselves, or rather even steadfastly believed, that they would be established in the certainty of prosperity, and would be better than their opponents, and unconquerable by their enemies. And this is a customary sickness for those who go astray. And indeed when they went down into Egypt, after Jerusalem was captured by the Babylonian, the prophet Jeremiah advised them to abstain from sacrificing to idols, so that there might be some mercy upon them from God who is able to save. But they claimed to have fallen into terrible things for this reason, that they had ceased being willing to fulfill the customary rites, and were convicted of neglecting the honor for vain things.

And it is written thus: "And all the men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other "gods, and all the women, a great assembly, and all "the people dwelling in the land of Egypt, in the land of Pathros, "answered Jeremiah, saying, 'The word which you have spoken to us in the name "of the Lord, we will not hear. For we will surely do every "word that shall go forth from our mouth, to burn incense "to the queen of heaven, and to pour out libations to her, "as we have done, we, and our fathers and our kings "and our rulers in the cities of Judah, and "outside Jerusalem; and we were filled with bread, and we were "well, and saw no evil. And when we left off "burning incense to the queen of heaven, we all were diminished, "and perished by the sword and by famine.'" He accuses, therefore, those of Israel of both their frivolous talk and the rottenness of their hope, and he says concerning the hills, that there they stood, that is, that just as they themselves say, or rather think to themselves, by worshipping the carved images there, they have held the security of prosperity, and have stood in unshakable good things. And as they think again, that which is accustomed to cause any grief at all will not seize them on the hill, if they should choose to fulfill the customary rites for the carved images.

But he says they have been deceived and have missed the mark of their hope. For war has come upon them, being children of injustice, and through experience itself they will be disciplined, that their unbridled will is bitter. And who would they be, the ones through whom their disciplines will come? A very great assembly of enemies. For this is what it is: 'peoples will be gathered against them,' and the terrible things from the war will certainly happen, when they are disciplined for their two injustices. And what these are, he showed us more clearly through the voice of Jeremiah, saying, "Heav-

en was astonished at this, and "shuddered much more exceedingly, says the Lord, because two "evil things my people have done: they have forsaken me, a spring "of living water, and have dug for themselves broken cisterns, "which will not be able to hold water. Ephraim is a heifer that has been taught to love victory, but I will come upon the beauty of her neck; I will mount Ephraim, and I will pass over Judah in silence. He compares Ephraim to a calf, very harsh and arrogant, and not knowing how to be checked from its own impulse, which it might happen to make for any reason, that is, not tolerating being tamed, but rather always seeking to win, and to rush with unreproved impulses toward what seems good to it. But even if it is such, he says, it will yield and not willingly.

for it will be subdued by the with the onsets of calamities, God bringing them under the yoke, and all but working this Himself, and paralyzing the beauty of its neck, that is, the part in Israel that was especially rebellious. This was the kingdom among them, provoking to apostasy the peoples under their hand. Therefore it will be cast down, with God weighing it down. For I think this is what is indicated by "I will ride upon Ephraim. But he says providentially, that "I will pass over Judah in silence," instead of, "I will postpone Judah for a little while," not submitting them to punishments; not yet bringing on the things that come from wrath; but rather persevering, and gently yielding. And for what reason? For Ephraim, that is, the ten tribes, as I have already said, have completely inclined to choosing to fulfill the works of error; but the two tribes in Jerusalem, I mean Judah and Benjamin, have often been under upright and pious kings, who cast down the trinkets of idolatry, who persuaded them to live reasonably and lawfully; such was Amaziah son of Joash, a pious and just man; likewise Hezekiah, he too admired equally with the aforementioned, zealous and beloved of God. For this reason the ten tribes suffered captivity first;

but when the Babylonian campaigned against Jerusalem, he did no harm, but rather went away to his own land, a fugitive and in great fear, at which time also fell in one night by the hand of an angel one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians. Since God, then, is forbearing, and bears our weaknesses, let us not be indolent, nor be taken captive by falling back with regard to the need to fulfill the things that seem good and dear to Him. Jacob shall be strong against him. I said that the Assyrian, having campaigned against the multitude under his hand, and having removed all of Samaria,

and having burned both the cities themselves and the temples, after this besieged Jerusalem, but in no way took it, since God was its defender. For by an angel in one night one hundred eighty-five thousand were destroyed. This, I think, he now announces beforehand, saying, "Jacob will be strong against him. Against whom, then? Is it not clear that it is against Rabshakeh, who was about to besiege? And he has called "Jacob" those of the blood of Jacob, I mean Judah and Benjamin. The phrase could also go, if one should choose, against all of Israel. Again, the meaning of the prophecy seems to refer us to the memory of an older matter, with God all but fulfilling the promise to the divine Jacob.

For when, as a man, he had wrestled with him in the night, beyond the torrent Jabbok, then when dawn finally came, and the day was breaking, God wished to depart, saying, "Let me go, for the dawn has come up," but he said he would not let him go, unless he blessed him, he heard then, "Because you have prevailed with God, and with men you will be powerful. This perhaps the word of prophecy signifies to us for the present, most clearly setting forth the phrase, "Jacob shall be strong against him. But observe the precision of the promise; for not that Jacob will overpower the Assyrians, but "he will be strong," it says; for he was strong in God, not through himself.

Book 6

Sow for yourselves unto righteousness, reap unto the fruit of life, enlighten for yourselves the light of knowledge, seek the Lord until the fruits of righteousness come to you. The manner of exhortation is ever twofold. For either, by explaining the punishment that will befall those who wish to be indolent, we are accustomed to frighten them away and very sternly toward choosing to live splendidly; or, by announcing the honors prepared for the decent, we make those who are being instructed more eager for the need to proceed hereafter to the better and more lawful life. The God of all is doing something of this kind now as well. For he has threatened those who have gone astray with wars, the calamities, the leading into captivity to foreigners, the burnings of cities, the savagery of the combatants. But he does not stop the word of exhortation at this point, but behold, again, he also helps them in another way, and indeed, having forsaken what is useless and the cause of all their misery, he bids them choose what is by nature most beneficial, just like farmers, sowing for righteousness, and harvesting for the fruit of life. For as the blessed Paul writes, "Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. And "He

who sows evil things will reap evil things," according to what is written; but the worker of righteousness will be full of salvation and life, brilliant and enviable, and will gather in the wine "that makes glad the heart of man.

And besides this, those who wish to be well-pleasing must house in their mind and heart the light of true knowledge, which those who worship "the creation rather than the Creator" do not have. And how one might be able to sow for righteousness, and indeed also to harvest for the fruit of life, and to receive the brilliant light of knowledge, he himself indicated, adding: Seek the Lord until the fruits of righteousness come to you. And God would be sought by us, not locally; for this is foolish, since the divine is not in a place; but as in a disposition of soul, and in the eagerness of a mind that has assented to everything whatsoever that is pleasing to Him, and looks to a right and polished knowledge, which has no cause for reproach from any quarter. For having thus found him, we will also be enriched with the possession of other good things. Or does Christ not speak the truth when He says, "Without me you can do nothing? But I think this is in no way doubtful to those accustomed to think rightly. For this is our possession of every good thing with God, and through God, and from God.

One might say, and very reasonably, that *sow for yourselves for righteousness* and what follows it, is not only for the worshipers of idols, but also for those who turn away from the right faith, adhering rather to "deceitful spirits," in the hypocrisy of demons, whose consciences are seared," as, at any rate, the most wise Paul writes. These sow indeed by engaging in labors for knowledge and learning; but not for works of righteousness, but for injustice and impiety, "Deceiving and being deceived," and "Wounding the weak conscience of the brothers, for whom Christ died. Therefore, they do not harvest for the fruit of life; from where? But for punishment and judgment. And at any rate Christ said, that "Whoever "causes one of these little ones who believe "in me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a millstone hung around "his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the "sea. Therefore, let them love the truth; this is the light of knowledge; thus God is sought; from this, fruits of righteousness will spring up for them unto life; and wine will also be harvested, not physical, but rather spiritual and through the Spirit, which gladdens both heart and mind. Why have you been silent about impiety, and harvested its injustices, eaten false fruit? because you trusted in your

chariots, in the multitude of your power, and destruction will rise up among your people, and all your walled cities will be gone.

Again he accuses them, as having chosen from pleasure in wickedness to be quiet about things they should have least been quiet about, and as having been most unwisely silent about things at which it was likely God was not moderately grieved. For it was necessary, he says, with all strength to thrust away impiety towards me and to rebuke those who advise shameful things, and doing this to be in every good thing, they were silent, they accepted the ways of error; there was not among them one who stood against those who innovated those things, not setting against them the things from the law, and bringing to remembrance what had been decreed. For it is written, "You shall have no other gods besides "me; and again, "You shall not make for yourself an idol. But they had very little regard for these things at all. For they were silent, honoring impiety, that is, apostasy. Therefore they have harvested the fruits of their injustice in this matter, they have eaten a false fruit, that is, they have held a hope that is both fragile and unprofitable. For the true fruit, which is able to save and to benefit, is love for God, and the boasts of righteousness; but a false fruit would reasonably be understood as that of impiety; for it certainly brings down to an abominable end. What, then, is the false fruit that has come to them from their impiety, He immediately showed.

For He adds, Because you hoped in your chariots, in the multitude of your power, destruction shall rise up among your people, and all your fortified places shall be gone. For you have acted impiously, not moderately, He says, having served wood and stones, and having dishonored the one God who is so by nature and in truth. Then, when war was announced, and had already come even within your gates, you did not seek help from Me, but you took courage in your own powers and in the multitude of your chariots, and you supposed you would overcome the strength of the enemy, the solicitude and aid of your falsely named gods being sufficient for you for this. This shall be a false fruit for you. For there will be destruction against the peoples, and every brilliant and well-fortified city will be shaken down. For what God does not establish, will in every way and entirely fall. Let these things be said also by us, or rather by God, to those who wish to attend to the unholy heretics, and who pretend to be disciples of things pertaining to life and understanding. These men pass over impiety in silence. For they endure hearing those who

blaspheme, although they owe it to make the greatest possible denunciation against them. They will therefore indeed share in their own ill counsel, and will reap the fruits of injustice.

for they will eat falsehood, receiving spurious and rejected knowledge, and being taught perverted things, and whatever attempts to counterfeit the beauty of the truth. And that all their power will fall, with God overthrowing it, and they will go to ruin and destruction, how could anyone doubt? As the ruler Salmana from the house of Jerubbaal, in the days of war dashed a mother to the ground upon her children; so will I do to you, O house of Israel, because of your evils. In the book of Judges it is written that Israel turned aside after the Baalim from time to time. For this reason they offended God, and were delivered into the hands of Midian, for seven whole years. And they endured such harsh oppression from their conquerors, that they even lived in rocks, and were saved only with difficulty by hiding in them, and making the difficult places a fortress, because they were utterly exhausted for battle. It happened therefore that from time to time those who fell into the hands of the Midianites were cruelly killed, so that children perished together with their wretched mothers, all mercy having been removed. And their rulers were Oreb and Zeeb, and Zebah and Salmana. And the calamity was prolonged until God, having pitied the afflicted Israel, raised up Gideon, who was also renamed Jerubbaal by his father and the locals, for such a reason.

For when God had instructed him by the voice of an angel, he pulled down the pillar of Baal, and cut down his grove, secretly and by night. But when the inhabitants of the town, hastening at dawn to perform their usual rites, were present in the sacred precinct, and saw Baal thrown down, and the oak grove fallen upon him, they at once suspected the piety of Gideon, and ascribed the cause of the matter to him. Then they went to his father, saying, Give us your son, that we may kill him, "because he has pulled down Baal. To this he replied; "Will you," he says, "avenge Baal? If he is a god, let him plead his own case against the one who pulled him down. From this, Gideon was henceforth renamed Jerubbaal, which is interpreted "Let Baal plead. Just as, then, he says, Salmana, the leader of the Midianite multitude, from the house of Gideon, that is, of Jerubbaal, dashed a mother upon her children, in this very same way the general of the Assyrians cruelly and inhumanly, and without any pity he will use war against you, and will dash the mother to

the ground with her children. And these things will happen because of your wickedness. For he does not punish in vain, being a righteous judge, the God of all. But if the sins of those who have offended him should then extend beyond measure, then he brings on them accordingly the things that come from wrath.

If then we would avert his anger, we must first avert very well both sinning, and, as it were, provoking to indignation the divine and most gentle nature, and perhaps even forcing it unwillingly to this by the excess of our offenses. But it must be known that some of the preceding commentators say that it was not Shalman, the ruler of the Midianites, who dashed the mother upon the children, from the house of Jerubbaal, that is, of Israel; for sometimes the whole is signified by the leaders; but rather that Gideon dashed the mother upon the children in the house of Shalman. But I think the other would be better, and have support from what is fitting, and not this rather. For just as at that time, when Israel inclined to the Baalim, the children were dashed along with their mothers among them by the hand of foreigners, so also now that Ephraim has turned aside to idolatry, the children will be dashed again by the hand of barbarians, that is, of the Assyrians, along with those who bore them. I think, therefore, that the argument is plausible, and will better preserve the similarity, as from an ancient image, to more recent events, if the force of the preceding is understood in this way. In the morning they were cast off. The king of Israel was cast off.

Again, the other interpreters, and indeed also the Hebrew writing, have clearly said that they were cast off as in the morning, signifying by this that Israel had fallen away from fellowship with God, as it were, in a very short time, that is, quickly and without delay. For the time of the morning is very brief; for as soon as the light of day begins to dawn, it makes the morning; but when the sun has risen and sent forth its first ray, it is immediately dissolved and has passed away. Therefore, as in the morning, that is, in a little, and brief, and very contracted time, they were cast off together with their leaders. For we shall either understand it thus, or we shall take it in another way. For when God does not yet bring punishments upon human offenses, or even makes the extension of his forbearance longer, it is not at all unlikely to compare him to those who sleep at night. And indeed the blessed Prophets have cried out to us in many ways, signifying this very thing. For the most wise Jeremiah says, "Be not as a man sleeping, or as a man who is not able to

save; and the divine psalmist at one time says, "Awake, why do you sleep, O Lord? Arise and do not cast off forever; and at another time, seeing him awakened for the help of some, says, "And the Lord awoke as one sleeping.

He seems, then, to call the morning the time of his, as it were, watchfulness over them; for in the morning we rise from sleep. Therefore, when God is watchful over them, and, as it were, now awakened to visit what they have done, they will become cast off and rejected; although because of his very great forbearance he, as it were, even slumbered over them, in the time that has already passed. And he says that the king was also cast off with the multitudes, since the kingdom of Ephraim would very soon be taken away from their midst. For having returned, as I said, to Judea after the time of the captivity, they all came under one king, just as, of course, both in the beginning and before the times of the captivity. For those from the tribe of Judah reigned in Jerusalem, while all of Israel still existed. Because Israel was a child, and I loved him, and out of Egypt I called his children. As I called them, so they went away from my face. In these things the argument seems to us to be contending against an objection from some people. For let someone be conceived of as considering that, or even saying openly: If they were going to fall away, and from the face of God, those of the blood of Israel were to become in due time, and to be both abominable and hated, why were they even called in the beginning?

To these things God, and very fittingly, explains in a certain way, saying, Israel is a child and I loved him, and out of Egypt I have summoned his children. Jacob, he says, was an unfeigned man, who was renamed Israel. For this reason I loved him; for while they were still in the womb, "Jacob I have loved," He says; "but Esau I have hated. Since, therefore, I have loved him, for this reason I also delivered his children from the oppression of the Egyptians. "For I show mercy to thousands of those who love me. What then of those honored and chosen on account of their fathers, those honored by the grace of freedom, and delivered from slavery and toils? Have they shown honor? Have they been eager to gladden with good will the God who protected them? By no means, he says. For they have run away from the Master, they have departed from the one who honored them, they have insulted the one who called them. And how have they departed? Was it one by one and a few at a time, having slipped from right thinking, and being seduced by certain deceits? Not at all. For they departed in the same way as they were indeed

called, that is, as a whole multitude and by tribes, every clan and every household. For so they went out of the land of the Egyptians in due course.

And we remember that when Pharaoh was scarcely promising to let Israel go, and wished to learn about the multitude departing from him, saying clearly, "Who are they that are going? Moses answered, "With our young men and with our elders we will go, with our sons and daughters, and our sheep and our cattle. Therefore the call was by whole tribes and by multitude, by clan and by household; and in the same manner was the apostasy, the ugliness of which he particularly signifies when he says *they departed from my face*. For those whom the Master of all might choose to hate, He would not even visit, I mean according to that which is sung in the psalms, "Look upon me and have mercy on me. For it is written that "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous; and He Himself somewhere says "And on whom shall I look, but on the humble and the quiet, and him who trembles at my words? They sacrificed to the Baals and burned incense to carved images. And I bound Ephraim's feet, I took him up in my arm, and they did not know that I heal them in the corruption of men. I drew them with the bonds of my love. He shows the immeasurable and god-fitting gentleness inherent in him. For to bestow good things on those who have already believed and acknowledged him and have chosen to worship him alone would have a fitting reason, and the matter would not be beyond what is likely;

for one honors, if he should choose to act rightly, one who is already his own and who has run to him; but to appear as the provider of every good thing even to the profane who do not yet know him would have an excess of philanthropy and wonder, and a truly god-fitting demonstration of gentleness. Therefore the Savior himself also said, pitying our condition and, as God, bestowing a mercy in no way fitting for the lovers of sin, at one time that "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick," and at another time again, "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And the most wise Paul also greatly marvels at the incomparable forbearance of God who rules over all, and says that "Christ came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am first. They, therefore, he says, that is, those of Israel, were wandering in Egypt, they did not yet know the true God, me; but rather they were detected bringing sacrifices to the Baals, that is, to the idols, burning incense to the carved images, that is, to the objects of worship of the natives. But I, since I am kind and good, al-

though Ephraim was in such a state of perversity—that is, Israel as a whole, as is indicated here by one tribe—I bound his feet, he says. And what this is, He Himself clarified, saying, I took him up in my arm.

But the a similarity of the matter, as from what is done with infants. For those who take up small babies in their hands, as it were, bind their feet, bringing their feet together. For I think the thighs and knees of everyone who is seated must be drawn together; this is what "I bound his feet" means; just as it is indeed written about Abraham, that he bound the feet of Isaac his son, when he expected to sacrifice him to God. But it is necessary to know that the edition of the Hebrews, and indeed that of the others, does not have "I bound his feet"; but they have rather put "I have become as a nursing-father to Ephraim. Therefore, I was such to them, but they did not know, that is, they did not understand, they did not perceive that by destroying others among them I bring about their correction. For this is what "I heal them by the destruction of men" means; for the Egyptians were first destroyed by the ten plagues, since Pharaoh would not relent. And after the plagues of the Egyptians, the Hittites, Hivites and Amorites, Canaanites and Jebusites were destroyed, whom Israel, having conquered by force, has inherited the land of promise, since God cleared every steep place for them, and bestowed the ability to overpower their enemies. Therefore, he says, they do not perceive that by destroying men of the same race as them, I set their affairs in order.

And I stretched them, that is, I bound them fast and held them as in bonds of love. But if they had been wise, they would surely have understood and reasoned among themselves, why these nations were destroyed by God, and we were brought in to replace them. For understanding thus, that I have hated the sinner, and I do not take into account the worshiper of demons, they would perhaps have ceased from choosing to do similar things. Therefore, it is necessary for those who wish to please God with sound reasoning and a good mind to make the wrath upon others a cause for their own security. But it is altogether terrible that the matter of ingratitude is, and how one who has fallen into this disease, having been convicted of all absurdities, would be justly punished, and from this it is easy for us to see. For the ungrateful man, he says, is as a blasphemer. And I will be to them as a man slapping his jaws; and I will look upon him, I will be able to help him. For since He said that He had loved and taken Ephraim into his arms as an infant, and bound him as if in bonds of love, although he was still profane and sinful,

for this reason He says He will also turn him back when he sins; "For whom the "Lord loves, he chastens, and scourges every son whom he "receives.

But see how He promises that the manner of rebuke will not be devoid of God-befitting gentleness. For He says that the motions against them will be equal to slaps on the jaw by the hand of a man. This would be understood as the motion of a father, who mixes that which comes from wrath with forbearance and love, and as it were, gently, and scarcely striking with his hand, so that he may not be entirely unproved. And since He has loved, He also promises to look upon him. For He deems worthy of His oversight those whom He chooses to honor, and He is able towards us, managing with God-befitting skill and power those who choose to be sick with disobedience. For if He does not help by persuading, He of necessity turns them to choose to do the better thing, and by afflictions drives them toward that which is most beneficial for us and necessary for salvation. Let therefore the God of all hear from us, "O Lord, in a little affliction is your "chastisement to us; this is the slap; and again, "Chasten us, O Lord, but in judgment and not in wrath, "lest you make us few. For to be chastened is not bitter to those who are of a right mind; but to be punished in wrath is both terrible and hard to bear, and rather the matter is full of destruction. Ephraim dwelt in the land of Egypt, and Ashur himself was his king, because he would not return;

and the sword grew weak in his cities, and it ceased in his hands. And they shall eat of their own counsels. That in every way and altogether, to be estranged from God, having refused to unrestrainedly choose to do evil things, and in some way to be insolent with disobedience, even though He was calling him to salvation, the blessed Paul will clarify, saying, "See to it, brothers, that you do not refuse Him who calls; and it will be no less manifest through the things set before us. For, he says, the all-wretched Ephraim, having abandoned the land that bore him, made that of the Egyptians his own, as it were, fearing the calamities of war. And he came to be under Assur himself, and he brought his neck under foreign scepters; for he slipped into this misery. And if anyone should ask the cause, he will hear the One who knows all things saying: Because he was not willing to return. For when God proposed amnesty and commanded him to go, as it were, without looking back, and thus to return to what seemed good to Him, turning from worthlessness and leaping out of the pits of idolatry, he was terribly negligent and was not

willing to return. For this reason, then, he was captured, and came under the hand of those who hated him.

For the sword grew weak in his cities, and it ceased in his hands, that is, in no city of Ephraim was any man found who was skilled in battle and able to wield a sword. For the hands of those accustomed to hold it were paralyzed and, as it were, loosened. But since they have both thought and done evil things against themselves, they will eat the fruits of their own ill counsel. It is a bitter thing, therefore, to dare to dishonor the one who saves by acts of disobedience, and even if it were possible for some to escape transgressions through the gentleness of God, to be negligent is not without penalty. For we shall dwell in Egypt, that is, we shall be altogether and in every way exiles and wanderers, and not by leaving the physical land and migrating to another, but by leaving the inheritance of the saints. And we shall also be under Assur, that is, the ruler of this age, and under him we shall lie as slaves and captives, submitting to his will, on account of the weakening and cessation of the sword among us. For it is not, it is not possible for those who love sin to be able to take up "the full armor of God," "and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And you will understand the sword as, so to speak, the most warlike and God-loving movement of our mind, which, by bringing forth against the passions and setting against the devilish evils, we travel the pious and blameless path, and we place upon our own heads the boasts of the evangelical way of life. And his people hanging from his dwelling; and God will be angered at his precious things, and will not exalt him. The meaning of the preceding is utterly inexpressible, and the composition of the words is rough, and it would require much clarification for those who wish to understand. But what it wishes to signify, in brief, is this. Ephraim, he says, went away to the Egyptians, and came to be under the king, Assur. Then, as if someone were inquiring and saying, 'For what reason and in what way was it permitted to suffer, or how did Israel come to be enslaved to foreigners?' he sets forth the reasons in order, and says, first, that "he was not willing to return; for with gentleness being offered, he was captured, he says, being in this regard negligent and disobedient; then, that "the sword also grew weak in his cities. For there was not, as I said, anyone to stand against the Assyrians, or renowned in tactics, as God paralyzed their fighting spirit, and perhaps shook even the

one exceedingly strong in battles with cowardice. And there is another cause for his falling under Assur. And what is it?

For the people, that is, Ephraim, all but hung from him, that is, from Assur, and wished to depart from his dwelling to that of the Persians and Medes. And we certainly do not say that Ephraim himself would have wished to suffer this, but insofar as it came to what he had transgressed, he all but sought to suffer such terrible things, since, when it was possible to escape the wrath by choosing to turn to better and more fitting things, he all but hung from Assur, and the one that bore him leaving, that is, his own dwelling, he foolishly longed to go to that one's, although God had declared that He would in every way and entirely bring such things upon him, if he would not choose to repent. But since they slipped from this purpose, God will be angered at his precious ones. The precious and select and prominent ones of the peoples, namely, kings and leaders, who were also carried away with the common herd, pitiful and slaves, and in the rank of captives, because they have led astray those under their hand, and have become a snare to those who, if they themselves had willed it, were able to hasten on the straight path. For the leader always guides the subordinate. Therefore, they will be humble and cast off, although they had possessed the greatest glory. For glory is always attached to the thrones of the kingdom. But God would not exalt them.

For the kingdom of Ephraim has ceased, as I have already said many times. Therefore, we especially who are in Christ must be on our guard against the inclination towards evil things, especially when God is holding us back; or if we do not do this, we will willingly place the yoke of the devil upon ourselves, all but hanging from love for him, and proceeding with all eagerness to be under him henceforth, and to fulfill what seems good to him. But if this should happen, we will provoke God, and so henceforth we will be humble, having a low and trodden-down mind, as God weakens us and does not endure to raise us up with courage for what is good. How shall I deal with you, Ephraim? Shall I protect you, Israel? How shall I deal with you? I will make you as Admah and as Zeboiim. My heart is turned within me, my repentance is stirred up together. I will not act according to the anger of my wrath, I will not abandon Ephraim to be blotted out, because I am God and not man; the Holy One in you. He introduced the reproaches, showing that in every way and entirely the sharpest wrath ought henceforth to be brought

upon them for having done unholy things, and having been impious against God beyond measure, so that no manner of sparing was any longer left for them.

But since He is good, the source and origin of gentleness, He checks the impulse, not rebuking it as having arisen irrationally, perhaps, from a better consideration; for the divine and ineffable nature would never miss the thoughts or actions most fitting for it; but, as it were, holding back what is according to their deserts, and through gentleness preventing what is most fitting for them, that is, utter destruction, and their needing to be dug up as from the very root. For this reason He says, How shall I deal with you? What way, He says, shall I use in arranging matters concerning you? Shall I protect you and defend you again, and show you to be unconquerable to those who wish to plot against you? Then how will this happen? For it would be more fitting to be punished than to prosper, for those who have done terrible things against God. Therefore, assigning what is deserved, and decreeing punishments equal to your transgressions, "I will make you as Admah and as Zeboiim. These are cities of Sodom, which the fire from heaven consumed down to their very foundations. But I will not do this either, He says, although it justly ought to happen. But I will postpone it; for I have changed my mind. And I will not use unrestrained wrath; I would not give Ephraim over to complete blotting out, although he has become wicked. For what reason? For were they not worthy to suffer it?

Yes, He says, but "I am God and not man," that is, good, and not yielding victory to the impulses of wrath. For such a passion is human. Why then do you still punish, he says, if you are God not overcome by wrath, but rather following an innate gentleness? I punish, He says, for I am not only good, as God; but besides this also holy, hating injustices, turning away from the polluted, rejecting the God-hated, and converting the sinner, cleansing the profane, so that he may be joined to Me again. Therefore the Prophet benefits us, crying out and saying, "Seek the Lord, and when you find him, call upon him; and when he draws near to you, let the "impious man forsake his ways and a lawless man his counsels, "and let him turn to the Lord, and he will be pitied. For it is necessary for us, if we consider it of great importance to be with God, to refrain from sinning with all our strength, and to remember the one who says, "You shall be holy, for I am holy. And I will not enter into a city. I will walk after the Lord. Sometimes the knowledge of fu-

ture events runs precisely through the mind of the holy Prophets, as the thing is illuminated in them by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, sometimes in the midst of their own words, that is, those from above and from God, they have cried out in advance the voices of certain ones, either of those repenting, or giving thanks, or leaping for joy at the things which God promises will cheer them. We will find the blessed Hosea to have experienced something of this kind now as well. For the God of all was promising gentleness, and said that He would not utterly destroy the sinners, because He was God, evidently good, and not a man; for the one who is above all creation is not like us. But they, as if having recognized their own transgressions, and now somehow blushing at the very great and unexpected grace, promise to cease from the things they have devised for themselves, through which they also have stumbled. And what these things are, God has again informed us through the prophet himself. For a little before, accusing both Judah himself and Ephraim, he said, "And Israel forgot him that made him and built shrines, and Judah multiplied walled cities; and I will send fire upon his cities, and it shall devour their foundations. For Ephraim, that is Israel, having erected altars and shrines to idols throughout Samaria, slipped into apostasy, forgot God, and considering genuine love for him of no account, they continually provoked him;

But Judah, on the other hand, although trusting in God, being saved by him and through him from ancient times, sharpened him to anger, in many and other ways, but especially through this one. For when God had threatened to send upon them the Assyrian to destroy the land, he fortified his own cities, thinking that, even if God did not wish it, he would be saved by the strong walls of the cities, and would overcome the hand of the one fighting him. Therefore, when God promises good things out of gentleness even to those who have stumbled not moderately, they themselves who are being saved say that they will cease from their absurd undertakings and also indeed their counsels. And indeed let Judah cry out, I will not enter into a city, that is, I will have God as a wall, I will make hope in him my security, I will run under the right hand of the one who saves, he himself alone will suffice for my salvation; I will confess that it is vain and utterly useless to expect that, when war overruns the land, I will be saved by entering a city; therefore I will not enter into a city; but let Israel, that is Ephraim, cry out the other thing; and that is, I will walk after the Lord. I will cease, he says,

from my former accusations, henceforth I will follow the divine laws, I will make the God of all my guide.

But if anyone should go towards what seems good to God, he will surely know him alone, and will offer reverence to him, and will worship absolutely no other besides him. He shall roar like a lion, for he himself shall cry out, and the children of the waters shall be amazed; and they shall fly like a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of the Assyrians; and I will restore them to their houses, says the Lord. When the time had already come, and the season was completed, in which Israel was at last to be released from captivity, Cyrus the son of Cambyses, having taken power over the Persians and Medes, with a heavy multitude and an irresistible force, marched against the country of Babylon itself, and of the Assyrians, God having raised him up for this. And indeed the prophet Jeremiah, proclaiming in advance the capture of Babylon, says concerning the Medes and Persians, "They shall set upon you, and Babylon shall be taken, and you will not know it; you were found and were taken, because you resisted the Lord; Concerning Cyrus, "A lion has gone up "from his thicket, a destroyer of nations has set out, and "has gone forth from his place to make your land a "desolation, and your cities will be laid waste, so that they "are not inhabited. But that it was the God of all who gave Cyrus the power to rule, the prophet Isaiah will fully inform us, saying:

"Thus says the Lord to my anointed, to Cyrus, "whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him; "and I will break in pieces the strength of kings, I will open before him "doors, and cities shall not be shut. I will go before "you and level the mountains; I will break in pieces the doors of bronze, "and shatter the bars of iron, and I will give you the treasures "of darkness, hidden, unseen I will open to you. Cyrus, therefore, having conquered and taken the land of the Babylonians by force, released Israel. And indeed, having returned, they have inhabited their own land. The prophet Hosea interprets this narrative, saying: "He shall roar like a lion. Who shall roar? Cyrus, evidently. It is as if he were to say, perhaps, "A terrible and mighty war from Cyrus will strike against the land of the Babylonians. But when he roars, and as some lion cries out against his adversaries, the children of the waters will be astonished. And he says "will be astonished" instead of "will be terrified. By "children of the waters" he means the Babylonians, who, yielding in no way to the children of the waters, that is, to those

that swim in the waters, namely fish, in cowardice, having become easily frightened and unmanly by experience itself, will be captured. The race of fish is most prone to cowardice, and it flees from noises, and avoids even the mere shadow of the hunter.

When, therefore, Cyrus roars, he says, and cries out something terrible and dreadful against the land of the Babylonians, the children of the waters will be terrified with fear, that is, the Babylonians, yielding in no way to the fish in cowardice. Then, like a bird and a dove, those who had formerly fled together into Egypt will fly away from it; and those caught in the snares of captivity will flee from the land of the Chaldeans. And then they will return and inhabit their own land. Since it is possible, then, to have good things, by submitting the neck of our mind to God, and acting under Him alone, let us not willingly walk towards what is grievous, drawing down upon ourselves, as it were, a self-summoned chastisement; although it is possible, as I said, to be established in the certainty of prosperity, delighting the Master through a lawful conduct and life, and through genuineness towards him. Ephraim has surrounded me with falsehood, and the house of Israel and Judah with impiety. God, being good and merciful by nature, and having an unwillingness to strike anyone at all, is yet necessarily called to a corrective indignation, whenever the offenses of some go beyond reason and measure. This he teaches us again through the preceding words. For he almost says: Here and there, and as it were in a circle, to one casting and turning about the eye of the Godhead, everywhere it was possible to see the falsehood and impiety of both Ephraim and Judah.

And he calls "falsehood" the playthings of idolatry and the worship of vain things; and "impiety," perhaps, the insolence against God. For how is it not a terrible and most extraordinary impiety to cast off the God who exists by nature and in truth, and to incline ignorantly to wood and stones; that is, to worship creation rather than the creator, and to attempt to crown with masterly honors things that have been brought into being by him? Now God has known them, and he shall be called a holy people of God. The house of Ephraim and Judah has surrounded me with falsehood and impiety, he says; nevertheless, even so I will be gracious, bringing upon them a measured chastisement. For I have known them, that they would not be able otherwise to learn better things, unless they should suffer some of those things that cause grief and call them to an awareness of their sins. God, therefore, has

known them, that is, He has not been ignorant of the way of repentance that benefits them. And the matter will not be unprofitable for them. For from this it will result that they are also ranked among the holy peoples of God. For once the...

has been melted away the wickedness within them through labor and tribulations, they will be both pure and sanctified, and having learned by experience, that genuine love for God will be for them the cause of all delight and prosperity, just as, of course, the crimes of apostasy cast them into the pits of slavery and tribulation. But Ephraim is an evil spirit, he pursued the scorching heat, all day he multiplied empty and vain things, and made a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil was carried into Egypt. The discourse turns again from the common multitude to those from the tribe of Ephraim who had reigned over Israel in Samaria, whom he also calls an evil spirit because of their stubborn disposition, and their extreme and unrestrained inclination to apostasy from God. For he pursued the scorching heat, he says; for although it was possible for him to be under my shadow, he went away as a deserter, as it were, to the scorching heat. He calls the scorching heat the burning that comes from tribulations, and the consuming disaster. And so the wise author of Proverbs enigmatically calls labors thus, and says, "A prudent son is saved from the heat; but a lawless son becomes blasted by the wind in the harvest. Therefore Ephraim, since he is an evil spirit, pursued the scorching heat, that is, he sought and willingly fled to the scorching heat; but the wise say concerning God, "Under his shadow I delighted, and I sat down.

And they call the shadow the protection of the help from God and from above. But Ephraim has not done this. For he sought the scorching heat. How, or in what way? All the day long he multiplied empty and vain things, that is, at every time he both did and planned cold and useless things. And what are these things? He made a covenant with the Assyrians. I have already said before, and many times, that some of the kings in Samaria, and of those in Jerusalem, at one time attempted to buy with money peace with the Assyrians and security from them, and at another time called upon the aid of the Egyptians, trafficking for the promise of their favor, sending the products of their own land, clearly along with other things. The land of the Samaritans was olive-bearing, and oil was prized in Egypt, as their land did not have it. Therefore, hope in men is empty and vain. And indeed let him

who trusts in God dance over him who trusts in men, saying that passage from the Psalms: "Behold, the man who did not make God his helper, but hoped in the abundance of his wealth, and strengthened himself in his vanity; but I am like a fruitful olive tree in the house of God, I have hoped in the mercy of God forever and ever.

But it is especially fitting for lovers of equity who wish to live securely to love being under the shadow of God, by provoking him in no way, and so to shun offending him as one would the very gates of hades. And the Lord has a controversy with Judah, to vindicate Jacob; according to his ways and according to his deeds He will repay him. Just as by naming Ephraim, he indicated that we should understand those from the tribe of Ephraim who had reigned, so here also he indicates those from the tribe of Judah who were reigning at various times, by the name of the ruling tribe. Having therefore rebuked Ephraim, that is, those from Ephraim who ruled Israel, both calling them an evil spirit and saying they multiply empty and vain things by making covenants with the Assyrians and carrying oil into Egypt, he then proceeds to accuse those from Judah in turn, and says that the God of all will indeed enter into judgment with them, as if somehow vindicating Jacob, I mean the Patriarch, as having been wronged in no small measure, because his descendants chose not to think like him, nor to follow their father's mind, but to shake off the desire to imitate him as something utterly improper. Therefore he promises to vindicate Jacob, whose glory has been wronged by the wickedness of his children, by repaying those who have wronged him according to their ways, and according to their their practices.

In the womb he supplanted his brother, and in his labors he was strong toward God, and he was strong with an angel and prevailed. He usefully enumerates the successes of Jacob, setting them forth for the purpose of rebuking those who have chosen to think and do other things; for somehow by the comparison of the good, the wicked is rebuked, and by the exhibition of praiseworthy things, that which is not so is wont to be accused. Therefore, that Jacob was well-disposed from his very swaddling clothes, or rather even before birth-pangs, he tries to show through the supplanting of his brother in the womb. For even if what was done was an operation of divine power; for we do not say that the infant in the embryo and womb supplanted Esau by himself; but rather, according to foreknowledge, as to one who would be good, God put in him the success of what happened. So also He said, "Jacob I

loved, but Esau I hated. And this was according to the election of grace, God choosing the one who would certainly be better, as again in foreknowledge. But these things were in the womb. But when he came to maturity, or rather, was now perfected among men, In his labors he was strong toward God. For when God providentially sent him into toils and labors, he was not weak, he says.

For is it not toil, to depart from his father's hearth, and to arrive at Laban's, and to endure servitude, and to bear the labors of shepherding? And how or to whom is this doubtful? Therefore in labors he was strong toward God. Not as fighting against God, but rather obeying, and as it were prevailing by fulfilling what was commanded. For although it was possible for Jacob to grow rich without toil, and to prosper while staying at home, God did not leave him untrained; but rather on the pretext of the fears from Esau, He prepared him, as he went to a foreign land and city, to endure unbearable labor, so that having kept the genuineness of his love for God even in the afflictions themselves, he might rightly be admired. Therefore he was strong in his labors toward God. But he was also strong with an angel, he says, and prevailed. For an angel wrestled with him as in the form of God. Then also his thigh grew numb. Nevertheless, the divine Jacob confessed the greatest grace in the wrestling. For he said, "Because I have seen God face to face, and my soul was saved. Therefore, the mystery concerning Christ was prefigured through the wrestling with the angel. For those from Jacob were destined to strive against Christ, whom the word of the prophets named "the Angel of great counsel"; and some would grow numb, not having accepted the redemption from him;

but others would also confess, that they have seen through him and in him face to face the one and by nature, and truly God. For in himself Emmanuel showed us the Father, saying, "He who has seen me, has seen the Father. Therefore, the manner of the contest prefigured the mystery. Nevertheless, God records what happened as an achievement for Jacob. They wept and entreated me; in my house they found me, and there it was spoken to him. But the Lord God the Almighty shall be his memorial. He again recalls other histories, showing us Jacob as illustrious and well-esteemed from every side. For it is written in Genesis that Levi and Simeon, the sons of Jacob, cruelly and inhumanly killed the Shechemites, being kindled to anger over Dinah their sister, whom Emmor the son of Shechem had defiled. Then the

blessed Jacob was very fearful from this; and expecting to be utterly destroyed immediately with his children and all his household, he rebuked those who had done these things, and so he said, "You have made me hateful, so that I am odious to the inhabitants of the land, both the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and I am few in number, and they will gather against me and cut me down, and I will be destroyed, I and my house. And the young men in no way ceased their audacity, for they replied, saying, "But should they treat our sister as a prostitute?

But since, as I said, the just man was exceedingly fearful, he fell down again to the God who saves. Then He promised to deliver him from his fears, and not in a long time, so says the righteous God "Arise, go up to the place Bethel, and dwell "there, and make there an altar to the God who appeared "to you when you were fleeing from the face of Esau your "brother. Then, as the blessed Jacob was about to go up to Bethel, and to come to the divine house—for Bethel is interpreted as the house of God—he spoke to his whole house and to all who were with him, "Remove the "foreign gods from your midst, and purify yourselves, and change "your garments, and rising up let us go to "Bethel, and let us make there an altar to the God who "heard me in the day of affliction, who was with me and "saved me in the way that I went. And they gave to Jacob "the foreign gods which were in their hands, "and the earrings that were in their ears, and Jacob hid "them under the terebinth that is in Shechem, and he destroyed "them to this day. When this had been done, the divine Jacob was in good hope. For he was completely freed from the suspicion of the Shechemites, as God calmed with His own power those who were travailing with war against him.

For the sacred scripture says next, "And a fear of the Lord was "upon the cities that were around them, and they did not pursue after "the sons of Israel. And when an altar was raised in Luz, which is Bethel, "God appeared, it says, to Jacob,"and blessed him, and said, I am your God, increase "and multiply; nations, and assemblies of nations will come from you, "and kings will come from your loins, and the "land, which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, to you I have given it; "and to your seed after you I will give this land. These are the histories he recalls for us in the present prophetic oracle. Therefore Jacob was indeed a supplanter from the womb, but you are always being supplanted, and do not rather supplant sin. And he was very industrious, and well-esteemed in his labors and genuine towards God; but you, delighting in

apostasies, act insolently, you have not honored the provider of all good cheer for you. Your fathers wept and entreated me, He says. For if they were ever under suspicion of suffering from some plot, they wept and entreated me. For they expected to be saved through me alone; but you fortify cities, and think that, even if I should not wish it, you will perhaps be saved, and will prevail over your adversaries. And they indeed found me in my house.

For Jacob went up, as I said, to Bethel, and God appeared to him, and there was spoken to him the promise of blessing, just as we have recently shown; but you, on the other hand, do not seek God in his house, but rather run, and very eagerly, into the precincts of Baal; you seek oracles not from God, but the prophecies from demons. And the divine Jacob, going up to Bethel, that is to the house of God, destroyed the idols, but you, on the contrary, set up a carved god in the house of God; for they set up in Bethel the golden calf, although Bethel is interpreted, as I said, as the house of God. For this reason also God says through the voice of Jeremiah concerning the Synagogue of the Jews: "What has the beloved "done in my house, an abomination? that is, an idol. And the divine Jacob, and those going up to the house of God, to be purified and even the garments themselves he commanded to be changed, but you are seen as profane and impure, and going with unwashed feet into the divine house you do not blush, he says. And since Jacob was such, for this very reason the Lord Almighty will be a memorial to him. For he is preserved in the memories of God, and has an ever-flourishing renown. For God glorifies those who love him.

Therefore, for I will say again something necessary for your benefit, the glories of the fathers will condemn us, for not choosing to think the same as they, and to be adorned through similar manners and endeavors. And we will be condemned, not as having wronged our own only souls, but, as it were, having also plotted against the good reputation of their fathers, and shaming their ancestral nobility. And you shall return in your God, keep mercy and judgment, and draw near to your God always. The promise of grace is mingled with a threat. For the word for the present is rather of one threatening than of one promising purely; nevertheless the threat is out of love, and the oracle calls to correctness of thoughts and to a desire for good order. For, he says, the divine Jacob was wise and most excellent, and had as the fruit of his own mind that which is dear to God. But you did not imitate your father. Nevertheless you too shall return in your God, that is, even if

you are an outcast and an apostate and insolent, yet you will return, and not willingly, to choosing to live rightly. And you will return being chastised in God, that is, through God. And since good reasoning has not persuaded you to go on the right path, and to love to think what is right, the scourge will overcome you entirely and in every way, and will quickly bring you over to the choice and knowledge of what is beneficial.

These things, therefore, as I suppose, would fittingly signify to us the saying, "And you shall return in your God," containing a threat, as I said, very well mingled with good promises. Then, furthermore, as to one already being scourged, and in the very act of being struck, God exclaims, "Keep mercy and judgment, and draw near to your God always. For just as if some master to a servant being chastised, and in the very act of being scourged, should say with both restraint and indignation, "Be temperate and obedient, and do not despise a master's commands; in the same way, I think, the God of all says to Ephraim, who is in a way being struck and disciplined by the calamities of war, "Keep mercy and judgment, and draw near to your God always. It is as if he should happen to say, "For this reason, know that you are being struck, because you have not kept nor honored the things dear and beloved to me. Mercy therefore signifies love; and love is the fulfillment of the law, "For it works no evil to its neighbor," according to the voice of the blessed Paul. And judgment signifies righteous action, that is, justice, and the observance of the divine will. For the law is called judgment in the divinely inspired scripture.

And to draw near to God always would imply a genuine desire and inclination of the mind towards him, and not to be fond of clinging to others who are not gods, or to creation perhaps, that is, to wood and stones. And he will draw near to God and will be near in disposition, who knows how to be distinguished by good deeds and has kept the faith uncorrupted in himself. For sin often intervenes and separates from God. In the same way, clinging to the voices of unholy false teachers also drives one away again from intimacy with him—a spiritual intimacy, obviously. Therefore, those wishing to be near God must avoid the things through which they would become far off. Canaan, in his hand is a balance of unrighteousness, he loved to oppress. And Ephraim said, 'But I have become rich, I have found rest for myself.' All his labors will not be found for him because of the iniquities he has sinned. For as far as pleasing God was concerned, Ephraim would have kept mercy

and judgment and drawing near to him always. But since he has slipped from a good mind, and has made no account of things so venerable and precious, he has become equal to the foreign Canaanites, both godless and impious, and especially rejoicing in the ways of worthlessness, and with a barbarous mind being uncontrollably overcome by the desire for what belongs to others.

Therefore Ephraim should have been seen as an emulator of his forefather Jacob, and loved to walk in the footsteps of his righteousness. But he has become a Canaanite. For a balance of unrighteousness has been found in his hands, that is, inequality and greed. For he has honored, equally with the nations who do not know God, accursed oppression. And that he acted criminally in doing this, he did not deign to consider; but he took pleasure only in being rich and living luxuriously, as if God were not watching, as if He no longer observed those on the earth, and those wishing to do wrong justly rebuking. And it would be a clear proof of the utmost folly, that Ephraim hastens to be rich by every means, and to consider the charges of plunder and violence as nothing, but, as it were, to make a boast henceforth out of excessive madness of those things for which he ought rather to have blushed. For he said, "Yet I have become rich, I have found rest for myself. What then says God to these things? "All his labors shall not be found for him, because of the iniquities which he has sinned. For it is true that, "Wealth unjustly gathered will be vomited up," according to what is written. And indeed, to those who wish to gather from injustice, and to be rich from greed, let someone now proclaim through the voice of a saint, "It were better for you to do judgment and "good justice;

for before the divine tribunal, "Treasures will not profit the lawless, but righteousness will deliver "from death. And as the writer of Proverbs says, "Better "is a small portion with the fear of the Lord, than great treasures with "fearlessness. And again the same: "Better is a little getting "with righteousness, than great revenues with iniquity. Yet our actions, and the quality of our works, sometimes make us worthy of the nobility of the holy fathers, but also assign us to sinful fathers. For we will differ in no way from those who have lived in impiety, if we imitate their ways. For this reason we say Ephraim is called Canaan; for he has thought the things of foreigners. And the Canaanites are foreigners, and famed for their godlessness. Therefore some were also reproached, hearing fittingly for their own bold deeds, "Seed of

"Canaan, and not of Judah. But I am the Lord your God who brought you up from the land of Egypt; I will yet make you dwell in tents as in the day of a feast. And I will speak to the Prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and by the hand of prophets I was represented. He called Ephraim Canaan, as I said, proving clearly that he had hated mercy and judgment, and had chosen rather greed and inequality and every form of injustice. But behold, again he tries to show that not only had he become such towards men, but indeed also that he was refusing to draw near to God through his very deeds.

He accuses him, therefore, as one who has ignored the Redeemer, as one who through his follies has insulted Him who brought him out of the house of bondage with signs and wonders, and with great power, and with a high arm. For He says, I brought you up out of Egypt. And in saying, "I brought you up," He brings to remembrance the things that happened to them, until they entered into the land promised to the holy fathers. And these things are countless, and beyond all wonder. But that their forgetting of these things was inexcusable, He showed by adding, "I will yet make you dwell in tents as in the day of a feast. And what is this, you will ask again. The law given through Moses commanded that in the seventh month, on the fifteenth day, the feast of tabernacles should be celebrated. And what the reason for this is, the lawgiver himself made clear to us, saying concerning the feast of tabernacles, in Leviticus: "In the seventh month "you shall celebrate it. You shall dwell in tents for seven "days. Every native in Israel shall dwell in "tents; that your generations may see that I made the children of Israel to dwell in tents, "when I brought them out "of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. Therefore, in remembrance of the exodus from Egypt that had happened, they celebrated the feast.

Then how could you, he says, forget me who brought you out of Egypt, while you are still under tents, and making the matter a pretext for a feast? For "I will yet make you dwell in tents as in the day of a feast. He says, "I will make you dwell," instead of "I cause to dwell," that is, I make you dwell in tents, in the days of the feast for these things. Therefore the forgetfulness is inexcusable. But perhaps you sought to know some of the things that were to come, and wished to be meddlesome about your own affairs; and why was it necessary to approach the false prophets of Baal, that is, those of the falsely named gods, and to seek such things from them, and not rather to remember wisely, that I speak to the Prophets, and I have multiplied visions, that is,

from me will be every word of prophecy, and already has been, not from any other of the falsely-named gods. For to me alone belongs both to know the future, and to remember the things that are past. But they have imitated me, he says, the false seers and false prophets honored by you. This is the meaning of "I have been likened by the hands of the Prophets. You sought to know the future from them. Then, fabricating my words, and imitating the works of my Prophets, they belched out to you things from their own heart.

And so Jeremiah the Prophet, for instance, placed wooden yokes around his neck, as God commanded the thing to be done. But the false prophet Hananiah, opposing his words, took and broke the yokes, and said "Thus says the Lord, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. This is, as I said, the meaning of "I have been likened by the hands of the prophets. An accusation, therefore, against Ephraim, is that although having a clear reminder from the feast of tabernacles, of the exodus that happened from Egypt, he forgot God, and that he did not rather seek him, as the one speaking to the Prophets, as the one who had multiplied visions; but he was rather attached to the deceptions of the false prophets who fabricate the things of God through both words and deeds. If Gilead is not, were the sacrificing rulers in Gilgal therefore false? and their altars like tortoises upon the fallow land of a field. That they were attached to false seers and false prophets, going up and sacrificing both in Gilead and Gilgal, he convicts them through these things; and he takes for his proof these two cities especially, in which the error was more out of place than in others, and every manner of piety towards God was disdained, but all things that incite were in vogue, and full of the utmost madness. And so, in the passages above, concerning Gilead, God said, "There Gilead has despised me, a city working vanity," that is, idols;

for the people in it were makers of idols; and concerning the other, "All their evils are in Gilgal; for there I have hated them because of the evils of their practices. But it is necessary to add some of the things that happened to the Gileadites, for thus we will understand the meaning of the things set before us. Phul king of the Assyrians, being the first to come against Samaria, made the two tribes beyond the Jordan a kind of first-fruits of the spoil, and he took all their cities, and Gilead before the others. God mentions this, as if in passing, saying, If Gilead is not. If Gilead is not, he says, and is not now saved; even if it has perished, and it is not possible from it to convict the drunkenness of Ephraim, because it is not seen now, were then the sacrifici-

cing rulers in Gilgal false, and not real? But Gilgal is a city beyond the Jordan, in which especially, gathering together small and great, they were attached to the defilements of idolatry. Therefore if Gilead is not, who is he that dares to say, that the sacrificing rulers in Gilgal were also false, and not real? But they were not a dream nor shadows, nor some of the obscure, but bright and conspicuous rulers and leaders, raising up high and prominent altars to the carved images, like tortoises in the fields. But he says tortoises, not indeed the animals; do not think this;

but rather the mounds of earth, which some would make, raising the irrigation channels into hills; and countless such things have been zealously made by farmers. And he says sacrificing rulers, either generals and leaders of the troops, or those of the blood of Levi, wearing the leadership from the law. For they also perished along with the others, and not a few in number have served the carved images. For so it is written in Ezekiel, "Therefore thus says the Lord God, No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my holy places, among all the foreigners who are in the midst of the house of Israel; but the Levites, who have removed themselves from me in the straying of Israel who strayed from me after their own thoughts, and they will bear their iniquity. And Jacob fled into the plain of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept watch. The discourse now returns again to the examination of both the genuineness and gentleness of the forefather, and of the awkwardness and impiety of those who came from him. And it marvels, as it were, at his endurance in small matters, then it brings the matter forward for the refutation of the negligence of the ten tribes in the greatest matters. For how would one not admire Jacob, who endured such bitter and unbearable toil, and did not refuse to serve Laban for wives and marriages? But even if the forefather's wage was very small;

for it was a marriage, as I said; nevertheless he kept watch and maintained his faithfulness to the one who had promised the marriage. And he toiled not in his own city or land or hearth, but being a newcomer, and living in a foreign land. And such was Jacob, but let us also see the charges against those of Israel. He was not sent into a foreign land; but being in the condition of one conquered by the spear, serving the Egyptians, and once enduring wageless sweat, by the power of God he was delivered from the land of the oppressors, and settled in the land promised to the fathers. The marriage of a woman was not set before him as a reward for having kept the law, but

rather an abundant supply of every good thing, "a land flowing with milk and honey," the ability to crush those who resisted, glory and wealth, and the boasts from these things, and what of the things for prosperity and luxury was not? But he did not keep watch. For he transgressed, considering the observance worthy of almost no account. It is therefore clear that, being immoderately inferior to the gentleness of the fathers, they will not even be partakers of the forbearance granted to them; for the Judge is just. And by a Prophet the Lord brought Israel up out of Egypt, and by a Prophet he was preserved.

In these words He makes clear to us the reason why Israel did not keep the appointed commandment, and despised God when He said, "You shall have no other gods besides me," and why they did not wish to love to vie with the gentleness of the fathers; for He rebukes that those of Israel came to be under the kingdom of men at all, although God reigned over them through holy Prophets, and nothing was lacking to them for being blessed. For we remember that while the blessed Samuel was still living and prophesying, they asked for a king. And indeed at this God was angered, and as one who had been insulted, He was not moderately grieved, nevertheless He appointed Saul. Therefore He strongly accuses, that they came to be under the kingdom of men at all, not enduring to be ruled by God through Prophets. For God, He says, saved Israel, and brought him out of the house of bondage, with Moses acting as mediator, who also was a prophet and the first-fruit of prophets; and not only did He bring him out of Egypt, He says, but He also preserved him. For he remained worshipping the one who is by nature and truly God. But when they came to be under kings, they ran aground from their love for God. For first Solomon built both altars and precincts for the Baalim; then after him the accursed Jeroboam made the golden calves.

Therefore He accuses them as not having kept a most excellent economy, that of being ruled by God, I say, through prophets, but having instead chosen to fall under the hand of men, which indeed became for them a cause of apostasy. Ephraim angered and provoked to wrath; and his blood will be poured out upon him, and the Lord will repay his reproach to him, according to the word of Ephraim. That it became bitter and perilous, and a cause of ruin for those of Israel, to choose rather to be under the kingdom of men, in these words he tries very well to show us. For behold, He says, Ephraim, that is, Jeroboam from the tribe of Ephraim, has angered and provoked me,

the Master of all, and has called me to every form of irritation, by innovating with calves, and my own to them having put on a boast. Therefore, he himself has become the cause of his own destruction; his blood will come upon him. But since, when he set up the heifers in Bethel and Dan, he addressed those of Israel, "Let it be enough for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your "gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt; for this reason, then, and very rightly, he says he will pay to me, the judge, the penalties for the reproach.

For it is outright insolence and admittedly a reproach against God, to dare to attribute to lifeless materials the brilliant and admirable accomplishments that came about through Him. Therefore, in accordance with the reproach of Ephraim himself, that is, in equal measure to his blasphemies and unholy utterances, the things from wrath will be brought against him in return. For just as, as far as his undertaking and words went, God was thrust out from the glory that befits Him and Him alone; so also will he himself be thrust out from his own rule. For the kingdom of Ephraim will cease in due time. For as I have already said before, after the return from Babylon no one from the ten tribes ever again reigned in Samaria, but they were all in Jerusalem under one man, the one from the tribe of Judah at the time. He took His ordinances in Israel, and set them for Baal, and died. And he added to his sinning yet more, and they made for themselves a molten image from their silver according to the likeness of idols, works of craftsmen finished for them. In these things he does not accuse the ten tribes in part, but all of Israel, and says that although ordinances were given to them through Moses, by which they were taught in what manner they ought to serve God, and how they should offer sacrifices, they themselves as good as decreed such things for Baal, that is, for the idols. For sometimes a part signifies the whole.

For they no longer sacrificed to God, but rather they performed the feasts for the works of their own hands, and they brought the worship, the first-fruits, the adoration, the gifts, the thank-offerings; and depriving God of His own glory, they dedicated it to the carved images. But having done this, Israel, he says, died, and again he added to his sinning. It is as if he were to say: The one who did it has been punished, the one who dared has been destroyed, he knew the Master's indignation, who brings the penalty of blood upon those who go astray; and he by no means ceased from his own foolish-

ness, but would rather be caught in other and equal charges. For we have read in Numbers that the sons of Israel committed fornication, being inflamed with illicit pleasures, and they were attached to the women of the Moabites. Then, for this they were required to pay the ultimate of all penalties. And the things written are as follows: "And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began "to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called "them to the sacrifices of their idols: and the people did eat of their "sacrifices, and bowed down to their idols. "And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the "Lord was kindled against Israel.

And the Lord said unto Moses, "Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before "the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be "turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the "tribes of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined "unto Baal-peor. And when this indeed had been brought to completion, a not insignificant multitude of those from Israel had fallen. See, therefore, that by offering the ordinances of God to idols in the time of Moses, Israel died miserably. For the one who went astray was slaughtered by the swords of his own people, not by a foreign hand; but he added to his sinning. For they have made for themselves a golden molten image, and the works of a craftsman, and gods fashioned by the skills of artisans. And the Word, as it were, smiles at their vain counsels. For they have believed them to be gods, whom they themselves fashion. Therefore let the psalmist also exclaim to these, "May all who make them "become like them, and all who trust "in them. They themselves say: Sacrifice men, for the calves have failed. Through For this they will be like a morning cloud and like the morning dew that goes away, and like chaff blown from the threshing floor and like smoke from a chimney.

He accuses them again, that not only have they been impious, fashioning the silver given by God into the image of idols, and ascribing the name of divine glory to things made from wood and stones; but they have also slipped into such ignorance, or rather even of foolishness and inhumanity and beast-like savagery, or even beyond these things, as not even to spare their own children, but to slaughter them for the demons; although God detested the deed, and would never endure the very utterance, either to speak it to others, or to hear it from someone. For the Master is not bloodthirsty, nor indeed does he delight in the destruction of men; far from it; "For He created all things that they might exist," as it is written, "and the generations of

the world are wholesome. But since the inventor and agent of death is the apostate dragon, for this reason he delights in the slaughter of men. That, therefore, even the mere word for this is hated by God, He makes clear, saying: They themselves say, Sacrifice men, for the calves have failed. The word is not mine, He says, nor would I ever utter such a saying; but the worshippers of demons themselves say that it is necessary to sacrifice men to them. Then He ridicules the thought and derides the undertaking, adding and saying: For, in all likelihood, they had no calves; for this reason they have honored manslaughter.

But let it be, He says, that you have been deceived, and have honored carved and molten gods. Why did you also drench their altars with human blood? But we have read in the Books of Kings, that there was Jonathan son of Ahaz, who reigned over Judah; indeed he "walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and offered incense "in the high places, and also made his own son pass through "the fire," and sacrificed to the demons him who was begotten and born of him. But since they have done such things, they will be, He says, like a morning cloud and like dew, like chaff and like smoke from a chimney, that is, having been seen for a little while, they will go away to destruction and will proceed to nothingness. For a morning cloud, that is, a mist, and dew and chaff and smoke from a chimney, are easily dispersed, and are scattered in a very short time, or rather, even in a single hour. For what substance has either chaff or dew, or the vapor formed from smoke?

Book 7

But I am the Lord your God, who establishes heaven and creates the earth, whose hands have created all the host of heaven, and I did not show them to you that you should go after them. The ugliness of false opinion is somehow always refuted when true knowledge is brought into the midst, and it is as if a light shines in night and darkness, the word which instructs toward the correctness of reasoning. That, therefore, being filled with the utmost of all evil counsel, and reaching the highest end of wretchedness of reasoning, those of Israel have honored a molten thing and the works of carpenters, running past the true God and God by nature, He refutes them, saying that He is the one who establishes heaven, and has fashioned the earth, and is the maker of the stars. But He reproaches them, that, having disregarded as worthless the ability to learn the glory of the maker through the things that have been made, they have made these things a pretext for their own error.

But they were not made for this reason, that they might wrong the divine glory, being taken up by those on earth under the assumption that they are gods, but so that, as the sacred scripture said, "from the greatness and beauty of created things proportionately" the mind of those who understand might leap up to the possible comprehension of the power and skill of the maker. Therefore the Creator did not show us creation so that it might be worshipped by us.

And at any rate he also testified beforehand, saying through Moses, "And lest, looking up to heaven and seeing the sun and the moon and the stars and all the host of heaven, you be led astray and worship them and serve them, which the Lord your God has allotted to all the nations under heaven. But they called gods those things that were allotted for a display of seasons and were stitched into the order of luminaries, and they dared to worship them, and seeking things yet more shameful than these, the wretched ones have honored a molten image and pieces of wood as gods, worshipping the art of coppersmiths and carpenters. And I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and you shall know no god but me, and there is no savior besides me. I shepherded you in the wilderness, in an uninhabited land, according to their pastures. In these words there is a great refutation of their insensibility, and the ways of his assistance are set forth in order, demonstrating the magnitude of the ingratitude of those of Israel. And he refutes them, not as being ignorant, as I think—how could they be?—but as having been brought, through their very great awkwardness and a reasoning inclined to insensibility, almost even to a forgetfulness of what they ought always to have remembered. For the accursed Jeroboam, having set up the calves for them, said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt;

but they, although knowing that this matter was the achievement for them not of any other, but of God, offered thank-offerings to handmade calves, and persuaded one another, I know not how, to attribute to them the pre-eminence of the divine achievements. Therefore, as though they were drunk with the wine of Sodom, he practically pierces them through, saying that he himself is clearly the one who brought them "out of the house of bondage," and commanded through Moses, that "You shall have no other gods but me," and that he alone is the one who saves and effortlessly achieves whatever he wishes, he himself who nourished them in the wilderness, and in a desert and trackless and waterless land, releasing springs of water, and

sending down the manna, and bestowing the bread of angels even from heaven, and in the manner of a good shepherd feeding them to contentment, according to their pastures, that is, their departures. For those of Israel were in want of no good thing in the wilderness, although they were always changing places, and encamping in a rough and fruitless land. It is necessary, therefore, to always remember what we have from God, and to be fond of keeping forgetfulness of these things as far away as possible from our own mind, as a cause of destruction, and as provoking to indignation God, the giver to us of all prosperity. For the ungrateful person is like a blasphemer, according to what has been wisely said by someone.

And they were filled to satiety, and their hearts were lifted up; for this reason they forgot me. Just as the most experienced of physicians, by thoroughly examining the causes of diseases, hasten to check them with remedies from their art; in the same way, I think, God of all, looking into the inner mind and heart, investigates the causes of the passions within us, and so then restrains the sickened mind with fitting medicines. He therefore accuses those of Israel of having been brought to a forgetfulness of him who supplies them with all life-sustaining things and all that would appear to make them renowned; although the law clearly foretold, "Take heed to yourself, lest you forget the Lord your God, so as not to keep his commandments and his judgments and his ordinances, which I command you today; lest when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses and dwelt in them, and your flocks and your herds have multiplied for you, and your silver and gold have multiplied for you, and all that you have has multiplied for you, your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, where snake biting, and scorpion, and "thirst, where there was no water.

For luxury always has a powerful ability, and to revel in unexpected honors, both to carry us away into forgetfulness of God, and to be able to shake the human mind toward anything whatsoever that is amiss. But I think Israel, having leaped away, will suffice for a proof, having found in the breadth of prosperity an occasion for this terrible sickness; and since they were stronger than the nations, with the all-powerful God clearly defending them, they have fallen sick with arrogance, ascribing perhaps to themselves and not to the protecting God the splendor from their achievements. There-

fore, then, luxury is precarious and hard to manage, and like a smooth path to apostasy from God; but moderate affliction is by far better. And the voices of the saints will confirm this for us. For one said, "Lord, in affliction we remembered you; in a little affliction "your discipline is upon us; but the most wise Paul, set down for us affliction as the root and origin, as it were, of every good, saying, "For affliction produces endurance, and end- "urance, character, and character, hope, and hope does not put to "shame. and the divine David also sings somewhere, "It is good for me that you have humbled me, that I might learn your "statutes. And I will be to them as a panther and as a leopard;

by the road of the Assyrians I will meet them as a bear bereaved of her cubs, and I will tear open the covering of their heart, and there the whelps of the wood will devour them, the beasts of the field will tear them apart. For since the breadth of their cheerfulness became for them a cause of destruction and an occasion for apostasy, for this reason, then, afflictions are brought on, and in proportion to their sicknesses. For indeed bodies that are very sick and already decayed would in no way yield any longer to mild medicines, but would rather need both iron and fire. Therefore, since the greatness of the divine gentleness profited the children of Israel little, that I may not say nothing at all, a savagery befitting a wild beast is brought upon them. And he compares himself to the fiercest and most voracious of beasts, and that have a very great tendency towards cruelty. not that the divine and ineffable nature would in any way be subject to such angers, but perhaps he teaches this again, that the Assyrians will use such unrestrained angers, being inhuman and hard-hearted, and what of such things would they not be, when they are captured; but what is done would seem to be of God, since He himself has permitted it to happen, inflicting upon those who have sinned so savagely the anger that is fitting for them. I will therefore find them as a panther and as a leopard;

for they will be carried away to the land of the Assyrians. and I will meet them as a bear bereaved of her cubs, that is, one that is perhaps hungry, or rather, is greatly distressed, her cubs having been taken away; for then they say the beast especially reaches the height of its innate fury. And I will tear open the covering of the heart. By "covering" here he means their security. And the security of the heart is the courage that one might have against enemies; when this indeed is torn apart, the passions of cowardice enter in, so as

even to grant victory to the enemy without a fight. It is therefore as if he might be saying, "I will bring them down into the uttermost cowardice," although those who are against them are compared to a hungry and bereaved beast, I mean, to the bear. And that, having been caught in the bonds of captivity, and having been carried away into the land of the Assyrians, they will have no escape from evils, but evils will follow them, as it were, even there, he showed by saying, And there the whelps of the wood will devour them, the beasts of the field will tear them apart. For the untamed races of the Assyrians, he compares to whelps in the woods and to wild beasts, being greatly inclined toward savagery. In your dispersion, Israel, who will help you? Where is this king of yours? and let him save you in all your cities;

let him judge you, of whom you said, "Give me a king and a ruler. And I gave you one in my anger, and I had in my wrath a band of iniquity. I have already said briefly in the preceding parts, that God was accusing the children of Israel, because I know not how choosing to be yoked rather to human yokes, and rejecting the kingdom under Him, God, although He had reigned over their ancestors through holy Prophets. For He said that "By a prophet "the Lord brought Israel up from Egypt, and by a prophet he was preserved. But you, he says, scorning to act under God, cried out against the blessed Samuel, saying, "Behold, you are old, and your sons do not walk "in your way; now, therefore, set up a king over us "to judge us, like all the other nations. Therefore, since you think you have deliberated well, having raised up a king over yourself, like the other nations, and you expected to be saved by him, where then is he now? Behold, it is time for a demonstration: let him fight your war, let him arm himself splendidly, let him save the cities, let him defend those under his hand, let him drive back those who oppose, let him vigorously drive away those who wish to ravage homes and cities. But perhaps you will say, "Although it seems that I asked, you are the one who both gave and anointed Saul in the beginning.

Yes, He says, but in anger I gave the leader, and I had in my wrath a twisting of injustice, as having been wronged by you, He says; and all but thrust out from the thrones of the kingdom, as far as your opinion was concerned, I was exceedingly wroth. Nevertheless, I appointed him, though knowing, He says, that the matter was not necessary for your benefit, but so that experience of the events might fully inform you well that in this you have made a foolish and useless decision. For where is he now, or what benefit could there

be hereafter from him for those who are being warred against? But if you had been again under my mercy and hand, you would surely have been seen to be in a better state than your enemies. Therefore, "Vain is the salvation of man," according to what is written, and "A horse is a false hope for salvation," is the hope placed in rulers; but God rescues very easily those whom He chooses, and those whom He would observe honoring the hope placed in Him. Ephraim, his sin is hidden; pains as of a woman in childbirth will come upon him. This is your wise son, because he will not stand in the destruction of children. This, I think, is what is meant by "He conceived trouble and brought forth "iniquity.

For in the beginning, Jeroboam, so that he would not lose the scepters, when Israel wished to fulfill the sacrifices according to the law, and for this reason was traveling up to Jerusalem, devised the golden calves. and he received into his mind a sowing of evil seed, as it were, buried, just as the sin was also hidden. But the time of labor pains, he says, will also come. And this would be understood again as that of the war and the captivity. For even if it did not happen to Ephraim himself, yet it came upon his descendants at times, that is, the successors of his rule, because they became imitators of his impiety. He speaks, therefore, as to the synagogue in Samaria and says, Who will save you? Is it this wise son of yours? And in saying "this," he points out either the one ruling at the time, who also received the reputation of seeming to be wise; for this always accompanies those in power; or else he hints at something else, fitting for the time in which the word of the prophecy came. For while Ahaz was ruling over Judah in Jerusalem, "in the eleventh "year, Hoshea son of Elah began to reign in Samaria over Israel, "who did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. But at that time Shalmaneser, king of the Assyrians, marched against Samaria. "And Hoshea became," it says, "his servant. But the Assyrian was very angry with him for such a reason.

For he sent messengers to him, asking for tribute and the usual things; but he, not enduring to be ordered about by that man, sent an embassy to So, king of Egypt, asking for help from him. Grieved at this, Shalmaneser besieged Samaria for three whole years. Then, having taken Hoshea captive, he made him a prisoner and enrolled him among the servants, and he resettled Israel in the territories of the Persians and Medes. Therefore, the prophetic word seems to us to be pointing out Hoshea son of Elah in these things, whom he also calls wise, not because he was truly wise, but he some-

how speaks ironically; for he seemed to be wise among Israel, and to have planned very wisely, for choosing to call for aid for them from Egypt. but he was caught out, having acted and planned in a cold and useless way. Who then, he says, will deliver you from suffering incurable calamities? This your prudent son, because he will not endure in the crushing of children. For with your children being crushed, he says, not even he himself would endure; for he will be taken as a slave and a captive along with the others; he will go to the Assyrians. Wise, therefore, is the one who sings, "The Lord is my strength and my song. For from him is all power, and all salvation; and there is no savior besides him. From the hand of Hades I will rescue them, from death I will redeem them; where is your judgment, O Death?

Where is your sting, O Hades? Having spoken things out of anger to the sinners, and having foretold the things that would come from grief, he has returned again to a god-fitting gentleness, and he has indicated by adding that the race on earth has not been utterly turned away, nor has it been given over to unbridled and endless corruption, but there will be some forbearance in due time and a recalling to the original state in Christ, that he will rescue from the hand of Hades, and will redeem from death, it being clear that he means those who have come under it, on account of adopted sin, and the transgression of Adam in the beginning. For such a promise has been made again, not to Ephraim alone, that is to those of the blood of Israel, but rather to all upon the earth. For as the divine Paul writes, "Is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? For he has justified the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. For he has redeemed us from the hand of Hades, that is, from the tyranny of death, and the manner of the redemption is understood as the death of Christ. For he willingly endured the slaughter on the wood for our sake, and has triumphed over principalities and powers, having nailed the handwriting that was against us to it. For then, then "all iniquity stopped its mouth; and the power of death was abolished, since sin was taken away;

for this is the victory of death, and the sting of Hades. Thus also the wise Paul interpreted for us. For he said, "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. Therefore, with the sin of all being destroyed in Christ, we ourselves might also reasonably say, Where is your victory, O Death? Where is your sting, O Hades? "For it is God who justifies, who is he that condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died" for us, or rather "who gave himself a ransom for

all," one worth more than all, through whom and in whom we have been enriched to return again to incorruption. Is comfort hidden from my eyes? Because this one will make a division among brothers. We shall read the first verse of the proposed text as a question, and with a pause, and it would suggest some such thing to us if we choose to understand it correctly. Human nature, he says, has fallen sick with manifold sin, and has inclined not moderately towards transgression; for this reason it was justly condemned to death. Then what will be the manner of help for those who have suffered this, or how they might escape what has happened, I myself will consider, or rather I have already determined. Or is there anyone among you, come to such a point of madness, as to think and say that there is some manner of comfort and consolation, which the divine and pure mind has not seen?

For I am a craftsman, and powerless in nothing, but I know all things well, and without delay I accomplish what seems good. And yet, he says, this one will make a division among brothers. And through these words he proclaims to us our Lord Jesus Christ. For he is the comfort of all, the manner of the cure; the Father predestined him before eternal ages as Savior and Redeemer for those held by death. He said that he makes a division among brothers. And what this is, we have heard from Christ our Savior of all saying, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth; I did not come to cast peace but "a sword. For I came to set a man against his "father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law "against her mother-in-law, and a man's enemies will be those "of his own household; and again, foretelling somewhere to the holy disciples the things that would be, "Brother will deliver up, he says, "brother to death," and a father will rise up against his sons. For since he has destroyed the tyranny of the devil, and rescued the deceived from the snares of idolatry, he has so bound them to love for himself, that those who have believed disregard even natural affection, and have renounced brothers and fathers and homes and families, and have supposed that to cleave to Christ would be sufficient for them for all joy.

And so indeed the blessed David, as from the person of those who have accomplished this, somewhere sings and says that "My father and my mother have forsaken "me, but the Lord took me in. The Lord will bring a scorching wind from the desert upon him, and it will dry up his veins, it will make his springs desolate; it will dry up his land and all his desirable vessels. He transfers the discourse to the very person of death, and compares Christ to a

south and scorching wind, which he says will be brought from the desert at times. But it is necessary to know, and before all else, this, that the country of the Jews has a wide and vast desert, lying in the southernmost parts, and if ever the wind from there happened to blow down violently, they were exceedingly fearful, as the country was being dried up. And it seems to some that the very veins of waters in the earth make their supplies more sluggish, and are checked by the blasts of the violent and fiery wind. Therefore, from what they know and have experienced, he makes his arguments. Therefore, the prophetic word has told us that Christ will be brought against death like a scorching wind, which will dry up all his springs and his veins. He persists, therefore, in the figure, and very rightly, and, as from that which is accustomed to happen, he makes the declaration of the mystery.

And the veins and springs of death, we say are the ways of destruction, that is, the evil and opposing powers. For through them, as it were, the multitude of those who are ever perishing from time to time is supplied. Thus you will understand also his desirable vessels. For vessels that destroy those on earth and are precious to death one might reasonably say, are either the evil and opposing powers, or certain unholy ones on the earth, servants of his wickedness, who also destroy others along with themselves. When, therefore, the scorching wind has blown, he says all the land of death will be dried up. And again the word is made as from a metaphor. For it is as if he might say, Death was grazing on those on the earth as on a field; but it will be dry, death will not find pasture. For corruption has been abolished, since Christ set life before all, and permitted incorruption to be made recoverable. Samaria shall be made desolate, because she has rebelled against her God; they themselves shall fall by the sword, and their infants shall be dashed to the ground, and their pregnant women shall be ripped open. Having very well finished the discourse concerning Christ, and having foretold the mystery of universal redemption, the blessed prophet again wails over the calamities of those who have offended, and all but laments those in Samaria.

For though it was possible, he says, to enjoy, and very richly, the good things from his clemency, they have run as deserters toward the things that would come upon them from wrath, because they chose to oppose God, and to raise their own will against the Lord's commands, and all but to seem to be set in opposition, or even to be in the lot of those who have truly resisted him. Therefore, with all mercy removed, they themselves will be the work of

the sword; and strange methods of inhumanity will be devised against both women and children. for together with the newborn infants a premature they will suffer death, and those not yet called to be and to live, and the sword will anticipate the coming forth of the enemies through birth-pangs. Therefore, it is a bitter thing to oppose God, and truly a cause of destruction, as is seen by experience itself. Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have grown weak in your iniquities. Take words with you, and return to the Lord your God; say to him, so that you may not receive iniquity but may receive good things, and we will offer the fruit of our lips. Assur shall not save us, we will not mount upon horses; we will no longer say, Our gods, to the works of our hands. One might greatly admire in this again the skillfulness of the prophet, and the arrangement of his discourse.

For it is composed in a manner befitting a saint, and is full of the mystagogy from above. For he has proclaimed beforehand the future redemption through Christ, and that in due time death will be weakened, and the sting of Hades will be rendered inactive; and in addition to these things, that no manner of exhortation and comfort could be conceived at all, which was not known to God. And what after this? It was necessary henceforth to advise them to think and do those things which lead to their salvation, and, as it were, to hasten to bring back to sobriety those who are drunk; not with wine; from what? but rather from worldly love of pleasure, and from loving to adhere to the deceptions of demons. Therefore, lest, being inclined to indolence by the promises of goodness and love for mankind, they should make no account of him who knows how to discipline, for this very reason he usefully brings them back again to the remembrance of the terrible things, saying that Samaria will be destroyed, because she stood against her God; then adding to these those other things, which indeed appear not ineffectively to terrify and distress the hearers. for he says that infants will be dashed to the ground; and that the mothers themselves will be destroyed together with the embryos, not yet having brought forth from the womb into the light the much-desired burden.

Therefore, having first terrified them with these dreads, then, at the opportune moment, he sends into the hearts of those being admonished the word that calls to repentance, exhorting them well that it is necessary to turn back, and to return to God. But by saying that you have grown weak in your iniquities, he gives them to understand, that in every way and altogether

their weakness will cease along with their iniquities, and if the ways of apostasy should be removed, the terrible things also will depart. And he smooths the way of the return to God; for he says that sinners will indeed be in a better state and under the forbearance of God, not by offering things from wealth, not by dedicating gold, not by choosing to honor with silver vessels, not with sacrifices of oxen, not by pleasing with slaughters of sheep, but if they would offer words, and choose to speak well, propitiating the Master of all. for take words with you, say to God, so that you may not receive iniquity but may receive good things, that is, so that you may not be punished in equal measure to your iniquities, but rather may be enriched by the provisions of good things, and promise to bring to him the things from your lips, thankful odes and confession. For such things are the fruits of the tongue. But cry out that, he says, and promise firmly, that neither shall Assur save us, nor indeed shall we mount upon horses;

nor shall we say any more, Our gods, to the works of our hands. For these were the ways of apostasy. For these things they have offended, because they both served idols, and, having dishonored the ever-saving God, they have assigned their hope to helps from men. And when the Egyptians were at war with them, they called upon the Assyrian; and again when the Assyrians had taken up arms against Samaria, they hired with money the Egyptian horse-archers, that is, those skilled in cavalry warfare. For this reason they also heard God saying clearly, "Woe to those who go down to Egypt "for help, who trust in horses and in chariots; and they were mocked, and very justly, being eager to make their champion "an Egyptian man and not God, the "flesh of horses," as it is written. Therefore they promise to depart both from worshipping idols and from still having their hopes in men. And this is a correction of those who have already stumbled, calling to gentleness the Creator of all, who says through the voice of the Prophet, "Turn away from your iniquities, O house of "Israel, and they shall not be a punishment of injustice for you. In you, he will have mercy on the orphan. This is the voice of the Prophet, urging to repentance, and making the Master's serenity manifest, and cutting away the hesitation of one willing to repent. For do not doubt, he says, O Israel, that you will obtain what you pray for, if you should offer repentance.

For the God in you knows how to have mercy and to pity orphans. Thus says also the divine David, "He will take up the orphan and the widow," from

one thing I think, that is, from persons who are by nature most to be pitied, showing the loving-kindness of the divine and ineffable nature. But if someone should wish to ascribe the matter of orphanhood also to Israel itself; for it was all but lost from God the Father, although He says clearly, "Israel is my firstborn son; I for my part would say that it is right to understand it in this way too. It is necessary, therefore, being confident that the Master of all is both good and ready for loving-kindness, to repent without hesitation, and by corrections for the better, to release the causes of previous stumblings. I will heal their dwellings, I will love them freely, because my anger has turned away from them. The word from God is introduced immediately as a neighbor, and almost next door, promising to heal the sick, and to love freely, that is, that the effects of mercy and love, and the increase of every good thing, should now henceforth appear to be at work confessedly and openly. And in addition to these things, it shows that His anger towards them has ceased, and that His beloved loving-kindness will not depart.

And again the word in these things seems to us not to mention only the conversion of Israel according to the flesh, but rather to bring in also the calling of the Gentiles; because not "all those from "Israel, these are Israel; but rather those are counted as children who follow "in the steps of the faith in uncircumcision "of our father Abraham. Therefore, the calling of the Gentiles is also contributed, and the appropriation to God in Christ through faith and sanctification; and in addition to this is also signified the supply of spiritual things, and the abundance of grace, that is, clearly, of that in Christ. I will be as dew to Israel. In every way enriching and watering the mind of those called to repentance, with comfort from above, that is, clearly, that through the Spirit; for the dew is from above. He shall blossom as a lily. He will give forth, he says, a sweet smell in Christ, and the fragrance of a holy life, and he will henceforth be a choice flower. And he shall cast his roots as Lebanon, his branches shall spread. By this he shows that the mind of believers is not easily shaken, nor as it were ready to be overcome by evil spirits. For it will be so secure and established, just as indeed the plant of Lebanon, which sends its root down to a great depth; and with its branches above, it spreads not moderately.

For as the root luxuriates, the growths of the shoots are in every way vigorous. And he shall be as a fruitful olive tree. Clearly evergreen and fruitful; for such is the plant. And his smell as of Lebanon. The thing of Lebanon is

exceedingly fragrant. For this reason also the law of Moses proclaimed it as sacred to God. For it prescribed in many ways that the fine flour offered for sacrifice should be sprinkled with frankincense. Therefore, he says, the fruit of those called will be fragrant, and well-pleasing as a sacrifice to the virtue-loving God. They shall return and shall sit under his shadow. They will cease, he says, from their former accusations, and will return vigorously to worship the "living and "true God," and will be under him in a single-minded way, not expecting to be saved from enemies by another, but from him alone. Fulfilling this well, the Church from the Gentiles says concerning the Savior of all in the Song of Songs, "In his shadow I delighted and sat down. To those accustomed to do this, let the divine David also proclaim, saying, "The sun shall not burn you by day, nor the moon by night. This was accomplished for the ancients by God, when a cloud overshadowed them in the desert, and elegantly revealing the tent from above and from God. And he says `they will sit down` very well, so that the steadfast and securely established disposition of those who turn may be understood through this.

They shall live and be satisfied with grain. These are the worthy gifts of conversion and of steadfastness. For he says they will be partakers of eternal life, and in an abundance of power, clearly spiritual power. For I think this is what "they will be strengthened with grain" signifies. And it is written that, "Bread strengthens man's heart. For bodies are pleased by suitable foods, but the divine and heavenly Word invigorates the soul of man. For how can it be doubted that one who turns from error to the knowledge of God would pass from weakness to power, and leaping up strongly from the pits of depravity to the pursuit of virtue? If indeed the charge of weakness is truly to fall back into indolence and worldly pleasures, and to love to be attached to the worship of idols; while a glorious achievement of spiritual strength is understood to be to choose eagerly to do good, and besides this to consider nothing better than love for God, and to travel without stumbling and with a vigorous mind the path to this. And his memorial shall blossom like a vine, as the wine of Lebanon to Ephraim. God said somewhere to the mother of the Jews, that is, the Synagogue, "But I planted you a fruitful vine, wholly true. And our divine David also sings somewhere about it, "You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out nations and planted it. You cleared the way before it.

It sent out its branches to the sea, and its shoots to the river. Therefore Israel was a vine with goodly branches; but since it has stumbled in many ways,

"The Lord took away its hedge, all who pass by the way have plucked its fruit. A boar from the forest has ravaged it, and a wild ass has devoured it. For it has been set, as it were, to be trampled on by those who wish to do wrong, as pasture for swine and asses, that is, for pleasures and irrationalities. For this reason they have withered. Nevertheless, his memorial flourished anew in Christ, that is, clearly, the memorial of Israel. And he says memorial, because not all have believed, but the remnant has been kept, as it were, for a memorial of him. And the grace from God has become to Ephraim, that is, to Israel, like the wine of Lebanon, that is, fragrant and yielding little to frankincense in its fragrance. Such is the word from Christ, and concerning it the blessed David says, "Wine gladdens the heart of man," to which a sacred word urges us to hasten to partake very eagerly; for it goes thus: "Eat, and drink, and be drunk, O friends. For the things through Christ are not offensive to the saints, and are more useful when taken to the point of intoxication. What has he yet to do with idols?

For if he should come to be, he says, in the fullness and partaking of such venerable and heavenly goods, he will completely depart from the desire to stray, and to be attached to the works of his own hands. For lacking what good things anymore will he seek them from another? Or is such a search also completely unprofitable for those who have gone astray? For what will lifeless matter bestow on anyone? to whom it was also justly said by God, "Do good, and do evil, and we will know that you are gods. But handmade things could never harm men; for how, or from where? Nor indeed could they give them anything good or beneficial. Therefore let them hear, and very rightly, "The gods who did not make the heaven and the earth shall per- "let them be destroyed from the earth and from under this "heaven. So therefore, he signifies that which is fixed and firm in love towards God, saying What has he to do any more with i- dols? I humbled him, and I will strengthen him. I, he says, am able to afflict those whom I might see disregarding the ways of genuineness toward me; but I will again strengthen those who would choose to practice virtue, and to know the God who is by nature and in truth. Therefore, neither the affliction, that is, the weakening of Israel, was from them;

nor indeed would the transition to being able be thought a gift of demons, but it is a God-given good, just as, of course, being weak was a result of the stirrings of wrath. Wisely therefore, and with love for God, our great

David sings in the psalms, "My strength "and my praise is the Lord. I am like a dense juniper tree, from me your fruit is found. The juniper is a plant, so dense and with such abundant foliage, as to seem to be in some way a man-made roof, neither yielding passage to the rays of the sun, nor indeed to the downpours of rain, even if torrential ones should ever pour over the earth. That, therefore, being under God they will have unassailable shadowing, that is, help, he implies by saying, I am like a dense juniper tree. But that all fruit-bearing for those under God would come about in no other way than in Christ and through Christ, he himself will fully inform, saying in the evangelical decrees, "Without me you "can do nothing. Therefore let him say with good reason to each of the faithful, if one should be brilliant and praiseworthy, and in the boasts of virtue, From me your fruit is found. Who is wise and will understand these things? Or prudent and will know them? For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just will walk in them; but the ungodly will be weak in them.

He says that the one who understands these things is very wise and most prudent. For the comprehension of the divine words is not available for those who wish to readily take it, nor could one understand "a parable and a dark saying, the words "of the wise and their riddles," as it is written, except through the torch-bearing from above, with Christ sending into the mind and heart, as a brilliant ray, the grace from himself. And he teaches that to be able to traverse the straight and pleasing path to God is completely effortless for lovers of seemliness; but the matter is not smooth for those who are not so minded. For the desire and eagerness for everything good strengthens the one group, and persuades them to be carried in an unrestrained course towards the will to be well-pleasing; but for the other group, the inclination and tendency toward worthlessness and sin, would render them cowardly and unmanly, and not having from God the ability to achieve virtue, because they have not honored it in the first principles, nor has their goal been with a view to this. Therefore if we are sagacious and wise, we will ask from God the ability to do what is fitting, and he will grant it in every way, being a lover of mankind, and he will fill us with spiritual strength through Christ, through whom and with whom to God the Father be the glory, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

JOEL

Book 1

The divine Joel prophesies in the times, as it seems, in which those also appointed before him would be thought of, I mean Hosea, and certainly also Amos. For it seems to the Hebrews that he should be arranged not after Micah, but with those ones. And he denounces, as it seems to me, those of Israel, and makes a very great outcry against them, as having come at last to such a point of arrogance, stupefaction and insensibility, as to be checked in no way at all from evils, nor indeed to be overcome by calamities so frequent, and all but brought on them in a row to love, although no time had slipped in, during which any respite from the evil, however brief, might appear to have occurred. And we will find the blessed prophet Isaiah coming through similar words. For he said, "And the Lord Sabaoth was moved to anger against his people, and laid his hand upon them and struck them; and the mountains were provoked, and their carcasses became as dung in the middle of the road. In all these things his anger has not been turned away, but his hand is still high. You understand how they have suffered this and that, and the hand of the one striking them has remained high, as if on the point of inflicting other blows upon them. For in the same way that the most incurable of afflictions sometimes require not one incision, but still more;

so too the human mind, having arrived at the limit of insensibility, needs a more frequent blow, which with difficulty recovers it at least to the point of being able to hasten to relearn what leads to benefit. It seems, therefore, that the blessed prophet Joel, since Israel has remained unadmonished after very many blows, wisely makes the rebuke, advising them at the same time to abandon their shameful ways and choose to turn toward what is pleasing to God. Moreover, he adds the promise of things most dear to them, if they should choose to repent; and he gives them courage that they will encounter a good and most gentle Master. This, then, is the purpose of his whole prophecy; but we will speak of each of the subsequent things in turn, following the contemplations of the things set before us. The word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Bethuel. The Prophet says that the word of the Lord came to him, so that we might assign faith to the prophecy, being firmly disposed and confident that what has been foretold will in every way and entirely come to pass. The Savior himself confirms us in this, saying,

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. For truth is not a false-speaking thing, and whatever God might say will surely be exact. For he is the one who "confirms the words of his servant, and makes the counsel of his messengers true.

Therefore, most artfully and wisely he demands faith from his hearers, since he is not a false speaker like some, that is, reporting what seems good from his own heart, but speaking from the mouth of the Lord in the spirit, as he has most clearly stated. And Bethuel is necessarily added, so that no other Joel besides him might be thought of. For perhaps many, or rather without a doubt, were called by such a name; but not all of them were from Bethuel. For the sake of security, therefore, as I think, Bethuel has been added again. Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land. Have such things happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers? Tell your children about them, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. He refers the aged to the antiquity of times and memory, and has ordered them to consider when indeed, and on what occasions, they have seen similar things, inflicted by divine wrath, upon their own fathers or those even further back, saying that they must now consider whether the tales are not strange and unusual, and perhaps not yet known to any of the ancients; moreover, he says, it is fitting for the others to understand very well if such things have happened among them; and it will be a subject of unending tales, not lasting for one, nor for two or three generations, but rather leaping through, and far beyond.

For just as we say that brilliant narratives are worthy of being heard by the many, and those which might happen to be followed by the need to rejoice; so too, things that reach the limit of disaster and suffering seem to be in some way worthy of memory. For such things all but compel forgetfulness, and having a more burdensome impact, they demand to be remembered out of excessive shamelessness, and contend with the reputations of the most pleasant things; and just as good things have a memory that is not unprofitable, so I suppose do unfortunate and grim. For some things sharpen the hearers toward the pursuit of virtue; while others teach them to shun the experience of evils before their approach; and through the things for which others have been punished, it does not permit some to seek to be caught in the same things. What the caterpillar left, the locust has eaten; and what the locust left, the cankerworm has eaten; and what the cankerworm

left, the blight has eaten. The word of the holy Prophets is always somehow hidden, and bringing forth reluctantly the very grim parts of the narratives on account of the untamed tempers of their hearers, they overshadow them with possible obscurities, and by fashioning riddles and parables they provide no small benefit. But their word also proceeds sometimes through useful examples; such as is found in the most wise Ezekiel:

"The great "eagle with great wings, long in its expanse and "full of talons, which has the leading part, to enter into Lebanon, "and it took the choice parts of the cedar, the tips of "its tenderness it nipped off, and brought them to the land of Canaan. For it cleverly indicated the ruler of the land of the Babylonians, who shears off the choice ones from Israel, and transfers the plunder home. And that there have been failures of fields, and shortages of seasonal produce, and very often harsh and long famines throughout the land of the Jews, the sacred scripture has said. For already some, when a famine was pressing, have come to such a state of necessity as to buy a donkey's head for fifty shekels. And the women who fought over the children would show the savagery of the want at that time. For when the two had devoured the one, they demanded to be judged by the rulers concerning the living one. Therefore, if in these things the prophetic word signifies for us the failures of fields and the destruction of crops, the matter would be understood even so as unbearable; for to be afflicted in succession and immediately by so many and harsh plagues, how is it not utterly hard to bear, and not unworthy of being remembered?

But if indeed the visions, overshadowed by the more apparent things, also lead us away to other thoughts, it seems to us that the Prophet by caterpillar and locust, cankerworm and blight, and the terrible and unbearable damages from them, signifies the devastations at each time, and hints at the manners of captivities; by which they have been consumed and have perished, just as if those who made the assaults had all but devoured and destroyed them like the plunder in a field. Therefore, there have been many successive uprootings of the land of the Jews, both when the neighboring nations made war at times, and those who had ruled Egypt. For while Rehobam was administering the royal honor in Jerusalem, Shishak king of Egypt came up, and took the palace, and having emptied all the treasures in it, and having taken the golden spears and the shields which Solomon had made, brilliant and victorious he returned home again. And indeed Hazael the Syr-

ian also brought no small plagues upon them; and Pul king of the Babylonians also took the tribes beyond the Jordan; and in addition to this, Necho Pharaoh king of Egypt, when Josiah was ruling, marched against Samaria, and subjected the land to tribute; for he demanded a hundred talents of gold. Therefore, the things that have happened at various times are very many; but there have been four terrible and noteworthy sackings.

For when Hoshea son of Elah was reigning in Samaria, Shalmaneser the Assyrian came up, and deported Israel to the borders of the Persians and Medes. Then, after a short time had passed, and when Jeremiah was prophesying, Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem by force. And Israel was released with difficulty through Cyrus the son of Cambyses, when the seventy years were completed. Then in due time came Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes. This man, having arrived in Judea, both burned the divine temple, and took the vessels in it, and forced those throughout all Judea to be negligent of their ancestral customs; at which time also the events of the Maccabees happened to become splendid and admirable achievements. And a fourth war came upon those from Israel, that of the Romans, when they were also scattered to every wind. The Prophet, therefore, seems to wish to convey his own message to us obscurely and faintly, and as it were in the form of examples through such narratives; the caterpillar and the locust and the cankerworm and indeed the rust, either signifying obliquely the wars themselves that ran upon them one after another, or else the commanders of the armies, of whom we have just now made mention. But if someone should wish to record a more moral interpretation in these things, he would not fail in what is fitting;

for if a soul were seen being devoured by frequent and successive passions, and, as it were, destroying each virtue little by little, adding this to that on account of indolence, how would it not be accurate to say of it: What the caterpillar left, the locust has eaten, and what the locust left, the cankerworm has eaten, and what the cankerworm left, the rust has eaten? For like rust and the other evils, the good things in us are somehow ravaged by wicked and unclean powers falling upon the mind, and which are accustomed to consume with insatiable teeth. Therefore, vigilance is good; and indeed the Proverb-writer benefits us not a little, saying, "If the spirit of the ruler "rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for healing will pacify "great sins. For passions, when rebuked at the beginning, are both calmed and

checked; but if they find a wide and, as it were, unadmonished path to what is worse, they seize the whole soul through and through, and cannot endure the reasoning that would punish. Awake, you who are drunk from their wine, and weep; lament, all you who drink wine to drunkenness, because gladness and joy have been taken from your mouth. Without trouble, I think, one might again perceive clearly from this, how exceedingly wise was the divine Paul, exhorting and saying to those ensnared for salvation through faith in Christ, sometimes, "Awake, you who sleep, "and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you;

and at other times again persuading them to love endurance in suffering, in this way also saying "If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with "sons; for what son is there whom a father does not "chasten? For God, as it were, strikes down those who sin, although He is a lover of mankind, not willingly, but as if turning them by necessity, and making this a means of help for them. Just as, of course, those skilled in medicine also apply to the sick even the very harsh medicines, making the need to feel pain a cure for their affliction. For see how, having first shown the scourges and proclaimed the things that come from wrath, he all but "restrains their jaws with bit "and bridle," according to what is written, and commands them to proceed in a human way, changing their mind to choose to do what was better and more fitting. For he says, Awake, you who are drunk from their wine. Do you hear how he then rebukes them as children who are out of their minds and somehow already drunk, as if to say that if they had been sober in the beginning, what came from the caterpillar alone would have been sufficient punishment for them; but since they have remained insensible to the first wrath brought upon them, the second has been added, and after that the third, and it has even proceeded to the fourth.

Nevertheless, he now commands even those awakened and sobered up late, who have, as it were, sent away from their mind a kind of drunkenness—the love of pleasure and the choice to sin excessively—to come to a perception of what has happened, weeping and wailing over their own sins. But it should be known that for each of us also there is, as it were, a private wine, which makes the heart drunk. For we divide up the passions, so to speak, and one of us has turned without restraint to the love of money, while being sick with other things as well; another, again, has thought on the things of the world, and has fallen sick with the love of the flesh, being wholly devoted to

luxury and loves of pleasure; while another has fled to some other sin. But we hasten towards such abominable and God-hated passions, some not very eagerly, but others using their full impulses, and having an unadmonished inclination of the mind. For this reason the Prophet says, "Become sober, you who are drunk with their wine; and he advises that it is fitting to lament those who drink wine to the point of drunkenness. For as I just said, some do not stop their love of pleasure at the point of satiety and sufficiency, but as it were, drink to the point of drunkenness, and stretch beyond all measure; from their mouth, he says, both gladness and joy have been taken away.

For Christ speaks the truth, that in every way and altogether those who mourn now will be comforted; but for those accustomed to live luxuriously, the need to shed tears will follow, because the end of arrogance will be lamentation and wailing, and it brings down those who love it into the pit of Hades. And David also speaks the truth when he says to God, "In death there is no one who remembers you; and in Hades who will confess to you? and again, "For the dead will not praise you, Lord, nor all those who go down into Hades; but we who are living will bless you, Lord. But if indeed the meaning of the preceding things were understood also in a more earthly way, if the causes of gladness have been consumed by both the caterpillar and the others, doubtless the gladness and joy of those who have suffered is destroyed along with the fruitful harvests. For it is necessary to be gloomy at the things that happen grievously and are accustomed to cause pain and are not unable—I mean, with regard to being able—to waste away the heart with bitter and unbearable grief. Because a nation has come up against my land, strong and without number, its teeth are the teeth of a lion, and its molars those of a lion's cub; it has laid my vine waste, and my fig trees into splinters; searching, it has stripped it bare and cast it down, it has made its branches white.

Wishing the tear of repentance to contend, in a way, with the things that have happened, that is, those things expected to be and which are all but present, he subtly narrates the things that will be, and placing the assault of gloomy things almost before their eyes, he gives something to those who are struck, and a lament, and as it were teaches a mournful song to those who have been commanded to wail, and he then persuades them to say that: "A nation has come upon my land, strong and without number, and as for the sharpness of its teeth, it yields little to lions and their cubs. Now, the matter

is true, even if it might be understood of the locust, the wingless locust, and the caterpillar. For the thing is invincible, and the assault of such creatures is utterly irresistible, and it is able to destroy root and branch the things in the fields, I mean both fruits and grass; and to destroy fig trees and vines, and to render the appearance of the tilled land bad and uncomely. But if the discourse should turn again to the inhumanity of the ravagers, and the complete desolation of the country, it would signify nothing other than that their whole country has perished, and the prominent among them have also been consumed, those who surpassed the measure of the common herd in glory and wealth; so that they are understood to be in the rank of a fig tree and a vine; before they endured withering;

just as it is surely understood of the perceptible vines themselves, if they happen to fall among the teeth of locusts; for by drinking up the moisture in the plants, and sucking up all their life-giving power, they do not wither after a long time, but for this reason cause them to appear white. Therefore, the teeth of the consuming enemies have utterly consumed and sent into complete uselessness those who are ranked as vines, or are in the form of fig trees, either striking them down with swords or bringing them under the yokes of slavery. But one might understand, if one should choose to think spiritually, such things again also of sinful men; into whose mind and heart, as in the manner of the locust and the wingless locust, and indeed also of the caterpillar, the wicked demons somehow always enter, and the manifold and multiform passions themselves, and indeed they make them appear useless and most uncomely, having cast off the flower of piety, and having no righteousness in themselves a shoot. And I would say that it would be fitting for them to weep without ceasing, and to lament to God; and to strive to obtain through frequent prayer forgiveness and help, so that they might be, even if late and with difficulty, wise and strong, and able to escape what has befallen them.

And they would suffer this, and most especially, those whose mind has foolishly turned to the need to heed those accustomed to heterodoxy and to undermine the correct doctrines of the Church, concerning whom it might be said, and very appropriately, "Their teeth are the teeth of a lion, and their molars are those of a lion's cub; for the nation is hateful to God, counterfeit and sinful, and devouring and consuming the mind of the simpler ones with its seemingly wise words, so that no remnant of orthodoxy is seen in them.

These wither the master's vineyard, they render the garden devoid of figs, and show it bare and laid waste, "for whom judgment does not tarry," but "is just" in due season. Those, therefore, who are accustomed to live in ignorance, will be food for the locust and the beetle and the caterpillar, and will remain destitute of all seemliness, and there will be nothing at all flourishing in them; but the wise and God-loving soul, richly adorned with the doctrines of truth, and having its heart almost teeming and very well-adorned with fruits of righteousness, will surely say with boldness, according to the bride understood in the Song of Songs, "Let my kinsman come down into his garden, and eat the fruit of his choice trees. For sweet are the fruits of piety, and the choice fruits of true learning are sweet to the Savior of us all, Christ, who is also our kinsman, as born from a sister, the holy virgin.

Lament to me as a bride girded with sackcloth for the husband of her virginity. He commands them not to make their repentance a secondary matter, nor as something done in passing, or simply indolently, nor the grief understood in it, but earnestly striving and contending not moderately with what is most burdensome of other things, so as to make the toils of equal weight with the sins. For a newly-wed maiden is wont to bewail excessively her dead bridegroom, and to receive sharp sorrows for this, so as to set her mind beyond consolation, and to think that no manner of mourning worthily is sufficient for her; for the female nature is confessedly prone to tears and fond of mourning, but most of all she who sees her virginal and youthful bridegroom lying pitifully in his bed, dead and breathless. To her, he says, the multitude of the Jews must indeed be compared, to ward off wrath, and to check with lamentations the divine movement coming, as it were, irresistibly upon them, taking courage that the Lord of all is "gracious and gentle," loving mankind, "and of great mercy and repenting of evils" according to what is written. Nevertheless, the Synagogue of the Jews has not mourned the bridegroom from heaven, that is, Christ; for she herself killed and treated him with insolence. Therefore, she is excluded from the divine bridal chambers, and is outside the sacred marriage, and completely without a share in the feast, henceforth disinherited, and cast out and furthest from the hope of the saints;

but in her place has been called the new and unwrinkled, the all-holy and wise, and the bride from Lebanon, the beautiful dove, that is, the Church from the Gentiles, who also confesses the very passion of the Lord, and al-

most weeps over it by suffering with and mourning, and loves to take up her own cross and follow him, and to go through these things for the sake of love for him. And her virginal bridegroom would be understood to be Emmanuel; although she seemed to have been adulterated and to have fornicated with Satan, in the manner of having been led astray; through the regeneration from above, which we have received richly through the Spirit, denying the carnal. For it is written concerning Christ, "He came to his own, and his own did not receive him. But as many as received him, to them he gave the power to become children of God, to them that believe on his name: who were born not of "blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of "man, but of God. Therefore, pushing aside the birth according to the flesh, we appropriate the spiritual one, according to which the church from the gentiles, that is, those who have believed in Christ, would be understood as a pure and all-holy virgin, to whom the divine Paul also clearly writes, "For I have espoused "you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to "Christ.

Sacrifice and libation are taken away from the house of the Lord; mourn, you priests who minister at the altar. Because the fields are ruined, let the earth mourn; because the grain is ruined, the wine has dried up, the oil has failed, they have withered. It is as if he were to say clearly: Eucharists have ceased, and there is absolutely no one left to offer sacrifice, no one bringing an offering and the firstfruits of the crops, that is, the sacred sheaf as a first-fruit of the wheat harvest dedicated to God, according to the law of Moses; and no one, he says, placing the firstfruits of the seasons in a basket, and going to the house of the Lord, and offering up to God also the thanksgiving odes, which it was the custom to proclaim. For this reason, he commands the chosen race to mourn, I mean the priests, not laboring for the sake of gains, but as grieving over the peoples under their charge, and appointed for the sacred and renowned ministry, so that even before others they might propitiate the God of all, and imitate the hierophant Moses himself, who presided over Israel and said to God, "I pray, Lord, this people "has sinned a great sin, and if you will forgive their "sin, forgive it; but if not, blot me also out of this "your book which you have written.

For the office of the priesthood mediates between God and the peoples, and for those appointed to so august a ministry, boldness in supplications would be fitting, I think, and very reasonably so. For they all but consecrate

their own life to God on behalf of all, by eating the sacrifices for sin. This also the God of all says through the voice of Hosea, "They shall eat the sins of my people, "and in their iniquities they shall take their souls," that is, when the peoples do wrong, transgressing what seems right to the law, then, indeed then, he says, the ministers of the divine altars will take their own souls to God on behalf of them. And he says 'they will take' instead of 'they will offer' or 'they will dedicate'. For what was dedicated to God was said to be taken. And what is the reason for their mourning? The fields are ruined, he says, and indeed also the grain, stripped bare by the teeth of locusts, and as if by fire, burned up by the rust. For it burns up and withers what is in the fields. And he says that the land itself must, as it were, lament, since its fruits have perished. For the grain is ruined, the wine has dried up, the oil has failed, they have withered; that is, all things from it are gone, and the things for which it was right to be greatly admired, as the mother and nurse of good fruits.

And let these things be said by us as concerning perceptible matters; but indeed every most approved priest will lament for those who, out of immeasurable delusion, do not accept the purification through faith, and have not loved to be sanctified by Christ. For they will remain entirely and in every way destitute of spiritual fruitfulness, and they will be in want of everything that knows how to nourish and leads them to spiritual manliness, having no grain or wine, and deprived of the need for oil; the saying is mystical. For to those who accept the faith, Christ will present himself as the bread of life; for he said, "I am the bread of life; as wine that gladdens the heart of man; understand again what I say; and he will anoint also with oil, that is, the spiritual and sanctifying oil, and understood as in participation of the Holy Spirit; but those having a harsh disposition, bitter and ungodly, a disobedient and stubborn mind, he will surely show to be in want, and entirely without a share in the good things just now mentioned by us. And it must be known that the most wise Paul also, ministering as a priest to the gentiles the gospel of Christ, almost mourned for the disobedient from Israel. For he said, "Because I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart for my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites. But, as I said, the saying in this is mystical and hidden.

Lament, you farmers, for the wheat and barley; because the harvest of the field has perished. The vine has dried up, and the fig trees have become few;

the pomegranate, the palm tree, the apple tree, and all the trees of the field are withered, because the sons of men have shamed joy. Truly a mourning, a pain and a lamentation for those accustomed to tilling the land, the utter destruction of what is in the fields, and the inability to gather anything at all from them, and sometimes after long toils. to see the things in the gardens and the choice trees now withered and dead, and the vines together with the crops destroyed, and the very wild wood perishing along with the gardens. For it says, all the trees of the field are withered, because the sons of men have shamed joy; and "have shamed joy" is instead of: the inhabitants of the land have made the season one of shame and disgrace and reproofs leading to punishments and judgment, a season in which it was fitting to rejoice in prosperity, gathering the things from the fields, and to fill the storehouses with grain, to sing the vintage songs to the grape-treaders, and to delight in the flocks of sheep, with abundant and flourishing grass spread before them.

And in this again the word seems enigmatically to call "farmers" those who at that time presided over the Jewish orders, whom it said must mourn, as all in the country, so to speak, that is, the inhabitants of the land, were about to go to destruction, who might be understood as being in the category of wheat and barley and beautiful trees. But we will apply the force of these thoughts in a more fitting way to the scribes and Pharisees; who, being in the position of husbandmen, acted insolently toward Christ, and killed the heir, that they themselves might have the garden, and become masters of the vineyard henceforth, almost exulting as in crops over the populous multitude of their subjects, and being accustomed to harvest the most distinguished among them, like a pomegranate, like an apple. But the Roman war took them, it consumed great and small, the brilliant and the distinguished, understood as being like fig trees, as I just said, or perhaps like a vine, a palm, and an apple, and in trees, as in barley and wheat; for their ways are different, and the measure of life is not one for all. For since it once compared the land of the Jews to a field, and called the leaders husbandmen, the word has preserved the metaphor throughout, comparing those under them in various ways to crops and trees. But if someone should think that these things must also be transferred to a moral exegesis, he will think well.

For the vine, the fig tree, and the other trees, which are accustomed to be crowned with beautiful fruits, must be compared to virtues and the achievements of the mind. But if someone is wise and quick-witted, and a cultivator

of good glories, he will bear a flourishing and well-wooded garden in his mind and heart, nourishing in himself virtue in its many forms, and every manner of goodness. But if he is lazy and a lover of pleasure, and has inclined far too much toward baser things, he will surely lament, as his goodness withers, and his mind suffers great barrenness. Therefore, the prudent must take care of the good things in their hearts, which will certainly be present, if at least they choose by their goodness to gladden God, the giver of heavenly gifts. Gird yourselves and mourn, you priests; lament, you who minister at the altar. Go in, lie in sackcloth, you who minister to God, because the sacrifice and the drink offering have been withheld from the house of our God. Through these words, it as it were exalts what has happened, and places it among unbearable terrors, showing that the matter requires the most fervent prayer, by the fact that even the priests themselves must wail. Nevertheless, the... has something skillful. word.

For since, having most unwisely sat before the precincts of idols, although God was striking them in his anger, they sought help from there, the God of all usefully assigns to his own ministers the leading of the supplication, and to preside with fortitude over the efforts toward repentance, so that those who have transgressed might know that unless they chose rather to seek what is pleasing to God, and offered their prayers to him, they would not escape his anger. He said, therefore, that it was necessary for those who minister, almost to lend to others the labors in prayers, beating of the breast and lamentation and the wearing of sackcloth, by which is signified the putting away of luxury and rest, hardship and toil, and the right and blameless practice of a holy life. Then, making the cause of the toil clear, he says that sacrifice and libation have been withheld from the house of God; the saying is harsh; for he does not say that sacrifice and libation have been reduced, or rather, diminished, but rather have been withheld, which is significant of a complete overthrow. A terrible and truly burdensome thing for those who preside over the peoples, if in no way God is to be served by those under their yoke. Sanctify a fast, proclaim a solemn service, gather the elders, all the inhabitants of the land into the house of our God, and cry out earnestly to the Lord, alas, alas, for the day.

In what way it is fitting for them to make their lament, he again makes clear, and he appears as a wise guide to them of the way to repentance, and he shows clearly the things through which the God of all might become gentle

and well-disposed. This was, I think, also of one wanting to check the anger, and to remove what causes pain, and to restrain what is harmful, and to grant them again to prosper, and to be abundant in good things. Therefore he said that, sanctify a fast, that is, you should hold it in the order of a votive offering, and in the manner of a sacrifice the truly all-holy and blameless fast. For it is not fitting for the flesh to be worn down by abstinence from food, but for them, having fasted, to do the things at which God would reasonably be provoked. For if during a time of fasting we are not going to cease from our own wills, but to oppress those under our hand "for strife and contention, and to strike the humble with the fist" according to what is written, we have not yet fasted holily and purely; but we will reasonably suffer the loss of our labors, God having cried out "Is not this the fast that I have chosen, says the Lord.

It is necessary therefore to abstain from wickedness, and to follow, and very vigorously, the decrees of the lawgiver, directing the heart toward anything whatsoever of the things pleasing to him, and submitting the neck of the mind, singing and saying "Behold my humiliation and my toil, and forgive all my sins; and indeed, in addition to this, also that prophetic word "Behold, we will be yours, for you are the Lord our God. For this is a spiritual offering and a pure sacrifice pleasing to God "more than a young calf," more than a lamb from the flocks, more than a kid from the goats, more than fine flour and frankincense. For "God is well pleased with spiritual sacrifices. And sanctifying the fast, let us proclaim a solemn service, that is, the fulfillment of the divine wills, with which would fittingly follow the uprightness, the good conduct of manner, the readiness for anything whatsoever of the words that pertain to piety; and we will accomplish the ways of the solemn service, the elders having been gathered in the churches, and all the inhabitants of the land having run together, and weeping very intensely for the whole day, and being steadfastly disposed, that in every way and altogether God will have mercy; for he is "Long-suffering and of great mercy and true," "Taking away iniquities and passing over injustices and not holding his anger for a testimony, according to what is written, because he is a willer of mercy.

Because the day of the Lord is near, and as misery from misery it will come. Before your eyes foods were destroyed, dried up, and from the house of our God gladness and joy. He says, the day of the Lord, on which the things from wrath would come to pass, either by the locust brought upon them and

consuming the things in the fields and sending the terrors of famine and want, and instilling the very fear of death itself, that is, of the Babylonians destroying everything, attacking both cities and villages, working one evil upon another, and always heaping misery upon misery for the inhabitants of the land, so that they could not even, so to speak, take a short breath, nor could any good thing come in between, by which it was likely that they could have even a partial and moderate comfort, they who were now unbearably consumed by the frequency of evils. But since, when the fruits were already ripening, and the crops were now all but calling the reaper to themselves, and the grape cluster was darkening and yearning to be pressed, the attack of the locusts happened to occur, he says foods were utterly destroyed from before their eyes, as if those things that were in sight were snatched away, though they were set before them, as it were, and they had the readiest enjoyment of them; and he again affirms that there has been removed from the house of the Lord both gladness and joy.

For they were sacrificing, exulting in the bountiful harvests from the fields, and they practiced the ways of gladness, offering thank-offerings because they were richly showered with the good things of the earth. But we will find that something of this sort has also been suffered by those especially who have acted insolently toward Christ. For the bread of life has in a way already come before their eyes, "He who came down from "heaven and gives life to the world," "the grain "of wheat that fell into the earth," and sprang up manifold, the spiritual wine, that knows how to make glad the heart of man. But since they have not ceased to act insolently with their disobedience, spiritual foods have been removed from their eyes and, as it were, from their midst. For the participation in every good thing has departed from them, and from the house among them gladness and joy have been removed. For they have been given over to desolation, and the wretched ones continue "without a king or ruler, without a sacrifice or an altar, or a priesthood or manifestations. And in another way too we say have been removed from their eyes both the foods and the gladness and joy. For our Lord Jesus Christ said that, "Man shall not live on "bread alone, but on every word "that proceeds from the mouth of God. And that the word is food for the mind, no one would doubt. This has been removed from the multitude of the Jews;

for they have come to be in want of spiritual food; they have not understood the things of Moses. For the divine Paul also writes, "To this day, when

the "old covenant is read, a veil lies over their heart; and they have hated the divine decrees given through Christ. Therefore all spiritual food has been destroyed for them, not that it itself suffered destruction, but by no longer being available to those who have suffered, and, as far as they were concerned, not existing at all. But our Lord Jesus Christ distributes to those who believe in him the need to live luxuriously, and to revel in the good things from above. For it is written that "The Lord "will not let the soul of the righteous hunger, but he will overthrow "the life of the wicked. Heifers leaped at their mangers, treasures vanished, wine-presses were demolished, because the grain dried up. What shall we store up for ourselves? Herds of cattle wept, because there was no pasture for them, and the flocks of sheep vanished. And at times the God-inspired scripture attributes speech to irrational animals, artfully diversifying the natures of things into what is charming and elegant, and writing, as it were, in character the dispositions of which it would be fitting to think. Then what is the wonder, even if it should say that heifers happened to leap about, and herds of cattle to weep?

For as famine was unbearably oppressing them, perhaps they would have both leaped up and died, if they had perception of what was brought upon them. And he says that treasures have vanished and wine-presses have been demolished, perhaps of no deemed worthy of concern, because nothing was being gathered from the fields, but the sickle in the vineyard and on the grape-cluster was idle, and perhaps the ear of corn had withered in the fields, dry and fruitless. For this reason they say, "What shall we store up for ourselves? But that, as I said, along with the cultivated fruits, the grasses of the wilderness also perished together, he makes it clear, saying that the very flocks of sheep have vanished, utterly destroyed by famine, and deprived of their accustomed and most beloved pasture. And these things will also apply wisely to the misfortunes of the Jews, who have acted insolently, as I said, toward Christ the Savior of all. To you, O Lord, will I cry, for fire has devoured the beautiful places of the wilderness, and a flame has burned up all the trees of the field, and all the beasts of the plain have looked up to you, because the springs of waters have dried up, and fire has eaten up the beautiful places of the wilderness. By "beautiful places of the wilderness" he means perhaps those things growing of their own accord in the unplowed plains;

and by "trees of the field," the noble plants in gardens and parks, that are accustomed to bloom with the fruitful seasons; these things both the locust

and the blight have almost devoured, as it were in the form of fire. He makes the prayer to God usefully and most skillfully, teaching that one must least of all seek the cessation of the misfortune from another, but to offer supplications only to the one who is able to save, and as the one who brings on out of wrath the things that are accustomed to cause grief. For he says that one must by no means think that such evils happen automatically, but rather that they have been brought upon them as from divine wrath; and this the God of all himself says to us through the voice of another prophet, "Shall there be evil in a city, which the Lord has not done? For none of the things accustomed to afflict either cities or countries would happen, if it were not done with God permitting it. For He saves whom He would choose, and delivers from evils. He persuades them, therefore, to seek release from the things that have caused grief from God, casting as far away as possible the notion that they ought to have needed the hand and help of the falsely named gods in their affairs. And he says that the springs of water have been dried up.

For with rain not watering the earth, and with blight added to this, and the locust armed, and the locust-larva jumping, and the caterpillar crawling, how was it doubtful that their means of life would completely and utterly come to nothing? And with the grass also being destroyed, it was somehow entirely necessary for the cattle also to suffer destruction. And I would say that perhaps also for the Jews who turn to God in the last times of the age, it would be fitting to say such words, being afflicted and lamenting in their lack of good things. For the good things for the mind have been consumed for them as if by fire, and a spiritual locust has devoured them, and the springs of water have been dried up. "For he commanded the "clouds not to rain rain upon them," according to what is written, and they have become an impassable and waterless land, which will not be inhabited. But concerning us who have been justified by faith, God proclaimed beforehand, and of the gifts through Christ he indicated that the supply would be most abundant, saying, "In that day the mountains shall drip with "sweetness, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the "springs of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord "and shall water the torrent of the reeds;

and indeed also in another way, "I am the Lord God, I will hearken to "the God of Israel, and I will not forsake them, but I will open "rivers on the

mountains, and in the midst of the plains into marshes, "and the thirsty land into aqueducts; therefore we are in these things. But if they should walk to repentance and look up to God, and they themselves also say, "To you, Lord, I will cry," they will receive the springs of water, and they will draw with us the spiritual water "from the springs of salvation," and they will be given to drink "the torrent of delight" from God the Father, and they will have the fountain of life in their hearts. And there will be set before them for delight also the beautiful places of the wilderness, that is, a good and abundant pasture, to a knowledge of them turning away the divine and evangelical [teaching] understood in Christ. Blow the trumpet in Zion, proclaim on my holy mountain, and all the inhabitants of the land will be confounded, because the day of the Lord is present, because near is a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and mist. The form of the war is again described for us elegantly. And it would be true for both, whether it be understood perchance of the locust and the locust-grub, or whether one might take it of the Babylonians themselves.

For he says that since the war has already stepped inside the gates, and has been all but proclaimed throughout all the land of Zion, that is, in all of Judea, all things will be filled with confusion and fears. For the day of the Lord is present, that is, the matter is no longer only a prediction, but the sufferings are in sight, and they have come into the actual experience of what was long ago announced, from which it was far better to have chosen to turn to better things, and to shake off the experience of evils before the attack and its arrival. Therefore he does not permit them to shrink from repentance, but commands them to put away, as it were, their fallen state of mind and their sloth, and to turn quickly to diligence, and in general to the will to defend themselves, clearly by adding God to their side, and wiping away the charges of their ancient accusations by the practice of better things. For this reason he says the day of the Lord is near, on which they will be as in mist and darkness, fearing the famine from the locust, that is, the misery and disaster threatened upon them by the Assyrians. Like the dawn a numerous and strong people will be poured out upon the mountains; its like has not been from of old, and after it none will be added for years to come, for generations of generations. Before it a consuming fire, and behind it a burning flame;

like a paradise of delight is the land before its face, and behind it a plain of desolation, and there is no one who escapes it. He seems to call 'dawn' either the dew at dawn, which, whenever it is poured all over the mountains, leaves nothing on them unwatered; or the first rays of the sun, and the immediate and initial shining of the day's light, which almost spreads out upon the peaks of the mountains before all else, and reddens the hills. Thus he says the strong people will be upon the mountains, perhaps the locusts, that is, by similarity to them, the Assyrian, understood henceforth as an incomparable multitude; for he says that its like has not been from of old, nor will it ever be. And since in the invasions of the locusts whatever falls in their way is immediately consumed, and if anything by chance should happen to be left over, this too is the work of those that follow the first; he said a consuming fire is what is before it, and a burning flame what is behind and follows. And I think an army of enemies would do this very thing. For those coming a little later will surely follow the arrogance and ruthlessness of those who have arrived first; and they will make the land like a paradise of delight, utterly shearing it bare, and squandering what is found. But the saying holds true also if it were applied to the locust itself.

Like the appearance of horses is their appearance, and like horsemen so will they pursue. As the sound of chariots on the tops of the mountains they will leap, and as the sound of a flame of fire consuming stubble, and as a numerous and strong people drawn up for battle. He says that the locust and the locust-grub, if they should be carried over lands and cities, will be in no way inferior to the most warlike horse; for it will leap upon the land in such a way as perhaps even to imitate the rattling of chariots. For they leap upon all the peaks of mountains, and they fly down upon every hill, and they produce a sound like that of a flame burning up stubble. For they say that the devouring in the fields is not done by them without a noise, but a certain bleating and discordant echo is produced by their teeth, as what falls into them is shattered, as if a wind were fanning a flame. But again to compare it to a crowd of enemies, the unseemly nothing; for it rushes in a multitude, and yields little to those who fight bravely in battle. For the thing is voracious and because of its immeasurable multitude not easily conquered, but rather even difficult to encounter. The same account could also be given concerning the Assyrians;

and if someone wished, perhaps, also concerning the expedition of the Romans themselves, who like locusts devoured Israel for having impiously transgressed against our Lord Jesus Christ, it would not be so bad. From his face peoples will be crushed. For, as I said, the thing is completely invincible and hard for men to conquer, an assault of the cankerworm and the locust. Every face like the burning of a pot. For it is true that by unbearable terrors and griefs at times even the bloom of faces withers and somehow blackens into ugliness, being all but changed in color by the disturbances of the mind. They will run like warriors, and like men of war they will scale the walls. For running down equally with the most warlike, being superior to hesitation and fears, they will even be raised above the walls, as if practicing a bold assault. And each will march in his own way, and they will not swerve from their paths, and each will not keep away from his brother. The locust is kingless, yet it marches out in order from a single command. And they say that they go in rows, and fly as if in formation, and are least of all separated, but so attend one another, as if they were brothers, nature itself awarding the mutual love. Weighed down in their weapons they will march.

And by weapons I suppose he means the teeth, by which they wage war, and the achievements as in battle, with the grass being consumed, and the crop falling, and plants withering. And they will fall upon their darts, and they will not be finished. Locusts do not strike those being warred against with the points of darts, nor is a bow drawn by them; from where would it be? but they strike as it were with the destruction of edibles, and with the terrors of famine and want. But that for those who have fallen under such a calamity the loss of things in the fields would not suffice, but that having invaded their very homes and cities and troubling them terribly, they will have the army of locusts, that is, the Assyrian himself, he showed by saying And they will not be finished. It is as if he were to say, And this will not be the end of the wrath, but it would go even beyond; for he says: They will seize the city, and run upon the walls, and climb up on the houses, and enter through the windows like thieves. Before their face the earth will be thrown into confusion, and the heaven will be shaken, the sun and the moon will be darkened and the stars will not give their light.

You hear that they will fly down even upon the walls, and as if ravaging the grass itself, equally with those accustomed to clothes-stealing, they will burst in through windows, confusing peoples, and all but stirring up

everything, so that heaven itself already seems to have been shaken, and the sun and moon, and indeed the stars, to have held back their own light as it were. And again in these things the account has become hyperbolic for us, showing the calamity to be both unbearable and very painful for those who inhabit the earth. But the account is accurate, even if it be understood again as about an army of men, if they should choose to overrun countries and a city. For, pouring over everything equally with the locusts, they ravage the fields, and they also afflict cities, being raised above walls and running into the houses themselves, and rivaling the terrors of an earthquake in their savagery. And the Lord will give his voice before the face of his power; for his camp is very great, for the works of his words are strong; because the day of the Lord is great, great and very manifest; and who will be sufficient for it? I have already said before, that the Prophet's aim is to show the calamity to be terrible and hard to bear, so that they might turn to willing to do better things, and indeed also to deliberate more prudently, those who have grieved the lawgiver by their deviations into wickedness.

For the excess of pain knows, it knows how to easily transfer some, as if by necessity, to choosing henceforth to do what is pleasing to the one who is able to save and has the strength to deliver. Therefore, the Lord, he says, will give his voice before the face of his power, practically acting as a general and inciting them as against enemies. For it would be fitting for no other, except for those who act as shield-bearers and are placed before the others, to stir up the fighting spirit and to consider the army camp their own. And through these things he subtly indicates that the terrors do not have a spontaneous attack, nor indeed have they simply happened by chance, but rather that they have been brought on by God, who is clearly grieved and is now justly punishing. And he terrifies them, saying both that the camp is very great, and that the works of his words are mighty. And it is impossible that what God should command to happen would not in every way and entirely come to pass. And indeed he said to one of the holy prophets—this was Jeremiah: "Are not my words like a burning fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock? For the word of God penetrates as if through everything, and whatever he might speak, nothing withstands it, but rather even hard and resistant things yield; for it is easily shattered, and it gives way to the master's will, even unwillingly.

Therefore, great and manifest is the day, he says, on account of the report, which runs through all men, of the terrible things that will be brought upon them. And who will be able for it? That is, no one on earth would be so stubborn and strong as to be able to stand against the divine wrath. And the divine David was very wise when he cried out to God, "You are terrible, and who will stand against you because of your anger? And now says the Lord our God, Return to me with all your heart, with fasting and with weeping and with lamentation, and rend your hearts and not your garments; and return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, long-suffering and full of mercy, and repents of evils. Who knows if he will return and repent, and leave behind him a blessing, a sacrifice and a libation for the Lord our God? From this you might learn, and very clearly, that it was for no other reason that he set forth the narratives on high; and that he proclaims beforehand to them a disaster that is harsh and entirely difficult to endure, than so that he might henceforth persuade them to come to repentance. For he does not allow them to despair;

but he affirms, and very clearly, that if they should choose to think better things, and to correct their own ways at least in the second instance to what is pleasing to God, the things from his wrath will cease completely, and their affairs will pass over into the breadth of good order. And what the manner of both their return and of their prayer should be, he makes plain, saying thus, And now says the Lord our God, Return to me with all your heart. Let the things that are past be cast aside, he says, and let the things that have gone before depart into oblivion; appear better than yourselves in the second instance, propitiate God with fasting and toil, with lamentation and wailing. For it will surely follow for those who have chosen to do these things that they must henceforth be in comfort and luxury. For just as the end of ease, and of falling into pleasures, always concludes in wailing and punishment; so the outcome of gentleness and of the toils of repentance comes into the breadth of prosperity. Therefore, it is useful to weep over sins, and to be grieved according to God. For as the blessed Paul writes, "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret. And Christ himself also blesses those "who mourn now, for they will be comforted. And indeed our wise Solomon also says something of this sort enigmatically:

"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting. However, it is necessary to consider this: how great the power of

fasting is. It tames the Master, it calms his anger, it overturns punishment. For by tormenting ourselves, we very effectively, as it were, turn away the divine wrath that is raging and savage against us, and we easily restrain the hand of the one who strikes. For if it is true that by merely confessing our sins we are justified by God's pity, how could anyone doubt that by wasting ourselves away with the toils of ascetic practice, and as it were asking for justice, we will gain from God the forgiveness of our sins? Therefore, he commands them to mourn and to rend themselves, not their garments at all, but rather to unfold spiritually the harsh and hardened heart into which the divine fear does not penetrate. So Paul writes to the Corinthians, "You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. In return for the same—I speak as to children—you also be open. Therefore, it is necessary to widen the heart, as it were, for God, and almost to rend the mind, that it might receive what is His. For to feign grief by tearing one's garments rashly and in vain would in no way benefit those who have chosen to do this; but opening the heart and storing up in it what is pleasing to God would bring no small gain;

for this thing will lead to salvation. And that they will not fail to achieve their purpose by making supplications, he confirms by saying that the Lord of all is both loving-kind and very merciful, compassionate and good, and repenting of evils. For even if He should choose to inflict evil on those who have sinned, yet He will be gentle, and not for long; for He easily changes to willing what is good. This, I say, is what it is to repent of evils. And the Prophet, usefully cutting short the rash counsel of those who despaired of salvation, says, Who knows if he will repent and leave a blessing behind him, that is, he will grant to those who turn back a share in a blessing, so that they may again offer a libation and a sacrifice to him, and rejoicing and being glad may light the thank-offerings. Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly, gather the people, sanctify the congregation, choose the elders, gather the infants that suck the breasts, let the bridegroom go forth from his chamber, and the bride from her bridal-canopy. Between the porch and the altar the priests, the ministers of the Lord, shall weep, and they shall say, Spare your people, O Lord, and give not your inheritance to reproach, that the nations should rule over them, lest they should say among the nations, Where is their God?

Through these words he very effectively rouses them to repentance, and usefully commands them to leave no means of diligence for this purpose untried. For he said it was necessary, using a clear and loud proclamation, to sanctify a fast, to proclaim a service, and to gather in the congregation those who ought to serve, it is clear that is, the grieved God of all. And these would be "Young men and maidens, old men with children," and in addition to these, newborn and suckling infants, and indeed bridegrooms, and newly-wedded brides, perhaps running out of bridal chambers still garlanded and refusing their marriage beds, disdaining luxury and drink, and embracing austerity; with applause curtailed, and songs and words of good omen, which it is the custom for some to utter sometimes for those who have married, being silent; and lamenting along with the bridegrooms. For what one of the wise men among us said is true: "Music in a time of mourning is an inopportune tale. Therefore, when divine wrath is hanging over us, it is necessary to mourn, not indeed to love exulting in drinking and luxuries. For that reveling at the wrong time would not escape blame and justice, one of the holy prophets will make clear, saying of those from Israel: "And the Lord of hosts called in that day for weeping and for mourning and for baldness and for girding with sackcloths, but they made for themselves gladness, slaughtering calves and sacrificing sheep, and saying, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

Therefore, one must turn to lamentations and tears when wrath is hanging overhead, and hav- Let drinking be cast aside. But the Prophet says that even the sacred and chosen race must join the mourners, and at the very foundations of the temple, and between the altar to wail earnestly, crying out and saying, Spare, O Lord, your people, and do not give your inheritance to reproach, for the nations to rule over them, so that they may not say among the nations, Where is their God? But if his discourse was only about the locust, why do they not rather ask for deliverance from famine and want? But they are terrified of falling into the hands of enemies, and they beg to be spared mockery and reproach. It is likely, therefore, and I would say even true, that in the riddles concerning the locust the invasion of the Assyrians was written of secretly. But if someone should wish to understand such things even of the locust itself, he would reasonably marvel at the economy of the prophetic decrees. For the very manner of the punishment all but cried out against the folly of Israel, and in addition against the weakness

inherent in them. For they exchanged for "gods that are not gods," and forsaking the Creator of all things they have worshiped Baal. But behold, they consider the array of the locust unbearable, the locust larva is armed and they have fallen, they have no help from the falsely-named gods;

but those who are defeated by the locust larva and the locust, what cure could they still give to their worshipers if they were to fight against enemies, and were besieged by the phalanxes of the enemy?

Book 2

And the Lord was zealous for his land, and spared his people. And the Lord answered and said to his people, Behold, I am sending you the grain and the wine and the oil, and you shall be filled with them, and I will no longer give you over to reproach among the nations, and I will drive the one from the north away from you. Behold then the mercy running on their heels. For I think the tranquility anticipates the grief, and the grace of the one who pities anticipates the tear of repentance. For he not only pitied those who had acted wretchedly, but was rather zealous and raged against those who had caused grief, who also became ministers of the misery brought upon them. For the God of all somewhere commands the Babylonians, as being harsher than was necessary to those brought under the divine wrath. For he said that "I gave them into your hands, but you did not give them mercy; and indeed also to the blessed prophet Zechariah, "Thus says the Lord: I am zealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great zeal, and with great wrath I am angry against the nations that are attacking, because while I was a little angry, they joined in for evil. Being zealous then for his people, he promises to supply them abundantly with the necessities of life, and a cheerfulness somehow equal to the preceding misfortune, and food to satiety;

and in addition to these, security and not being given into the hands of their enemies, nor indeed, having fallen into slavery to them, to live a pitiable life in misery. And in addition to these he promises to destroy the one from the north, that is, the Assyrian; for their country is more northerly and more towards the light. But if anyone should think that the invasion of the locust also came from the more northerly parts of Judea, there is nothing to prevent thinking that the account is correct in this way too. But if for some the good things in the heart and the wealth of intelligible fruitfulness should be destroyed, as if by a swarm of demons leaping upon them like locusts, and the onslaught of principalities, powers and authorities—clearly of

the evil ones—let him practice grief, let him meditate on repentance, let him weep before God. For he will hear at once from his loving-kindness one saying, Behold, I give you the grain and the wine and the oil. For he will show his heart as a land rich in corn, as a garden luxuriant with seasonable seeds, as a vineyard rich in grapes, and indeed He will make it fat with oil, according to what is sung in the Psalms, "You have anointed my head with oil. And He will drive away from it the one from the north, that is, the chilling satan, who does not allow those who have come under him to be fervent in spirit.

And Paul also said that "the love of the many will grow cold because lawlessness will be increased. But the acquaintances of Christ are fervent in spirit; and they in no way endure being chilled towards unseemly pleasures; "For they have crucified their own flesh with its passions and desires. And I will drive him into a waterless land, and I will destroy his face toward the first sea, and his hind parts toward the last sea; and his rottenness shall come up, and his stench shall come up, because he has magnified his works. He still forms the structure of the discourse, as also in the beginning, as if about the locust and the cankerworm, which He says will be destroyed, having been carried away by the will of God to the very extremities, perhaps, of the land of the Jews, and to come to such a stench that its spread would become burdensome to those throughout the whole country; but the discourse in no way changes from the need to understand such things again as being about the Babylonians. For in the southern parts of Jerusalem a deep desert extends, and it is bounded on the east and south by the Indian seas; and on the west and more northerly, by the neighboring sea of the Palestinians, which also washes the coast of the Egyptians. There He says the cankerworm and the locust will be destroyed, and their stench will become offensive, perhaps that of the locust, as I just said.

And the Babylonians were also destroyed, inhabiting the more northern country, and lying towards the east. And they were destroyed as we have often said in the times of the reign of Hezekiah, and the stench of the corpses was unbearable, so that the land was cleansed with difficulty in seven months, and was rid of the rottenness of the corpses. For so says the prophet Ezekiel somewhere. That the land of the Babylonians is inclined to the more northern parts would be clear, as God says through the voice of the saints to those of the blood of Israel who were carried away into captivity: "Ho, ho,

flee from the land of the north, says the Lord; be saved to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon. And Christ, having driven out the locust from us ourselves, I mean the spiritual locust, that is, the utterly wicked swarms of demons, has destroyed them, casting them as it were into the depths of the sea; for He has shut them up in Hades and in the recesses of the abyss, and henceforth their rottenness and stench have come up, and have become to us burdensome and hated, although formerly they did not seem to be such; for though satan is foul-smelling, we have now at last recognized that he is such. For we wretches thought him to be fragrant and lovely, when, entangled in the bonds of wickedness, we had fallen under his hand.

But when Emmanuel appeared to us, crying out and saying, "I am a flower of the plain, a lily of the valleys," then at last, having been called to share in the fragrance that is in Him, we condemned the stench of that one. Be of good courage, O land; rejoice and be glad, because the Lord has done great things. Be of good courage, you beasts of the field, because the plains of the wilderness have sprung up, because the tree has brought forth its fruit, the vine and the fig tree have given their strength. And you, children of Zion, rejoice and be glad in the Lord your God, because He has given you food for righteousness, and He will rain on you the early and the latter rain, as before, and the threshing floors shall be filled with wheat, and the wine presses shall overflow with wine and oil. It is a custom for the holy prophets, from particular goods, and as to a few, to carry the discourse to what is universal and more general; and these are the things through Christ. Therefore the discourse now proceeds again to this for us. For when was it given that the earth should be of good courage; and when again did the Lord do great things with us?

If not when the Word, being God, became man, so that by flooding the world under heaven with good things from above, he might be found by those who believe in him "As a river of peace, as a torrent" of delight, as early and late rain, and a giver of all spiritual fruitfulness. Then indeed then, even for the most foolish, who are also called beasts of the field, a certain spiritual grass sprang up, the word of the teachers; then the fields of the desert sprouted. and he calls the Church a desert according to what was said about it in the prophets: "Rejoice, thirsty desert, let the desert rejoice, "and blossom as a lily. And its fields would be the leaders of the peoples and those who know how to teach, who bear the mind as if gushing forth and very well-ad-

orned with flowers with the divine gifts from heaven, and breathing sweetly with the flowers of doctrines, and as if crowned with newly-appeared grass. These nourish the mind of those who have been made like beasts, so that they may ascend to a human-like understanding. And he said that the tree also bore its fruit, the vine and the fig tree to give forth their strength, the solid word, I think, of the teachers, in which there is sweetness, and in addition to this also that which knows how to gladden, comparing it to the fruits of the fig and the vine.

And it would fit very reasonably, for those still thicker in mind and having a beast-like dullness, to be fed the lowlier learning, that which grows as in the form and power of grass among those who teach the small things, but for those already perfect, that which is already understood on high, and the fruit as if blossomed on beautiful trees, that concerning the holy and consubstantial Trinity, or of ethical instruction, that which is in the height of contemplations. Therefore, he calls those ones beasts, but the more perfect ones children of Zion, whom he also commands to rejoice in the Lord their God. For all our gladness is Christ, from whom and through whom is all fulfillment of good things, and an abundant supply of heavenly gifts for those who love him, understood as in early and late fruits and as in wheat filling the threshing floor, and as in wine overflowing the winepress, and as in gushing oil. And it must be known that indeed according to the manner of mystical fulfillment the promise is true. For it has been given to us as in rain, the living water of holy baptism, and as in wheat, the bread of life, and as in wine, the blood; and the need for oil has also been brought forward, contributing to the perfection of those justified in Christ through holy baptism.

And I will restore to you for the years that the locust has eaten, and the cankerworm, and the blight, and the caterpillar, my great army which I sent among you, and you shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and you shall praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. Therefore, as far as the account suited to historical narratives is concerned, for the preceding attacks of the locust he promises a completely equal-in-strength and equal-in-share bounty, and he says the provision of food will be more abundant than the affliction that happened to them at that time. But if the word of the prophecy should be understood spiritually, we say, that as satan had devoured us, and as in the order of the caterpillar and the locust and indeed also of the blight the sinful spirits had unbearably destroyed us into

manifold forms of passions, we have remained dry and fruitless, naked and stripped of all good, not having ethical virtue in our mind, not illumined by dogmatic contemplation, but as if destroyed by famine, and simply deprived of all fruitfulness. but since we have been enriched by Christ to be courageous; for we have conquered the world with him, and "He has given us to tread upon serpents and scorpions;

then indeed then we also had the spiritual rains, early and late, I mean both the instruction of the Law and the exhortation of the Gospel, then we also blossomed into righteousness and had the fruits of life, then also having eaten we are filled and we glorify as Master our own Savior Christ, proclaiming him as a worker of wonders, and as one who bestows on those who love him things beyond word and hope. And we have known absolutely no other besides him. And we have been taught to say from a good mind, "Lord, besides you we know no other; we name your name. But see how the God of all things all but laughs at and mocks human affairs, calling the caterpillar his great power, which he says he has also sent against them. And of course we do not say that the caterpillar is truly a power of God, and a great one at that, but he says something like this to those who could not bear the punishment from it: O terrible and arrogant ones, who take no account of offending me; I am not seen sending down fire from heaven upon you, I have not sent thunder or hail, nor brought on anything else of the things raised on high and especially those most fitting to the glory of God. a wretched multitude of most insignificant worms has risen up against the country, and you have been thrown into confusion by it, you have lamented and been destroyed;

perhaps then the caterpillar is very great, and I will reckon it as my great power also. So then the statement is a characterization, and as it were in laughter, with God all but mocking those accustomed to being contemptuous, as if, should he choose to punish them, even a caterpillar would be sufficient for this instead of great and invincible strength. Let not heretics laugh broadly then, nor let them trifle with the glory of the Only-begotten, as though, since the caterpillar was also named a great power, even if he himself is also called the power of God, he should be reckoned equal to the worm. For the wretched ones have dared to slip into this wretchedness of thought. And my people shall not be ashamed forever; and you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, and I am the Lord your God, and there is no other besides me; and all my people shall no more be ashamed forever. He clearly

promises the manner of the economy in the flesh, and that he will live together with those on earth, having sent himself into emptiness, and having become as we are, that is, man. For then he was in the midst of Israel, and we escaped shame and were delivered from dishonor, death having fallen, sin having been taken away, true knowledge having been introduced. for we no longer worship "the creature rather than the Creator," and we have accepted absolutely no other God besides him.

Therefore we have also been enriched, as in sure hope, with both life and glory and a life for long ages, a way of life in sanctification and holiness. And it shall be after these things, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, and your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions; and also upon my male servants and upon my female servants in those days I will pour out of my spirit. Behold, he clearly promises to bestow the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, that is, an abundant supply, not selectly upon one or perhaps two prophets, but simply upon all those worthy to receive. which indeed we say was accomplished when Christ was raised, and had destroyed the power of death. For as a first-fruit, as it were, of this venerable and admirable grace he placed in the holy disciples, both breathing on them and saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit. For it was necessary, it was necessary for the mystagogues of the Church, and those who would be teachers under the sun, and indeed before others, to be beautified by the gift of the Holy Spirit, and having become, as it were, a first-fruit of those called through faith into sanctification, to be gilded with divine and heavenly grace.

And indeed on the days of Pentecost, when the disciples were gathered together in one house, and were offering their customary prayers to God, it happened "Suddenly there came from heaven a sound like the rushing of a mighty wind, and behold, there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed, and it sat upon each one of them, and they began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. and they spoke forth prophesying, that is, both understanding and speaking the testimonies concerning Christ through the holy prophets, and those things by which it was likely that the hearers, being very well persuaded, would readily come to obedience, that the time of good pleasure is now at hand, and that the things formerly announced concerning Christ through the law and the prophets have now come to their fulfillment. Therefore they prophesied, speaking in every

tongue, God proclaiming this also beforehand through the voice of the saints. For it is written, "For with other tongues and with "the lips of others I will speak to this people, and not even so "will they believe. Understanding this, the divine Paul said that speaking in many tongues was given as a sign to the Jews. And that when the Holy Spirit had descended from heaven, there were very many who were filled with the spirit of prophecy, Paul will make clear, writing: "Let two or three prophets "speak, and let the others discern.

But if a revelation is made," he says, "to another who is seated, let the first be silent. "For you can all prophesy one by one. For in the past, because of the great perversity of Israel who was led astray, God said: "Behold, I am sending a famine on the land, not a famine "of bread, nor a thirst for water; but a famine of hearing the word "of the Lord. And they shall wander from east to west, "seeking the word of the Lord, and they shall not find it. And to the blessed Ezekiel: "And I will make your tongue "cleave to the roof of your mouth, and you shall be mute, and you shall not be to them a man who re-proves, because they are a rebellious house. But since, according to the voice of the Psalmist, "God is the Lord, and has appeared "to us; for our Lord Jesus Christ has shone upon us, forgiving accusations and delivering from charges, and stopping the mouth of sin; the outpouring of the Holy Spirit has now been given, God gladdening human nature, and crowning it with the glory from above and from the beginning, and benevolently bringing it back again to that state in which it was in the beginning, when sin had not yet entered. For we will not find Adam, before he had transgressed the divine commandment, to be devoid of the prophetic spirit; but as one who had walked firmly and was still established, and adorned with the good things of nature.

And indeed when God, having formed the woman, brought her to him, although he had heard from no one who she was or from where she was, or in what way she had been formed, he immediately declared: "This is "now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; "she shall be called woman," or according to the Hebrew version, 'man-ess', "because she was taken out of her man. But the grace given to man was inactive, yet it was renewed in Christ, who is the second Adam. But in what way was it renewed? For inasmuch as the Son is God and from God by nature—for He was truly begotten of God the Father—the Spirit is His own and in Him and from Him, just as it is also

understood to be of God the Father; but inasmuch as He became man and appeared as one of us, He is said to have the Spirit as something brought upon Him. Indeed, it descended upon Him in the form of a dove when, having become as one of us, as I said, He was baptized for our sake as one of us. Then His own Spirit is said to have been given to Him from above, because of His humanity, and this is the emptying. And it should be understood in this way, and not otherwise: "Though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor, so that we by His poverty might become rich.

For, as I said, the Spirit was given to Adam in the beginning, but it did not remain in human nature; for it turned aside to transgression, and slipped into sin, and grew sick with every kind of impurity. But since the Only-begotten, though He was rich, became poor, as I said, and with us as a man He received His own Spirit as something brought upon Him, "it remained upon Him; for so said the blessed John the Evangelist; so that it might henceforth dwell in us permanently, as it had already remained in the second first-fruit of our race, that is, Christ; for on account of this He was also named the second Adam, through whom we are re-created to something incomparably better, and we gain very well the regeneration through the Spirit, no longer having the first, the according to the flesh, I say, which leads to corruption and sin; "For the mind "of the flesh is death," according to what is written; but the one from above and second, the one from God through the Spirit, if it is true that "Not of blood, nor of the will of man, but we have been born of God. It was necessary, then, it was necessary for those counted among the children of God to be enriched with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

And Christ has worked this also in us, and the divine Peter will confirm it, saying, "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the "Holy Spirit, he has poured out "this which you see and hear. For as a man He receives from the Father what is in Him by nature; and He pours it out richly upon us, because He is also God by nature, even though He became flesh. And He pours it out upon all flesh. And this is clear, that it is not upon those of the circumcision alone, but upon all without exception who are called through faith, whether they be from Greek error, whether small and great, slaves and free, barbarians and Scythians. For the grace of salvation in Christ is set before those throughout the whole world under heaven, because He Himself is "the Expectation of the nations. But if some, speaking foolishly, should say that

cattle are also called flesh, being delirious, let them now somehow hear, that the scope of the prophecy extends only to the human race, and not "Is it for oxen that God is concerned? as the wise Paul also said. And he says that sons and daughters will prophesy, indicating through these things the abundance of grace and its equality for all.

For the female sex would not be rejected by God, if it eagerly does the things that seem good to Him, and indeed also chooses to think, nor indeed unhonored, or without a share of holiness, if it is to be approved through faith and goodness in works; Why? For it too has been deemed worthy of grace and mercy, and it receives "the pledge of the "Spirit" from God, and has been counted among the children. He says, then, that the old men shall dream dreams, and the young men shall see visions, speaking, as I think, of the older age as that which is preeminent and superior in the quantity of virtue, and as it were grown gray with splendid achievements, and distinguished and admired for its most perfect wisdom, such as was the divine Paul, who saw in a dream a certain man from Macedonia, begging him and saying, "Come over into "Macedonia and help us; for so it is written in the Acts of the wise apostles. And a certain Ananias, one of those approved in the faith, saw a vision concerning the blessed Paul himself. For when he had come to Damascus, Christ having appeared to him on the road, then by the flash of light his sight was taken away, he was healed through Christ. And again it is written thus:

"Now there was a disciple at Damascus named "Ananias, and the Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' "And he said, 'Here I am.' And the Lord said to him, 'Rise "and go to the street called Straight, and inquire "in the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus named Saul.'" Do you hear how He spoke to Ananias in a vision? For he was perhaps strong in faith, and a young man in disposition, having a vigorous will for what is good, unbreakable in strength, meaning spiritual strength, of course. But in a dream the Macedonian seemed to offer his prayers to the blessed Paul; for he was an old man in mind, aged in intellect, and full of wisdom from above. And the wise John also addressed those sanctified in Christ through faith: "I am writing to you, fathers, "because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because "you are strong, and you have overcome the evil one. He promises, therefore, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on those who serve Him. And who might such people be, again? Or surely those who sub-

mit the neck of their mind to the evangelical decrees, having departed from the worship in type, and having ceased from Hellenic deceit, according to him who says? And I will give wonders in heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes. At the impieties of the Jews, those committed against Christ, that is, even the nature of the elements was distressed, and creation, as it were, lamented, seeing its own Master insulted, and the divine temple, almost grieving along with those who mourned, was torn apart; for it is written, that "The veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom; and the sun, checking its own light and withdrawing its ray, did not deign to shine any longer upon those on the earth. For it made darkness from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, and the rocks were also split, and perhaps something unusual also happened concerning the circle of the moon, so that it seemed to have been turned into blood as well. Now, such a thing is passed over in silence by the holy Evangelists, but belief from the prophecy is certainly trustworthy. But that the signs occurred not in the sun alone by the commands of the Creator, but that, as it were, the whole creation had shifted to what was for it unseemly and unusual, would be clear from God saying through the voice of Isaiah, "And I will clothe heaven with darkness, and I will make its covering as sackcloth.

And when he says heaven, he means by all means everything in heaven, and that it is clothed as with a sackcloth of darkness, mourning and grieving, and as it were crying out by its appearance. So then, I would say these are the signs in heaven; but as for those on earth, the blood and fire, and vapor of smoke would, I think, probably signify the calamities of the Jews, which the most grievous war, that at the hand of the Romans, heaped upon them. For their entire country was besprinkled with blood. And together with the cities, the famous temple itself was about to be burned down, and the shaken houses to be filled with smoke. And that such things will happen to the Jews even before the great and glorious day, on which the divine judgment seat of Christ will be set before all, who gives to each according to his works, he has indicated by saying, "before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes. And it should be noted in addition to these things, that our Lord Himself, when asked by the wise apostles about the end of the age, and about the destruction of Jerusalem, mixed the signs, so that perhaps it would henceforth

be unknown which ones, in fact, will happen. And it shall be, that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved;

for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be one who is saved, as the Lord has said, and those preaching the good news whom the Lord has called. He says, then, that there will surely and in every way be signs and wonders in heaven and on earth because of the unholy deeds of the Jews. Nevertheless, even so, the things of God's gentleness will be set before them, namely salvation through faith, justification in Christ, the pledge of the Spirit, sanctification, the hope of the kingdom of heaven, with God forgiving them, without remembrance of evils, even their crimes against Christ. And indeed the divine Peter strongly accused the people of the Jews, crying out explicitly, that they had killed the Savior and Redeemer of all by hanging him on a tree, and "denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to them. And he added to these things, "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. Repent therefore, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit; for the promises are for you and for your children. Therefore, even if signs and wonders should occur, he says, everyone who would profess the Lord of heaven and earth as master will be saved.

And that the word of salvation was destined to be spoken first in the very Lord-slaying Jerusalem, and would thus also be carried to all the nations through the holy Apostles, would be clear, from the Prophet saying, In Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be one who is saved, and one who preaches the good news, whom the Lord he has been called; for as the divine Paul writes "No one takes the honor upon himself, "but he who is called by God. Therefore the blessed disciples were called, chosen from all, and they did not come to the apostolate as deserters, like that frenzied Pharisee, that is, the lawyer, who, thrusting himself into the boasts of discipleship, added, saying, "Lord, I will "follow you wherever you go. For this reason the Savior himself pushed him aside, as he was troubling him in vain and was not even close, so to speak, to the evangelical practices, saying, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have "nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to "lay his head; but to those who were fit for the apostolate he called out, saying, "Come after me, and I will make you "fishers of men. Indeed, he raised up Matthew from the very workshops of greed, commanding him to follow; and he has called, according to his own will, those who were likely to be

most able to accomplish, and very vigorously, what seemed good to him, even if the inventor and father of lawlessness snatched away the betrayer.

For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will enter into judgment with them there for my people and my heritage Israel, who were scattered among the nations, and they divided up my land, and they cast lots for my people, and gave the young boys to prostitutes, and sold the young girls for wine and drank. After the ten tribes broke away from the kingdom of Rehoboam, and they and all of Israel were divided into both Ephraim and Judah, the blessed prophets came to be. And they spoke on behalf of both, as the whole kingdom extended for them until the times of the captivity. But after the return from there to Jerusalem, and the return that happened in due time, Haggai and Zechariah and indeed Malachi prophesied to Israel; and Ezra also appears to have foretold a few things of that time, and of what happened in his own times. Therefore, the account mentions the aforesaid matter, which happened not in the time of the ancient prophets, but when they had just returned to Judea, after Cyrus had released the people. And what the noteworthy matter is, and what indeed happened, we will say as we are able, bringing forward the writing of Ezra as proof.

Therefore, since those from Israel had just returned to Judea and had a respite from the tributes and the labors of slavery, they turned to indolence, and were not secure observers and guardians of the things decreed through Moses. For though the law forbade anyone to lie with the daughters of foreigners, they took little thought of the oracles given to them from God and mingled with foreign women. And Ezra, being very distressed at this, tore his garment, and lamented over those of Israel, and urged them to separate from the foreign women. And they were persuaded to do this, fearing perhaps the things that come from wrath, and they made the experience of past events their teacher concerning what would happen to them if they did not choose to honor the law. But when the multitude of foreign women had been cast out and had departed from Jerusalem, then necessarily the neighboring nations were embittered to anger, since they had been not moderately insulted through these things, and in addition to this they perhaps reasoned that other thing among themselves.

For since they were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, and were also eager to raise up the divine temple itself, they were inflamed to anger by the arrows of envy, and they attempted to hinder them, considering this, as was likely, that if Israel should again be in its former powers, and have its cities walled, and the God of all defending them, since indeed for those worshipped in a temple according to ancient customs, will again prevail and will be unbearable to all everywhere, and will impose tributes on some of its neighbors, and they will certainly be captured, their lands being ravaged, if any should choose even late just to look against it. For this reason some prepared to restrain them from the constructions both on the temple itself, and on the walls. But since their effort was fruitless, God making straight the way of their undertakings for those from Israel, they armed themselves then and wished to wage war; but they were captured and have fallen with God defending them. The gathering of those assembled for this purpose took place in the valley of Jehoshaphat; this is a place not many stades distant from Jerusalem, in the eastern parts. They say it is bare, and suitable for cavalry. That some of the more powerful envied those from Israel who were raising the divine temple, but profited nothing, the blessed Esdras will teach, saying "But in the times of Artaxerxes the "king of the Persians they wrote against the inhabitants "in Judea and in Jerusalem:

Belemus and "Mithridates and Tabellius and Rathumus and Beeltethmus "and Geeltethmus the scribe, and the rest of those "allied with them, living in Samaria and the other "places. The meaning of the writing was something like this, that Jerusalem was a city having an unbreakable power, yielding in no way to the kings of other lands; but rather rising up against them and very vigorously, which if it should happen to return again to its ancient state, it would heap up cares even for the successive rulers of Babylon. But, as I said, those who had written such things profited absolutely nothing. And some of those in Samaria urged those who had been resettled from Babylon to work with and build with them. But they were not willing, and for this reason they grew exceedingly weary, resisting their plots. For it is written thus in Esdras again "And the enemies of "Judah and Benjamin heard that the sons of the captivity were building "a house to the Lord God of Israel;

and they drew near to Zoro-"babel and to the heads of the clans, and said "to them 'We will build with you, because we seek your God "as you do, and to him we sacrifice from "the days of Sarsathus king of Asour who brought us

"hither.' And Zerubbabel and Jesus and "the rest of the heads of the clans of Israel said to them "'It is not for you and us to build a house to our God, "for we ourselves together will build to the Lord our God, "as Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us.' And "the people of the land were weakening the hands of the people of Judah, "and hindered them from building, and hiring counselors against "them, to frustrate their purpose. But they plotted, but their attempt was also unsuccessful. And that when the secret plot was then failing, all the neighboring nations went to the law of war, campaigning, and were captured and have fallen, you may learn from this. For he writes thus again also in the second book. "And "it came to pass when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs "and the Ammonites heard that the restoration went forward on the walls of Jeru-"salem, and that the breaches began to be stopped, "it seemed very evil to them. And they all gathered together "to go out and to fight against Jerusalem. "And to the Lord our God, he says, we prayed, "and we set a watch against them day and night "because of them.

And Judah said, The "strength of the enemies has been broken, and the great multitude. And in these passages the memory of the valley is passed over in silence; but the account of tradition brings this back to us. And the prophecy is worthy of belief, naming for us the very place of the war. We say that he is mindful of this history, when he says that he will gather all the nations into the valley of Jehoshaphat. And it is clear that he will not lead them unwillingly, but that he will not prevent them from coming willingly. but to be judged against These things are concerning Israel and his own inheritance, which they divided among themselves, plundering perhaps the remnants of the Babylonians, and attacking them in the time of their affliction, and giving the little boys to harlots, and putting the girls forth to unusual fornication, and as it were prostituting them to the licentiousness of others, then collecting the wages from this for luxuries and drunkenness. But we say that something of this kind has also happened to us, having understood the redemption through Christ.

For he delivered us who were captives, and serving under a tyrant, I mean the bitter Satan, and he brought us back as it were into a holy land, into an evangelical commonwealth, into a most docile state, into a walled city, the spiritual Jerusalem, "which is the Church of the living God," having prepared it to be built, like precious stones "into a holy temple, into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. But by the toils of envy the unholy multitude of demons

was inflamed, and in addition to these, those who fight against the doctrines of the truth, and they have made many assaults against the saints, but they have done no harm, as God was their champion, and Christ encouraged them saying, "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. There is, then, among the Jews a baseless and old wives' tale, that at some time in the valley of Jehoshaphat there will be a judgment from God against all, after the dead have been raised. They suppose that those throughout the whole world under heaven will render an account for what was done to them. But their notion would by no means fail to deserve ridicule, since the divinely inspired scripture says that the things of the prophecy have been fulfilled, and that the neighboring nations have paid the penalty to God, when the war occurred in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

For, as I said, they leaped upon the remnants of Israel, although they had endured a very great deal of affliction; for they had been given over to the Babylonians. And what have I to do with you, O Tyre and Sidon, and all Galilee of the foreigners? Are you rendering a recompense to me? Or are you bearing a grudge against me? Swiftly and quickly I will return your recompense upon your heads, because you took my silver and my gold, and you brought my choice and beautiful things into your temples; and the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel you sold to the sons of the Greeks, that you might drive them out from their own borders. Therefore every nation was gathered together against Israel, Moabites, Idumeans, Jebusites, Ammonites, and the rest. But I think the Damascenes and Tyrians and those called Philistines took the lead in counsel and undertakings, even as far as Gath itself, which is also called a city of foreigners. Therefore also to them the God of all says, And what have I to do with you, O Tyre and Sidon and all Galilee of the foreigners? For what pretexts for savagery, he says, having, do you unholily add to the burden of afflicted Israel, already immoderately weighed down by the calamities from the Babylonians, attacking them bitterly and as it were mocking me, who am perhaps saving them, and defending yourselves, and daring to speak the words of enemies against me, or rather even to do so now?

Therefore not long hence you will receive your recompense. It will come upon your own head; for you will pay the penalty to me who will judge you in the valley of Jehoshaphat. And he accuses them of having plundered the choice things of the temple, and having despoiled the golden vessels, and

having dedicated them to the honor of their own gods. An intolerable and bitter thing, and not without power to grieve God. For he said, "My glory I will not give to another, nor my praises to graven images. For what else could it be to adorn the temples of idols with divine offerings, than all but to cry out and say that the God of all is in second place, while they are in the position of preeminence and know how to save their own worshippers? And it is not enough, he says, for your impiety to strip my temple of its divine offerings, but you also the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel you have sold to the sons of the Greeks. And it is likely that something like this happened, that some from Israel were carried away into the lands of the nations, sold by Tyrians, perhaps, or even by others, for whom trade is their pursuit, and love of gain their practice.

The saying would also be fitting, as it seems to me, for the leaders of impious heresies, who, all but snatching away the sons of the Church, sell them to the wisdom of the Greeks, so that being filled with complex ideas, they might become bitter seekers, or rather, disobedient and wicked, and perverters of what is right, although they ought to live with a simple nature and study the unadulterated word of truth. Therefore, they cause the deceived to be outside their own boundaries. But the boundaries, as it were, and the country of the children of the Church, are the knowledge of the truth and that which tends toward the correctness of anything precisely examined. And they might rightly be called golden and silver vessels, and the chosen of God, who are truly resplendent with faith, and gilded with the boasts of good works, and shining with the beauty of piety. But if any of these brilliant ones should be caught in the snares of deceit, the inventors of the deceit will certainly hear: You have taken My silver and My gold, and you have brought My chosen things into your temples. And this is a terrible and inescapable charge. "For by sinning against the brethren, for whom Christ died," they wrong Christ Himself, to whom they will by all means and in every way pay the penalties for the offenses committed against Him. Behold, I will raise them up from the place where you sold them, and I will return your recompense upon your own heads.

And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hands of the sons of Judah, and they will sell them into captivity to a nation far off, for the Lord has spoken. He says most clearly that the schemes of the Tyrians and the inventions of their wickedness against those from Israel will be ineffective, and

that the calamity will, as it were, turn back upon the wrongdoers, and they will be caught in equal evils, with an equivalent punishment all but falling upon the heads of those who have committed impious offenses. For just as they captured the race from Judah and then gave them to the slave-traders, telling them to carry them off to a distant nation, so, he says, their own children will be sold by the hand of the Jews; and that such things will by all means and in every way come to pass, he confirms by saying, For the Lord has spoken. And in no way is anything that God utters unfulfilled. And indeed Christ said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. And these things historically;

but if someone should choose to examine the spiritual things and be filled with the hidden meanings, he will understand again that both the children of the Greeks who are puffed up with their pseudo-wisdom, and indeed heretics who, with complex inventions of deceit, attribute some seeming importance to themselves, lead away some of the more simple from the right and blameless faith which they would have from God, and all but binding them with the snares of deceit, and taking them as their spear-won portion, they carry them as far as possible from the boundaries of truth. But the God of all renders their evil deed ineffective, and releases the deceived, but brings the sons by learning of the deceivers to those from Judah; and these again might be understood as the divine disciples, and all who speak the mystery of Christ; and delivering them from their error, they lead them into a good and lovely servitude, that under Christ, obviously, and they seize them like captives, transferring them into their own state and mind, which is most distant from that of the others. For a great distance is seen between the mind of the saints and that of such men. And Christ is also said to have taken as captives those who were transferred from Hellenic deceit to the knowledge of the God who is by nature. For the blessed David said, "Having ascended on high, You led captivity captive, You received gifts among men.

Proclaim these things among the nations, sanctify war, rouse the warriors, bring forth and come up, all you men of war, beat your plowshares into swords and your sickles into spears; let the weak say, I have strength. Assemble and enter, all you nations from round about, and gather there; let the gentle be a warrior. Let them be roused, and let all the nations go up to the valley of Josaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations from round about. Having threatened the nations with calamities in return, and a pun-

ishment equal to their unholy deeds, he now turns his discourse to his own worshipers, whom he commands to be by no means cowardly and unmanly, but rather vigorous, and, so to speak, to use a piercing proclamation, to gather the nations for battle, and to urge them on eagerly to this, even if they should happen to choose a quiet and peace-loving life. This was to show them as most courageous, and to persuade them to trust in him, because they would be superior to their enemies with him as their shield-bearer. Therefore, he says, Proclaim these things among the nations, and sanctify war. And what, again, is sanctify? Consecrate it to me in a way, for I will be the warrior, and what is done will be for my glory; for they will die who have ascribed my glory to wood and stones. For everything that is said to be sanctified is always brought to the glory of God.

For this reason he says, sanctify war, rouse the warriors, and indeed you cry out, he says, Bring forth all you men of war. Let the farmer cease from his most beloved cares and labors; let him reforge the plow into a sword, and the sickle into a spear. For it is not the time for farming, but for giving satisfaction to a dishonored God. And if anyone should be weak, he says, let him not make cowardice an excuse, but let him even lie, if he wishes, and say that he is able. For let him not be far from his weapons. Therefore, gather, all of you, he says, who are around Judea, and let the gentle be a warrior, that is, even if one is among the meek, let him also be a warrior. It is as if he were saying, with absolutely no one left behind, whether he is a farmer, or cowardly and unmanly—for this is the weak man—or if he is gentle and unwarlike, let him be sharpened for battle. For I will excuse no one; but I judge everyone in the valley of Josaphat. And I judge means that I will be a powerful Judge, inflicting punishments and sentences on those who plundered my land, who cast lots for Israel, and gave the little boys to prostitutes, sold the little girls, and drank them down like wine.

Our Lord Jesus Christ might proclaim such things again to the enemies of the Church, who, though they should come in great multitudes and campaign against the saints with all their force, will surely fall with him as their shield-bearer, as he overthrows them, and fortifies his own worshipers with faith and hope and love, and with the good things from his own gentleness. Send forth sickles, for the harvest is at hand; enter, tread, for the winepress is full; the vats overflow, for their evils have multiplied. Sounds have resounded in the valley of judgment, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of

judgment. The sun and the moon will be darkened, and the stars will withdraw their light. But the Lord will cry out from Zion, and from Jerusalem he will give his voice, and the heaven and the earth will be shaken. As for the neighboring nations of the land of the Jews, I mean the Arabs and Tyrians, the Gittites and Philistines, the Moabites and Idumeans, the Ammonites and Gergesenes, he commanded them, as if using a trumpet, to gather in the valley of Josaphat, as those who would very soon die and suffer bitter penalties from the one judging;

but now he incites those of Israel to an invincible zeal and an irresistible courage, and indeed he commands them, as it were, to leap upon those who have been gathered, that it is necessary he says that they are seen as most bold, courageous and youthful, not terrified by the fears of war, nor indeed as going into battle at all, but rather considering the matter a luxury, and recording it among their delights and rejoicing equally with those who gather the good fruit from the vines. For this reason, he says, Send forth sickles, for the harvest is at hand; using "send forth" instead of "send out" and "stretch out," just as, of course, those who are accustomed to harvest grapes do; for they will lie ready for destruction, prepared for being cut down. Let the enemy be shorn, he says, like a cluster of grapes from a vine; let him be trodden as in winepresses, lying in a heap underfoot. For go in, he says, and tread. Because the winepress is full, that is, the multitude of the nations has been gathered for destruction, there is nothing to prevent them from being under your feet. the vats overflow; and by this he signifies the great abundance of those gathered to be trodden down. For in the abundance of grape clusters, the wine often overflows even the presses themselves. Therefore, by saying The vats overflow, he indicates the multitude of those lying underfoot. Sounds have resounded in the valley of judgment. And what is this?

It is the custom for the holy prophets to announce future events, and at times to be in the very visions of the events, so as to seem to already see what is being done and to hear voices. And so the divine prophet Jeremiah, proclaiming beforehand what would happen to the Jews, and that Nebuchadnezzar, stirred to battle, would utterly destroy them, was caught up into the grim spectacle of the war itself, and as if having seen an countless multitude of the dead, said, "Woe is me, for my soul faints over the "slain. Having experienced something of this sort, as I think, the blessed Joel perhaps received into his ears the din of war; for this reason he says, Sounds have resounded in

the valley of judgment. And he calls the place of the war the valley of judgment, as if the nations were gathered in it for no other reason than to pay bitter penalties; and by "resounding sounds" he means here either the wailings of the falling, or the shouts of the victors. For it happens in wars that the falling groan, while the conquerors exult over the fallen, and boast very much. And he says that the sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars themselves will be without light. And not at all as if the elements themselves will suffer this at that time, but as if the war creates darkness, and puts a kind of mist before the eyes of the vanquished.

For the terror of death always darkens, and the magnitude of unexpected calamity dulls the mind, and like gloom it blackens the heart with excessive sufferings. And he says that the Lord will cry out, as one who is present and fighting alongside, and like a general urging the men of Israel against the enemy. It would be especially fitting for the time of the resurrection to say that the Lord will cry out from Zion. Because, as the divine Paul says, "The Lord "Himself will descend from heaven with a command, with the voice of an archangel, and with "the trumpet of God, and the dead "in Christ will be raised incorruptible. The law of Moses also prefigured this, for it commanded the men of Israel to blow the trumpet at the new moon. And the new moon might be understood as a type, and a very clear one, of the future and new age after the first; but the trumpet, of the piercing sound of the archangel's voice, of the trumpet from God, which will raise all who lie in the earth, sounding something extraordinary and vocal. It should be known that the Lord Himself also, performing the miracle concerning Lazarus, came to the tomb, and as the Evangelist says, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come "forth. But how might this be understood, when God says through the prophet, "He will not quarrel, nor cry out, nor will his voice "be heard outside?

Therefore, a sign of the piercing trumpet, and of the sound from it at the last times, I say, and from heaven, was the Savior's use of a loud voice when raising Lazarus. But he The Lord will spare his people, and the Lord will strengthen the sons of Israel. and you will know that I am the Lord your God, who dwells in Zion in my holy mountain; and Jerusalem will be holy, and foreigners shall no longer pass through her. When the crimes of apostasy were charged against those of Israel, and they were worshipping the golden calves, and saying impiously "These are your gods, O Israel, who "brought

you up from the land of Egypt," then they were both weak and vulnerable, and were set forth as the readiest prey for their enemies; for this reason they were also sent into captivity. But since they have been shown mercy, and have inhabited their own land, with God relaxing His wrath, they have henceforth become invincible and irresistible to their enemies, and they have prevailed effortlessly, although all the nations were gathered for battle. Therefore, he says that they will know from having prevailed over their adversaries, that he is both among them and henceforth rests upon Zion as a holy city. For this reason, he says that he will spare his own peoples, and will show them to be most valiant, and that they will learn that, as I just said, he is with them.

And he says that Jerusalem will be holy, having been delivered from its ancient godlessness in every way; not bestowing its modes of worship on falsely-named gods, nor with false prophecy and sorcery still being honored in her, but rather with a lawful life prevailing, and the best practices having become their pursuit. And since she is thus disposed and has chosen to live this way, he says that none of the nations shall pass through her, meaning she will not be easily conquered by anyone nor seized in passing by those who wish to, as before, but rather she will be secure, and very well fortified by my powers and assistance. And the matter is true even if it is understood of the Church of Christ itself. for he cares for his own worshipers, and makes them superior to their enemies, strong and most valiant, and full of spiritual robustness, knowing and believing that God is in them through the Spirit; for he dwells in our hearts through faith, and as the Evangelist John says, "By this we know "that he is in us, from the Spirit which he has given us. And holy in truth is the intelligible Jerusalem, that is, the Church, where the orders of the saints are. For they are not a passage for foreigners; "For those who are of Christ have crucified the "flesh with its passions and desires;

and they remember one of the wise men saying, "If the spirit of the ruler rises up against you, do not leave your place, "for healing will pacify great sins. For they have a secure heart, not one that can be trodden upon, not one that can be ridden by unclean spirits, not one that yields easily to the assaults of passions, not one defiled by the false opinions of those who teach other doctrines, not one shaken by the deceptions of reasonings; but rather one that is steadfast and very well fortified by the dogmas of truth. And it shall be in that day, the mountains will drip with sweetness, and the hills will flow

with milk, and all the springs of Judah will flow with water, and a fountain will come forth from the house of the Lord and will water the torrent of the reeds. Jerusalem having been shown to be holy, and no longer trodden by foreigners, because the Lord of all has dwelt in her, and has spared His own people, and made them strong, and shown them to be superior to their opponents, then indeed, then he says the mountains will drip with sweetness, and the hills will flow with milk, and the springs of Judah will give forth their own stream. And I think 'springs' (apheseis) means the outlets of fountains, or in another way what might be called water channels.

And 'mountains' could be understood as those who are lifted up to the height of virtue, and who in the boasts of a virtuous life surpass the measure of others, the conspicuous and renowned, such as the disciples were, and before all others the Baptist, concerning whom the Savior says, "Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist. These, then, the great and most famous, will drip sweetness, and as if anointing with honey they will make their discourse about the Savior, so that each of those who have partaken cries out from exceeding joy, "How sweet are your words to my throat, more than honey and the honeycomb to my mouth. For the word of the saints is always sweet, at least to those who love to please God. Therefore, such men might be understood as mountains, and very fittingly. But we say that the hills are those who are slightly inferior to their pre-eminence and are lower in the measure of their way of life; but they too are raised up, and far surpass others. These men pour into the souls of those who have just believed the rational and pure milk, providing nourishment fit for infants; for solid food is for the mature; but milk is most fitting for infants. And we do not at all say that the measure of their understanding is in being able only to pour milk for infants.

For having, and very skillfully, the ability to distribute, if they should choose, to those of a more solid constitution the richer kinds of nourishment, they remember the sacred writing saying, "You shall diligently know the souls of your flock. And so the divine disciples, although Christ had given us countless commands to those who believed from the Gentiles, write with wise management, that they must abstain "From fornication and what is strangled and from blood. For it seemed good," he says, "to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay no greater burden upon you. Do you hear how the command is fit for infants, and like milk is administered to those of a weaker

constitution? But that the spiritual water will also be abundant for those "planted in the house of the Lord," so that "they might flourish in the courts of our God" being watered, of course, by divine streams, and enriched by words from above and from heaven, he hints at, saying that all the springs of Judah shall flow with water. For the blessed disciples confessed that they were comforted by God. But the first springs of the spiritual waters, these springs would surely be the provisions of good things given by God to the saints through the Spirit; and second, as it were, springs of water are found to be the words from them to us, filling us with spiritual gifts. But the spring proceeding from the house of the Lord, who could it be again but Christ?

For so the blessed psalmist named him, saying to the Father and God in heaven, "How you have multiplied your mercy, O God; and the sons of men will hope in the shelter of your wings. They will be inebriated with the fatness of your house, and you will give them to drink of the torrent of your delight, for with you is the spring of life. Therefore Christ is both the spring of life and a torrent. But a torrent of rushes. The Prophet therefore mentions a certain torrent beside which many rushes have grown. They say that it is the same as the torrent of the Cedars, near which the Evangelist says our Lord Jesus Christ was found, when the traitor disciple was seeking him with the cohort. The saying is not uncomely, if we were to compare the Church to the torrent of rushes, upon which our Lord Jesus Christ has "turned aside like a river of peace," which he, as it were, ever flows beside, watering the ever-green rushes, that is, the souls of the saints. For the rush is somehow always water-loving and ever-green. But if indeed it were seen to be prickly, it would be well even so. For the virtue of the saints is not entirely without a sting. For they are lovers of gentleness, but along with this, they are also fighters. Egypt shall be a desolation, and Idumea shall become a plain of desolation for the injustices against the sons of Judah, because they shed innocent blood in their land.

But Judea shall be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem to generations of generations. And I will avenge their blood, and I will not acquit, and the Lord will dwell in Zion. Insofar, therefore, as it pertains to what is shown from history, the land of the Egyptians has paid the penalty, for it was deprived of its kingdom, when Cambyases, the son of Cyrus, overthrew it, and Idumea also endured desolation, as also The facts themselves bear witness. But in these things the prophetic word seems to show us a hidden dispensation,

which the Only-Begotten fulfilled when He became man. For somehow the divine scripture has always practiced likening to extreme idolaters and those greatly inclined to this, both the herds of demons and those who have always opposed the saints. Therefore it says that every enemy will be destroyed, being compared to Egyptians and Idumeans. For sure is the promise of Christ who says concerning the Church that "the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.

And that the evil powers, and as many as dare to do things similar to them, either carrying some away to Hellenic deceit, or else perverting them to a reprobate mind, by hastening to teach perverse things, would in every way and altogether be required to pay the penalty for the things they have committed against men, he makes clear, saying that for this reason those who have warred against Zion will be destroyed, because they shed innocent blood, and have wronged unbearably the sons of Judah, that is, the saints who are children of confession. For Judah is interpreted as confession. And the blessed David said somewhere concerning those who were unholily slain, "For he who seeks their blood has remembered; he has not forgotten the cry of the poor. And to Satan, as if pictured in the Assyrian, "As "a garment stained in blood will not be clean, "so you also shall not be clean, because you have defiled my land "and destroyed my people; you shall not remain for all "time. Therefore he says that those who have warred against Zion will go down to destruction.

but that Judea will be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem for generations of generations, not the one that was sacked and burned, if indeed the Lord and God is infallible as truth, but rather the spiritual one, the heavenly Jerusalem, the Zion above which is divine, the glorious and beautiful city "whose artisan and maker and builder is "God," to which may we also arrive through Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to the Father with the Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen.

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