

The Early Church Fathers Writings

Volume 72

THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS WRITINGS

Volume 72

Cyril of Alexandria: The Twelve Prophets, Amos to
Malachi

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-second 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, The Twelve Prophets, Amos to Malachi, 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 holds the rest of the Commentary on the Twelve Prophets, from Amos to Malachi. In the sources each prophet is divided into one or more books. The headings of the books are kept where the commentary has more than one.

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

Amos to Malachi

*Cyril on Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk,
Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.*

Commentary on the Twelve Prophets: Amos to Malachi

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 Amos to Malachi.

AMOS

Book 1

AMOS was a goatherd, and in pastoral customs and laws brought up; and he made his abode in the desert to the south of the land of the Jews, which extends as far as the borders of the Indian sea, and stretches into the land of the Persians, and countless barbarian tribes graze upon it, and it is very well-suited to be able to feed flocks of sheep; for it is good for pasture and wide and crowned with various kinds of grass. And Amos was from the village of Tekoa, situated at the very feet of the desert. And since he was a good man, and a worker of all gentleness, he was immediately enriched with the spirit of prophecy, and he prophesied not in Jerusalem, but while still among the flocks themselves, at the beginning of his customary and practiced concerns, then also having arrived in Bethel itself. For Tekoa was not so much under the kingdom of Judah, but under that of Ephraim. That the accounts we have given concerning these things are true, you will observe effortlessly, and you will be fully informed by his own words; for he prophesied in Bethel, as I said, saying that the altars of laughter would be destroyed, and the rites of Israel would be made desolate; and adding to these, "And I will rise up against

the house of Jeroboam with a sword. But the priest of Bethel; this was Amaziah; gnashed his teeth at the Prophet.

Then he sends to Jeroboam king of Israel saying "Amos makes conspiracies against you "in the midst of the house of Israel, the land is not able to bear "all his words; because thus says Amos: By "a sword Jeroboam shall die, and Israel a captive "shall be led away from his land. and Amaziah said to "Amos: O seer, go, depart into the land of Judah, and there "live, and there you shall prophesy. But at Bethel no longer "continue to prophesy, for it is the king's sanctuary, "and it is the king's house; and Amos answered and said "to Amaziah: I was not a prophet, nor a son of a pro- "phet, but I was a herdsman, a gatherer of sycamore fruit, and "the Lord took me from the sheep, and the Lord said to "me: Go, prophesy to my people Israel. He was taken, then, from the flocks, and he prophesied in Bethel, where the first Jeroboam, son of Nebat, also set up a golden calf. And I think it is somehow useful to note that the Amos who was the father of Isaiah was a different person. But what and on what subjects at all were the words from him, by taking up the matters before us we will clarify as much as possible. The words of Amos, which were in Accarim of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Jerusalem. These, he says, are the words of the prophecy of Amos from Tekoa, which were in Accarim.

But it must be known that the Hebrew version does not know this word at all, that is, 'in Accarim'; for they have only said, 'The words of Amos from Tekoa.' But the other interpreters, instead of 'in Accarim,' have put, 'among the herdsmen.' These, therefore, he says, are the words of Amos from Tekoa, which came at the time of still shepherding, and in the very sheepfolds. And concerning Jerusalem itself he says he did not so much hear, but rather saw the words. For God made the things themselves manifest and virtually present to the holy prophets along with the revelations, so that the words seemed to have become somehow visible, with the vision of things that would come to pass perhaps running concurrently with what God might say. However, this is worthy of investigation: for how could anyone think that the words came concerning Jerusalem alone, when through the voice of the same prophet God accuses both Judah and Israel? For he said again, "Thus says the Lord: For the three "impieties of the sons of Judah, and for the four, I will not turn "them away, because they rejected the "law of the Lord, and did not keep his commandments. "And their vanities which they made led

them astray, "after which their fathers followed; "and I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the foundations "of Jerusalem. Then, following these things, "Thus says the Lord: "For the three impieties of Israel, and for the four, "I will not turn him away.

And having brought forward the manners of their sin, he threatened terrible things, and his discourse has a very great rebuke against both. How then could the words be understood as having been for Jerusalem, when God says, "I will send "a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the foundations of Jerusalem. What, then, will be the manner of our defense? Come, let us consider. We say, then, that it is the custom of the holy prophets, sometimes to distinctly call the two tribes in Jerusalem, Judah and Benjamin, Israel, and at other times again to name the ten other tribes in Samaria Israel, that is, Ephraim, but most often they do not distinguish. And since all are of the blood of Israel, so also they name the twelve tribes. But if they should wish perhaps to signify to us the entire Synagogue of the Jews, we will find them no longer using the name of Jerusalem in a restricted sense. The words of the prophecy of Amos, then, were concerning the whole multitude of the Jews, both that in Jerusalem and that in Samaria; but how they might be concerning them, it is necessary to say. Therefore, the manner of our defense is two-fold. For first, he has introduced the God of all recounting the sins of the Synagogue of the Jews;

then having announced beforehand the things that would be against them, And he added to these things the good things that come from gentleness, and that in due time there would be a great sparing of them and a renewal to their original state. For Amos himself said again, as from the person of God, "Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, says "the Lord. For, behold, I command, and I will sift among all "the nations the house of Israel, as one sifts in "a sieve, and not a fragment shall fall upon the earth. He necessarily also foretells the coming redemption through Christ, and that they will pass over to a renewal, and will be in a state of well-being, as God has mercy on them. And he spoke thus again, "In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is "fallen, and I will rebuild its fallen parts, and "I will raise up its ruins, and I will rebuild "it as in the days of old. Therefore, the words are concerning Jerusalem. And in another way, they might reasonably be understood to be concerning her. For Syria and the kings of Damascus, and not a few of the neighboring nations, ravaged the land of the

Jews, at different times different ones rising up and devastating it, carrying off plunder, and doing things out of unrestrained anger, so that they came into extreme misery.

Therefore, to all these who had sacked her, the Prophet introduced God threatening desolation, and said they would be punished for their unholy deeds. Therefore, on behalf of Jerusalem, or rather, on behalf of the whole congregation of the Jews, were the words of Amos spoken. And we shall know this clearly by examining the times of the prophecy; for it is written next: In the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. But I suppose someone will say, 'And what is the benefit for those who read this, to have to examine curiously, and very minutely, the times of the reigns of those just named, I mean Uzziah and also Jeroboam?' And to this we say that the matter is necessary, as it contains within itself the whole circumstance, as it were, of the prophecy, as if in birth pangs. For he threatens destruction and uprisings and conflagrations to Syria and Damascus and to the barbarians dwelling near Judea, and from this came the beginning of his divine oracles. Therefore it is necessary to learn the reasons why the times of the reigns were added, what and how many things were accomplished by each, how he lived, and what is worthy of hearing in both. Having turned aside, then, into apostasy, both Israel and Judah were disciplined in many ways. For when the rulers of Damascus and the Syrians would run down and besiege them, they plundered the lands among them;

and when, in turn, the Moabites and Idumeans, the Gergesenes and Elamites, the Azotians and the inhabitants of Accaron were maltreating Samaria, and indeed also the kingdom of Judah, using unbridled impulses and an insatiable will, and being driven to extremes of rage; and indeed we shall find that they have done this in various ways; for instance, when Ahab was king of Samaria and over Israel. And it is written thus in the third book of Kings, "And the son of Ader gathered "all his force, and went up and besieged "Samaria, and thirty-two kings with him and "every horse and chariot; and they went up and besieged "Samaria and made war against it. See then that the king of Damascus, that is, Ader, made allies against Israel, thirty-two other rulers of the neighboring nations, and thus made war on the land. But also in the times of Joash king of Judah, Hazael the Syrian made war on Jerusalem. And it is written again in the fourth book of Kings, "Then Hazael

"king of Syria went up and fought against Gath, and "captured it. And Hazael set his "face to go up to Jerusalem.

And Joash king "of Judah took all the holy things that Jehoshaphat and "Jehoram and Ahaziah, his fathers and kings "of Judah, had dedicated, and his own holy things and all the the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of the Lord and of the house of the king and sent it to Hazael king of Syria, and he went up from Jerusalem. For they did such things according to divine wrath, since Israel had offended, by turning away exceedingly and being terribly excited about the worship of idols. But the foreigners, when they conquered, were insulting the glory of God. For the wretched ones thought to themselves that the hand that helped them had grown weak, and they have dared to behave insolently against the glory of God. And so the Syrians, having grown weak, when Ader was briefly besieging Samaria, made a false pretext for their cowardice, saying, "The God of Israel is a God of mountains and not a God of valleys. For they thought that those of Israel had conquered because God was able to save only in the mountains or on the hills. 'We have been defeated, then,' they say, 'because the God of Israel is a God of mountains; but if we could join battle on the bare plains, we would certainly overcome them, since the God of Israel is weak in the valleys.' But these are charges of Hellenic delusion, and the terrible unguarded speech of those who do not know the true God by nature.

Therefore, God who is all-powerful was indignant with the foreigners, and very rightly so, because even when conquering Israel, as I said, they offered thank-offerings to their own gods, and talking nonsense they thought they had prevailed even over God Himself. As time went on after the reign of Ahab, and of certain others in between and in succession, a king was proclaimed over Israel in Samaria, Jeroboam, another besides the first, who was the son of Nebat, but his namesake and of like mind and impious. But in the times of his reign the compassionate God at last pitied Israel, who was weighed down by unbearable hardship, and He freed them from their troubles through the hand of Jeroboam, although he was exceedingly wicked and an apostate. For he so prevailed over the foreigners, as even to recover again cities that had been taken away from them in the times of past kings, and to subject them to his own scepters, and to inflict very many evils on those who had formerly conquered. For it is written about him in the fourth book of Kings: "In the fifteenth year of Amaziah son of Joash, king of Judah,

Jeroboam son of Joash began to reign over Israel in Samaria for forty-one years; and he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who made Israel sin.

For he restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which he spoke by the hand of his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher. For the Lord saw that the affliction of Israel was very bitter, and that they were reduced to a few, confined and destitute and abandoned, and there was no one to help Israel. And the Lord did not say that he would blot out the seed of Israel from under heaven; and he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam son of Joash. Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam and all that he did, and his mighty deeds, how he waged war, and how he recovered Damascus and Hamath for Judah in Israel, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? Behold, he says clearly that those of Israel were afflicted, with no one to save them, so that they were few and scattered; yet that they were saved from the hand of Jeroboam. And he has put 'from the hand' instead of 'by the hand'. For he himself was not the one crushing Israel, but rather fighting for and defending it; and he recovered Damascus, and won back the border of Israel and performed many mighty deeds. While Jeroboam was reigning, Azariah, also called Uzziah, is anointed king over Judah in Jerusalem.

who was no less burdensome to the nations, and vigorously pressing upon those who had ravaged Judea. For he was a pious and God-loving man. But when he had prevailed over the enemies, with God permitting him to conquer, he became sick with arrogance, and went by his own commands to that it was necessary then also to act as a priest to God, and indeed he dared to go up to the divine altar itself, and to offer incense. But immediately God rebuked him. For he was marked with leprosy, a terrible and incurable affliction, so that as one unclean according to the law he might be sent out of Jerusalem, and might cease then both from acting as a priest to God, and from the sacred rite he had unlawfully practiced, and from defiling the divine temple. And the sacred Scripture spoke thus concerning him in the fourth of Kingdoms: "In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah the son of Amaziah king of Judah began to reign. He was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem, and his mother's name was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. And he did what was right in the

sight of the Lord, according to all that Amaziah his father had done. Except the high places he did not remove, because the people were sacrificing and burning incense on the high places. And the Lord touched the king, and he was a leper until the day of his death.

And these things are in Kingdoms, but in the second of Chronicles a leaner narrative is given concerning these things. It is as follows: "And all the people of the land took Uzziah, and he was sixteen years old and they made him king in the place of his father Amaziah. He built Elath, he restored it to Judah after the king slept with his fathers. Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem, and his mother's name was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Amaziah his father had done. And he was seeking the Lord in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the fear of the Lord, in his days he sought the Lord, and the Lord made him prosper. And he went out and fought against the Philistines, and broke down the walls of Gath and the walls of Jabneh and the walls of Ashdod, and he built cities in Ashdod, and among the Philistines the Lord made him strong, against the Philistines and against the Arabs who dwelt upon the rock, and against the Meunites. And the Meunites gave gifts to Uzziah, and his name was known as far as the entrance of Egypt, because he was exceedingly strong. Then it says next concerning him: "And he did wrong against the Lord his God, and he entered into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him eighty priests of the Lord, valiant men. And they stood up against Uzziah the king and said to him, It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense; go out from the sanctuary, because you have rebelled against the Lord; and this will not be for your glory from the Lord God. And Uzziah was enraged, and in his hand was the censer to burn incense in the temple; and while he was enraged with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, above the altar of incense. And the chief priest and the priests turned to him, and behold, he was leprous on his forehead, and they hurried him out from there, and indeed he himself hurried to go out, because the Lord had rebuked him. Concerning Uzziah's being made a leper, these things suffice; but that he became a mighty man, and campaigned

against the lands of the Philistines, and became so great in strength as to build cities among them, and to impose tribute, and to bring under his own scepters those who were once very proud, the sacred Scripture has taught sufficiently.

Therefore, since the prophetic word has introduced to us at the beginning the future desolation of the Philistines, the memory of the reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam has become necessary, for they were conquered through them, as we have at least said before. We know, therefore, that Damascus was also burned by the hand of the Assyrians, and the tribes of the Philistines were no less ravaged. But since it is of these those things being later, we will of necessity attach to the times of both Jeroboam and Uzziah the things that happened to the foreigners, and no less to the leaders of the Assyrians themselves. And since the Prophet has added "Two years before the earthquake," we have necessarily also made mention of Uzziah being struck with leprosy. For since he dared to act as a priest unlawfully, he was struck with leprosy when God reproved him, and Jerusalem was shaken by an earthquake, and through this it was clear to those at that time that God was indicating his own wrath. And he said, The Lord has spoken from Zion, and from Jerusalem he has given his voice, and the pastures of the shepherds have mourned, and the top of Carmel has withered. In these words the whole purpose of the prophecy is revealed to us, and the force of what is set forth might reasonably be understood as a kind of definition and preface of the entire oracle, overshadowed by great obscurity.

For the word is composed as from a likeness and a metaphor, and as from what is wont to happen to the well-rooted summits of mountains, or sometimes also to the bare plains. For mountains, though luxuriant with thickets and woods, and plains again, crowned with much and abundant grass, when some destructive thing or perhaps a plague, or another of the maladies from the air, unexpectedly wither. In this way human affairs also fail, and sometimes bitter and unbearable calamities strike cities and countries, destroying and corrupting both small and great. For what would an enemy's sword spare, or, let us say, a plague, utterly cutting down both the one distinguished in wealth and glories and powers, and the obscure and downtrodden? Therefore, the word has now become for the Prophet especially fitting to his accustomed ways. For he was, as I said, a goatherd, and the trope is made as from the fact that the pastures of the flocks are often destroyed. What then is the

truer meaning of what has been said? He says the Lord spoke from Zion, as from his own place, and from Jerusalem, as from that which was allotted to him; for the incorporeal is not in a place. But since that famous temple was in Jerusalem, the place somehow seemed to be his own, at least according to the supposition of the ancients who still had small thoughts about God. But instead of "spoke," the Hebrew version has put "roared," that is, he bellowed, in the manner of lions.

When this happened, he says, the pastures of the flocks mourned; and by "pastures of the flocks" he means the nations of the foreigners, as being subject to certain shepherds, their own rulers, who lead and carry the people under their hand to whatever they please. Therefore they mourned, that is, they have been in dejection and in every evil; for mourning happens for the dead. And the cause of their calamity was that God roared down, and as it were threatened destruction. "For a lion," he says, "will roar, and who will not be afraid? But not only did the pastures of the flocks mourn, but in addition to this the top of Carmel also withered; and by "the top of Carmel" he means Jerusalem. For Carmel is a mountain situated in the country of the Jews, on which also Elijah the Tishbite dwelt. And often the whole land of the Jews is signified by the name of Carmel. Such is what was said by God through the voice of another prophet to the sons of Israel: "And I brought you into Carmel to eat "its good things and its fruits, and you entered "and defiled my land, and you made my inheritance "an abomination.

Since, therefore, Jerusalem was named the most notable and distinguished of the other cities in Judaea, he calls it the top of Carmel, as being lifted up in glory, as excelling in pre-eminence, as conspicuous beyond the others, on account of having the divine temple, and the kings from the tribe of Judah who reigned at various times. But it is the custom of the holy prophets to hide their words providentially in obscurities, because of the unbridled impulses of the hearers. For they would not have they tolerated those speaking openly, very much stirred up to audacity, and rebuking the holy prophets and saying, "But speak to us and announce to us another delusion. And the Lord said, "For the three impieties of Damascus and for the four I will not turn away from it, because they sawed with iron saws the pregnant women of Gilead. And I will send fire upon the house of Hazael, and it shall devour the foundations of the son of Hadad. And I will break the bars of Damascus, and I will destroy the inhabitants from the plain of On, and cut

off a tribe from the men of Harran, and the renowned people of Syria shall be taken captive, says the Lord. The divine Moses marvels at God as both good and long-suffering, and very rightly. For since Israel had made a calf in the wilderness, and said foolishly, "These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt," he had necessarily offended.

But since God threatened to destroy them completely, then Moses fell down and besought, and indeed persuaded the Creator to remit the punishment for those who had sinned, he offered up songs of thanksgiving, saying, "The Lord God is compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and very merciful and true, and keeping justice and mercy for thousands, taking away iniquities and injustices and sins, and will not clear the guilty, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children, to the third and fourth generation. The peoples of the Jews did not understand this correctly. For they thought God to be so harsh and implacable and long in wrath, as to bring the faults of the fathers upon the children's children. And so mocking this very thing, they would say, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth were set on edge. For this reason God says to the prophet Ezekiel, "Son of man, what is this parable to you in Israel, saying, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth were set on edge'? As I live, says the Lord, this parable shall no longer be spoken in Israel. For all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son, they are mine. The soul that sins, it shall die. And the son shall not bear the sin of his father, nor shall the father bear the sin of his son.

For how is the Lord of all still long-suffering and very merciful and true, if He does not remit sins, and cleanse the guilty, but rather extends His indignation to the third and fourth generation? What then is the meaning? He is, as I said, both long-suffering and incomparably good, and does not immediately bring punishment upon those who have sinned. But He postpones it, even to a second generation, so that perhaps some intervening repentance might check His wrath. But if this should not happen, and the third and fourth from the first should be caught in the same, or even worse evils, and be found to be imitators of their ancestors' impiety, then indeed, then at last He brings the punishments, bestowing upon the generation a sufficient long-suffering for those who have already passed; this is the visiting of the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation. Does He not then say, having been long-suffering with Damascus many

times, shall I not at last be indignant, and very rightly, for three and four sins? For what have they done? Many other things indeed. Yet they will pay the penalty for their excessive cruelty. For I will turn away from them, because they sawed with iron saws the pregnant women of Gilead. Now Gilead is a small city of Judea, situated on the border of the land of the Palestinians.

The Syrians captured this beforehand, and destroyed it with complete ruin, cutting with iron saws the pregnant women, and together with the infants melting away the raw embryos of women. But the iron saws he calls the wheels of the wagons, with which it is the custom for the Syrians to thresh the grain on the threshing-floor. And so somewhere God also says through the voice of Isaiah to the Synagogue of the Jews, "Behold, I have made you as the wheels of a threshing-wagon, new, saw-toothed. Therefore, it is similar As if he were to say, for instance, to Damascus: I will determine your judgment, for what you have threshed and crushed those in Gilead, so as not even to spare those still in the womb, to whom mercy from all follows and is owed. That some from Damascus treated the people of Israel cruelly and savagely, you may learn effortlessly by paying attention to the words of the prophet Elisha. For he arrived in Damascus. And when he met Hazael, while Hadad was still sick, "The man of God," it says, "wept, and Hazael said, 'Why does my lord weep?' And he said, 'Because I know what evil things you will do to the sons of Israel:

their strongholds you will send up in fire, and their chosen men you will kill with the sword, and their infants you will dash to pieces, and their pregnant women you will rip open.'" Since Damascus has done these things against Gilead, and rather against the whole land of the Jews, he threatens to burn down the house of Hazael and Hadad, and to break the bars of Damascus. These things were done partly and at times by Uzziah and Jeroboam; for they themselves also took Syria and conquered it by force; and as time went on, also by the king of the Assyrians. Then he says, and I will destroy inhabitants from the plain of On. On the prophets call Bethel, in which the accursed Jeroboam set up the golden calf. But from that time on it was their custom to call every idolatrous land so. Therefore, the inhabitants in the land and plain of On, that is, of vanities, which is idols; for so the others have interpreted; I will destroy and cut off, he says, and I will cut down no less also a tribe from the men of Harran, which is a town somewhere surely bordering Damascus, having most warlike inhabitants. And he says that the

renowned people of Syria will be taken captive. By renowned, he means either the one greatly famous, or the mercenary and one gathered to them for assistance; for, as I said, they would hire their foreign neighbors when campaigning against the land of the Jews;

or renowned means the one called from outside and a sojourner. For it must be known that the Hebrew version, instead of "people of Syria," says "of Cyrene"; for the Syrians are colonists of the Cyrenians. And we remember that, as is written again in the fourth book of Kingdoms, Ahaz was reigning over Jerusalem, and Pekah and Rezin, the kings of Syria and Damascus, went up against Jerusalem, laying waste the cities of Judah under it. And since Ahaz, reigning over Judah, was in unbearable fear, he hired Tiglath-pileser the Assyrian with money for assistance. "And the king of the Assyrians," it says, "heard him, and the king of the Assyrians went up to Damascus and captured it, and carried it away captive, and put Rezin to death. Thus says the Lord: For the three transgressions of Gaza, and for the four, I will not turn them away, because they took captive a captivity of Solomon, to shut them up in Edom. And I will send a fire upon the walls of Gaza, and it shall devour its foundations. And I will destroy the inhabitants from Ashdod, and a tribe shall be taken from Ashkelon, and I will bring my hand upon Ekron, and the remnant of the foreigners shall perish, says the Lord.

I think it necessary before all else to say this, that neither the Hebrew version, nor indeed that of the others, mentions Solomon, but the Hebrews have said, "Because they took them captive," while the others have added, instead of "of Solomon," "a complete" or "perfect" one. But we will necessarily follow the writing of the seventy. Gaza is therefore accused; this is a city of the Philistines, which is now Palestine; as having taken captive a captivity of Solomon, to shut them up in Edom. And if we understand it thus, as at least the other interpreters have published, they have not made an ordinary devastation against Judea, but having taken a sufficient number of captives, they have given them into the hand of the Edomites. The Idumaeans, though descended from the blood of Esau, have always held hostile thoughts toward those of Israel, with whom the Gazites and the Azotians and the Ascalonites, and those of the so-called Accaron and some others of the foreigners, co-operating and becoming allies, prepared to take the cities of Judea by force. But if indeed, according to the writing of the seventy, we should say that they took captive the captivity of Solomon, it is necessary to understand that

somehow. For Solomon was a most powerful and all-mighty king, and he so ruled over the neighboring nations that he even built many cities among them, and in them established Israel, with Hiram giving them to him. And it is so written in the second of Chronicles:

"And it came to pass after twenty years in which Solomon had built "the house of the Lord and his own house, and the "cities which Hiram gave to Solomon, Solomon built them "and settled there the sons of Israel. And Solomon came "to Emath Soba, and prevailed against it, and "built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the "fortified cities he built in Hamath. And again, after other things: "And whatever Solomon desired according to his desire "to build in Jerusalem and in Lebanon, and in "all his kingdom. All the people that were left of "the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and "the Hivite and the Jebusite, who are not of Is-"rael, were from their sons left after "them in the land, whom the sons of Israel did not destroy, "and Solomon brought them up for tribute unto this day. Therefore, having allied themselves with those from Idumaea, the Gazites and Azotians and the rest have destroyed these cities, namely those named after Solomon, so that they no longer lie under the kingdom of Judah, but are assigned, as it were, to the unholy leaders of the Moabites. For this reason, he says Gaza will be consumed by fire along with the others, and the Azotians and the tribe of Ascalon will be utterly destroyed, and Accaron will fall under the hand of the smiter; and with them the remnant of the foreigners will certainly be destroyed together.

For it is likely that they have served as mercenaries, and some of the neighboring barbarians have been called for aid. It is seen, therefore, to be a grievous thing and full of all danger, to conspire with the wicked and to love to be armed against those beloved by God, and to persecute saints. For even if they sometimes suffer on account of their stumblings, being disciplined by God, yet he will not utterly neglect those who are his own; and having disciplined them usefully, he will cast into destruction the vessels of wrath, that is, those who rushed against them with unbridled anger, surely according to that which was well said to Babylon concerning the sons of Israel: "I gave them "into your hands, but you showed them no mercy. For the excess of torment from those who were commanded to do this is exceedingly displeasing even to an indignant God. Thus says the Lord: For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not turn away from it, because they delivered up

the captivity of Solomon to Idumaea, and did not remember the covenant of brothers. And I will send a fire upon the walls of Tyre, and it shall devour its foundations.

But the Tyrians again, in addition to those from Damascus, and indeed also the Azotians, the Gazites and Ascalonites, and those from Accaron, having surpassed the forbearance befitting God, and having been conquered, in a way, by the excess of their impieties, will be subjected to wrath, at least according to the meaning of the oracle, and will endure the ultimate punishment of all. And the charge against them is that they delivered up the captivity of Solomon to Idumaea, and being unmindful of the very covenant of brothers. What, then, the captivity of Solomon is, the argument has sufficiently shown us; but how it was delivered up to Idumaea, and by the Tyrians, it is necessary to say. For having enslaved a number not easy to count of those from Judah and Israel, they have sold to the Idumeans. But they, having made their blood brothers and free men from of old into the portion of captives, both oppressed them with the bitter yoke of slavery and forced them to live by the laws of the Greeks, the wretches all but mocking the glory of God, as though He had neither preserved for them the freedom from their fathers, nor indeed had the strength to grant them a state of well-being. And so the God of all says through the voice of another prophet, accusing not moderately those who shut up the captivity of Solomon into Idumaea. "And "what are you to me, 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 speedily I will "return your recompense upon your heads, for "what you took, my silver and my gold, and my "choice and beautiful things you brought 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 borders. Now a border, as it were, of those of Israel, is Judea in a bodily sense, but the law in a spiritual sense, outside of which they have come to be, being unnaturally sold to the sons of the Greeks. The Tyrians have done this, along with the others, having forgotten the covenant of the brothers itself. And this might be understood by us in three ways. For who are the brothers, and what is the covenant, come let us say, being guided by the sacred writings to the thoughts on this matter. Hiram, who was king of the Tyrians at the time, was one of the most beloved friends of the divine

David; then after him he became beloved to Solomon, so as to make covenants of unanimity with him, to cooperate with him in all things, and to contribute the necessary care while he was completing the divine temple. And he brought very many gifts, and he himself also gained even greater and richer ones.

Therefore, he either says that, that the Tyrians made war on Israel, forgetting the covenant of the brothers out of love, who had come to such a disposition and affection, that they seemed to be even of the same blood; or that the Idumeans, having descended from Esau, were brothers to those of Israel, but made war, having had no regard for the covenant of the brothers. For Esau had hostile and enemy thoughts against Jacob, being grieved in the beginning on account of the birthright; but when he was departing from the hearth of Laban at the proper time, and wishing to return home again with both his wives and children, he met him as a brother. For they embraced and kissed one another, and spoke what was fitting for friends, and treading upon their old difference, they made covenants of harmony and peace. But they were in this state. But the Tyrians, forgetting the covenant of the brothers, pitted the clans against each other, and persuaded them to hold their blood brothers as slaves, rendering the Idumeans far too strong over the vanquished by their own conspiracies. And if indeed someone should say this also of the Moabites themselves, who were of the blood of Lot, that the Tyrians violated the covenant of brothers, it is clear that it means the one from Abraham to Lot.

For since the herdsmen of both fought, "Abram said to Lot," he says, "Let there be no strife between me and you, and between my "herdsmen and between your herdsmen, for we are "brother men. Therefore, for this reason he says it will be justly burned, and shaken from its very foundations. For "You shall not be with the majority for evil" is useful everywhere. Thus says the Lord: For the three transgressions of Idumea, and for the four, I will not turn them away, because they pursued their brother with the sword. The word now passes to the Idumean himself, that is, those of Esau, and it says very well that they too will be subjected to the consequences of wrath. For they made war on Israel, who was their brother, and did not shrink from raising the insolent and savage sword against those who were near and of their blood, not of the law having been mindful of nature, not having been mindful of anything human, but accustomed to conquering those outside

and most hostile with enmities against brothers, and perhaps being very proud of this. Therefore let them hear from us too, "Why do you boast in wickedness, O mighty one? And it might be said of them, and very appropriately, "Whose glory is in their "shame.

For what it was better to love to put as far away as possible, these things indeed honoring with an utterly wicked judgment, they will hear again, "Woe "to those who call evil good and good evil, who "put darkness for light and light for darkness, who say "the bitter is sweet and the sweet is bitter. And he ravaged a womb upon the earth. The crimes of the Idumeans are usefully enumerated, and he goes back to Esau himself, showing them to be of low birth and sprung from an unholy father, so that we might perhaps understand that which is obliquely indicated through the voice of Isaiah, "For from the seed of serpents shall come forth the offspring of asps. He narrates, therefore, that their forefather Esau also almost ravaged the good things that had come to him from the womb and birth, and cast down to the earth the dignity of the birthright, deeming the thing worthy of almost no account for the sake of bodily food; for he sought a pottage of lentils, and having received it, he gave up the gift of nature. "For this reason," it says, "his name was called Edom; which is, earthy, whence, I think, those descended from him are henceforth called Idumeans. Therefore the dignity from birth and womb he ravaged, it says, to the earth; he exchanged it for an earthy thing.

They would be held liable for the same crimes who put the enjoyment of carnal things before spiritual things, and choose temporary things instead of eternal things, and things that are shaken instead of things that are not shaken, and despising the glory that is from God, but having most unwisely preferred the splendid things among men, which also, like shadows, pass by those who possess them. And very usefully the divine Paul cries out, "Lest there be any "fornicator," he says, "or profane person like Esau, who for one "meal sold his birthright. And he has seized his terror for a testimony. He again mentions another matter, able to slander the Idumean, as having always been awkward and wicked, and most hostile and warlike to those of his own blood. It is written, then, in Numbers, "And Moses sent "messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, saying, Thus "says your brother Israel: You know all the "hardship that has found us; and our fathers went down "into Egypt, and we sojourned in Egypt many "days, and the Egyptians afflic-

ted us and our "fathers. And we cried out to the Lord, and the Lord heard "our voice and sending an angel "brought us out of Egypt; and now we are in Kadesh, a city "on part of your border; we will pass through your "land; we will not pass through fields or through vineyards, "nor will we drink water from your cistern; by the king's highway we will "go;

we will not turn aside to the right or to the left, until "we have passed through your borders. And Edom said to him, You "shall not pass through me; but if not, I will come out against you in "war. And the sons of Israel say to him, "We will go along the mountain; and if I and my cattle drink of your water, "I will give you a price, but "it is no matter; we will go along the mountain. "But he said, You shall not pass through me. And Edom came out to "meet them with a heavy host and with a strong hand. And "Edom was not willing to allow Israel to pass through "his borders, and Israel turned away from him. Observe then again in these things, how terrible and beyond all reason are the crimes of lack of affection. For Israel did not ask for water from Edom without payment, but he was in arms, and drew up for battle, and having begrudged them passage alone, and having proceeded to this point of awkwardness was convicted, that if Israel had not turned away, he would not even have spared their blood. He has seized, therefore, his terror for a testimony. For they indeed they refused and drew back, fearing to make war, so that they might not seem to neglect love towards their brothers; but he made their drawing back, or rather their cowardice in this matter, which he also signifies by the name of dread, a pretext for a harsh protest against them.

For he threatened plainly, that if he would not depart from the borders belonging to him, he would go out against him and make war henceforth. Therefore Edom was without love for his kinsman, and not moderately guilty of the charge of brother-hating; for this reason he was justly also hated by God; "For God is love," according to the voice of John, "and he who abides in love, abides in God. Therefore he who has chosen to live without love is not in God; how could he be? But he will rather lie outside of intimacy with God. And his anger he kept for a victory; and I will send a fire upon Teman, and it shall devour the foundations of her walls. This is indeed the third transgression of Esau. For his anger, clearly fierce towards enmity and impiety, he kept for a victory, that is, for complete victory, and to the very end. For he in no way ceased from his impious undertakings, although, as I

have already said, Esau had departed from that ancient impiety, and no longer sought to kill Jacob, but rather changed to gentleness and brotherly love. For when he returned from the hearth of Laban, he embraced him with weeping; and somehow tears are always wont to be shed even in times of extreme joy; but those descended from him were exceedingly harsh, in the awkwardness of their ways surpassing even the wickedness of their forefather.

But it is true, that in every way and altogether "The ways of the resentful lead to death. For this reason he also says I will send a fire upon Teman; this is a metropolis of Idumea; and it shall devour the foundations of her walls; for it has been burned by conquering enemies, and Teman has perished along with the others. Hating brothers will therefore end in fire and flames, and rising up against those of one's own blood, or even those gathered into unity and one-mindedness from spiritual kinship; but the boasts of love are free from such evils. Thus says the Lord: For three transgressions of the sons of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away from them, because they ripped open the pregnant women of the Gileadites, that they might enlarge their borders. And I will kindle a fire upon the walls of Rabbah, and it shall devour her foundations with shouting in the day of war, and it shall be shaken in the day of her consummation, and their kings shall go into captivity, their priests and their princes together, says the Lord. The savagery of the Damascenes is also recorded in the case of the Ammonites.

For they too killed the pregnant women of the Gileadites, not in defense of some others, nor indeed lending their wrath to foreigners, but for themselves, so that they might have a wider domain, and the borders of their kingdom extending very far, with all the land of the Jews laid waste, and those of Israel completely overthrown, as though God had suffered powerlessness, and He who promised to save, and to show Himself invincible to those who wish to make war, had truly grown weak. So then, having also captured the cities, they dared to mock the protecting God, and to the falsely-named gods they lit thank-offerings and sang victory odes. For this reason He says that Rabbah will be burned; this too is a metropolis of the land of the Ammonites; and He says that it will perish with a shout, that is, with the Babylonians shouting their war-cry against it. For they have taken it with a whole army, with Nebuchadnezzar overrunning the land of the Ammonites. And they shall go as captives, he says, the subjects together with their rulers, and those appointed to serve their own gods, having no help

from them. For what could a deaf idol do, or how could it help anyone? And the proponents of the heresies are like those who cut open pregnant women, so that they might enlarge the borders of them.

For in order that they may appear to be leaders of many, they do violence to wretched souls, and by deceptions from their words they cause them to miscarry a faith that is, as it were, raw and unfulfilled, speaking to them perverted things, and belching out things "from their own heart, and not from the mouth of the Lord. For no one says, "Jesus is Lord," except "in the Holy Spirit," nor "Jesus is anathema" except in Beelzebul. Thus says the Lord: For the three transgressions of Moab, and for the four, I will not turn away from it, because they burned the bones of the king of Idumea to lime. And I will send a fire upon Moab, and it will devour the foundations of their cities, and Moab will die in weakness, with a shout and with the sound of a trumpet. And I will destroy the judge from her midst, and I will kill all her rulers with her, says the Lord. The Moabites again have acted impiously, not moderately, so as to drive even them beyond the inherent gentleness and forbearance of the God of all. But their accusation is the sin against the dead; I mean the burning of the bones of the king of Idumea; and burning them in such a way as to finally reduce them to dust and lime. What then is the crime? Hatred and inhumanity and unbridled savagery against those of Israel.

For one might say that the bones of the aforementioned king were burned for no other reason than solely on account of those of Israel. And since the story is clear, I will relate it briefly. It is written in the fourth of the kingdoms "And it came to pass after the death of Ahab that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. And King Joram went out on that day from Samaria and mustered Israel, and he went and sent to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab has rebelled against me; will you go with me against Moab to war? And he said, I will go up; I am as you are, as your people are my people, as your horses are my horses. And he said, By what way shall I go up? And he said, By the way of the wilderness of Edom. And the king of Israel and the king of Judah and the king of Edom went, and they made a circuit of a seven days' journey; and there was no water for the camp nor for the cattle that were at their feet. Observe, therefore, how the king of Edom, that is, of Idumea, also took up arms with the kings; and since they were in want of water, they sent for the blessed prophet Elisha,

and they begged that what they sought might be given from God. When this happened, the Moabites were captured;

for it is written again after other things, "And Israel rose up and struck Moab, and they fled from before them. And they went in, advancing and striking Moab, and they overthrew the cities, and on every good portion of land each man threw his stone and filled it, and they stopped up every spring of water, and cut down every good tree, until only the stones of the wall were left torn down. Therefore, those from Moab, being enraged that those of Israel had at times conquered, while the king of Edom aided them and marched with them, since they could not otherwise harm a dead man, they sinned against his remains, consuming them with fire, not even sparing his bones any longer, adding, as it were, to the destroyed of Israel the one who had from time to time been their helper. Therefore, their cities will be burned, and He says they themselves will perish in weakness, not wasting away by disease, nor consumed by common ailments, but with a shout and with the sound of a trumpet, that is, as in war and battle; and He threatens that also judges and rulers and all her leaders will perish together with those under them. For they were in charge of counsel and enterprises, and of the whole impiety they were surely the instigators to the others. Thus says the Lord:

For the three transgressions of the sons of Judah, and for the four, I will not turn away from them, because they have rejected the law of the Lord, and His commandments they have not kept, and their vanities which they made have led them astray, which their fathers followed after them; and I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the foundations of Jerusalem. To the lawless nations has also been added the one instructed by the law, that is, Judah; for the Judge is no respecter of persons. That He endured him while he was always sinning, and persevered for a long time, is shown by the fact that He was moved only at the third and indeed also the fourth sin. And yet it was surely necessary, as is reasonable, to allot to the other nations, since they do not have the divine law, a more abundant gentleness, and to lavish upon them the length of His forgiveness, but to demand punishment for indifference immediately from Israel, since he was nourished in the divine commandments and was not ignorant of the profitable path, but He endured even those who knew the law as if they did not know it. But when He at last beheld them carried away to the limit of wickedness and of awk-

ward reasonings, then He says He will send the fire upon Jerusalem itself, and consume even to its very foundations the city that is so brilliant and renowned. And the crimes of those of Israel are very many;

but most of all God blames them for following the errors of their fathers. For the ones still yoked to the greed of the Egyptians, and nourished in their customs and laws, kindled their worship for a calf; but the others, having escaped that most wretched slavery, and being instructed in many ways by the divine commandments so as to know clearly what is pleasing to God, were caught going backwards, and being dragged down into the error of their fathers, and perhaps even fearing as unseemly not to be seen in equal evils. For they too have worshipped the golden heifers. And the cause of such impiety for them has been that they rejected the law of the Lord, and were unwilling to keep His commandments. Therefore, as long as we are keepers of the law and lovers of God, and are diligent to keep the commandments, we shall be found wise and sagacious, and knowledgeable of every virtue, and indeed enriched in all such things. But having inclined toward indifference, and having disregarded the divine laws, we shall hereafter be carried about by every wind, deprived of the best mind and understanding. And we shall be "portions for foxes," with the unclean spirits dragging us this way and that. Rightly and wisely, therefore, does the divine David sing concerning every righteous man, "The law of his God is in his heart, and "his steps shall not be tripped. Thus says the Lord:

For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away from him, because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of sandals, those who trample on the dust of the earth. He does not leave him unpunished, but rather subjects to punishments Israel, that is, the tribes in Samaria. And that they themselves, sinning unguardedly, have all but consumed the tranquility owed by God to the weak, the turning away for three and four sins would show, which having suffered they must necessarily be subjected to terrible things, and be in every evil. Therefore, the divine David, fearing this thing, and knowing it to be a cause of destruction, implored, saying, "Do not turn Your face from me, and "do not turn away in wrath from Your servant. For wrath always follows, and, as it were, accompanies the turnings away. And what are the crimes of those of Israel, he clearly states. For they have sold, he says, the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of sandals, that is, they did not endure to speak rightly and justly, and to render

for each of those being judged the justice that accords with the law. But if it happened that a man was righteous, sober and gentle, modest and unboastful; for such a one would be understood as both righteous and poor, or poor in spirit;

being brought to judgment by one of the more powerful, this man is sold to his enemies, although the law clearly proclaimed, "You shall not take" person in judgment; and again, "You shall not slay the innocent and the just. For the one entrusted with judging is certainly established in the order of God, to whom alone judging is proper. "For there is one lawgiver and judge," according to the voice of the saint. Therefore, the one who falsifies the account of justice and shows partiality will certainly insult the divine dignity, and offends God who says, "Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion every one to his "brother. He accuses them, therefore, of selling the just and the poor to their enemies, and of being accustomed to doing this for the sake of a few and most worthless gains, which would scarcely suffice for those who received them for the purchase of sandals. But it was far better, having chosen to honor righteousness and what is pleasing to God, to be intoxicated rather with the honors from Him, and indeed to have the wealth that comes from a good reputation. "For a good name," he says, "is to be chosen rather than great riches. It should be known that through the voice of Isaiah He says something like this to the mother of the Jews, that is, Jerusalem: "Your silver is dross; your wine merchants mix wine with water;

your princes are rebellious, companions of thieves, loving gifts, seeking rewards, not judging the fatherless, and not attending to the case of the widow; and again through the voice of Jeremiah, "Her leaders judged for a reward. It is therefore everywhere accursed not to render judgment that is right and blameless, but in a burdensome manner and discredited by its inequality. And they struck the heads of the poor with their fists. He clearly reproaches and accuses them of oppression and greed, as being unholy and merciless, and those whom it was better to deem worthy of care and to choose to honor, and to love to restore with assistance out of love, they were accustomed, on the contrary, to do wrong, wasting away with unbearable and bitter sorrows those who are burdened with poverty. But our Lord Jesus Christ records what is done to them as done to His own person. For He says, "Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these, you have done it to Me. Therefore, we shall offend God in no small measure, by taking ad-

vantage of the weak and "striking the humble with fists," as it is written, and embittering with sorrows those who are weighed down by poverty, although we ought rather to extend to them the hand of mutual love. "For poverty," he says, "humbles a man, but the hands of the diligent make rich;

and the disciple of Christ also writes somewhere that "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. And they have turned aside the way of the humble. You will understand this in two ways: for either it means that they have thought arrogant things, and have come to such a measure of God-hated arrogance, as to reject even brothers, unless they are swimming in wealth and have splendid possessions, and to go with hatred, as it were, and in the same way as those who have not excessively practiced the passion of love of money, who are also humble, thrusting away the vain turmoil of life; or else, that having become teachers and leaders of the people, they pervert the way of the weaker, that is, of the humble, it being clear that these do not of themselves have an accurate knowledge of what is expedient, but rather adhere to the voices of their instructors. And the multitude of this kind is very great. For some live rather un-curiously and in simplicity, and depend on the voice or instruction of their teachers, and whatever way they learn is good, they love exceedingly. Therefore, the wise and God-loving among those allotted to lead show the straight path, by which, rushing along, they achieve a life pleasing to God.

But those who have thought little of the divine law pervert the way of the humble, causing them to be outside of what is reasonable and truly fitting; such as Jeroboam did, having persuaded them to worship the man-made heifers; and having turned them away from the path that is straight and of the good, I mean of being devoted to the God and Lord who is so by nature and in truth. They turn aside from the way of the humble, those who do not hesitate to say to the one who is simple in mind, "Come with us, share in unjust blood. They also turn aside from the way of the humble, those who twist the correctness of ecclesiastical dogmas to what seems right to them, persuading the mind of the more simple to go down a crooked and perverse path; and for indeed there is nothing right among them, but rather distorted and unseemly little sayings, and compositions of words, full of impiety and ignorance alike. And a son and his father went in to the same girl, so that they might profane the name of their God. He again accuses them for

passionate and unrestrained pleasures, and has shown them to be neglectful of all decency in this one trespass. For it was better to be master of the passions and to overcome improper and loathsome pleasure and to cut off desires, and having resolved to rebuke the wills of the flesh and persuading to be still the law that rages in our members.

But they were far behind such brilliant virtue, and were perhaps defeated by the passions of the flesh. Then how is it not wise, even in shameful things, to choose the better, and to consider that it is of the most exceedingly improper things for a son to leap upon his father's bed, and for a father to delight in raging unholily upon his son's very bed, and to choose to commit a terrible deed, which even without the law through Moses nature knows to be shameful, and deems worthy to condemn with movements of wrath? And indeed Reuben, having wronged his father's bed, offended not moderately; and the divine Paul was exceedingly indignant about such a thing being done by some; and these were Corinthians, to whom he also writes, saying, "It is actually reported that there is "fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, "that a man has his father's wife. But he did not stop his indignation at this; but he delivered the one who had done it "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. Therefore, those who are guilty of such offenses profane the name of their God. And we do not say, by any means, that they imputed profanation and impurity to the divine nature. For how could they, or from where? But rather they cause the God of all to be blasphemed, as being a ruler of profane peoples.

And indeed He said somewhere to the Jews, "Because of you my name is blasphemed continually "among the Gentiles. For just as those who live rightly are said to sanctify God, so also would those who practice an unclean and inglorious way of life be understood to profane Him. And binding their garments with ropes they made curtains next to the altar, and they drank wine from false accusations in the house of their God. Our Lord Jesus Christ, teaching that the divine temples ought to be maintained for no other reason than to glorify in them the God of all, and to make the worship that is fitting for him, once rebuked the Jewish merchants; for they were bringing into the temple sheep and oxen and doves; and indeed, "making a whip "of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, saying, 'It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer.'"" And the sacred writing noted, "His "disciples remembered that it was written, 'The zeal for your house will consume

"me." And the divine Paul also rebuked some who were accustomed to daring such things; for he writes thus: "Do you not have "houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church "of God and humiliate those who have nothing? Therefore, it is seen to be unprofitable everywhere to dare to misuse the divine houses, as if they were common and belonged privately to each person.

For where would the reverence due to God still be kept, if we serve the pleasures of the flesh in his sight? and in those places where we ought to be seen as radiant through solemnity, to be laughed at there, slipping into what is unseemly, and willing to do what is not right? which indeed he does not permit some to do without blame, and very rightly so. For they did not, he says, keep the altar free from hangings, but having fallen under them, they dared to get drunk and to fulfill the works of pleasure, so that they might also hear God saying clearly, "And I am a witness, says the Lord. From what sort of absurdities would a drunken man abstain, whose mind is deranged and is prone to every kind of evil whatsoever? For the God of all sees even "the things in darkness," according to what is written, and nothing at all is unseen by him; but it seems somehow that the things in churches especially are done by us as if he were almost present and watching. And if it is truly most shameful, and has the ultimate condemnation from the law, to get drunk at all, how is it not beyond all description tending towards depravity, for such people to be seen even in the churches themselves? And what is still more burdensome, if the things for luxury are collected from unjust and wicked gains? Those who do this will hear God saying clearly, "Is my house a den of robbers?

Therefore, the crimes of others will be of great benefit to us, and through the things by which others have stumbled, we will become better, if we avoid their ways. For the temperate would reasonably be safer, if indeed they wished to live according to the law, if they chose not to emulate the wicked. But if it were said to Judah, that is, the two tribes in Jerusalem, Binding their garments with cords they made hangings next to the altar, the argument would rightly hold to the interpretation just now stated by us. But if indeed the offense were also brought against Israel, I would say that not in the house of him who is God by nature and in truth, nor next to the altar were the tents woven by means of the hangings, that is, the things of drunkenness were done, but in the house of their god, that he might mean Baal, or some

other of those made into the form of an idol by human invention. How then could it still be counted as a crime for Israel, to be in a house of idols, perhaps, and beside the profane altar itself to get drunk with wine and weave tents? Because they have honored these things, and made the temples of their supposed gods workshops of drunkenness as well as of every shameful pleasure, although it was necessary rather to desire to worship God purely and with all sanctity, and to enter the house that is truly holy, and to consider the altar venerable.

But they, eager to consider things so venerable and admirable as nothing, having honored things far more shameful, even dared to act insolently towards their own gods, trampling everywhere on the divine dignity, and fearlessly insulting the glory fitting for the one and only God by nature, when having also placed it upon those falsely named, they endured to esteem it of no account. But I destroyed the Amorite from before them, whose height was like the height of a cedar, and he was strong as an oak; and I dried up his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath. Do you see how he then shows them to be impiously insulting and choosing to despise, and him whom they ought rather to delight with songs of thanksgiving and with obedience in every single thing, they have chosen most foolishly and senselessly to grieve, because of their exceedingly great awkwardness of manners, and to drive to forgetfulness the good things they have suffered? For I, he says, destroyed the Amorite from before them; that is, I brought down the barbarian races, signified perhaps by the one Amorite, as being hard and rather coarse; I prepared to conquer the one who was so overgrown and unbreakable, so as to seem now somehow to be raised to the height of a cedar, and to imitate the strength of the exceedingly sturdy oak. For there was no other but I alone, he says, who withered him, and struck him down to the roots, and almost dried up his fruit.

For since he has spoken as if about a tree, the discourse plausibly persists in the figure, and says that the harm came to its root, and that in this way the fruit also was destroyed. For the wood in the forests would not die in any other way, except in this manner. For that they were destroyed, when those from Israel, the Amorites and Hivites, Girgashites and Perizzites and Jebusites, with God clearly fighting alongside, no one would doubt. Bitter therefore it is to despise Christ, who gave us [the power] "to tread on serpents and scorpions and on all the power of the enemy," who destroys those who resist,

and subdues the stronger; "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness of this age, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. And we have conquered all of these in Christ. And if we are to grieve our own Savior and Redeemer by turning aside to laziness, we will be at a loss, I know, for a reason and a pretext able to deliver us from punishment and fire. And I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you about in the desert for forty years, that you might inherit the land of the Amorites. He clearly explains what He said, and as if the discourse were going backwards, He reveals in brief the things from the beginning to the end.

For I delivered them from slavery, He says, and freed them from the greed of the Egyptians; and I nourished them in the desert, sending down the manna to them from above, and in a manner befitting God sending forth springs of water, and from the steep rock bestowing outflows of unexpected streams. And the toil of their journey was not for small things, but so that they might inherit the land of the Amorites, which was promised to their fathers. But they have slipped into such stupidity, as perhaps not even to know my love and philanthropy towards them. It is necessary, therefore, for us who are in Christ through faith to remember, that we too have been freed from slavery, and just as from Egypt we have moved into the desert, that is, into a wide and truly most pure way of life, unmixed with what is worse, I mean, the Evangelical way; we have been enriched with the bread from heaven, the one giving life to the world. For we are strengthened in Christ, and we have had springs of pure waters in the writings of the holy Apostles; for thus also the prophet Isaiah named them, saying, "And draw water with joy from the springs of salvation. And what could the springs of salvation be, rather than surely those who send forth for us the saving and life-giving word, and evangelize the mystery of Christ, and initiate into the mysteries all under heaven.

And I took of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for sanctification. Are not these things so, O sons of Israel? says the Lord. And you gave the sanctified ones wine to drink, and you commanded the prophets, saying, You shall not prophesy. It is a great matter for reproach and for condemnation for every evil to be, as it were, charged with ingratitude by God, who distributes to us all things, both those for glory and those sufficient for life. For although there were many nations throughout the world, He made

Israel alone the chosen one, and to this glory God then called and raised him, so that some, those who loved a holy and most lawful life, were even adorned with the dignity of prophecy, and the young men among them were taken for sanctification, that is, those more mature in mind and having intellectual strength. For some were sanctified according to the law, those called Nazirites, letting the hair of their head grow for the Lord, abstaining from wine and the things from it—I mean vinegar and grapes and raisins and grapestones—and keeping very far away from dead bodies. And the discourse concerning these things is deep. Nevertheless, God honored them, both as prophets, as I said, and by raising up some of them to be sanctified typologically. But they, rejecting in an unseemly way this so brilliant and admirable glory, gave wine to drink to the sanctified ones, that is, those who had upon themselves a vow of sanctification.

For they persuaded them to despise sanctification itself, surely saying that the law of God is absolutely nothing, and that for men to wish to be sanctified and to fulfill the customary rites for this purpose is useless. For even if the law was in shadows, yet it was not entirely deprived of the doctrines of truth; for the form of piety flashes forth in its types. But to rebuke the holy prophets themselves belongs to those who completely shake off the word of God, and who do not endure to be instructed, and who are ignorant that they have been honored, since, being from among them, they were taken up for communion with God. And he further asks in their midst and says, Are not these things so, O sons of Israel, says the Lord? Is it so, he says, that you will determine what is false even of such manifest matters? Will God need witnesses to convict you, who have chosen to slander such evident things? Therefore one must be sanctified, and with a steadfast mind attend to God, not admitting the opinions of the wicked. "For evil communications corrupt good manners," and the words of pleasure-lovers carry one away from sanctification and all reasonableness. Therefore we shall rather adhere to the voices of those who speak for God, to whom the Savior himself also bears witness, saying, "It is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you."

Therefore, behold, I roll beneath you, in the way that a cart full of stubble rolls. It was the custom for the ancients to transport by carts the things from the fields and whatever fills the threshing floor, and this practice is preserved to this day among those who inhabit the land of the east and

of the west. And the wheels roll together with the axles, the wood creaking heavily and gratingly, and the loads placed upon them all but crying out. Therefore I myself, he says, the Master of all, will be as the thing that rolls under the cart, that is, the axle; for it, as I said, rolls the wheels with itself, having them fixed and fitted to it. And I will cry out as if against the impious, no longer being able to bear the grievous burden of their transgressions. "For they have rejected the law of the Lord, and his commandments they have not kept, but their vanities, which their fathers made, have led them astray," and they have forgotten me, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, who destroyed the Amorite from before their face, who took from their sons for prophets and from their young men for consecration.

But I have honored them, but they themselves have descended to such an evil counsel, as to "bind their garments with cords, to make curtains next to the altar, and to drink wine from false accusations in the house of their God," and to give "the consecrated ones wine to drink, and to command the prophets, saying, 'You shall not prophesy.'" Therefore, being all but laden with such impieties of yours, like an axle under a cart that is full of stubble and sheaves, I will make the loudest outcry. And what harm will come from this, or what sufferings will again befall them, he makes clear immediately in what follows. However, it is necessary to say this, that it is truly a terrible thing to provoke God, and to finally slip into such wickedness that our sin becomes unbearable to him, even though by nature he is exceedingly gracious, good, and gentle. Therefore, one must by all means refrain from loving to offend him; but if anything should happen and one should suffer a human failing, one must not be seen to delay in repentance, nor indeed allow one's faults to grow, but rather, using a sobriety befitting a saint, to draw them back, and to hasten to transport the ailing mind to what is better. For in this way God will be forbearing, and since he is good, he will bestow his mercy.

And flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong man shall not retain his strength, and the warrior shall not save his life, and the archer shall not stand, and he that is swift of foot shall not be delivered, nor shall the horseman save his life, and he will find his heart in mighty deeds; the naked shall be pursued in that day, says the Lord. Nothing will save, he says, in the days of wrath those who have offended; not swiftness of foot will deliver the swiftest runner from evils; not strength of body the one who is strong; nor

military experience the one who knows tactics and has practiced archery excellently and is admired for it; useless to those who use them is both the swiftness of horses, and in addition to this, knowing the cavalry battle. but each of these, he says, will find his own heart in dominions, that is, overpowered by fears and yielding without a fight to those who wish to lay waste the victory. For then there will be cowardice among those of Israel, and such dominion of the Babylonians, that even the unarmed man will be able to pursue, that is, to prevail over those in arms, even if one of the Babylonians is without a breastplate; and the unarmed and unequipped man will be able to pursue those in full armor. Therefore, when God shakes down into weakness those whom he chooses to harm, nothing could help.

And this I think is what is said to us in another way through the voice of the psalmist: "He will not delight in the strength of the horse; nor is he pleased with the "legs of a man," and again, "A horse is a vain thing for "safety, neither shall he be saved by his great strength. For such things are completely useless, if God does not contend with them. For he is the Lord of hosts, who gives sinews to the weakened, and enervates those who have grieved him, and with him "one shall chase a thousand, and two in turn shall move "ten thousand," and a great and countless multitude will be consumed by perhaps two or three resisting them, unless God defends.

Book 2

Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you, O house of Israel, and against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying: Only you have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. The word might be understood as having come against all of Israel, no longer taking Judah and Ephraim in part, but with the whole race gathered as if into one; for every tribe of Israel was brought up from Egypt. Therefore, with none being left out, he commands them to hear the things from God. And what were these things? For there are countless, he says, cities and countries throughout the whole world under heaven, and those in them are beyond number, but you from Israel out of all I have made chosen, I made myself manifest through many wonders, I delivered you from bitter and unbearable slavery, I declared you enviable and thrice-blessed, I have instructed you by law for what is pleasing to me, I have fortified you with my assistance, and I have brought you into the land promised to the fathers. But since you alone, he says, out of all who have been

deemed worthy of so conspicuous a grace have not ceased grieving and have offended in many ways, for this reason I will henceforth demand of you an account of your folly, I will no longer tolerate those who sin and have an un-reproved inclination for this.

Therefore, to despise God and to disregard the master's will is a cause of destruction for anyone henceforth who has known him, or has been known by him, in the manner of spiritual kinship. And indeed the most wise Paul writes to those from the nations called through faith, who then suffer from weakness, and are eager to go backward as it were, saying: "But now that you have come to know God, "or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the "weak and poor elements of the world, whose slaves you want to be once "more? For the Creator knew them even before faith; for he is ignorant of absolutely nothing that exists; but in these things, as I said, knowledge would very well signify spiritual kinship. If Will two walk together at all, unless they know one another? Deep is the riddle and dim the saying; nevertheless, we will speak as we are able. He therefore accused Israel, because "they commanded the prophets, saying, 'You shall not prophesy.'" And for what reason they recklessly rebuked the voices of the saints, it is necessary to say. For since they were announcing the grim things that would come from wrath, and the things through which it was likely for sinners to become better, fearing perhaps the outcome of what was spoken, they practiced resistance and opposed them, those who were accustomed to leading astray the mind of the common folk to what was not fitting, and deceiving those yoked under them.

For they rebuked the prophets, but they accepted the deceivers, as though they were going on the straight path. Therefore, through the voice of Isaiah, God says, "My people, those who call you blessed lead you astray and confuse the path of your feet. And Amaziah the priest of Bethel also rebuked Amos the Prophet, saying, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and live there and prophesy there, but in Bethel you shall no longer prophesy again. But those who opposed the prophets, out of very great awkwardness and terrible perversity, fabricated a convenient pretext for their resistance, saying this: "The Lord has not sent you. He therefore accuses them, because they claimed that the prophets from Him did not convey words from above and from God; but rather they thought that things were being uttered from their own opinion, and that they were speaking things different from what seemed

good to the Lord of all. For this reason He says, O foolish and senseless ones, will any of you become friends and walk the same path of life, not having known yourselves, or rather one another; that is, unless they have seen one another to be of the same character and like-minded? "For every creature loves its like, and a man will cleave to his like. And if this is true, how could I have accepted the prophets, as it were, into friendship and love, being holy Myself, if they too had not become holy?

How then do you persecute the saints, to whom I have entrusted My words, whom I have accepted as good, as it were walking the same road of My wills? For whatever I might wish, this is also their will. Therefore, to rebuke the prophets is nothing other than to direct the rebuke against Me. The Savior also said something like this to the holy disciples: "He who receives you receives Me; and he who receives Me, receives Him who sent Me. And he commanded those who were cast out to wipe off the very dust from their feet, saying, "That it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgment than for that city. It is therefore necessary to accept those who are ambassadors for God, and who convey to us what seems good to Him, such as was the divine Paul, writing and saying, "We are therefore ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making his appeal through us; we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. Will a lion roar from his forest when he has no prey? Will a young lion give his voice from his den at all, unless he has seized something? Those who study the habits of wild beasts say that the lion, when it is in need of food, roams about powerfully through mountains and glens and forests, turning its eye this way and that, and seeking to catch something of the animals grazing in the woods.

But when it sees something suitable for food, then it comes near and makes its attack, roaring terribly and harshly. And if indeed it should carry back to the cubs things for food, then when it should get near the den, they too leap up, and taking it with a roar, they tear it apart. Why then, He says, do you accuse God, because He makes the threat before the attack of terrible things? And why do you gnash your teeth at the prophets themselves, because they too have cried out against your impiety? For I am like a lion, He says, which is accustomed to roar before the hunt, all but threatening the attack beforehand, and the prophets are like cubs, imitating my custom; For, as I said, they have cried out against those who are accustomed to impiety. But just as for the animals in the mountains the hunter's shout beforehand is not

entirely unprofitable, scaring them to flight before they happen to be caught, so also for sinners the threat and prediction before the terrible things is exceedingly useful, leading them to repentance and avoidance of what is impending. God, therefore, compares himself to a lion that does not leap upon and bring things from his wrath upon some, unless he first makes known the threat, so that by repenting they might be saved, receiving the prediction of the things that will be as a medicine for salvation before the onset of the terrible things. Will a bird fall to the earth without a fowler?

Will a snare be sprung from the earth without catching anything? The discourse is now made by way of comparison. For fowlers most skillfully bring down the sparrows that have settled in the plants, and with snares, on the other hand, some crush what is caught. But the discourse now seems to signify through the sparrows those who are accustomed to think lofty things, the boastful in mind and arrogant in spirit, and not enduring to be brought down with the lowly; and through those caught in snares, the lovers of earthly things, and those who seek only carnal and fattening things. And God again compares himself to a fowler and a snare, bringing the proud down to the earth, and as it were crushing and hunting for punishment those who mind only the things on earth. But those from Israel were boastful, despising God and rejecting prophets and dishonoring the law; and they were no less also exceedingly greedy for the things in the world, and seeking only the things on earth, overcome by whose strange desires they did not accept the word of God, but opposed those who call to virtue. For they said to the holy prophets "But "speak to us and announce to us another delusion.

If, then, it is I, he says, who in the manner of a fowler brings down the proud, and as in the function of a snare am accustomed to crush him who like a fox or a mouse is greedy for the things in the world, why do you persecute the saints in vain, when they only convey words to you, while I fulfill the things from wrath cast upon the impious? If a trumpet sounds in a city, will the people not be terrified? Will there be calamity in a city which the Lord has not done? I indeed, he says, bring on the things from wrath, but the prophets are useful mediators for the words alone. For they convey to you whatever I command them through the Spirit. But you perhaps make light of them, and are greatly vexed even at the mere words from them at times. For in what way at all, tell me, are you profited by these things? what fear has entered you? or what change have you made for the better? For if a trumpet

should sound in a city, announcing the war coming and stirred up by enemies, who is so insensible as not in every way and altogether to receive the fear of the evils that will be? But my trumpets have not ceased proclaiming beforehand the things to come.

But you are profited not at all, and though learning that you will be laid waste by enemies, you utterly despise the terrors for this, so as perhaps even to laugh at the prediction as some vain thing, and moreover to shout that which is customary and familiar to the desperate, "The vision that this man sees is for "many days to come, and he prophesies of times far off. Why then do you consider burdensome those who are as it were trumpeting, if you consider their words as nothing? But perhaps you say that the outcome of these matters grieves you not moderately. Will there then be an affliction in a city, perchance, which the Lord has not done? It is like as if one should say: Will there then be anyone among men able to afflict a city either with diseases or sieges or destructions of crops or even in some other such way? But if no one of men could do such things, and it lies rather in the authority and power of God, why are you angry with those who announce it beforehand? And yet it is necessary to repent, and by inclinations to this to appease him the one who is grieved and has the power to harm those who have sinned.

Therefore, in these matters, we shall understand the 'evil' that comes from God in the cities not as wickedness—far from it!— but rather as an affliction, that is, the wrath and movement for whatever reason, which He might bring upon sinners, persuading them to turn back to what is more fitting. For it is written that, "With bit and "bridle you shall restrain the jaws of those who do not draw near "to you. For since He is good, and "wishes all people "to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth," He somehow compels them by means of wrath toward what is better, and sometimes powerfully moves, with terrors and threats, those whom reason and the guidance of what is beneficial do not persuade. Because the Lord God will not do anything, unless He reveals His instruction to His servants the prophets. A lion will roar, and who will not be afraid? The Lord God has spoken, and who will not prophesy? It is not the prophets, he says, who bring on the things that come from wrath; how could they? For they are also human in nature, just like you, but they have been honored by God by learning all the things that He might wish to fulfill, and to bring upon cities and lands either good things, perhaps, or things that are accustomed to cause pain. But

perhaps you say to this: Let them learn, if you wish; let them be enriched by you with the knowledge of future events;

let all the mysteries be made clear to them; but let them speak to no one, nor let them sound anything in the ears of those who reject them. What then is the reply to this from God? A lion will roar and who will not be afraid? For if, he says, when the lion roars, the most powerful of beasts, there would not be anyone so hard-hearted and arrogant as not to receive fear, how, when God, who is above all, speaks and commands them to announce what they learn, would they not fear the one who has commanded them? For they are not, like you, scornful and unyielding, holding in no account the things that seem good to the Lord of all. Therefore, in every way He secures the saints, and wards off from the prophets the harms from those who willingly do evil. And this was nothing other than to deem them worthy of the fitting care. For to remove the physicians from their midst would be nothing other than to render the sick helpless. Indeed, He proclaims this beforehand through the voice of the blessed David, saying, "Do not touch my anointed ones, and do no evil to my prophets," and to them, He somewhere says, "And he who touches you will be as one who touches the pupil of His eye. For he will do no small injury to his own soul who gnashes his teeth at the heads of the saints and unholily attacks them, and does not refrain from bringing on some outrages.

Announce to the regions in Assyria and to the regions of Egypt and say: Be gathered together on the mountain of Samaria, and see many wonders in its midst and the oppression that is in it. And she did not know what things shall be against her, says the Lord, they who treasure up injustice and misery in their regions. For this reason, thus says the Lord God: Tyre, and your land round about shall be made desolate, and he shall bring down your strength from you, and your regions shall be plundered. He threatens, then, again to bring upon them what it was likely for those to endure and suffer who had finally arrived at such a point of wickedness, as even to leap away from God, and to rebuke the prophets, and to utterly disregard the things established through Moses. But it must be known that the edition of the Hebrews and the writing of the seventy again differ in these points. For the Hebrews have published: Announce to the regions in Ashdod and to the regions of Egypt; while the seventy have: Announce to the regions in Assyria and to the regions of Egypt. And Ashdod is perhaps a neighbor and bordering on the land

of the Jews, but the land of the Assyrians is very distant, that is, of the Persians and Medes, lying as it were at the very borders of the east. We say, therefore, that there is nothing troublesome, even if they should be called Ashdodites, perhaps, or Assyrians;

for according to both the word of the divinely inspired scripture will be true, just as indeed the things in the text before us we will show by making it clear. Indeed, the thing being signified has a recollection of history, lying in the fourth of Kings, and in the second of Chronicles; but I will make the narrative very concisely, so that I might not seem to speak at length among those who know. Manasseh reigned at a certain time in Jerusalem, who was the son of Hezekiah, but very different in character and as far as possible from his father's piety. For he became a wicked man and easily turned to anything whatever that was amiss, abominable and an idolater, and not moderately given to the deceptions of demons. This man built altars and precincts for Baal, he worshipped the whole host of heaven, he passed his own children through fire, he assembled augurs, and those whose practice it is to speak falsely, those who think they know something of what is necessary, but in fact do not yet know it, but rather speak the things from their own heart. And there was perhaps utterly no manner of the uttermost depravity unpracticed by his desires. While he was reigning, God said somewhere through the voice of prophets concerning both Jerusalem and all the land of the Jews, "Behold, I am bringing evils upon this people, so that for everyone who hears them, both his ears will tingle.

When Manasseh died, his son Amon succeeded to the scepter, lacking in none of his father's depravity; for he honored all that he did. He lived for only two years. Then after him his son Josiah was anointed again as king, a wise and shrewd man, and among the most God-loving. The man of God proclaimed him when he arrived in Bethel, while Jeroboam was standing at the altar and inaugurating the feast for the heifers; for he spoke thus: "O altar, altar, thus says the Lord: Behold, a son is born to the house of David, Josiah is his name, and he will sacrifice upon you the priests of the high places who burn incense upon you, and he will burn the bones of men upon you. For when Josiah became king, he pulled down the precincts of the idols, demolished the altars, destroyed the groves, burned the chariot of the sun, slaughtered the priests of the high places in Bethel, set fire to the bones of men upon the altar of the heifers, drove out the soothsayers, I mean false

prophets and false seers and ventriloquists, he commanded that the things ordained by the all-wise Moses should be held and be in force in Israel; in his time they sacrificed the lamb, and they celebrated the Passover in Jerusalem.

And since he was good and genuine with God, he sent to Huldah the prophetess, seeking to inquire if the Master of all would cease from his anger, if Israel would be in a good state of prosperity, and if the things foretold against it by the voice of prophets would henceforth be inactive. And she said to them, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: Say to the man who sent you to me: Thus says the Lord: Behold, I am bringing evils upon this place and upon those who dwell in it, all the words of the book which the king of Judah read, because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with the works of their hands, and my wrath will be kindled in this place and will not be quenched. And to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the Lord, you shall say this to him: Thus says the Lord God of Israel: My words which you have heard, because your heart was tender and you were humbled before the face of the Lord, when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, to be for a desolation and for a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before me, I have indeed heard, says the Lord. Not so;

behold, I am adding you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, and it shall not be seen by your eyes amid all the evils which I am bringing upon this place and upon those who dwell in it. And the promise was fulfilled. For the Master of all postponed his anger for the time of his reign time; and they were thirty-one years. But in the last period, Pharaoh Necho, the leader of the Egyptians, campaigned against the Babylonians, and went forth from his own land with all his army. And since Josiah was suspicious that he had perhaps come to ravage Judea, he armed himself according to the law of war, and wished to go out against him. But he ordered him to withdraw, saying he was hurrying to the Euphrates river, and was being carried off to the land of the Assyrians. But since even after this he needlessly set himself in array against him, he was struck in the war; and having died, he was then carried home and to Jerusalem by his own people, and his son Jehoahaz was anointed as king. But having completed scarcely the third month, Pharaoh Necho removed him from the scepters, and having bound him, held him guarded in Egypt. And for a large sum of money

he barely consented for Eliakim, that is, Jehoiakim, who was also a son of Josiah, to reign in Jerusalem.

And he so oppressed Israel, I mean those in Samaria, and those in Jerusalem, as to impose tribute on those throughout the whole land, and to seek taxes from all. While matters stood thus, and Jehoiakim was administering the kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar came up. And he so overpowered Jerusalem, as to take Jehoiakim as a slave, and to levy tribute on him, and to ravage the entire city completely. And God did not measure out the calamity for those who had committed impious deeds only up to this point, but added something else both grievous and most burdensome. For from all the surrounding land and country, from the Syrians, I mean, and the Tyrians and Ashdodites, Idumeans and Moabites, bands of robbers, running out from place to place, plundered the land of the Jews. For it is written thus in the Chronicles: "Then "the land began to be taxed to give the silver at the command of "Pharaoh, and the silver and the gold was required of each one "according to his ability by the king of the land, to give it "to Pharaoh Necho. Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when "he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusa- "lem, and the name of his mother was Zebudah, daughter of Neriah "of Ramah, and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord according to "all that his fathers had done.

In his days "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up to the "land, and he was his servant for three years and he rebelled against "him. And the Lord sent against them the Chaldeans, "and bands of Syrians and bands of Moabites and of the sons of "Ammon and of Samaria. Indeed, all these things Israel happened to suffer, having been exceedingly insolent towards the glory of God, and having been unholy corrupted to the point of wishing to worship "the works of his hands," as it is written. Since, then, the history has been sufficiently related by us, come let us, going over the saying cursorily, say what is fitting. Proclaim to the lands in Assyria and to the lands of Egypt and say, Assemble upon the mountain of Samaria and see many wonders in her midst and the oppression that is in her. For he as good as says, Let someone announce with all speed to the Egyptians and Assyrians, and let them run down mightily upon the mountains of Samaria, that is, the country itself; for they say it is mountainous. And when they arrive they will see in it many wonders and an unexpected oppression.

For those who once were victorious, he says, will be pitiable and among slaves, those who raised their overweening brow against all, so to speak, of the nations, will lie wretched and cast down and under the feet of enemies, and they will endure such great oppression, as to consider it a desirable thing to be saved, and to live in slavery, and to pay tribute to the conquerors. But Samaria, he says, did not know what will be before it, that is, what will happen against it. Then where, at last, are those who treasure up injustice and misery in their lands? For what did their greed profit, he says, and their heaping up of sins, because they did not wish to know the things of God? Therefore, will the calamity for the impious be confined to the invasion of the Assyrians and Egyptians? Not at all, he says. For this reason, thus says the Lord the God. Tyre and your land round about will be laid waste, and he will break your strength from you, and your lands will be plundered. But the phrase 'Tyre and round about,' you will understand in this way. From Tyre, he says, and from the surrounding and neighboring land your country will be laid waste, with bands of robbers overrunning it, as I said. For then they will break your strength, that is, all your power will be shattered, and not only broken but also weakened.

Therefore, if the Hebrew version should happen to say 'Proclaim to the regions in Ashdod,' and if the Septuagint in turn has 'in Assyria,' what has been said will be true according to both. For not only the Assyrians plundered, but also Syrians and Ashdodites, running out in multitudes and wronging Israel in the manner of robbery. Thus says the Lord: As when a shepherd snatches from the mouth of the lion two legs or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel who dwell in Samaria be snatched away, opposite a tribe and in Damascus. Observe everywhere, and you will greatly admire the sobriety of the prophecy. For since Israel has not utterly perished, but "the remnant" has been saved, according to the voice of Isaiah, so that the Truth-itself might not seem to speak falsely, it always adds to the predictions of evils the mercy that comes from gentleness. Just as, then, he says, when a lion has been sated, and has completely devoured the animal it has seized, a few remains are barely left, perhaps two legs or even part of an ear, and these the shepherds gather, weeping; so will it be for the sons of Israel, those in Samaria and those who dwell in Damascus, those 'opposite a tribe,' that is, those who have hostile thoughts and always oppose the tribe of Judah.

For those dwelling in Samaria were captured by force and were sacked by enemies, and when the war had consumed almost all of them, a very few were barely saved, and have remained in the land as remnants of the dead. Or also they were snatched away in another way, as from the mouth of a lion. Having been carried away to the land of the Assyrians, and being released at times from captivity, for not all returned, but very few, remnants of those who had been carried away. But that the Assyrian Tiglath-pileser also took Damascus at times and resettled it in his own land, is clear to everyone, I think; for as is written in the fourth book of Kingdoms, he was once called for help by Uzziah the king of Judah, when Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, and also Rezin, king of Syria, were warring against him at that time. And having arrived, he killed Rezin and took Damascus itself. But if someone should choose to apply the meaning of the foregoing to all men, he will not go wide of the mark. For he will understand very correctly, calling that to mind, that Satan has seized and devoured those on the earth like some savage beast, but "The good shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep," has appeared and helped, and has snatched us away, both those left among the living and those already dead.

For as the blessed psalmist says, "The Lord has broken the molars of the lions," and as Paul says, "He died and lived, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Hear, you priests, and testify to the house of Jacob, says the Lord, the God Almighty, because in the day when I punish the impieties of Israel upon him, I will also punish the altars of Bethel, and the horns of the altar shall be dug up and shall fall to the earth. I will confound and smite the turreted house upon the summer house, and the ivory houses shall perish, and many other houses shall be added, says the Lord. He returns again to a clear narration of the things that will happen to the impious, often expanding upon the same account for the benefit of the listeners. Whence, I think, understanding that this practice is not unprofitable, the divine Paul also writes to some, "To say the same things to you, is not for me troublesome, but for you it is "safe. He therefore commands those serving as priests to almost raise their own voice and bear witness to Israel, and to clearly foretell to them each of the things that are about to happen. And whom then shall we understand, or rather say, are those commanded to cry out piercingly? Is it the priests of the heifers, or those of the idols in another shrine? But I think this is improbable;

for they would not have proclaimed their own evils and those of the others whom they themselves have led astray. Who then, therefore, are the priests commanded to do this? Those of the blood of Levi; for not all had slipped away with those led astray in Samaria, nor did they endure to worship idols, but having leapt away from that of the Samaritans, they returned to Jerusalem. And it is written thus about them in the second book of Chronicles. So the account is about Jeroboam; then explaining the power inherent in him, "And he had," it says, "Judah "and Benjamin. And the Levites and the priests who were in "all Israel gathered to him from all their territories. For the Levites left the dwellings of their "possession and went to Judah, to Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons "had cast them out from ministering to the Lord. And he appointed "for himself priests of the high places and for the idols and for the "vain things and for the calves, which Jeroboam had made; and "he cast them out from the tribes of Israel who had set their heart "to seek the Lord God of Israel, and they came "to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord God of their "fathers. And they strengthened the kingdom of Judah.

For since these, about whom the account is, were not moderately grieved, being driven out from their kinship and inheritances and from the ministry itself—for Jeroboam had cast them out—of necessity he commanded them especially to proclaim the destruction of both their idols and of Samaria, as if consoling and teaching them that, having chosen to think the things of God and having loved the Master of all, they will not perish with the others, but will lie outside of the wrath. "For when," he says, "I bring upon those of Israel their sins, then I will also take vengeance upon the altars of Bethel; for their horns will be dug up and will fall to the ground. Is then the destruction of Samaria up to this point, and will it be enough for those commanded to ravage it merely to tear down the shrines and to dig up the altars? By no means; "for I will throw into confusion," he says, "and I will strike the winter house upon the summer house. And what he wishes to signify is something like this. Those in Samaria, living too luxuriously and having the breadth that comes from wealth, constructed for themselves both winter and summer houses. And the winter one he calls 'peripteron,' as if girded on all sides with wings or walls, so that it might be almost unapproachable to the blasts of winter; but the summer one is the one that is open and exposed to the pleasant breezes of the winds.

Therefore with the altars, he says, that have been dug up, I will at the same time throw into confusion and strike both winter and summer houses; and ivory houses will also perish. And we remember that Ahab, having reigned in Samaria, constructed such a house for himself. And many others will be added, he says, that is, those of the lower and more insignificant people, or rather, of the poor and the common herd. Therefore, all Samaria has now perished, every house having been shaken down. What then shall we learn from this again, we who have chosen to think rightly? That worldly splendor will not profit those who have it at all, not wealth, not glory, not anything else for luxury, when love for God is absent, and when righteousness is in no way honored by us. "For the treasures of the lawless will not profit," according to what is written, "but righteousness delivers from "death. Therefore it would be far better to love righteousness and to store up treasure in heaven, and to yearn for the mansions above, and to love to be suspended from the hope in God. For the things in this world are both small and temporary, and the profane has no basis for security; but it both always remains and is saved, and accompanies the boundless ages. Hear this word, you heifers of Bashan who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor and trample on the needy, who say to their lords, Give to us, that we may drink.

The Lord swears by his saints, because, behold, days are coming upon you, and they will take you with weapons, and those with you into cauldrons with fiery plagues, and you will be brought forth naked, wife and her husband opposite each other, and you will be cast away to the mountain Remman, says the Lord God. Out of excessive arrogance and luxury, the most prominent men of Samaria, surpassing all others in the abundance of their wealth, as I just said, were building for themselves houses that were brilliant and most costly, and suited to the seasons, I mean for winter and for summer, and the oracle proclaimed that they would be utterly and completely destroyed. Therefore, these very masters of the houses, who had practiced being fattened by fleeting luxuries, he calls heifers of Bashan. The country of Bashan is good for grazing and verdant, and exceedingly well-suited for abundantly fattening the animals that graze in it. Therefore, as they were living in extreme comfort and were very well-fed, and making luxury their study, God compares them to the heifers from Bashan; and He accuses them, because they oppressed the poor, and almost crushed the needy with their

own feet; "For the poor are the pastures of the rich," according to what is written.

And by adding that they say to their lords, Give to us, that we may drink, He showed that they were insubordinate, not even tolerating to yield to those who ruled them, as far as royal honor was concerned, but as it were, out of boundless arrogance, they assigned the measure of a servant even to their own lords. For to dare to say to their superiors and those set over them, Give to us, that we may drink, belongs to those who desire to be served rather than to serve. What then will happen to those who have come to such a point of desperation? The Lord, he says, swears by His saints, that is, by His holy things, or mysteries, which again is Himself; for He has no one greater by whom to swear; that there will come seasons and days, when the fear of suffering will cause even you, who are so luxurious and well-fed and accustomed to extravagance, to be in the toils of war and in arms. But even while you are in this state and equipped, they will take you, he says, together with your dearest friends and wives and flatterers, who, being always with you, applauded with very many praises, and called you thrice-blessed; for these things the tribes of flatterers always shout to those who feed them. But they will be burned up; for they were plagues and approved of nothing else, and admired the shameful and the lovers of sin.

But you, stripped of glory, and furthest from all luxury, and as if unclothed of that former prosperity, will henceforth be carried away as slaves and captives, and will be cast, he says, upon the mountain Remman. This is in Armenia, lying at the furthest outlets of the land of the Persians; for the countries are adjacent and bordering on one another. It is therefore possible to see from this how the pursuit of luxury turns to a bitter end for those who live luxuriously, as the Savior says, "Blessed are those who mourn now, for they shall be comforted. For, as I said, luxury ends in a tear, but the end of toils is rest. And someone will testify, saying that "the fruit of good labors is glorious. It is not implausible to suppose that the heifers of Bashan are the women in Samaria, who, indulging in luxury and delicacies and in ornaments for beautification, and being fattened in the prime of their bodies, were oppressing the poor and trampling on the needy, almost setting on fire for unnatural pleasures those who were weak in this and had a spiritual poverty, who, not having the wealth of strength from above, by the passions by assaults they have a heart easily broken. These heifers, therefore, say to

their lords, "Give to us that we may drink. For the affairs of harlotrous women are always puffed up, and with excessive laziness they almost weary those who have been captivated;

even if they have them as masters, yet seeing them laid low by sensual pleasures, they persuade them to fulfill what seems best to them. But you, he says, O heifers, they will take in arms; that is, not being in the rank of lovers, who persuade by flattering and serve by speaking sweet words, because they are utterly overcome by pleasure in you, but cruelly and fiercely and by the law of war, and they will burn with fire the wanton lovers with you. And you, stripped of those unseemly adornments, will be carried off to the mountain of Remman. You have entered into Bethel and have committed iniquity, and in Gilgal you have multiplied impiety. He immediately sets the transgressions alongside the judgments, and usefully makes the clear demonstration of the unholy deeds a neighbor to the narrations of the terrible things, so that no one might mock, nor indeed blame God, as having imposed a harsher punishment than is necessary on those of Israel. For these things, he says, will come upon you, and these things. And in response to the question of why they will come, he proclaims: you entered into Bethel and committed iniquity, where the god-hated Jeroboam set up the golden calf; there you will be captured, transgressing terribly and outrageously. For I have legislated through the all-wise Moses, "You shall not make for "yourself gods of gold and gods of silver," and "You shall worship the Lord "your God, and him only shall you serve.

But you, he says, mocking my law, have worshipped the works of your own hands, and seeing a golden calf and lifeless matter, you persisted, while the one who devised the error said, "These are your gods, O Israel, "who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. And you have wrought the greatest impiety in Gilgal; this is a city beyond the streams of the Jordan, terribly inclined toward apostasy. And indeed the God of all said concerning it, "All their evils are in Gilgal, for there I "hated them because of the evil of their practices. Therefore, as the writer of Proverbs says, "The ways of a man are before the "eyes of God, and he looks upon all his paths. And He accepts those who have practiced walking uprightly, but he rejects the one who steps outside the straight path, and who is eager to go where he ought not. And you brought your sacrifices in the morning, your tithes on the third day; and they read the law outside, and they called for confessions; declare then that

the sons of Israel loved these things, says the Lord God. Truly dreadful and having reached the utmost limit of impiety is it to dare to counterfeit the glory of God, and what is fitting for him and him alone, to attach these things to the honors of idols.

For those accustomed to do this, as far as it is in their power, shake the divine and supreme nature from the thrones most fitting for it and it alone, and they send it forth from the sacred seats, and establish in them, as it were, the unclean demons. We shall find, therefore, the frenzied Israel entangled in such frightful accusations. For the God of all ordained through Moses in one place that it was fitting for them to sacrifice two lambs every day in the holy tabernacle, one in the morning, and the other in the evening, as a quasi-continual and uninterrupted sweet odor, signifying clearly the spiritual one of the Church as in riddles and types; and again He further ordained, "Three times a year every male of yours shall appear before me. And at these three appointed times according to the law, they brought tithes, firstfruits of the fields, sacrifices, thanksgiving offerings. For it is written that "You shall not appear before me empty. But they, transferring what was so rightly ordained through the all-wise Moses to the glory of idols, offered in their precincts to the in the morning the sacrifices, and they brought their tithes also for the three-day festival. By the three-day festival he means the three days of the year, on which, as I said, every male had to come before God.

And the impiety of those of Israel did not stop at these things, but indeed they also read an outside law, that is, they honored the law of foreigners, holding the law from God to be of very little account. For they offered their sacrifices in the precincts of idols at appointed times and kept a very great observance of their customary feasts. That is, he says this, that the things established for my glory, they have offered to outsiders, and they dedicated my law to idols, offering to them the morning sacrifices, and dedicating the tithes to them in the three-day festivals. and they have proclaimed voluntary offerings. And the 'they have proclaimed' means that they prayed, that is, they made vows; and 'voluntary offerings' are the voluntary things according to the law, and whatever one might bring to God willingly. Then to the priests he cries out the 'report and testify,' because these things the sons of Israel have loved, that is, not only have they dared to do them once, but they also loved them, having obviously hated the things of God. For they ought to be single-minded. For to be lame, and to hasten to go on both sides,

would receive much outcry from God, and the Savior Himself will testify, saying, "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 it is a very difficult thing to divert elsewhere the things that are for the glory of God, and to deem others worthy of the honor that befits Him. For the things of God are His own and special, and would not befit any other, but Him and Him alone. And I will give you numbness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, and you did not return to me, says the Lord. And I withheld the rain from you three months before the harvest; and I will rain on one city, and on another city I will not rain; one portion will be rained upon, and the portion on which I will not rain, will be withered. And two and three cities will be gathered into one city to drink water and they will not be filled, and not even so did you return to me, says the Lord. The discourse again providentially meets those who are accustomed to find fault, and to babble most imprudently against the serenity that is in God out of an excessive madness. For on what account indeed, some might perhaps say, does He inflict upon those of Israel a punishment so untamable and completely unbearable, although God is by nature good? He makes a defense, therefore, in a way, through these things and shows that they are in need of a harsh wrath;

and at the same time he shows that at first He strikes sinners more gently, not demanding punishments, but out of innate love for humanity turning them to Himself, and as it were "with whip and toil" changing them to choose to do what is better. For since they had become as I said, and had committed impieties no longer tolerable, he disciplined them with numbness of teeth, and indeed with lack of bread, that is, famine. And you did not return to me, says the Lord. I withheld the rain from you three months before the harvest, that is, as the Hebrews have more suitably rendered it: three months before the reaping, when the need for watering the crops is most great and necessary for bringing them to fruition. And he says there was such a scarcity of water that by the judgment and decree of God who knows all things, one city was rained on, while another was parched; and again, two and three would be gathered into one, and still be thirsty. And you did not return to me, says the Lord. And it has happened that those of Israel suffered such things both historically and spiritually. For as the disciple of the Savior said, "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that

it might not rain on the land, and it did not rain for three years and six months. And there was so harsh a famine in Samaria, that a donkey's head was sold for many denarii.

But also in the times of the prophecy of Jeremiah, the God of all withheld the rain. And so he has made the pronouncements concerning the drought: "Judah has mourned, and her "gates have been emptied, and they were darkened upon the earth, "and the cry of Jerusalem went up, and their great men "sent their younger ones for water; they came "to the wells, and found no water, they returned "their vessels empty. and the works of the earth failed, because "there was no rain. The farmers were ashamed, they covered their "heads. And does in the field gave birth and abandoned "[their young], because there was no pasture. Wild asses stood in the valleys, "they drew in the wind, their eyes failed, because there was "no grass, because of the iniquity of the people. Since, then, those of Israel had acted impiously in no small measure, God held back the rain and gave numbness of teeth and lack of bread in all his cities. But, as I just said, we will find that they suffered this also in a spiritual sense; for food and drink for bodies from the earth are the things from the earth, and perceptible water; but the soul of man is nourished by divine and heavenly words. And its stream is the spiritual one, and the divinely-inspired scripture is a spring that waters it spiritually, speaking the mystery of Christ. But just as if teeth should suffer numbness, they would be somewhat weaker for being able to chew anything, and to grind down food;

so also the human mind, having slipped into weakness, and having suffered the sickness of sluggishness, would not be able to attain spiritual knowledge, nor to take in for digestion anything of even the exceedingly subtle contemplations. Therefore the heart of Israel was hardened; for it in no way understood the mystery of Christ; for this reason they also have had a lack of spiritual bread and a scarcity of water, since they do not have the nourishing Word who came down from heaven and gives life to the world, the one who waters souls with the grace of the Spirit, the living spring, the Son from God the Father, the exhortation through the law and the prophets. For as the prophet Isaiah says, "He commanded the clouds not to rain upon it. I struck you with blight and with mildew; your many gardens, your vineyards and your fig-trees and your olive-groves the caterpillar devoured, and even so you did not return to me, says the Lord. I sent death among you

in the way of Egypt, and I killed your young men with the sword, along with the captivity of your horses, and I brought up your camps in fire in my wrath, and even so you did not return to me, says the Lord.

For those who are callous about the things that happen from wrath, and are very much supine, and thus fall back further into indifference, so that they do not deign even to consider the need to repent, no manner of being struck would be sufficient, but rather more, and worse than one another, and having an increase towards grieving them yet more greatly. Therefore, since for those of Israel being disciplined by a lack of bread and drink was perhaps in some way a small thing for correction, there was brought upon them to suffer also things yet more burdensome than this, the weakness of their bodies, which happens as in fever and mildew. We will find this said again through the voice of Jeremiah. For he said that "Thus says the Lord: "Behold I am bringing weakness upon this people, and "fathers and sons together will be weak in it, neighbor and "his kinsman will perish. And since they were overcome by shameful gains, and were looking very much indeed towards avarice, for this reason multiplying their gardens and vineyards, fig-groves and olive-groves, God touched these things also, through which it was likely that, being not moderately grieved, they would return to a sound mind, and choose what is profitable instead of what is worse, heaping up for them so that, being struck from all sides, they might be saved. And when this too was a small thing, the greater was also brought upon them.

For when, he says, dishonoring my hand, and all but defining as weakness the power of God who is all-mighty, you have made your way toward the Egyptians, having chosen "the flesh of horses" over the providence from me, and "an Egyptian, a man" having preferred it, then indeed, then, he says, your most warlike race was consumed by the sword of the Babylonians. and all your cavalry was taken captive, as God weakened even those who knew how to succeed, and who were not unpracticed in conquering in battles. You will also understand in another way, I have sent death among you in the way of Egypt. When Josiah was reigning over Judah, Pharaoh Necho, the ruler of the Egyptians, campaigned against Babylon. And as it was necessary for him to pass through the land of the Jews, Josiah, thinking that the way to Babylon was a pretext, and that the Egyptian was armed against him, irrationally led his forces out against him. There Israel fell. Therefore, he says, I sent death among you in the way of Egypt, that is, as in the passing by of the

Egyptians, then I also brought up your camps in fire, instead of, I tore up from the foundations your walled and well-towered cities. And he said this also in the beginning, "And Ephraim went to the Assyrians, and Judah multiplied walled cities; and I will send fire upon his cities, and it will devour their foundations.

Therefore, he says, I shook down your most fortified camps from their very foundations, and not even so did you return to me, says the Lord. I overthrew you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you became like a firebrand plucked from the fire, and not even so did you return to me, says the Lord. Seeing no correction in you, he says, I have added to the tortures things still more harsh than these, and have made my indignation against you more fervent. For I overthrew you as Sodom and Gomorrah, and you did not return. And he seems to indicate to us in these things the final destruction, the one that happened in the times of Jeremiah by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, who took all Judea, and burned Jerusalem itself, and its neighboring cities and villages, and tearing down the divine temple itself, having as spear-won captives those who were left from the war, he returned home again, glorious and victorious, together with those who had been captured, who with difficulty returned to Judea, after the number of seventy years had been fulfilled for them. For Cyrus, as I said, having taken Babylon, released from captivity those who remained and were saved from Israel. For this reason, he says, you became like a firebrand plucked from the fire, like a half-burnt piece of wood, and still saved in a few remains.

Therefore, when God disciplines, to be supine is bitter, and it will be the cause of even more grievous evils for those who shake off their perception, from the necessity of ceaselessly going on to choose to do and to think what is not lawful. For in the same way that those who cut short the diseases of bodies, and who have practiced the experience of being able to heal, purify the more insensitive parts of wounds with hot and pungent medicines, and by thinning the thickness of the impurity within them, persuade them to yield to the remedies of their art, so also God, who knows all things, burdens with even harsher plagues those who are unfeeling about small things, the assault of which, if anyone is wise and quick-witted, he would reasonably beg off before experiencing it. Therefore, thus will I do to you, Israel. For since, he says, having done this, and having added that, and having brought upon you, so to speak, every kind of torture and suffering, I have both seen and

learned from experience itself that you are unfeeling, for this very reason I will also do thus to you. But how thus? For I was not content with the first things; but I also brought upon you the overthrow like that of Sodom. For, as I said, this sort of plague was brought upon them last through the divine wrath. But because I will do thus to you, prepare to call upon your God, Israel.

But if you should wish, he says, to learn the reason why I will do thus to you, you will surely find out, as he, so to speak, cries out and says to you who are being struck, "Prepare to call upon your God, Israel. He says "prepare" instead of "Be zealous, be unwearying and eager to call upon the not alien and falsely named, but your God, O Israel, that is, whom you have known through experience itself, that he is God by nature and in truth, and not invented by the skill of some, just as, for instance, things made from wood or stone. For behold, I am he who makes the thunder firm and creates the spirit and declares to men his Christ, who makes the morning and the mist, and walks upon the high places of the earth, the Lord God Almighty is his name. By contrast with the preeminent one, what is held in lower esteem is easily exposed. So that, then, the inactivity of idols might be revealed at least to those who thought out of excessive foolishness that they were gods and fitting to be worshipped, the God of all usefully makes himself manifest to us, introducing a maker and creator of all things, and having authority over our affairs, and, as it were, a pilot of human affairs, being beyond all height and every preeminence, and a kind of steward of the whole creation.

For the nature of God is to be beyond all things, and not by local heights but by the eminences of glory, and by incomparable power, surpassing the measure of every created thing. Call upon your God, therefore, he says, O Israel, recognizing his authority, the all-powerful nature of his preeminence. For it is I, and no other, who makes the thunder firm, that is, also covering the sky with cloudiness, and sending down rain, and creating the spirit, that is again, the maker of winds. and declaring to men his Christ. similar to as if he were to say "By me kings reign, and rulers by me rule the earth. for by 'christ' in this context, he does not mean Emmanuel, but rather he means the one anointed as king; and 'spirit' similarly, not the divine and holy one; even if some of those who have practiced perverting what is right should rage; but this one, which is in the air and in the world, about which the Savior himself also says "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its

sound; but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going; so is everyone who has been born of the Spirit. I therefore, he says, who gathers the clouds and makes the thunder firm, and "who brings forth the winds from their storehouses," who makes manifest whomever I wish to be exalted on the thrones of the kingdom.

Therefore, King of kings and Lord of lords, the God by nature, he himself is the one who makes the morning, that is, day or light, he himself is the one who makes the mist, that is, darkness or night; he himself is the one who walks upon the high places of the earth, being better than and superior to everything exalted and high, bearing a name that is fitting and very much like his own glory, "Lord Almighty. See, then, how much gentleness and love for humanity the God of all shows towards us. For having suspended the threat, and having foretold some things as though they had already happened, and others as though they would be, he calls to full knowledge, and initiates the one who has turned aside, and brings back to understanding the one who has slipped from ignorance; and to those who do not know the Master by nature and in truth, from the fact that he is able to accomplish all things and to rule over all things, he makes himself manifest. and this was of one chastening "with hardship and scourge," and almost even unwillingly instructing them towards conversion, and usefully bringing on the means by which it was likely they could learn to think better things. Hear this word of the Lord, which I take up over you as a lament. The house of Israel has fallen, it shall no longer rise again. The virgin of Israel has stumbled upon her land, there is no one to raise her up.

The blessed prophets, learning beforehand the evils that would befall certain people, and then being filled with dread from this and grieving exceedingly as for brothers, at times make their rebukes more intense, almost biting out of love, and rousing to sobriety by foretelling the things that are just about to happen. The Prophet accomplishes something of this sort now as well, speaking as from his own person, yet not things from his own mind, but as from divine oracles. For this reason he says, Hear this word of the Lord which I I take up a lamentation for you. For the God of all has spoken in me, he says, and a lamentation has been composed by me for you who depart from him. And what then is the mournful song? What is the lament? And for what reason would my tear fall? Terrible and unadmonished is the calamity. The house of Israel has fallen. For it stood firm while God was honored

and loved, but now it has fallen down, provoked by the follies of those who have gone astray. Then who will raise up the one who falls by the divine decrees? The virgin has stumbled, instead of has committed fornication. And who is this? Surely again Israel, that is, the Synagogue of the Jews, to which it was said by God, "Did you not call me as a house and father and the guide of your virginity?

Therefore she who had God as the guide of her virginity has stumbled upon her own land, that is, she has committed fornication and has her sin without excuse. For she once committed fornication in Egypt; but she was in a land not her own, and was subject to the laws of the rulers, and perhaps was even unwillingly forced into their customs, being driven out of necessity, as it were, from her ancestral piety; but now she is wanton with no one pushing her down; for she is on her own land, where the law is the tutor, bringing her to the knowledge of the God who is by nature and truly is, and the path to all that is best is unrestrained and free and entirely without rebuke. What way of defense, then, could be provided for her? For she has committed fornication, not having been forced; from where? But willingly, then. For this reason she is broken; there is no one to raise her up. Let it therefore be said very well, and by us ourselves, to the all-powerful God, "You are terrible, and who will stand against you from your wrath? And in another way the multitude of the Jews has fallen, being forced toward destruction through their drunken violence against Christ, and it lies now with no one to defend it, but waiting again for the grace of the one who has pity, I mean Christ. For she too will be called to knowledge through faith in the last times of the age.

For thus says the Lord: The city from which a thousand went forth, a hundred shall be left; and from which a hundred went forth, ten shall be left to the house of Israel. In these words he makes very clear in what manner it will fall. For the cities, he says, will be left destitute of men, as war consumes those in them, and misery transports them to this state, so that scarcely a tenth part will remain to them. For since they, being provoked, offered their tithes on the third day to the unclean demons, they themselves will scarcely be left as a tenth part, with God, as it were, weighing the transgression, and bringing upon their impieties a balanced justice. It is a fearful thing, then, to be disciplined in wrath; for this reason the prophet also besought God, saying, "Discipline us, O Lord, but in judgment, and not in wrath, lest you make us few. For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel: Seek me and you

shall live; and do not seek Bethel, and do not enter into Gilgal, and do not go up to the well of the oath, because Gilgal shall surely be taken captive, and Bethel shall be as if it did not exist. seek the Lord and live, lest the house of Joseph blaze up like fire and devour it, and there be no one to quench it for the house of Israel.

He does not again allow those who have sinned to slide into despair, although they are entangled in terrible and unbearable transgressions; but he puts forward the things from God, drawing them like a net to repentance; and he has now of necessity brought him in, promising to forgive them their charges, and to release them from punishment and the fears related to it. For the Creator is good by nature, "Long-suffering and of great mercy, and repenting of evils," as it is written, and as he himself says through the voice of Ezekiel, "He does not desire the death of the one who dies, as that he should turn from his wicked way and live. If, therefore, you consider it of great importance to live, and the matter seems to you worthy of acceptance, cease from the deceit, and from such Leaping away from long ignorance, seek me, He says, that is, serve me who am God by nature, the life-giver, the one mighty to save, and the one who places those who revere him outside of all evil. But it is necessary, he says, to wash yourselves beforehand, thrusting out from your own soul the filth of apostasy, and to melt away very well the stain from having been deceived, and thus finally to cleave to the all-good God. And what indeed they who had chosen to repent ought to do, he clarified, saying: Do not seek Bethel and do not enter into Gilgal, and do not go up to the well of the oath.

And by the well of the oath he means Gerar; this is a city of the Philistines, that is, of the Palestinians. For since both the divine Abraham and Abimelech swore to each other, and made treaties of peace at the well, the city was afterward renamed to the well of the oath. Therefore, Gilgal and Bethel and indeed Gerar were cities very much turned toward impiety, and setting before the deceived a multifaceted error. He commanded them to depart from these places of necessity, interweaving a threat with his word, so that from all sides he might drive them toward what is profitable. For Bethel and the rest, he says, will be gone. And one will go as a captive to its enemies, and another will be so burned down, as to seem in a way to have never existed. Therefore, let God be sought, that you may live, he says, before the house of Joseph blazes up and it consumes him, and there will be no one to

quench it. So by "blazes up" he means "to be set on fire," and by "house of Joseph" he names Ephraim, that is, those in Samaria; for from Joseph came both Ephraim and Manasseh. Therefore, just as when he calls them Israel, we understand that those from him are called by their father's name, so also if he happens to say Joseph, you will understand it in the same way.

Repentance, therefore, is a good thing, scaring away punishments, and checking things that come from wrath, placing those who practice it outside of the master's movements, and freeing us from every misfortune. The Lord who makes judgment in the height, and has set righteousness on the earth; who makes and remakes all things, and turns shadow into morning, and darkens day into night, who calls for the water of the sea and pours it out upon the face of the earth, the Lord God the Almighty is his name. Who brings destruction upon strength and leads misery against a fortress. The discourse is initiatory, and especially fitting for those who are called to the knowledge of God, and are eager to go to the light of truth. For it is the Prophet's purpose to teach the erring, first, that power over all things is attached to God, and the universe is steered by his commands, and by a law of righteousness the all-blessed multitude of angels has been subjected; and that in every way and altogether it is consequent and necessary for those who are on the earth to be yoked to the laws of his righteousness. For if the better part among these both serves God, and the holy multitude of spirits on high is subject with fear, how or from where could that which is so inferior by nature and glory have impunity, having inclined to willfulness, that is, man, who is from the earth and to the earth?

Therefore, he says, the Lord of all is he who makes judgment in the height. Which is similar to saying: He who implants the way of righteousness that is fitting for them in the spirits on high and above; for by judgment he means righteousness. He himself has also set righteousness on the earth, that is, he has also established laws for those on earth, according to which it would be fitting for them to live, if being and living well, and partaking of his gentleness and love for mankind, are held in account by them. And that He is almighty and all-powerful as God, and that absolutely nothing is impossible for Him, and that the very nature of the elements yields, and existing things are changed according to His will, he demonstrates, taking as an example the turning of shadow into morning, and again the darkening of day into night; and in addition to these, that also from salt water,

by an ineffable power calling it to the height and above, he sends it down sweet to those on the earth, by the commands of the one who rules moving into that which is contrary to nature. He says that the shadow turns aside into the morning, that is, the night, or rather the darkness, changes into day. For as the blessed Moses writes, "There was darkness" in the beginning "over the abyss," that is, the shadow;

but "God said," he says, "and there was light," thus into the morning, that is, into day, we say the shadow, that is, the darkness, was changed. But when day had come, night took over again; this is to darken the day into night. The Prophet therefore helps those who have gone astray, pointing out not lifeless matter, but the God who is by nature and truly is, nor indeed equal to the golden heifers, that is, according to some, gods devised by human art, but also king and lawgiver of the spirits above, and of those on earth likewise, and master of the elements, and bending the nature of existing things to His will. For in this way, he says, and very rightly, the name fitting for Him is the Lord God the Almighty. And since these things are so by nature and in truth, He brings destruction upon strength, and brings hardship upon a fortress; He seizes, he says, the arrogant, and upon those who shake off His yoke He apportions destruction. But even if someone should happen to think himself strong and great out of insolence, upon him too He brings hardship. This was to suggest skillfully that if they should choose to be idle, and to persist still in the charges of arrogance, and to think great things of themselves, they will fall into extreme hardship, being righteously shattered at last by the hand of the one who rules all things.

"For the Lord," he says, "opposes the proud," according to what is written, and He considers the boastful and disobedient and intractable man an enemy; yet He looks "upon the humble and the quiet and the one who trembles at His words. And the thing is good, and truly worthy of emulation by those who have chosen to live best. They hated him who reproves in the gates, and they abhorred a holy word. The discourse again holds to its proper sequence. For since the divine Prophet named God almighty and all-powerful, and added that "He brings destruction upon strength, and brings hardship upon a fortress," for this reason now also, necessarily, lest anyone think He brings His wrath excessively upon those who err in small things, he enumerates the charges, and brings forward the reasons for which He apportions destruction and hardship to some. For they have hated, he says, those who would correct

them, they have made nothing of those who reprove and are accustomed to set them right toward what is pleasing to God, they have considered every holy word abominable, that is, the word that calls and urges toward holiness and sanctification. But you will understand "in the gates" as clearly and openly and with boldness. And he seems now to be mindful of their madness and aversion toward the prophets and the law. For the prophets would reprove, approaching without concealment.

And the law was a holy word, because it is a guide of God and of righteousness, and a tutor unto piety, and indicative of the God who is by nature and in truth. For this reason also the blessed Paul said the commandment through Moses is "holy and just and good. Therefore, it is the most shameful of sicknesses, and a kind of root and genesis of the passions in the soul, to shake off counsels, and to hate reproofs, and to seem not even to know the divine law. For he who has arrived at this point of wickedness will surely be like a ship destitute of rudders and not having a pilot, which is carried about by every wind, and rushes simply without consideration toward what pushes it, almost as if drunk, and appearing at last as a plaything of the waves. But our wise David blesses that just man, saying, "The law of his God is in his heart, and his steps shall not be tripped up; for the law sets one right toward what is pleasing to God. Therefore, because you struck the heads of the poor, and you received choice gifts from them, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them, and vineyards you have planted desirable ones and you will not drink their wine.

It is true, that in every way and altogether, to abstain from good things has its origin in worthlessness, and turning away from what is useful and by nature beneficial makes us stumble, as by necessity, into things that are not so. For just as when light has been driven away, darkness immediately follows in its tracks and on its heels, so the departure of virtue has the incursion of worthlessness following it. Therefore, since they have hated "the one who reproves in the gates, and abhorred also a holy word," they have slid down into multifaceted sin, and they have turned to greed, and practicing the oppression that is most hated by God, they struck "the humble with their fists," and punched the heads of the poor, those who were surely powerful and surpassed others in glory and in wealth; and they plundered in the name of a gift, receiving from the unwilling the more valuable of their possessions. However, he usefully shows that for those accustomed to do such things,

greed is unprofitable, and being overcome by shameful gains ends in sorrow, and its end brings punishment. For if they will neither enjoy the houses built with such zeal and ambition, and they labor in vain on the things in their fields, and the enjoyment of the beloved things for which their greed arose and the passion for money entered in is gone to an unexpected outcome, how will the way of having to be greedy not appear to some to be vain and profitless?

It is wise, therefore, to consider that, as the writer of Proverbs says, "Better is a little getting "with righteousness than many fruits with unrighteousness. And Paul also calls greed idolatry, and very fittingly; for the matter is then godlessness, and those who trample on the law of love for the brethren, which is also the fulfillment of the law, are placed on an equal footing with those who have not known God by nature. And he who does not know the law denies the Law-giver. And Christ himself also made us more prudent and stronger than the unjust love of money, saying, "For what "will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, "but loses his own soul? Or what will a man give "in exchange for his soul? "For treasures will not "profit the lawless, according to what is written; but righteousness "will deliver from death. For I have known your many impieties, and your sins are strong, trampling down the just, taking bribes, and turning aside the poor in the gates. Therefore the prudent will keep silent in that time, for it is an evil time. That God does not punish those who have offended for small things, nor indeed for common transgressions, but rather, having been patient with moderate faults, he then brings his wrath upon their unbridled inclinations toward worthlessness, he tries to teach.

For he says that those in Samaria will fall away from their houses, and indeed also from their vineyards, and, I think, from everything that knows how to gladden and contributes to prosperity. Therefore, since the sins committed by them have become terrible and great and no longer bearable; for they oppressed the just, or any man perhaps, that is, looking to unholliness, they deigned to care little for right and just judgment. And this is, in a way, to oppress and unguardedly to be greedy for what seems right to the law. For they also received bribes, that is, repayments and rewards for unjust judgments; and in addition to this, they turned aside the poor in the gates. And what is this? For either he says that, that they made to be shunned those who persuade others to think moderately, and who advise about this with

bold- ness; or that they dared to pervert the judgments of the poor, not secretly; from where? not even as if concealing the impiety, but as it were in the gates, that is, openly and in the sight of many, no longer blushing at all, nor indeed having any reverence for the divine law.

And to this point they have now brought down the time to worthlessness and wickedness, so that even to the wise, and to those able to understand, it seemed better of the economy of things, to neither rebuke any longer, nor indeed to correct those who have chosen to be impious, on account of the fact that those being rebuked are henceforth like those who have no ears, and leap like dogs upon those willing to help them, and consider as enemies those who propose the best things. For they would censure the holy prophets, and sometimes prepared to make them suffer things when they came into their midst, and the words conveyed to them from above. And indeed, Zedekiah at one time bound the prophet Jeremiah when he announced the things from God, and at another time cast him into a pit, and wished to suffocate him in the mire within it. Therefore it is necessary to repent while the stumbles are still small, and not to provoke God, as it were, even unwillingly, by the introduction of greater ones. For if sins become strong and very many, then indeed He will surely repay, and will bring on the flames of indignation. And we say that sins are strong which are terrible and unbearable; because "not every sin is unto death," according to the most wise voice of John; although none has the strength to overcome the loving-kindness of God, to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Book 3

Seek good and not evil, that you may live, and so it will be the Lord God the Almighty with you; in the manner that you said, We have hated evil and loved good, and establish judgment in the gates, so that the Lord God the Almighty may have mercy on the remnant of Joseph. I have already said many times that there was not one captivity, but different ones at different times, and in parts. For Pul the Assyrian first came to Samaria, and having laid waste the two tribes beyond the Jordan and the cities there, departed; and after him, Shalmaneser did not take all of Samaria, but took some part of it back to his own land with the captives. And God did this providentially, disciplining the wayward Israel "with toil and scourge," and moving them to the necessity of thinking and doing better and more seemly things. It happened, therefore, that those who were able to escape from the wars we

have just mentioned, now somehow fighting against their own knowledge, repented of the things in which they had been deceived, and knew and confessed that many and intolerable things from the divine wrath had consequently been brought upon them for their sins, and then they, as it were, promised God the correction of their own habits, saying, We have hated evil and loved good.

Therefore, in the manner you have spoken, he says, seek good and not evil, so that you may gain well-being by living and being saved, and the Lord God, who has authority over all, may be with you. And establish judgment in the gates, that is, become upright judges; not recording an unjust vote against the weaker; not misrepresenting the power of the just; nor indeed striking the heads of the poor; nor turning aside the way of the humble, so that God may henceforth have mercy on those left from Joseph from the captivities that have already occurred. And again it signifies Ephraim, that is, the ten tribes. For as I have already said before, since Ephraim came from Joseph, for this reason he is also signified by his father's name. Therefore, it is necessary to think rightly, and to correct our own minds, so that we must think the things pleasing to God, and achieve virtue, and cling to the ways of justice, and be wise guardians of uprightness; for thus we will have the God of all with us and defending us. Therefore thus says the Lord God the Almighty: In all the broad places there will be wailing, and in all the streets it will be said, Woe, woe! the farmer will be called to mourning and wailing, and to those who know lamentation; and in all the ways there will be wailing, because I will pass through the midst of you, said the Lord.

Having tasted, he says, the evils of war, and having been not moderately grieved by what had already happened, you promised to hate what is evil and to love what is good; but having been freed from those terrors for only a short and difficult time, you inclined toward indolence, and you appeared no less attached to your former evils. Therefore, for this reason, the cities will be full of lamentation and wailing, and dirges and tears everywhere, and there will be a search for those who know how to mourn. And since the city dwellers are not sufficient for this, the farmer will also be taken, so that he might sing a rustic song for you, and in local rhythms mourn the misfortunes of the fallen. For I will pass through the midst of you, he says, now somehow observing your sins, and no longer standing far off from those who have committed intolerable impieties. For as long as God does not yet discipline,

he seems somehow not even to be present; but when he brings on things from his wrath, he is, so to speak, present and inflicts punishments. Thus also angels visited Sodom to burn the impious, as though they had been absent when not punishing. Therefore, "I will pass through the midst of you" signifies the visitation, and that the time for being punished is at hand. Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! Why would you have this day of the Lord? It is darkness, and not light.

As if a man should flee from a lion, and a bear should meet him; or go into his house and lean his hand against the wall, and a serpent bite him. Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light? Even deep darkness with no brightness in it? When the holy prophets foretold to them the things that would be, and that they would fall into bitter and incurable misfortunes, they turned recklessly to the works of error, laughing and being arrogant, at one time saying that the prophecies would run on into postponements and long periods of time; at another time, being completely desperate, they dared to say, according to the voice of Jeremiah, "Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come. For they thought that the prophets were speaking falsely and filling them with empty terrors; or, if indeed some war should come against them, they would be stronger than their hand, setting up against them a hard and irresistible defense and zeal. For it is true that, "When a wicked man comes into a depth of evils, he becomes contemptuous," according to what is written. But those of such a disposition, like those with desperate wounds, have all but cried out that they need fire and cutting, and are in desire of such things. For in a way they thirst for the need to be punished, even if they no longer use such a voice.

Woe, therefore, he says, to those who desire and await nothing other than the day of punishment, which he also calls the Lord's; for it is brought on by God. Why then, he says, is this day for you, being darkness and not light, because it is filled with so very much misfortune? For it would not be possible, he says, for any to escape, nor could anyone go outside of the evil; but he who flees this will be seized by that, and the second will meet those who have escaped the first. For this is to escape from the mouth of a lion, but to fall into a bear. But even if someone should think, he says, that he might happen to be in safety and enter into his house, there he will fall into death, unexpectedly subjected to the bites of a serpent. For when God drives someone into destruction and troubles, who is the one who will save? Who is the one who

will help and deliver from judgment? Or what way will there be, by which if one passed through, he might be outside of the evils? None at all. "For who will turn back the high hand? And, "If he shuts a man in, who can open it? according to what is written. I have hated, I have rejected your feasts, and I will not smell the offerings in your solemn assemblies.

For if you bring me your whole burnt offerings and sacrifices, I will not accept them, and I will not look upon your salvation offerings of manifestation. The word would be especially fitting for those from Judah and Benjamin. For the tribes in Samaria to the worship of idols being wholly attached, they were found to be very slothful and greatly negligent of the laws given through Moses; but those in Jerusalem sacrificed on the high places to Baal and offered libations to the host of heaven, yet in addition to this they pretended to take care to show reverence for the law, and to be eager to fulfill both sacrifices and feasts. But that the Creator of all things has hated these things, he also made clear through the voice of Isaiah, saying, "Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom; attend to the law of God, you people of Gomorrah. What is the multitude of your sacrifices to me, says the Lord? I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of lambs and the blood of bulls and goats I do not desire, not even should you come to appear before me. For who has sought these things from your hands? You shall not continue to tread my court. If you bring fine flour, it is in vain; incense is an abomination to me. Your new moons and your Sabbaths and the great day I do not tolerate; fasting and idleness and your feasts my soul hates;

you have become to me a surfeit. We say that the preceding words depend on this thought. For he says, I have hated and cast off your feasts, and I would not praise your sacrifices, nor would I ever reckon as a fragrant aroma the whole burnt offerings and the offerings for salvation. These are kinds of sacrifices, distinguished according to seasons, and as in their own ways. For the whole burnt offering is one thing, and the sacrifice another, and the appearance for salvation, that is, to come into the sight of God, and to offer sacrifices for salvation. But what we just said would fittingly apply to the Jews who practice the greatest impiety; but God accepts, and very gladly, and receives the sacrifices of those in faith, the spiritual whole burnt offering, the appearances at the feasts. For we offer a sweet smell not of ourselves, but of the one in us through the Spirit, I mean, Christ. And the unacceptability for sacrifice would very fittingly apply also to the unholy heretics and those of

whom it is not possible to say, at least according to the genuine in faith, "That we are the aroma of Christ to God. for their smell is in Beelzebul, if it is true that "No one says, Jesus is anathema," except in Beelzebul. But the wretched ones, blaspheming unguardedly and speaking falsely against the glory of the Only-begotten, bear a mind not filled with a spiritual sweet smell, but rather drunk with filth.

Take away from me the sound of your songs, and the psalm of your instruments I will not hear. And judgment shall roll down as water, and righteousness as an impassable torrent. He sends away along with the feasts and the useless sacrifices the praises with instruments, God not assigning the duty of giving glory to soulless materials, but rather transferring the participation of such splendid renown to those who send forth a voice from a pure mind; for such a doxology is beautiful and pleasing to the Lord of all. And very well indeed he calls the doxologies of the Jews, devised I know not from where, namely the instrumental ones, as I just said, a 'sound of songs,' meaning a sort of superfluous and vain echo, producing an indistinct and weak melody. And that these things have also become inventions of Jewish thoughtlessness, he has shown by saying, 'the psalm of your instruments;' for he all but says, 'Not mine;' for the practice is outside the law, and about these things Moses has said nothing. Therefore, he says, I will not be persuaded, nor will he ward off the accusations with the sweet sounds of instruments; but my judgment will roll down like water, and the righteousness from me, that is, the just sentence hereafter against you, will be like an impassable torrent, sweeping away, of course, what falls in its path, and sparing nothing. For torrents burst down violently from the mountains.

Thus also the divine decree, if it should indeed be against some, will be an irresistible water and an unopposable torrent, and nothing else. Everywhere, therefore, to repent appears useful and necessary, and by returning to what is better to ward off wrath, not sending up a completely useless and indistinct voice to God, but from a good mind a wise truly and rhythmically resounding melody. "For sacrifice, he says, a sacrifice "of praise, and pay your vows to the Most High; and call "upon me in the day of your affliction, and I will deliver you, and "you will glorify me. Did you offer slain victims and sacrifices to me for forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? says the Lord. And you took up the tent of Moloch, and the star of your god Raiphan, the images of them which you made for yourselves; and I will carry you away bey-

ond Damascus, says the Lord, God Almighty is his name. Through the things just interpreted, it was God who was saying to those of the blood of Israel, "I have hated, I have rejected your feasts, "and I will not smell the offerings in your solemn assemblies. "For even if you bring me your whole burnt offerings and sacrifices, "I will not accept them, and upon your splendid peace-offerings "I will not look.

For in order that He might be seen to have saved Israel himself out of his own gentleness, and in memory of the fathers granting mercy to their children, and not making the matter a requital for sacrifices and, as it were, a payment in return, He says of necessity, that they had spent no few years in the wilderness. And their food was manna, and they walked with a cloud overshadowing them by day, and a pillar of fire by night. And the ark went before them as a type of God, going ahead and spying out a place and a rest for them; and they were in want of none of the necessities, with unexpected waters breaking forth for them, and enemies falling. And while all these things were happening, they received the laws concerning sacrifices, and they heard everywhere and in each one, perhaps, of the ordinances, "But when the Lord your God brings you into "the land which he swore to your fathers to give you," you will do this and that, and you will also offer sacrifices. Therefore in the forty-year period during which they were in the wilderness, they offered sacrifices willingly, but no one demanded them out of necessity. But the matter was for them postponed, until they should enter the land promised to their fathers. For this reason he says, Did you offer slain victims and sacrifices to me in the wilderness for forty years, O house of Israel? says the Lord.

But they were saved then even without sacrifices, and as he says through another prophet again, "You did not acquire for me incense with money, nor for me the sheep of your "whole burnt offering, nor did I make you weary with frankincense. But they, on the other hand, having their apostasy without excuse, were fickle at that time, and dishonoring the God who is by nature and in truth, took up the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Raiphan. And what this is, it is necessary to examine. Therefore, the divine Moses had gone up to the mountain to receive the law; but those of the blood of Israel rose up against Aaron, saying, "Make for us gods "who will go before us; for this Moses, the "man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know "what has become of him. They therefore made a calf in the

wilderness. And the visible, and as it were, the idol of all, was the calf; but many other things were also done by each one. For having turned once to their ancient error, and having leaped away from piety towards God, each one made a worship that seemed good to him, and fashioned it for himself, according to the custom from of old and still in Egypt; and they were more devoted to the worship of the stars. And from where might this also become manifest? someone might say. It is no great trouble for those willing to prove it;

for we shall know from the sacred writings themselves. For the divine Moses was displeased, and cried out against Aaron, then he fell down before God, saying, "I pray, O Lord; this people has sinned a great sin, "for they have made for themselves gods of gold," although what had been fashioned was a calf. But he was not ignorant that others also had made carved images. And indeed the blessed Stephen, being once accused before the rulers of the Jews of blasphemies against God and Moses, and warding off the slanders with the appropriate defenses, then showing that they had acted with savage impiety, and had behaved insolently towards the they imitate for Christ the depravity and hardness of heart of their own fathers, he clearly recalls the calf-making in the wilderness, and says concerning the all-wise Moses, "This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us. Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt, saying to Aaron, 'Make for us gods who will go before us; for as for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' And they made a calf in the wilderness in those days and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands.

But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets: 'Did you bring to me slain beasts and sacrifices for forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? says the Lord. And you took up the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Raiphan, the figures that you made to worship; and I will remove you beyond Babylon.'" See, then, that the divine Stephen, a man full of the Holy Spirit, testified that they had indeed made a calf, and had also turned to worship the host of heaven; and he also recalls the voice of the Prophet. From this it is possible to understand that, in addition to the calf, they also took up the tent

of Moloch. For having made a tent, they set up an idol, and have called it Moloch or Molchom; this is an idol of the Moabites, having a translucent and exceptional stone on its highest brow, in the form of the morning star. And Moloch is interpreted as their king; for Aquila and Theodotion have translated it thus; but the artifact was an image of the morning star. "You took up, therefore," he says, "the tent of Moloch," that is, of your king. And who was this king? "The star of your god Raiphan. And Raiphan is interpreted as darkness or blindness.

For they worshiped the morning star as rising before the gleam of the sun, and bringing the beginning of day to those on the earth; but for those who worshiped, it became Raiphan, that is, darkness or blindness. And not at all as if the star had effected blindness in them, but because this worship became for them a cause of darkness. "Since, therefore," he says, "you emulated the madness of the Moabites and of neighboring Damascus, for this reason you shall also depart beyond Damascus and even the places lying farther away, I mean, of the Babylonians. For the Septuagint version says, "beyond Damascus," but the divine Stephen said, "Beyond Babylon. What then shall we say to this? The blessed Stephen spoke according to the Hebrew version. For it seems that to them, "beyond Damascus" was the name for the land of the Babylonians. For perhaps the kingdom of the Damascenes, that is, of the Syrians, extended as far as the borders of the cities toward the east and the sun's rays, and the country and land of the Babylonians was immediately adjacent. Woe to those who despise Zion and to those who trust in the mountain of Samaria. Again the word pronounces woe not only on those from Ephraim, that is, the tribes in Samaria, but also on those from Judah and Benjamin. And having first shown that those who came before them also always had a rotten and shaken mind; for they made a calf and took up the tent of Moloch;

he then convicts them of acting like their fathers, and, following in the footsteps of their ancestors' impiety, they provoke against themselves the Master of all. He says that those from Judah and Benjamin despise Zion. For having remained in Jerusalem, and having the divine temple, they have made of no account their reverence and love for God, but as the holy scripture says, "They burned incense in the high places under oak and poplar and a shady tree. And they also worshiped the host of heaven. And so, not moderately grieved, the God of all said to Jeremiah, "And you, do not pray for of

this people, and not worthy for them to be pitied, "and do not approach me concerning them in supplication and "prayer, for I will not listen to you. Then he adds the reason for turning away, saying, "Or do you not see what these are "doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jeru- "salem? Their sons gather wood, and their fathers kin- "dle a fire, and their women knead dough to "make cakes for the host of heaven; and they have poured out "libations to other gods that they might provoke me to anger. Therefore, those in Jerusalem have despised Zion. Therefore, he has fittingly brought upon them the "woe. And such a voice would also befit those who trust in the mountain of Samaria, that is, those who have dwelt in Samaria, and trust in themselves.

For they thought that even without God they would overcome their enemies, and would be in a good state of prosperity, and that whatever was most pleasant to them would have an unshaken foundation. Therefore it is truly a bitter and dreadful thing to slip into such ill counsel, as to dare to hold love for God as nothing, but to be attached to what is absurd and to do what is not right, and to grieve him, and to think that, without his giving, any good thing will be upon us; "For every good "gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down "from the Father of lights; so then it is good to be attached to him, and to make him our hope and helper. And they despise Zion, that is, the Church, who are leaders of impious doctrines, and who have taken courage in their own eloquence, and are accustomed to be arrogant over the discoveries of their impious reasonings and worldly wisdom. And to them, even before the others, the "woe" would befit. They have harvested the firstfruits of the nations, and they themselves entered. O house of Is- rael, pass over, all of you, and see, and go from there to Hamath Rabbah, and go down to Gath of the Philistines, the best of all these kingdoms, see if their borders are greater than your borders.

He shows them to be ungrateful, and to have chosen to be unmindful of his great gift, although it was necessary always to confess the greatest possible grace, and to offer up songs of thanksgiving, because not only did he marvelously deliver them when they were burdened by a hard and unbearable slavery, but indeed he also brought them into the land which he swore to their fathers. And he brought them in, after cutting off many nations that were hard to conquer and not unpracticed in winning in battles. For thus also the blessed David said somewhere to God concerning those of the blood of Israel, "You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations "and

planted it. Therefore they are reproached, and very rightly so, as being utterly ungrateful and grieving the Benefactor with their excursions into every kind of transgression. For they have harvested the firstfruits, he says, of nations, and made their country their own inheritance, with God shaking down those who resisted, and with ineffable power paralyzing the strength of those who rose up against them. But that they have inherited a land that is fertile and good for grazing and rich with every good thing, and better and wider than other lands, he commands them to learn, by investigating the principalities, that is, the kingdoms, of their neighbors or even of those beyond. For go, he says, to Hamath Rabbah and to Gath of the Philistines; for these are the kingdoms that have a more conspicuous glory than the others;

and there inquire, he says, if their borders are greater than your borders. Now there were many individual kingdoms of the nations, that of the Moabites, that of the Idumeans, that of the sons of Ammon. But there was nothing great in them. But more splendid than the others was that of the Damascenes and the Palestinians. And there were two cities under the kingdom of Damascus, situated toward the east, whose name was Hamath; of which one was wider and greater, and the other having the smaller part. And Rabbah is interpreted as "greater" or "wider. Go therefore to Hamath Rabbah, that is, to the greater and wider Hamath; for, as I said, it was homonymous with another, having the greater part. And they say that this wide Hamath is the present-day Antioch, and the lesser one also narrower, the neighboring and bordering Epiphaneia; Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, having named one Antioch, and the other Epiphaneia for his own glory. The city of Gath was at that time more splendid than the Palestine of today. In it had remained the Anakim and those called Philistines, the sons of Israel not having destroyed them at that time. For this reason he says of it, "To Gath of the foreigners; "Go then," he says, "to Hamath Rabbah and to Gath of the foreigners; and examine carefully, if you do not inhabit a broader land, better and more excellent than all the others. It is necessary to know that the Hebrew scripture has Calneh placed first.

For it says, "Go to Calneh and to Hamath and to Gath; Calneh is under the Persian kingdom, which is now called Lysippon. And since the Hebrew version also mentioned the Persian kingdom, for this reason we say that the blessed Stephen, instead of "I will remove you beyond Damascus," said, "Beyond Babylon. Therefore, the charge of ingratitude is against those of Israel,

because having inherited a land so fertile, easy to plow, and spacious, they did not rather offer thanksgivings to God, but some scorned Zion, while others, trusting in the mountain of Samaria, took no account of reverence for him. Useful, as it seems, also to those who after the faith have admired the wisdom of the Greeks, so as to consider their opinions better than ours, and to those who incline to seek adherence to those who counterfeit the truth and subvert the orthodoxy of ecclesiastical dogmas is the saying, “Go to Hamath Rabbah and to Gath of the foreigners and see if their borders are greater than your borders. For the divinely-inspired scripture is broader than the narrow talk of the Greeks, proclaiming the light of truth and introducing a knowledge of beneficial dogmas, and raising the mind of believers to everything praiseworthy. Again, the discourse concerning truth is broader than the narrowness of the heretics. For those who fight against it are all but suffocated, swimming in cold and unclear reasonings;

but those who agree with the dogmas of piety, and contemplate the brilliant beauty of the truth, run out into a broad sea of contemplations, “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,” darting hither and thither, and gathering very well from the divinely-inspired scripture things pertaining to true knowledge. And so to the Corinthians, who chose to depart “from the holy commandment delivered to them,” and ignorantly adhered to those accustomed to teach other doctrines, the divine Paul writes, saying: “Our mouth is open to you, O Corinthians, our heart is enlarged. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. Now in return for the same; I speak as to children; you also be enlarged. Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. Woe to those who pray for an evil day, who approach and hold to false sabbaths. He was saying, “Woe to those who scorn Zion, and to those who trust in the mountain of Samaria. And since he made mention of two groups, I mean those who scorn Zion and those who trust in the mountain of Samaria, we, having necessarily investigated the meaning of the thoughts, applied the charge of scorning Zion to those of Judah and Benjamin, and that of trusting in the mountain of Samaria to those of Ephraim. So the discourse goes back, as it were, and enumerates again the charges against both, bringing upon them the “Woe. It is a custom in the divine scripture to bring the word “Woe” against the nominative case;

as I say, “Woe, those who desire the day of the Lord; and again, “Woe, those who rise early in the morning and pursue strong drink. Woe then, he

says, to those who pray for an evil day, that is, those in Jerusalem. For not to endure to repent, nor indeed to accept the fear of what was foretold would happen, is almost to desire destruction a day to fall. For instance, as if someone might say about one of the lovers of sin, "He desires to die," even though that person does not wish to suffer this, whence? but insofar as he has come to the point of wanting to do, and this unceasingly, things that are contrary to the laws, he all but loves the punishment and justice that is always in some way owed to the lovers of sin. Therefore, being unwilling to repent, they all but desire to fall into an evil day, and to be caught in the already foretold calamities, those who draw near to and touch false sabbaths. For the temple and the altars in it were still standing. And they offered to God the sacrifices according to the law, and they also observed the rests on the sabbaths, yet not at all accurately, but very carelessly and lazily indeed. And so he accused them through the voice of prophets, as not having kept the sabbaths. Woe, therefore, he says, to those who pretend to draw near to God by pretending to still honor the things of Moses, and to touch false sabbaths.

Do you see how he has slandered them as not keeping the rest proper to the sabbath correctly or carefully? And besides; for I think it is necessary to say something more essential on these points; false sabbaths, those among the Jews; since the law is a shadow, and the things through Moses are truly a type. But the type is not the truth, but rather brings in a form of the truth. Therefore the divine Paul also writes to the Hebrews, and says concerning the more ancient things, "Therefore a sabbath rest remains for the people of God. For Joshua did not give them rest, nor indeed have they entered into the rest of God; but we keep sabbath spiritually in Christ, putting an end to and departing from sins, and ceasing from every corruptible and earthly matter. For as the blessed Paul writes, "For he who has entered into His rest has himself also ceased from all his works, as God did from His own. Those who sleep on ivory beds and live luxuriously upon their couches, and eat kids from the flocks and milk-fed calves from the midst of the herd; who applaud at the sound of instruments, they reckoned it as something stationary and not as fleeting; who drink strained wine and anoint themselves with the finest ointments, and felt nothing for the affliction of Joseph. Woe again generally to those who sleep on ivory beds, accustomed to doing this and that.

He strongly blames those in Samaria who were more conspicuous in glory, and who were exalted above others by the abundance of their wealth, as being all but drunk from too much prosperity, and carried away by the breadth of their luxury to the point of not seeing any of the terrible things at all, nor indeed to think that the God of all would ever be provoked against those so disposed, and bring penalties upon the lovers of sin. He describes accurately their unrestrained and unbridled indulgence in luxuries. For their beds were of ivory, he says, their couches both costly and soft, and the choicest of the lambs, and suckling calves were their foods, and odes and songs, and all things that with instruments run together with luxuries, and revels and applause, and what is even more burdensome, that they considered such evils as stationary and not as fleeting. For in general, such things fly by, and worldly deceit does not have permanence. For it is dissolved like shadows, and "the form of this world is passing away," according to what is written; and luxury by all means ceases with the dead. But in the case of those in Samaria, the meaning of what has been said might be understood in another way. For since they were about to be captured, and not long after, he speaks of the things devised for their luxury as fleeting and not stationary, as things that would pass away almost immediately. So they applaud instruments, drinking perhaps fragrant wine, very finely strained;

and they anoint themselves with myrrh, compounding the choicest ones, and have taken no account at all of the fact that Joseph was about to be crushed. For as I just said, although they knew beforehand that a calamity was all but present, and the capture of Samaria, and the crushing that would befall the descendants of Joseph, they did not neglect their accustomed luxury. Therefore it is truly terrible for those chosen to lead countries or cities or peoples to be overcome by bodily luxury. For when it was necessary for them rather to make very good use of appropriate vigilance, to look out for what is advantageous, and to lead those under them straight toward what is fitting, and in every way to appease a saddened God, how is it not utterly senseless to slip into luxuries and to consider nothing better than profane love of the flesh? Concerning such men, perhaps, he says through the voice of the saints, "O shepherds who scatter and destroy the sheep of the pasture. For that the flock is endangered by the indolence of the shepherds would become clear from God saying again clearly, "Because the shepherds have become senseless, and have not sought the Lord; therefore the whole pasture did not under-

stand, and they were scattered. Therefore now they shall be captives from the beginning of the powerful, and the neighing of horses shall be taken away from Ephraim.

For since, he says, they have lived in luxury, having abandoned love for God, and they have trusted in the mountain of Samaria, that is, in those in Samaria, the leaders being very haughty, as rulers of an unmeasured multitude and having a fighting force beyond number, for this very reason, he says, the time of captivity will indeed come, and very swiftly, against all, and it will make the most powerful its first spoils. For enemies, when sacking a city, always run to the houses of the more notable people, to plunder the things in them. And since it was the custom for the splendid men in Samaria to love to be carried by choice horses, and these, as was likely, went through the middle of the public squares, neighing with a certain intelligence and wisdom and as if from knowledge; for the animal is always somehow ready for notions of good order and for the reception of the knowledge befitting it; and this will cease, he says. for the neighing will be taken away from the horses of Ephraim. It is as if he were saying: The elite of those in Samaria will cease from their arrogance, and they will unwillingly stop making their processions conspicuous, with their horses neighing for them, which, adorned with shining ornaments, perhaps even recognize their rider, and all but puff themselves up with pride, bearing their august and admirable charioteer.

But that it is safe for leaders to be vigilant, while to love to be indolent is harmful, you might learn even from this. For the things that come from wrath will be upon them, and indeed before the others. And they will be cast out from all good repute, and they themselves will lie with the others, having a bitter and grievous judgment, and they will have to account for the fact that not only have they destroyed themselves, but they have also added others to their own transgressions. Because the Lord has sworn by himself, because I detest all the arrogance of Jacob, and I have hated his lands. He declares the unchangeable nature of the wrath, showing that God has sworn that he has hated the arrogance of Jacob. And we certainly do not say that the divine word makes a denunciation of our forefather Jacob; for it is utterly foolish to think this, since God both loved Jacob from the womb, and made him chosen even while he was in the embryo. But by Jacob he means again those descended from Jacob, whose accursed arrogance; for it is the

custom in the divine scripture to call arrogance 'hubris'; he says he has hated it.

For is it not indeed arrogance, I mean, to push aside reverence for God, and to assign to idols the glory that is most fitting for him, and in addition to these things, not deigning to listen to what he might choose to declare through the holy prophets, but to make the threat a sort of plaything, and taking courage in a multitude of allies, to utterly disregard his forbearance and help? Then, how is this doubtful? Therefore, the Lord of all has sworn by himself, he says. And by himself, because "he had no one greater by whom to swear. And what is it that was sworn? "I detest all the arrogance of Jacob," that is, the haughtiness of Jacob, and I have hated all his lands. for there was not in them the one who fulfills the divine will; there was not one who kindled reverence for him, and was pre-eminent in the boasts of righteousness. For God would not have turned away, if there had been any, even if few in number, among them, for whom pleasing him was of account. And so he said through the voice of Jeremiah, "Run ye to and fro through the streets of "Jerusalem, and see now, and seek in the broad places "thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh "the truth; and I will be merciful to it, saith the Lord.

But since the lands of Jacob have come to be in want of every good and God-loving man, for this reason they are given over to desolation, and the cities have perished together with their inhabitants. Great, therefore, is the need for the saints; for they save cities, and deliver lands from impending disaster, by the brightness of their life cutting short the wrath that is indeed boiling against the indolent, and as it were, restraining the movements from divine anger running upon some. And I will destroy a city with all that dwell therein. And it shall be, if there be ten men left in one house, they shall die, and the rest shall be left behind, and their kinsmen shall take them, and shall make an effort to bring out their bones from the house, and he shall say to them that are over the house, Is there yet any with thee? And he shall say, No more; and he shall say, Be silent, that thou mayest not name the name of the Lord. For since He has hated their lands, and abhors all the insolence of Jacob, that is, their pride, for this reason he says that the cities among them have been utterly destroyed, men and all. But how each of these things will happen to those who have transgressed, he explains in detail. For I

will destroy, he says, whatever city I wish, and as it were, I will make it vanish along with its inhabitants.

And if it should happen that ten persons from one house escape the sword of the enemy, and enter into the innermost recesses of the house, they will die, fearing perhaps even to peek out a little from the recesses in which they are. Famine, therefore, he says, will succeed the hand of the smiter, and will kill those who are hidden. And when the enemies have departed, some of their kinsmen by blood and disposition will come, and will make an effort to bring out their bones. But whom will they compel, gathering the remains of the dead? Themselves, clearly. For it is truly burdensome and unbearable to touch bodies already decaying and putrefying, and I think there is need of a nose that is not pierced for those who dare such things; for nothing could be worse than such a terrible stench. They will therefore compel themselves, showing compassion to those who have departed and perished by famine, by deeming them worthy of both burial and care. And those who do this, he says, will then inquire of the one who knows the house, whether there might be another after them, either perhaps still alive and hiding in the recesses, or already dead and stinking. And he answers, saying, No more. And this is nothing other than a clear proof of complete desolation. But if the masters of the house should say this, they will hear in reply, he says, from the one making the inquiry, Be silent, that you may not name the name of the Lord.

And what this is, it is necessary to see. Some, therefore, think and say that when the masters of the house are about to swear, those who ask silence them, so that they may not swear by the name of the Lord. And they add that to this point the mind of those from Ephraim had slipped into the utmost godlessness, so as not even to tolerate some, if they should choose in any way to name the God of all. But I think such an argument is utterly unsound and unseemly. For that those from Ephraim had completely leaped away from the love of God, no one would doubt. But having been in plague and scourge, it is likely that they would rather fear a little and henceforth change towards wanting something of the more necessary things, not on the contrary so savagely become insolent towards piety to God. Besides; for I would add this to what has been said; for what need was there for the masters of the house when asked if anyone perhaps among them, either still living by chance, or already dead is hidden, to add also an oath, that no one is still among them? What then is the meaning of "He will say, Silence, for the sake

of not naming the name of the Lord"? We say that it was the custom for those of the blood of Israel, who have their origin from the legal commandments, to call abuse and blasphemy against God thus.

For it is written in Leviticus, that two men struggled with each other in the congregation, then one of those who fought, the son of the Egyptian woman, blasphemed, and he died by stoning. And God immediately set a law for this, saying thus: "A man, if he should curse his God, will bear his sin; and he who names the name of the Lord shall be put to death. Therefore, to name the name of the Lord is to blaspheme, expressed in euphemistic words through the sacred letters. Since it is a habit for many, if they should somehow be in grief, to sometimes hurl reviling words against God, he says that the one presiding over the house, announcing that no one is still with him, and having suffered something of an incurable disaster, will silence him, he says, so that he may not name the name of the Lord, that is, so that he may not say anything reviling against God. This is a sign that the scourge was not brought upon them in vain, and that He does not punish them for no reason, but for a useful and necessary purpose.

For it is, it is indeed, and very easily seen from what has happened, that the plague of those who suffered has converted to piety those still living and remaining, and has prepared them to fear offending God anymore, even if only to grieve him with mere words, although long ago they were accustomed to do this unguardedly, adding to their words also insults in their very deeds. Therefore it is much better for those who are truly good and prudent to go in pursuit of what is profitable before plague and scourge, and to anticipate the experience of the movements of wrath by departing from wickedness, and having chosen to do what would truly please the all-holy God. For behold, the Lord commands, and he will strike the great house with fragments, and the small house with fissures. He clearly threatened that cities would be captured, or rather, destroyed along with their inhabitants. And that the matter is from God, and will not happen by chance, is made very clear by His commanding those who have the power to ravage, and their easily doing whatever the divine wrath should decree. He calls Ephraim and perhaps also Judah the great and the small house. For Ephraim was populous, as counted in ten tribes; for this reason also a great house. But Judah was smaller, being of two; for he was in Jerusalem, and the tribe of Benjamin. It follows to understand that what is shattered somehow has a complete fall;

but what is fissured might reasonably be thought of as suffering in part. And it happened that the house of Ephraim, that is Israel, endured a complete capture, and an incurable disaster from the war, but Judah in part, and suffered this as in a small fissure. Therefore the Judge is just and impartial. For He weighs, as He sees, the crimes of cities or regions, and brings upon each a blow that has the power to benefit them accordingly. Let us not then despise God, knowing the all-powerful nature of the supreme hand; for understanding of this is a most excellent thing. Will horses run on rocks? Or will they be silent among the mares? For you have turned judgment into wrath, and the fruit of righteousness into bitterness. That indeed He himself again commanded that He will strike "the great house with fragments and the small house with fissures," even if it were done by the hand of the Assyrians, he will again persuade us by saying, Will horses run on rocks? For it is as if he were saying clearly: A horse is a proud animal, and among the swiftest of runners, but the place suitable for it to run is not one that is rocky and full of banks, but that which is clear and smooth. Then how have the Assyrians overrun you, although long ago of a rough being a people exceedingly and as it were rocky, and never yet trodden by any of the enemies?

But it was God who had been dishonored, who makes the hard and impassable things for the warring ones easy to walk on and for horses to traverse. Just as, he says, lustful horses would not stop, and being aroused and mounting the females present by the goads of nature, so the enemies would not rest, making their assault against the impious ones most ardent and irresistible. And what is the cause of this? You, and no others. For my just judgment concerning you, he says, you have turned aside into wrath, and instead of having the fruits of righteousness, you forced the author of all your cheerfulness to anger, having committed impieties worthy of bitterness. For the God of all pitied Israel for having suffered in Egypt, but they did not cease from provoking. And this, I think, is 'you turned judgment into wrath.' The crime of ingratitude is therefore terrible indeed; and it is punished, and very justly so. For he whom we ought rather still to appease with praises and to gladden with voices of thanksgiving, to provoke him ignorantly, how will this not be for us the cause of every evil? You who rejoice in a thing of no good account, who say, Is it not by our own strength that we have taken horns for ourselves? For behold, I will raise up against you, O house of Israel,

a nation, and they shall afflict you from the entrance of Hamath to the brook of the west.

Therefore you have turned, he says, "judgment into wrath, and the fruit of righteousness into bitterness, you," who are proud of yourselves, and who raise a high brow against God, who rejoice in a rotten and foolish word. For you have said that I have not been the provider of the strength that is in you, and of the ability to oppress the enemies, but attributing the boasts to your own powers, you have dared even to say, Is it not by our own strength that we have taken horns for ourselves? And that was similar, then, to be caught thinking proudly and saying foolishly, We ourselves rule and will overcome the enemies, even if God should not choose, he says, to defend us, we have prevailed, and we must take pride in such brilliant achievements, attributing absolutely nothing to God. So it is disdain and insolence against God, this frenzied thought and word. But the divine David was exceedingly wise, attributing glory to the God who has authority over all things, and saying, "For you are the boast of their strength. and again, "In you we will gore our enemies, and in your name we will despise those who rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, and my sword will not save me. For all strength is from him, and nothing noteworthy would be done by us, unless he were with us and presiding. "For the Lord crushes wars," according to what is written.

But since, he says, you are now caught having fallen into such arrogance and loose talk, behold, I bring a nation against you; and it is clear that it is the nation of the Assyrians; and they will afflict you, from the entrance of Hamath even to the brook of the west. Now, Hamath is one of the cities toward the east, lying at that time under the kingdom of Damascus; but it has now been renamed, as I said, Antioch, or rather Epiphania. And by 'brook of the west' he means the river of the Egyptians, since Egypt lies to the west of the land of the Jews. And since it was the custom for those of Israel, when war was about to leap upon them, at one time to ask for aid from Damascus and the Syrians, and at another time to run to the land of the Egyptians, for this reason he says that he raises up a nation against them, and they will come strong, inflicting so much affliction on them, that they would no longer be strong enough either to enter Hamath or to reach the brook of the west, that is, to call upon the power of either Damascus or the Egyptians for aid. "For when God shuts, who will open? according to what is written.

What way of salvation will there be, when the Almighty drives them to destruction? Thus the Lord showed me, and behold, a brood of locusts coming early in the morning, and behold, a locust one; Gog the king.

and it shall be when he finishes to eat up the grass of the land, and I said, O Lord, Lord, be merciful; who shall raise up Jacob? for he is small; repent, O Lord, for this. And this shall not be, saith the Lord. What nation would be brought upon those of Israel, or what harm would come upon them, God reveals to the Prophet; and it is suited to his character, and through what he knows accurately, through these things He teaches him the things that will be done. For to the shepherds the locust and the cankerworm always seem to be, and truly are, a terrible thing; for when the grass is shorn as if by them, the flocks must then be destroyed. Therefore, God indicates the calamities from war to the Prophet as to a shepherd. For as in the form of a locust He signifies the Assyrian, as one in an immeasurable multitude almost eating up and consuming the land. And he calls it the morning locust, almost falling like dew, and poured upon the earth in the manner of snowflakes. But there was, he says, also one cankerworm; and this was indeed Gog the king. Then, when God said, And it shall be when he finishes to eat up the grass of the land; that is, when he consumes by eating the common multitude that is in Samaria, clearly, and in the cities of Judea;

then, as He was about to add something else, the Prophet, interrupting, begs Him to cease from His anger, saying, O Lord, be merciful; who shall raise up Israel? for he is small. For if you should wish, he says, to deliver Israel to the enemies for consumption in the manner I have seen, he will be completely diminished. To this God [says], And this shall not be, says the Lord. I will not grow weary, He says, nor will I relent; for I would by no means cease from chastising the impious. But investigating of necessity who Gog is, we say this, that the blessed prophet Ezekiel also writes a lamentation for him, as God commands. And we think it is Sennacherib, when also Rabshakeh was reviling God, "the angel of the Lord went forth and slew in one night from the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand. And I will of necessity recall the things written about him through the voice of Ezekiel. And it is as follows, "Thus saith the Lord God to Gog: Art thou he of whom I have spoken before days past by the hand of my servants the prophets of Israel, in those days and years, that I would bring thee upon

them? Do you hear how he says it is he, and not another, whom He threatened through holy prophets to bring upon those of Israel?

And that he paid the penalty for his unbridled speech, and having supposed he would conquer was unexpectedly destroyed, and has fallen in the land of Israel, He immediately indicates again, saying, "And thou, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal; and I will turn thee back, and lead thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel; and I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and thy arrows out of thy right hand, and I will cast thee down upon the mountains of Israel, and thou shalt fall, thou, and all that are about thee, and the nations that are about thee shall be given to a multitude of birds; and to every winged bird, and to all the beasts of the field have I given thee to be devoured; thou shalt fall upon the face of the field, for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God; and after other things again, "And it shall be in that day, I will give to Gog a place of renown, a monument in Israel, the burial-place of them that come to the sea; and they shall build round about the mouth of the valley, and there they shall bury Gog and all his multitude; and it shall then be called the burial-place of Gog.

and the house of Israel shall bury them, that it may be cleansed in seven months, and all the people of the land shall bury them, and it shall be to them a renown in the day that I was glorified, saith the Lord God. For when the Assyrians had fallen, who are signified by Gog, perhaps the multitude of those of Israel buried the dead, so that for the cities and the lands the intolerable [stench] of the so would a thing of such a terrible stench be ruined. Thus the Lord showed me, and behold, the Lord called for judgment by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and devoured the portion. And I said, 'O Lord, Lord, cease, I pray! Who will raise up Jacob? For he is small.' Repent, O Lord, concerning this. 'And this shall not be,' says the Lord. He has seen Gog, that is, the Assyrian, as a locust and a young locust; this he calls the judgment through fire. For it was not enough for the Babylonians to destroy Ephraim with the sword, but they also burned down very many of the cities in Samaria. The judgment, therefore, he says, that is, the vengeance through fire, has devoured the great deep, that is, Ephraim, so named an 'abyss' on account of its great and immeasurable multitude. And it devoured no less the

small portion, that is, Judah and Benjamin. For after burning not a few cities of Judea, after this the arrogant Rabshakeh finally besieged Jerusalem itself.

But when the Prophet again appeased him, and persuaded the God of all to repent, that is, to change his mind, 'This shall not be,' says the Master of all. What then shall we learn from this again? That transgressions beyond description, although God is known to be very long-suffering, provoke him terribly, and render the prayers of the saints almost ineffective. And so he said to the prophet Jeremiah concerning those of Israel, "And you, do not pray for this people, and do not ask that they be pitied, and do not approach me concerning them, for I will not listen to you. Thus the Lord showed me, and behold, a man standing upon a wall of adamant, and in his hand was adamant. And the Lord said to me, 'What do you see, Amos?' And I said, 'Adamant.' And the Lord said to me, 'Behold, I am setting adamant in the midst of my people Israel; I will no longer pass by him. And the altars of laughter shall be destroyed, and the rites of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise up against the house of Jeroboam with a sword.' Having shown the Assyrian, that is, Gog, to the Prophet as a locust and as a young locust and as a judgment by fire, God, then shows himself somehow standing upon a wall of adamant, so that through this he might be understood as standing, so to speak, upon an unbreakable power, and having unshakable security in his own good things.

For the divine is all-powerful, and has a firm foundation, because it does not know how to change, but is superior to change, and, as I said, it loves to be always and forever established in its own good things. He is seen, therefore, standing upon a wall of adamant. Adamant among stones is both unbreakable and unconquerable, neither enduring to yield to things that are hard and accustomed to resist, nor indeed giving to other materials the ability to crush its inherent strength, and perhaps also accustomed to disregard the force of fire. And since the one standing on the wall was holding adamant in his hand, he inquired of the Prophet, saying, 'What do you see, Amos?' And when he understood and said what it was—for he said, 'Adamant'—he clearly affirmed that he would set this in the midst of Israel. But you will understand adamant as either the Assyrian, as both harsh and unbreakable, and appointed by God for this purpose; for the Lord of hosts strengthens whomever he might choose; or, the unbreakable and all-powerful Word of God, whom it is not possible to turn back empty, that is, to render ineffect-

ive; for whatever God utters will surely run to its completion, with no one acting against it. Thus also our Lord Jesus Christ says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. And he said that he would not pass by Israel, that is, he will demand justice for the unholy things transgressed against him;

and he will no longer be long-suffering, but will finally hand it over to those called against it, along with its sacred precincts and altars and idols. For the altars of laughter, he says, will be destroyed. The making of any idol is truly, then, a laughingstock; but it would be fitting, I think, for the laughter to be understood properly and specifically as the Beelphegor, on account of the very ugliness of its form. And it disparages all idol-making, as being from this one thing, the most shameful of all. Therefore, the altars will be torn down, he says, and the feasts of Israel will be removed along with them, that is, the playthings of idolatry, profane and abominable mysteries. That Jeroboam, distinguished by the boasts of his kingdom, will go away to destruction with his own gods, he has clearly indicated. But it is necessary to remember that the one of whom the discourse is now is different from the first one; for the one was the son of Nebat, and the other the son of Joash. And these things for the time being might apply to the words of the history. But it will show the true adamant to be Christ the Lord of hosts, having invincible and irresistible strength, shattering enemies, and conquering opponents, and being broken by no one. He, as a chosen stone, has been placed in the midst of the people.

"For 'He was seen on earth and dwelt among men.'" Therefore He is also called by the voice of the angel "Emmanuel, which "is interpreted, God with us. For He became with us, when He became like us. Therefore, having been placed among us by God the Father as a stone of adamant, He shook the tyranny of the devil, He truly made the altars of laughter to disappear. For as soon as Emmanuel shone forth, and spread the light of true knowledge to those throughout the whole world under heaven, He showed Himself to us as the image and likeness of the Father. Then indeed, then the darkness of the ancient deceit was driven away, and profane and God-hated idolatry was removed from the midst, and he himself who presided over the deceit, that is, Satan, has also fallen. And Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos has formed a conspiracy against you in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. because

thus says Amos: 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall be led away captive from his land.' Falsehood is always unassisted by itself, and the feet of deceit have a rotten support. Therefore it is laughed at, being held up to stand only with difficulty by external aids. Such is this thing, the idolatry of Israel. For their things were playthings of drunkards:

golden heifers, "the works of a craftsman and molten images," according to what is written, and the art of a human hand, and the inventions of unholy enterprises. But the blessed prophets call to sobriety those who are held by deceits; but the worshippers of idols, as if their whole stage were being dismantled, are not moderately vexed, they terrify with fears, they bewail the return to sobriety of those who were led astray. For they know that with a keen and watchful mind it is easy to see the profanation of their worship. The profane Amaziah therefore was greatly afraid, lest those persuaded to worship the golden heifers should be brought by the Prophet's words to a good understanding, and he himself should be deprived of his priestly function, and the statues in the precincts should be destroyed along with them. For this reason he tries to incite Jeroboam, saying that Amos was all but rising up against his kingdom, and was daring to utter some heavy and now somehow unbearable word, that he himself would die by the sword, and Israel would go away captive. The wretched Jews also did something like this, composing slanders against Christ. For since, striking Judea with astonishment by His miracles, He was calling everyone to Himself, they brought Him to Pilate, the miserable ones having taken the flames of envy into their mind, and indeed they said, "If you do not kill this "man, you are not a friend of Caesar.

Therefore, the outrages against the saints by all who always fight against piety come through similar enterprises, with falsehood everywhere suffering from weakness. And Amaziah said to Amos, O seer, go, depart into the land of Judah, and there live your life, and there prophesy; but in Bethel you shall no longer prophesy, because it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house. He is then clearly shameless, and opposes the divine words with the proof of his own malice. For they used to call the prophets seers, but not deigning even to honor him with the name of prophecy, but rather as it were slandering him as one of the false soothsayers, he commanded him to depart into the land of Judah. And adding the words, "There earn your living," he as much as says, "If you desire shameful gains, and seek to collect things useful

for your livelihood by chanting little phrases to people, leave Samaria and speak to those from the tribe of Judah, and you shall not prophesy in Bethel; for it is the king's sanctuary. He says sanctuary, instead of offering, that is, a place of offering. For there the first Jeroboam set up the golden calf. And referring the Prophet's crime, as it were, also to the honor of the ruler, he says, "it is a royal house. "But you are confounding the royal affairs, you are stirring up disturbances, recklessly opposing the wishes of the rulers. See clearly, then, how true is what was said by God to Israel:

"And you gave the consecrated ones wine to drink, and you commanded the prophets, saying, 'You shall not prophesy.'" And Amos answered and said to Amaziah, "I was no prophet, nor a prophet's son, but I was a herdsman, scraping sycamore fruits. And the Lord took me from the sheep, and the Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' And now hear the word of the Lord: You say, 'Do not prophesy against my people Israel, and do not stir up a mob against the house of Jacob.' Therefore thus says the Lord: 'Your wife shall be a prostitute in the city, and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword, and your land shall be measured by a line, and you shall die in an unclean land, and Israel shall be led captive from his land.'" When the practitioners of wickedness bring insults upon the virtuous, they accuse them of their own ways, and bringing forward the ugliness of their own accusations, they think they are mocking them, but they have forgotten that they are as good as writing themselves on a tablet and showing others what sort of people they are. We will now find that the stupefied Amaziah has suffered something of this sort.

For being a false prophet, and attending the altars of idols, collecting limbs and the remains of the slaughtered victims, and being uncontrollably overcome by shameful gains, he reproached Amos, and said that he ought to depart from Samaria, and withdraw, if he wished, into the land of Judah, and there earn his living. For there, he says, you will easily utter falsehoods, and carrying many away, you will collect things for your livelihood, and you will more readily find the means of life. For "There earn your living," implies some such meaning, as I have already said before. But that the Prophet has no such purpose, nor is he looking for love of gain, but rather submits to the Master's will, for this reason he fulfills the service befitting a prophet, he tries to teach, and very gently, saying that he was neither a prophet, nor indeed had become a prophet's son—that is certainly by discipleship, or rather by

spirit, I mean, just as of course Elisha was of Elijah—but he was a goatherd, living a rustic and simple and harmless life, having very few things for food, and being content with things from the fields, which one would not even buy; and these were sycamore fruits. For the overseers of the flocks, being at leisure, run under the shades of the trees, and, as if making sport of the charges of idleness, they pinch off fruits and attend to the needs of the stomach, as best they can.

But he says that while I was engaged in these things, God, according to His good pleasure, made me a prophet, and commanded me to declare clearly to those of the blood of Israel the things that were coming upon them and would very soon be at hand. But you, opposing your own things to the commands from above, command silence. For this reason, then, "Thus says the Lord: Your wife shall be a prostitute in the city," it is clear that this means falling victim to the insults of the enemies, and the unchaste into the licentiousness of those having her, as if she endured it out of necessity; and the children will also be destroyed, having become the work of the sword. And in addition to this, your land will be measured with a line, that is, it will be under tribute, and will pay taxes to the one who has conquered it. But you, in addition to these things, who now think, he says, that you inhabit the holy land of Bethel, and have a king's sanctuary, you will go away a captive, and you will die in evils, not returning again; for how, or from where? having remained a corpse in a foreign and unclean land of the enemies; and Israel itself will also go away captive, the one who chose you as prophet and overseer of the holy things.

It is a grievous thing, then, to act against the divine commands, and to proceed inconsiderately to the point of sometimes even rebuking holy men who interpret the things that seem good to God, of whom it was also said by Him, "And it shall be that he who touches you is as he who touches the apple of his eye. But observe how the one and admirable purpose for the saints, I mean the duty to serve the words of God without shrinking, and to consider human things as nothing, even if some bring wars and afflictions upon them. For the blessed Amos, completely disregarding the rudeness of Amaziah, not only did not keep silent, but indeed even made the denunciation against him vigorously; and the divine disciples, when the scribes and Pharisees once commanded them to be silent, said plainly, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you judge; for

we "cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. Thus the Lord showed me, and behold, a fowler's basket. And He said, What do you see, Amos? And I said, A fowler's basket. And the Lord said to me, The end has come upon my people Israel; I will not pass by them any more. And the panels of the temple will wail in that day, says the Lord; the fallen one is great in every place; I will cast down silence.

The word then proceeds again for the Prophet as if in a stream, and with those things once introduced having received sufficient narration for themselves, the order of the visions runs on to its proper purpose. Therefore he has seen the multitude of the Assyrians, like a morning brood of locusts, and with them Gog, that is, Sennacherib, depicted as in the form of a locust-larva, because the creature leaps strongly over much of the land. Such in a way is the boaster, always leaping up high, and refusing to dwell with the humble. And he has seen justice being called as in fire, and indeed also the adamant Israel placed in the midst by the one standing on the wall of adamant. Then what else? It was the fowler's basket. And what I said in the beginning, I will now say again, that to the Prophet who was raised in a more rustic manner, God reveals mysteries through things that are especially done in the fields. For fowlers, and the things hunted by them, clearly birds, would not be more fitting for city men, but for those whose pursuit and purpose of life would be the fields and the things in them.

But that in every way and entirely they will be caught for slaughter, just as by the hand of those accustomed to fowling, the common herd together with the select race in Samaria, I mean that of the boasters and those who have practiced being carried on high like birds, the power of the visions has shown enigmatically. For what was seen was a fowler's basket. Therefore the God of all says that the end has come upon my people Israel, and that their crimes would no longer be passed over; and that the temple itself, which had the golden calf in Bethel, will also be burned, he has revealed, saying that the panels of the temple will wail in that day. And he is accustomed to call the roof, or the things about it, "panels," skillfully and very well variegated by the arts of the carpenters, according to that in the Song of Songs, "Our beams are cedars, our panels are cypresses. And he says the panels will wail; and not by emitting an articulate voice, but rather as in crashes and the creaks in being broken. And since there will be many, he says, the one who has fallen in every place, I will cast silence. For since every place has hence-

forth been brought to desolation, and has no inhabitants, there will be a great silence, that is to say, stillness, just as in the deserts and impassable lands.

Therefore the God of all will in no way be at a loss, if he should choose to chastise those who have sinned, but his manner of punishment will be manifold and various, and no one will withstand him as he inflicts punishments on the one who provokes him, yet he who shakes off the wrath by repentance will escape, turning for himself toward gentleness the Master who is good and compassionate.

Book 4

Hear this now, you who crush the poor man in the morning and oppress the needy from the land, who say, When will the month be over, that we may sell, and the sabbaths, that we may open the treasuries to make the measure small, and to make the weights great, and to make the balance unjust, to buy the needy for silver, and the humble for a pair of sandals, and we will trade from every kind of produce? One of the Pharisees once asked our Lord Jesus Christ which he considered the first and great commandment in the law, and he heard in reply that the first commandment is, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your strength; and the second, which is near it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. And one might see the divine Paul himself having hung, so to speak, every kind of virtue from love, and having dared to say that it is greater than faith and hope, and having clearly confessed that he who does not have it is nothing, even if he should give his possessions to those in need, and even if he should deliver his own body to his persecutors to be burned. Therefore whatever is great and worthy of hearing in us will surely come from love for God and for our brothers.

But if anyone at all is carried outside the laws of love, and is seen to be without a share of its blossoms, he himself will be completely useless, and would reasonably be thought to be held fast in every kind of wickedness, since wherever the good is unpracticed, there surely wrongdoing will flourish. See, therefore, the arrangement of the whole argument. For having first accused Ephraim, that is, Israel, of godlessness, and having declared him a worshiper of heifers, and not having love for the one and true God, because he loved to be attached to the works of his own hands, he also proves him truly unholy toward his own brothers, and having completely neglected love

for his neighbor. And he makes the charge generally and very clearly, and though still in brief, yet he enumerates the accusations. For this reason he says, Hear this, you who crush the poor man in the morning and oppress the needy from the land. It is as if he were to say, The word is to you, for whom it is a matter of great diligence to, as it were, wipe the weak and poor from the earth and to oppress them in the morning. For the lovers of godliness according to God, as the day dawns for them, offer thanksgivings to God, they worship, they pray, and they turn their efforts toward everything that is praiseworthy;

but those who look only to oppressing certain people, and who think that being on an equal footing is nothing compared to the need to be avaricious, make it their most diligent work to leap from bed as soon as dawn begins, and to proceed to their customary wickedness, and whom they might be able to defraud, almost even blaming the night for passing over them entirely and for delaying, because it does not grant a time sufficient for them for greed. These say, When will the month be over, that we may sell? This is the prayer of those who lend and of petty traders, of shameful and sordid men, who always thirst for the end of the month, so that by collecting little by little, they may make their own wares more substantial, and by impiously collecting interest upon interest they oppress the weaker, although the law clearly says, "If you lend money to your "neighbor, you shall not be an exactor to him, you shall not charge him "interest. But some say, When will the month be over, that we may trade? And others, held by the same or even worse sicknesses, and overcome by shameful gains, say again, When will the sabbaths be over, that we may open our treasures, to make the measure small and the shekel great, and to make the balance unjust?

And what this is, or of what sabbaths they seek the passing, so that they may open their treasures and make the measure small and enlarge the weights, it is necessary to say. For it is written in Deuteronomy, "Every seven years "you shall make a release, and this is the command of the release: "you shall release every private debt which your neighbor owes you, and "you shall not demand it of your brother, because a release has been proclaimed "to the Lord your God. You may exact it of a foreigner as much as you may "have with him; but of your brother you shall make a release of "your debt. And after other things again, "If there is among "you a poor man from one of your brothers in one of your cities in "the land that the Lord your God is

giving you, you shall not harden "your heart or shut your hand "from your brother who is in need; you shall surely open "your hands to him, and shall surely lend him as much as he needs "and according to what he lacks. And he gives further instruction, saying, "Take "care lest there be a wicked, secret thought in your heart, "saying, 'The seventh year, the year of "release, is near,' and your eye be evil against your needy "brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry "to the Lord against you, and it be a great sin for you.

Therefore, since the law has commanded the cancellation of debts, as it were, of sabbatical years; for it commanded it to be fulfilled in the seventh year; then, forewarning that one should not be wicked, but rather lend to those in need, even if the year of release does not seem far off, those who have many and abundant treasures, closing their hand, were eager to wait for the sabbaths of the years that were then at the gates, and then they would lend, so that the debt might not fall under the times of release. These say, When will the sabbaths be over? And it is clear that they mean those of the years; and we will open our treasures. And their impiety does not stop there, but uncharitably preying on the poverty of those who have fared wretchedly, they made their giving with small measures, but received in return with unequal weights, but with those even larger, and much heavier than the first, although God says through the all-wise Moses, "You shall not have in your bag "differing weights, a great and a small; you shall not have in your "house differing measures, a great and a small. A true "and just weight you shall have, and a true and just "measure you shall have; that you may live long in the land which "the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance, because everyone "who does this, everyone who does unjustly, is an abomination "to the Lord your God.

But for them there is no regard for justice; but looking only to avarice, they wore out the poor, almost acquiring the wretched, and treating them like footwear; "For the poor are the pasture of the rich," according to what is written. But the writer of Proverbs helps us not a little, saying, "Let the heart of a man devise just things, so that his steps may be directed by God. "For the ways of a man are before the "eyes of God, and He watches all his "paths. Therefore, as God watches over and minutely examines each of our affairs, we should make straight the a necessary course for those who are truly good and prudent, and to esteem nothing above the equilibrium between love for God and love for brothers. And love for God possesses genuineness in faith,

and incorruptibility; while love for brothers has kindled the glories of righteousness. For it is true that "Love does no wrong to a neighbor. And I say that it is necessary for those who have chosen to be well-pleasing, and who live a most lawful life, to put on "bowels of mercies," to utterly disdain accursed avarice, and to set forth one's possessions as common for those in need. For by so keeping the law of love, he will be both glorious and enviable in the sight of both God and men. For it is written that "He has scattered, "he has given to the poor, his righteousness endures for "ever and ever.

The Lord swears against the pride of Jacob, Surely I will not forget any of your works forever. And for these things shall not the earth be troubled, and shall not everyone who dwells in it mourn? And destruction will come up like a river, and will go down like the river of Egypt. God brings a charge of arrogance against those of Jacob, for disregarding divine laws and completely ignoring the Master's will, and for trampling on love for brothers itself. He swears, therefore, 'against the pride of Jacob.' And we are not saying that the God of all makes the arrogance of some the object of his oath; rather, He swears against it, that is, decreeing its deserved punishment. And why does He swear at all? That he will no longer overlook their crimes, nor tolerate them to the end. For this, I think, is the meaning of 'forever': that which runs to the very end and to a final completion. Then he says that since forgetfulness—I mean, concerning their unholy transgressions—is taken away, how would the earth not become full of tumult as enemies overrun it, and how would they not mourn, having to endure a terrible and inescapable calamity? And what calamity is this? For destruction, he says, will be brought up against them like the river of Egypt, covering everything, and with many and irresistible currents flooding the whole land of Samaria; and it will likewise go down, dragging away everything in its path and sparing absolutely nothing.

For Sennacherib came up against them with armies of myriads, like some river flooding the land and subjugating everything to himself; and he departed again to his own land, dragging with him a very great and countless number of captives. Therefore, whenever we despise God, we will find the hostile powers turned against us, so that we are in tumult and grief, being plundered by them, as it were, and by necessity falling into servile bondage. For they will be against us like an irresistible flood, dragging us to ruin and sinking us into perdition. "But rivers will not enclose us," according to what

is written, nor will "the deep swallow us, nor could a storm sink us" who wish to please God. For then, yes then, having manfully escaped the greedy desires of the demons and having cared very little for their malice, we will say with joy: "If it had not been that the Lord was with us, let Israel now say; if it had not been that the Lord was with us, when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us alive; and again, "Our soul passed through a torrent; then our soul passed through the irresistible water. For even if the water of diabolical insolence is irresistible and not to be withstood by our minds—that is, the flood which comes through the passions—yet in Christ we will have strength. For we shall pass through the assault of his perversity as through a kind of torrent.

And it shall be in that day, says the Lord God, that the sun shall set at noon, and the light shall be darkened upon the earth in the daytime; and I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring sackcloth upon every loin, and baldness upon every head; and I will make Jacob as a mourning for a beloved, and those with him as a day of pain. This passage brings forth a twofold meaning. For it is always the custom for the holy prophets at the very end of their own words to remember Christ, and to make the narrative of the mystery concerning him, still overshadowed by obscurities. Come then, looking at both, let us say what is fitting. We will first set forth what follows from what has been said, and then in this way we will adapt the meaning of what has been said to the explanation concerning Christ. On that very day, therefore, on which the consummation shall go over all the land of the Samaritans like a river of Egypt, a terrible and deep darkness will be scattered over all, so to speak, who dwell in it, the sun in a way setting, and this at midday. And we do not say, of course, that the light of the sun truly set, but the calamity from the war became like darkness to those dwelling in Samaria.

For great and excessive grief, when it arises, troubles the mind, and things that happen contrary to hope and unexpectedly darken the heart, and the harshness of sorrows works a kind of mist and fog in the hearts of the sufferers. Therefore they will see darkness, he says, even if the sun happens to be at midday. And those who formerly celebrated splendidly, always using strings and lyres and the sweeter parts of songs, will abstain from such pursuits, but will rather wail, and will make their study the odes for lamentation, and will take on the appearance of mourners, I mean both sackcloth and baldness.

For to shave the head completely is very dishonorable. And indeed the divine Job shaved his hair when his children had perished. And I will make Jacob, he says, as a mourning for a beloved, that is, those who see him will be so sad over him, as if a mother or father over one beloved child lying dead; and those with him into a day of pain, that is, the neighboring Judah and Benjamin, who together with Ephraim had served idols, and were with him in this very way, so that they will be found having a day of pain, and being as in birth pangs; and by birth pangs I mean those from terrors and grief and toils. For after devastating Samaria, Sennacherib captured all their cities. Then he sends Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem, who threatened terrible things to those in the wall.

And he so crushed those in Jerusalem into despondency, that they expected to perish immediately along with those in Samaria. Then indeed, being very downhearted, King Hezekiah also sends someone to the prophet Isaiah, saying, "This day is a day of affliction and reproach and rebuke and "wrath, because the birth pang has come to the one giving birth, "but she has no strength to bear. Therefore, by a day of pain he means the toils and downheartedness as from a birth pang. Therefore, those in Jerusalem were in a day of pain, expecting to perish, those who were with Ephraim, I mean, in the manner of idolatry. And these things I have said as being likely and fitting for those who at that time were provoking the Master of all against themselves. And one might apply them no less also to those who acted impiously against Emmanuel himself, at the time of the incarnation. For they are "those who crush the poor in the "morning," that is, those who eagerly reject choosing to live lawfully, but proceed for no other reason, perhaps, than to destroy justice, and dare to hold as nothing what has been very well defined by the divine commandments, and to immoderately take advantage of whomever they might choose of the weaker. And they would be those "who say, When will the month be over, that "we may sell; and the sabbaths, that we may open the treasures "to make the measure small and to make the weight great "and to make the balance unjust.

For that the scribes and the Pharisees were very fond of money and greedy for dishonest gain, we might know in many ways, by applying our mind to the evangelical writings. For to be seen as superior to shameful gains, and to love to be free from all greed for gain that is according to God Christ advised the lovers of moderation, and urged them to go even further, and to

assist those in need and to distribute their possessions. But what does the Evangelist say? "But the scribes and the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard these things, and they scoffed at Him. Therefore it might also be said of them, "The Lord swears by the pride of Jacob: Surely I will never forget your works. For it is truly arrogance for them to disregard even the divine laws, and what is still more burdensome than this, to even insult Christ Himself. Therefore, their transgressions will not depart into oblivion; but a consummation, as it were, has come upon them, and the war of the Romans like a flooding river. Since they delivered the Lord of all to the cross, the sun set upon them, and the light was also darkened. For "there was darkness from the sixth hour until the ninth hour. And this was a clear sign to the Jews that the souls of those who crucified Him were spiritually darkened. "For a partial hardening has come upon Israel;

and as the divine Paul writes, "To this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts. And the blessed David also cursed them out of love for God, saying thus, "Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs forever. That they have also mourned, transforming as it were their feasts into dejection, would be clear from Christ Himself saying to the women weeping for Him as He was being led away to the cross, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For they have mourned for the city and for the divine temple being destroyed along with it, and for the Romans burning everything. Therefore, he says, I will make him; and it is clear that he means Emmanuel; as mourning for a beloved one and those with him as a day of grief. For those who believed mourned for the crucified Jesus, and women wailing stood at a distance, both Mary Magdalene and again Mary the mother of James and certain other women with them; and creation itself mourned its own Master. For the sun was darkened, and the rocks were split, and the temple itself took on the appearance of mourners, with the curtain being torn "from top to bottom. And God signified something like this to us through the voice of Isaiah, saying, "And I will clothe the heaven with darkness, and make sackcloth its covering. Therefore the mourning for him was as for a beloved one.

And those with him, that is, the disciples, were set for a day of grief. For that they also mourned, how can one doubt? For the women announced the resurrection of Christ to them while they were in grief; then indeed, then, having barely recovered, they ran to the tomb. And perhaps somewhere to

these women who were proclaiming the good news of the resurrection the prophet Isaiah says in spirit, "Women coming from a spectacle, come here; for it is not a people with understanding; that is, of the Jews; "therefore he who made them will not have pity on them, and he who formed them will not have mercy," he says. Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will send a famine on the earth, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord. And waters shall be shaken even to the sea, and from the north to the east they shall run about seeking the word of the Lord, and they shall not find it. It is written, "Lord, in affliction we remembered you, in slight affliction was your discipline to us. And knowing that affliction is an excellent thing and truly beneficial, the divine David sometimes said, "In affliction I called upon the Lord," and at other times, "It is good for me that you have humbled me, that I might learn your statutes.

For afflictions make us more sober, and draw us out of the snares of indolence, persuading us to love the ways of moderation, and the harsh and intractable as if by necessity and fear to the ways of holiness and obedience enduring yokes. So when Samaria has been ravaged, he says, and the Babylonian is burning the cities, even if some should choose then to learn what the will of God is, and what they must do or say to obtain mercy from him, so that they might be carried out of wrath, there will be no one, he says, to teach them. For I will bring a famine of the words from God upon them, so that absolutely no prophet will be found, even if they should run from west to east, even if from south to north. Similar to this is what was said by God to the blessed Ezekiel, "And I will bind your tongue and you will be "made mute, and you will not be a man who reproves them, for it is a "rebellious house. For those who have once spurned the word from God, even if they still wanted to, could not reasonably receive it. And by "agitated waters" he means the immeasurable multitude of the Jews, as being in turmoil, and henceforth resembling the waves in the sea, which are scattered everywhere by the blasts of the winds. And in another way. When Christ was crucified, the wretched Jews have had a famine of the words from God.

For there is no longer among them a prophet, nor an accurate teacher of the Mosaic history who knows how to refine its density and to clarify the mysteries concealed in the letters. For they did not accept Christ saying, "I am the bread of "life, who came down from heaven and gives life to the

"world. And for this very reason they also heard him saying long ago through the voice of Isaiah, "Behold, my servants will eat, "but you will be hungry; behold, my servants will drink, but you "will be thirsty. And indeed it is true that "The Lord will never "let a righteous soul starve, but he will overthrow the life of the wicked," not sending down to them the divine word that turns the mind to the pursuit of virtue. For as the Savior himself has said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but "by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. In that day the beautiful virgins and the young men will faint from thirst, those who swear by the propitiation of Samaria and those who say, As your god lives, O Dan, and as your god lives, O Beersheba, and they will fall and will never rise again. The word indeed has the sense that their sons and daughters will be carried off by enemies; for this is what the virgins and the young men signify, for we will find that those accustomed to carrying people into captivity especially took those of such an age.

But the word seems to indicate to us something else of the hidden meanings. There were certain virgins who dwelt in the precincts of the idols, and with them youths or prepubescent boys, through whom those more curious about sorcery thought to be taught things from the demons; for, as if invoking them upon undefiled bodies, they prepared them to give oracles with secret whisperings. And they say that even to this day some who wish to perform unholy rites prophesy in a manner similar to them. That therefore Israel will lack not only the word from God through holy prophets, which is useful and necessary for correction, but also the very word from the false prophets or demons, which they produced for some through virgins and boys, he implies by saying, In that day the beautiful virgins will faint. For it is as if he says, Your beautiful virgins will perish along with the others. And the word also mocks, along with the girls, the little boys who swear by the propitiation of Samaria. For it was perhaps a custom for them to love to make oaths by the gods in Samaria, that is, the heifers, and perhaps broadly mocking God, they ascribed his attributes to the carved images, saying, As your god lives, O Dan, and as your god lives, O Beersheba. These are cities of Judea, lying at the very extremities of the country, and as it were defining the measure of the land from south to the sea.

It is therefore as if those swearing were perchance saying, As the god of the land of the Jews lives, that is, the calf; for by the extremities the middle

parts are included, and the designation of the whole is woven together. But he says that the virgins and the young men, no longer supplying the false words of demons, because they themselves also became the work of the hand of foreigners, either having fallen by the sword, or having endured the inglorious and unbearable captivity. But when Christ was crucified, and had set for the Jews, along with the sun in the cosmos and the perceptible light, and the intelligible radiance and illumination through the Spirit; for they are deprived of the divine word, and of the comfort from above; the virgins among them have failed, along with the young men, that is, the beautiful and well-reputed souls, of which the undefiled part is signified by the virgin, while the strong and most valiant part is signified by the young man. For who is holy among them, since the law has power to perfect nothing, nor is it sufficient for them for righteousness? And with whom among them could spiritual robustness and a strong mind be found, when they have not known the splendid achievements of the evangelical way of life? For are not all of them sluggish and in sins and weakened in mind? Then how is this doubtful?

Therefore, they have fainted in thirst, but it was not said to them, "Draw water with joy from the springs of salvation. But indeed also "he commanded the clouds not to rain rain upon them," because they have not been obedient to Christ himself who cried out and said, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. But having forsaken him, although he is "a fountain of life, they have dug broken cisterns which will not be able to hold water. for they have given heed to teachings, the commandments of men, which know not how to give drink unto life, nor indeed to hold together for salvation those who use them. I saw the Lord standing upon the altar and he said, Strike the altar and the gateways will be shaken, and cut into the heads of all; and their remnant I will kill with the sword. The blessed prophets, by the torch-bearing of the Spirit brightening the eye of the mind, receive not only the knowledge of things to come, but indeed at times also the sight of the events themselves, seeing them as if painted on a tablet, are both themselves amazed, and persuade their listeners to be affected along with them, earnestly striving to make clear the powers of the visions. Therefore the blessed Amos said, "And the Lord said to me, The end has come upon my people Israel; I will no longer pass by them again. And the panels of the temple will wail in that day, says the Lord;

many are the fallen in every place; I will cast down silence. But behold, he has seen what was foretold being enacted in the events themselves, just as the prophecy holds. for he said he had seen the Lord himself standing by the altar, and as it were beginning the destruction, and commanding this very thing to happen. But God stands by the altar, not bestowing honor; for it is foolish to think this; since it is among the most absurd things to suppose and to say, that God bestows reverence and honor on the altars of idols; how then would he have honored the altar of the calves? But rather he stood by as one about to pull down and bring to the ground. For this very reason he has all but commanded the Prophet to begin the destruction, saying, Strike the altar, and let the gateways be shaken, he says, and let the temple henceforth be reeling, as being about to fall very soon indeed. And cut into the heads of all, that is, begin with the most prominent among them, and strike the leaders, who are also placed in the rank of a head to the others; and the remnant will perish mixed with them, and will follow the calamities of their leaders, they themselves also becoming the work of the sword.

And similar to this is that also through the voice of Ezekiel to the six men, who were coming from the gate that looks toward the north, and carrying their axes they followed the man girded with the long robe, to whom it was said by God, "Go into the city after him, and cut down and do not spare and do not have pity; slay elder and young man and infants and women to a wiping out, but upon all on whom "is the sign, do not approach, and from my holy ones "begin. Do you see how He made the leading men the first-fruits of His wrath, that is, those who seemed to be venerable and holy, perhaps because they were also kindled with the glory of the sacred ministry, or in other words, were distinguished by certain other honors? For such men are, as it were, the heads of the others. But this has also happened to those who have acted insolently toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

For since the wretched men, having cared little for the law and the prophets, did not receive Christ, who is the end of the law and the prophets, but, although knowing clearly that he is the heir, they cast him out of the vineyard, and finally crucified him, they have been given over to desolation to the Roman generals, and that famous temple has been burned, and the altar in it has been torn down, and the gates have been shaken down, and the leading men have perished along with the common people; for the war spared none of those among them. And each of the faithful, whether he be a

temple of God, as having Him as an inhabitant, or whether he be considered an altar, as offering his own life as a sacred rite to God, if then he looks to indolence and provokes God, he will come to nothing, and will suffer a most terrible destruction. For the Lord is no respecter of persons, and "The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver "him in the day that he goes astray," according to what is written. He that flees of them shall not escape, nor he that is being saved of them be delivered. Though they dig down to Hades, thence my hand shall drag them up; and though they ascend to heaven, thence will I bring them down. Though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, thence I will search out and take them;

and though they sink from my eyes into the depths of the sea, there I will command the dragon, and it shall bite them; and though they go into captivity before their enemies, there I will command the sword, and it shall kill them; and I will fix my eyes upon them for evil, and not for good. In due time, perhaps, then, will be said to those who hear these things what is sung to God through the voice of the blessed David: "Where shall I go from your Spirit? and "from your presence where shall I flee? If I ascend into "heaven, you are there; if I descend into Hades, you are present; if "I take up my wings at dawn and dwell "in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand "shall lead me and your right hand shall hold me. For the divine is all-seeing, and in addition to this, also all-powerful, and no one could escape the unsleeping eye. For He said, "I am a God at hand, and not a God afar off. Shall "anything be hidden from me? But one could never go outside the calamity imposed on him as by divine commands, "For who shall turn back the high hand? according to what is written. For what device will help us? Or what manner of help at all is there for us, when God decrees that we must suffer?

That counsel and thought and every kind of device, therefore, are completely useless to those who have fallen under divine wrath, He makes clear by saying that one could not escape, even if he were hidden in Hades itself. And the saying is hyperbolic: even if he should fly up to heaven, and pass through to the peak of Carmel, yet wherever he might go, he will be caught. And if he should be in the sea, he will fall in with the dragon, that is, according to the Hebrew version, he will be given to the sea monster. And if he should be among enemies, and at last a captive, and wretchedly held in the yokes of slavery, even this, He says, will be a small thing, and not sufficient

for his punishment. For the terror of the sword shall also be raised against him. And He will not cease, He says, the God of all, fixing His eye upon them. a sign of anger and threat. For at times we ourselves also fix our eyes on those who grieve us, looking at them with something fierce and unsmiling. But since God watches over both the good and the just, He clarifies the difference in His oversight, saying for evils and not for good. For he will look upon them, he says, not to bestow any good things, but so that they might have unshakable and, as it were, fixed the penalty and judgment determined for him.

The wretched multitude of the Jews has also endured this, having inscribed the righteous blood upon their own head; for they said to Pilate, persuading him to crucify Christ, "His blood be on us and on our children. Therefore they perished with their entire households, and their cities were seized along with the men, so that perhaps no one was strong enough to escape. For what and how many things they have suffered, the lengthy writings of those who have composed such things sing. And the Lord, the Lord God Almighty, who touches the earth and makes it shake; and all who dwell in it shall mourn, and its end shall rise up like a river, and shall go down like the river of Egypt. Out of love, the Prophet does not allow his hearers to disbelieve what is said, as if it would not happen. This was to persuade them to choose to learn better things, and to hold what is useful in reverence, so that God might cease from His anger and draw back the calamity, and might receive them when they repented. For He always pities those willing to turn back. He teaches, therefore, that God is all-powerful, and not unable to bring to fulfillment what He has said. For he says, "The Lord, the Lord God Almighty, who touches the earth and makes it shake. It is as if he were to say, "Do not think that the one who has been grieved is like you.

For the Master is not as a man, but is Himself the Lord of hosts, who lays his own hand upon the earth—that of the Samaritans, clearly—and makes it shake; and not at all preparing it to endure the usual tremor, but shaking it all with war and incurable calamities and causing it to be convulsed. For this reason he says, "Every one who dwells in it will mourn, and the end will rise up like the river of Egypt, covering and submerging everything; and so it will recede again, in the same way drawing everything down and carrying it away. And we said that he likens Sennacherib and the multitude of the Assyrians and the war raised by them against Samaria to the streams of rivers.

Therefore, for those who offend and grieve God, escape will be impossible, and the smiting hand all-powerful and hard to escape, and for those once caught there would be no help or comfort; "For if He shuts a man in, who can open? as it is written. But it is surely far better to put away anger by returning to what seems good and pleasing to Him. This would happen, and very rightly, if, forgetting what is behind and rejecting what is base, we were to make ourselves resplendent with progress in virtue. For then we shall swim through the things that come from wrath, and we shall easily change the Creator, who is good by nature, I say, to the point of deeming us worthy of a kind and most gentle oversight.

Who builds his ascent into heaven, and establishes his decree upon the earth; who calls for the water of the sea, and pours it out on the face of the earth; the Lord God Almighty is his name. And with yet more words he terrifies those who depart from God, and drives them toward what is better, skillfully explaining the preeminence and omnipotence of the divine nature, and he tries to convince them that He will in every way and in all circumstances bring His words to pass, with nothing standing in the way. "For the one who touches the earth," he says, "and makes it shake," in the ways just now rendered by us; this is the very one "who builds His ascent into heaven; he almost says, "The one who has all authority, so as to walk upon the heavens themselves and to possess dominion over all, so as to have the creation above and in the heavens laid under Him, that is, the blessed multitude of the holy angels. And we say the "heavens" are the angels who dwell in heaven. But it should be known that the divine Jacob also enigmatically the matter he has seen. For there was a ladder extending from earth up to heaven, and "The Lord," he says, "was set up on it," while he saw the angels ascending and descending by it he saw the angels. This, I think, is "He who builds His ascent in heaven.

But also whatever He may promise to those on the earth, he says, this is altogether unshaken and firm and as if founded. For in no way will the Lord of hosts grow weak, nor will a word from him fall through. And the Savior confirms us in this, saying, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. This is He who draws up the water of the sea by ineffable powers, and rains it upon the earth, that is again, He who orders human affairs, and is so powerful as to easily transform the natures of created things to whatever He may choose, and His name is the Lord God, and in addition to

this, the Almighty. And this is not to be thought of as a mere name, as it might be in the case of a man, but as one rightly found from truth itself. For from His ruling essentially, and holding power over all things, He has been so named by us and by the holy angels. The purpose, therefore, of the Prophet is through as many means as possible, and in whatever way he could, to strike terror into the deceived, and to persuade them well to go back quickly, as it were, to consider righteousness a splendid thing, and to make piety towards God desirable again, powerfully checking the inclination towards what is more shameful by the terrors of the things to come.

And this, I think, is what was rightly said through the voice of David to the Lord of all: "With bit and bridle curb the jaws of those who do not come near you. But "He who builds His ascent in heaven" might also be said of Christ, and very fittingly. For He is from above and from heaven, because He was begotten God from God according to nature; therefore He also said, "I am from above. And the wise John has also testified concerning Him, saying, "He who comes from above is above all; but having essentially the ascent to the heavens—for it belonged to Him, as I said, as God—He has shown it to be accessible to those on the earth. For as "a forerunner on our behalf" He ascended to the Father, and as the divine Paul writes, "He consecrated for us a new and living way; He appeared as a man "for us in the presence of God" the Father, who also "raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places. For since Christ ascended, He has built His own ascent for us also, if indeed the blessed Paul is truthful in saying, "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remaining until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.

And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remaining shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. He ascended, therefore, as a man, so that the ascent which belongs to Him and Him alone—because He is God and from God—He might also show to be accessible for us who have believed. He also establishes His own promise on the earth. For He has in no way been proven false, but rather will bring to accomplishment whatever He has promised to achieve for us. For He said, "It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but when I

depart, I will send Him to you. Therefore He also commanded the holy apostles "not to de- "part from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father which" they had heard from Him. But He poured out the grace richly upon them. Therefore they also became "witnesses of his glory both in Jerusalem and in Judea," and in all the earth. And in another way we will find His promise established; for we have believed that He will also raise us from the dead, and will make us superior to corruption, and "He will transform the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of his glory," and he will receive them as participants in his own kingdom.

He it is who calls the water of the sea and pours it out on the face of the earth, that is, the one who transforms the bitter and unacceptable and things unfit for use into something beneficial. "For the letter," the legal one, "kills," as the most wise Paul says, and the shadow is in itself unprofitable, but it has become most useful to us who understand, for the comprehension that is in Christ, and it has been shown to be like a spiritual rain, watering in a way the earth under heaven; if indeed it is true that the law, once bitter and unbearable to the ancients, has become for us a tutor unto the mystery of Christ, so that we can also bear fruit in him, refining the thickness of the shadow into truth. Therefore we shall take what has been said as an example, bringing forth as proof also the water of Marah, that although it was bitter, it was sweetened, God having shown a piece of wood to the blessed Moses, and having commanded him to cast it into the waters. But the wood was an image and type of the precious cross, through which the law became sweet, and as it were, most drinkable, although the history holds bitterness; "For, as I said, 'the letter kills,'" or rather as the wise Paul has written to us. Are you not as sons of Ethiopians to me, O sons of Israel? says the Lord;

Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Cappadocia, and the Syrians from a pit? behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth. Those of Israel, always raising a high brow, continually recounting up and down the nobility of their fathers, and greatly stretching out their tongue, would say, "We have Abraham as our father. But they heard Christ saying to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham." "For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel, nor because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children. But the likeness of works and the ability to boast splendidly in the glories of the fathers justly bestows this.

And they were arrogant towards all other nations, saying this also, that God made them chosen out of all the nations, and delivered them from the land of the Egyptians, and transferred them to the land of promise. And the statement is indeed true. But they who especially ought to have pleased the one who honored them with fitting returns, being outrageously insolent with complete apostasies and deviations into wickedness, were found to be so in many ways.

And so the wretches have now come to this point of madness, as to think that for their well-being and for glory it would suffice them to be from the root of Abraham, and that they were transferred from the land of the Egyptians into the land of promise. Therefore, so that they might know that such boasts as these would be of no benefit to them, who have fallen into indolence and do not wish to be pious, he necessarily says, I will not consider you thus, even if you should happen to have nobility from your fathers, just as, of course, the sons of the Ethiopians, who do not have Abraham as their root? For the divine is impartial and completely without respect of persons, and it knows no carnal nobility devoid of good deeds; indeed it deems spiritual nobility worthy of all reverence, which would be attended by the love of being resplendent through brilliant achievements. But that also seems to you to be something great and exceptional, to have moved from Egypt to another land. Then what of this? he says, or what benefit will it bring you? Others also have this, having received it from me. For I transferred the Philistines, that is, the Palestinians; for so the Hebrews have interpreted; from Cappadocia; and the Syrians, that is, all those under the kingdom of Damascus at that time, I led from a pit.

But it must be known that instead of 'from a pit' the Hebrews have published, 'of Cyrene.' Therefore the Palestinians have become colonists of the Cappadocians, and the Syrians of the Cyrenaeans. But he called it a pit Cyrene, although very elevated and situated on high, because it lies as if in a deep bay. For all the land of the Libyans, so to speak, has maritime bays, jutting out. Therefore, for me, he says, who looks upon all equally, the purpose is to cut off every kingdom of sinners from the earth. Therefore, fleshly splendor would not profit those who possess it. For nobility before God is judged to be a good character, one that has striven much for the pursuit of virtue, and has practiced contending with the pieties of one's ancestors. But I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, says the Lord. For behold, I give

the command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations, as one sifts with a sieve, and not a pebble shall fall to the ground; all the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, those who say, 'The evils shall not draw near or come upon us. The remnant has again been preserved for Israel "for the sake of the fathers. For they will not endure complete destruction, he says, nor indeed will the race of Jacob be utterly wiped out. But as if scattered by a sieve, he says, they will be scattered among all the nations.

but not a pebble shall fall to the ground, that is, the race of Jacob will not fall in such a way as to arrive at complete ruin, but will be saved in the part that has received mercy; for some were then brought back from captivity; and it has also been saved through Christ; for not a few in number from the Jews have believed; and the remnant will also be saved in the last times, after the flock of the nations has been called in first. Then, as if someone were saying, If Jacob is saved again, against whom are the threats? he usefully answers, and says, that the wrath will not be indiscriminate against all without distinction, nor will the effects of anger be indifferent, but will rather fall upon those who have sinned unbearably. This is the meaning of, By the sword shall all the sinners of my people die, who say, 'The evils shall not draw near or come upon us. For some came to such a point of madness as to think that the holy prophets were speaking falsely, and indeed they were saying that none of the things foretold would happen. And the wise Jeremiah will also testify to this, saying to God, "Behold, these say to me, 'Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come.'" Therefore, the sin of those so disposed was twofold: for they provoked in many ways, and they also thought that the truth was speaking falsely.

And we shall find that at the time of the visitation the teachers of the Jews did not heed the words of our Savior. Therefore they also heard, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves do not enter, and you do not allow those who are entering to go in; and again, "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 hell as yourselves. Therefore, they were justly not counted as children, and having slipped from the nobility of their fathers, they were enrolled as if among the sons of the Ethiopians; and they have also been consumed by the sword, and for their own ill counsel they have paid penalties equal to the judgment. In that day I

will raise up the tabernacle of David that has fallen and rebuild its ruins, and its demolished parts I will raise up and I will rebuild it as in the days of old; that the remnant of men may seek out [the Lord], and all the nations upon whom my name has been called, says the Lord who does these things. He promised, saying that he would not utterly destroy the race of Jacob, but even if they were scattered in a way by a sieve; for they will become both strangers and sojourners, driven from their fatherland and homes, inhabiting a barbarian and foreign land;

but they would not be completely crushed, nor indeed will they go away to complete destruction. For this reason he says that he will also raise up the tabernacle of David, although it has fallen, and he will raise up its ruins, as in the days of old, that is, for many days. He says that this will be a sign and an assurance to the other nations, both those near and those far away, that it is necessary henceforth to turn to God and choose to seek him, having marveled in some way at the greatness of both the gentleness of God and his strength. Therefore, if he should say the tabernacle of David, he signifies the race of the Jews, that is, the house of Jacob. But it must be known that when Cyrus released them from captivity, they then returned to Judea, and rebuilt the temple, and having fortified the deserted cities and repaired the houses in them, they have dwelt securely, although having endured wars from certain ones, such as Antiochus, I say, and Hadrian, they have not become captives again, nor indeed have they been laid waste, as they were by the Babylonians. So then, the historical account is in these things; but the inner and truer one would be in Christ.

For when he rose from the dead, God the Father having raised his tabernacle that had fallen into death, that is, his flesh from the earth, then indeed then all human things were restored to their ancient form, and all our ruined things have been brought to a new appearance. "For if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation," according to the scriptures; for we have been raised with him. And death indeed tore down the tabernacles of all, but God the Father rebuilt them in Christ; and this will not be for us for a measured time, but for the days of eternity; for the good of incorruptibility in us is imperishable, and death will no longer have dominion over those saved in Christ. Then indeed then the remnant of men after those who believed from Israel have known the God who is by nature and in truth, having departed from that ancient and profane error. For it was not possible to prove Christ

false when he said "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. And again, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself. On that very day, therefore, on which I will raise up the torn down and fallen tabernacle of David, all the nations will be called, and my name will be upon them.

And that the things foretold will in every way and entirely come to pass, he has fully assured by adding, Says the Lord God who does these things. For if he is truly the Lord God, he will in every way and entirely do these things also, being weak in nothing. For he does "Great and unsearchable things, glorious and wonderful, of which there is no number. Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, and the plowing will overtake the vintage, and the grape will ripen with the seed, and the mountains will drip sweetness, and all the hills will be planted; and I will restore the captivity of my people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and dwell in them, and they will plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they will plant gardens and eat their fruit. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up from their land which I have given them, says the Lord God Almighty. He has clearly interpreted the very thing I was saying.

And if someone should choose to make the narrative coarse and historical, he will say that again, that the return is clearly promised to those who have endured the captivity, and that they will possess their own land, having rebuilt cities and houses, and, being henceforth in a good state of prosperity, they will gather the good things from the fields, and will apply themselves to farming with gladness and joy, so that their labor in the harvests of the sweetest things becomes continuous, with the goods from the threshing floor coinciding with their vintage, and the vintage, in turn, extending again to the time of sowing, so that the farmer passes from the winepress and sickle and grape clusters to the plowlands of the plains, and having washed off the dust of the threshing floor, to take up the cares of the winepresses. But if we should wish to approach the contemplation of the things set before us in a more subtle and spiritual way, it would be fitting to reasonably think that. For since, as I said, Christ came back to life; for the Father raised the tent of David, and rebuilt its ruins, a great and abundant participation in spiritual goods has come upon all people, both Greeks and Jews; "For God is one, who has justified the circumcision by "faith, and the uncircumcision

through faith. Therefore, a very great supply of spiritual fruits is given to those who have believed, which is very well signified through earthly fruits.

For there will be, it says, an abundance of grain and wine. But we will now accept the grain for strength, clearly spiritual strength; for it is written that "And bread strengthens a man's heart," but in some way entirely spiritual and divine and from above; and the wine for gladness; for again it said, "And wine gladdens a man's heart; and we rejoice in hope," according to the voice of the blessed Paul. And the mountains drip sweetness. Therefore, the mountains, as it seems, here he calls the churches of Christ, on account of the loftiness of the doctrines in them, and the excellence of their piety towards God, and because the mountains appear to be covered with various plants, while the churches of Christ have countless heads of saints, like cedars and the tallest trees, which are established by the outlets of spiritual waters. But just as in the most wooded of mountains, swarms of bees flying about produce the sweet and precious honey; so again also in the churches, those who are more distinguished than others and more mature in virtue and understanding, collecting the sweet honey of the teaching about Christ, practically make it drip even into the hearts of others. Therefore, the mountains will drip sweetness in this way, I think. And he said the hills will be planted together. But hills are like those who are second and have less in virtue than those who are exceedingly distinguished in it.

For there are measures of holiness and righteousness in the churches, and as Paul says, "According to the grace given to each" by God who distributes such things. Therefore, these also will be planted together, he says, that is, flourishing and fruitful, and bearing a mind richly covered with the orthodoxy of divine doctrines. And that the God of all has restored our captivity, no one would doubt. For Christ proclaimed "release to the captives," and He rescued from the greed of the devil the whole world under heaven. Then indeed, then, like farmers, we became caretakers of all the spiritual fruitfulness, we planted gardens and vineyards, and we shall eat their fruit. For we shall receive the rewards for our labors, and we shall also gather the fruits of equity. And that we shall have an unshakable dwelling with God, and that no one could cast out those who are in the lots once given by him, he will make clear by saying, "I will plant them upon their land which I have given them, says the Lord God. "For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable," and we will be established in every good thing, having Christ himself

as our leader and festival-president; through whom and with whom to God the Father be the glory and the power with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

O B A D I A H

Obadiah again prophesies indeed in times, as it seems, in which also Joel, and he almost shares the vision with him, and the narrative is divided. For the divine Joel, at the very end of his prophecy, "Egypt, he says, will be for destruction, and Idumea for a "plain of destruction because of the injustices of the sons of Judah, for which they poured out righteous blood in their land. And he narrates in detail, in due time, in what manner and how the destruction of Idumea will be. But since it is profitable for those who will encounter the composition of the book to learn accurately and before all else, who Idumea is, what happened to it, and for what reason indeed it has been subjected to calamities from divine wrath, come, let us speak, as is possible, explaining such things clearly in detail to the lovers of learning. The Idumeans, then, are called and are those descended from Esau. For since he was named Edom, that is, earthly, on account of selling his birthright, and of disregarding the honor owed to him from it, and of preferring the serving of one meal, and that a most worthless one, for this reason they also named the ones born from him Idumeans. The land of the Idumeans is called both Seir and Teman; Seir, because its inhabitants were said to be hairy, and Esau was also hairy, for he was covered with hair; and Seir is interpreted as hairiness, or hairy.

And there was also a mountain in the land of Seir. Teman, on the other hand, because it is very southerly. For Teman means south in the Hebrew language. But to some it seems that it was called Teman for another reason. For they say that a son, Eliphaz, was born to Esau in due time, and from Eliphaz came Teman, from whom the land is also called Teman. And this is sufficient concerning Idumea and those in it. But they perished for such a reason as this. For when Jerusalem was being besieged by Nebuchadnezzar, and had come to the last extremes of evil—for countless men were falling, consumed by the swords of the nations—some were saved with difficulty, and were carried off to the lands of the neighboring nations; and most of those from Israel went down especially to Idumea, as it was their neighbor, and they thought that they would sympathize with them as brothers, and would remember the kinship of blood, and would grant aid to those who

had fared miserably. But they, although they ought to have pitied them as brothers, received them into their own land, but slaughtered them, running around the borders of Idumea in the manner of robbers, seizing them while they were in turmoil and terrified. And they were so inhuman as to surpass even the savagery of the Babylonians. For they went against them, as I said, as they were perishing, mocking and making the calamities of their kinsmen an occasion for a festival.

The Judeans, therefore, at that time departed into the land of the Persians and Medes. But when the seventy years had already passed, God had mercy; for they were brought back to Judea; they made haste both to rebuild the city itself and to raise up again the temple in it. But the Idumeans, again, their brothers and neighbors, were consumed with envy, and wished to prevent such undertakings, gathering the like-minded and neighboring barbarians, and indeed they even went to battle. And they fell and perished in the valley of Jehoshaphat, with God defending those of Israel. And since the Idumeans had become more burdensome than the foreigners, those of Israel overran their country, and killed those in it, and searching the holes of the rocks and caves and hiding places of the earth, they slaughtered those who were found. The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord God to Idumea: I have heard a report from the Lord, and he has sent a command to the nations: Arise, and let us rise up against it to war. In these words he interprets for us the whole purpose of his own prophecy, that is, of his vision, and makes clear where it is aimed. For he tries to fully convince that his vision is about the things that are to come upon Idumea.

For he confirms the hearers in faith, and tries to persuade them that what is spoken will in every way and entirely come to pass, saying that the words are least of all his own, but rather God's. He said, then, that he heard a report from God against Idumea. And what this might mean, he himself immediately clarified, adding that a command to the nations he sent forth. But what nations? Those of Idumea. For he says the surrounding, or siege, that is, the enclosure, was sent against them, with the divine judgment compelling them of necessity to suffer desolation. Or also in another way. For he commanded the nations around Idumea to carry out the surrounding, or the siege. And he commanded not altogether clearly, but as it were arousing as God, and sharpening them against them, which things, persuaded by divine nods, they say, having been driven on, almost shouting one to another,

"Arise, and let us rise up against her to war. For they invaded along with those from Israel who were ravaging Idumea and the neighboring nations. Behold, I have made you small among the nations, you are greatly dishonored. The pride of your heart has lifted you up, you who dwell in the holes of the rocks, who make your habitation high, saying in your heart, "Who will bring me down to the earth? Though you soar aloft like the eagle and though you set your nest among the stars, thence I will bring you down, says the Lord.

He says he was made small among the nations and dishonored because they had become altogether few in number, if they were compared to the multitude of those attacking; for very many, as I said, were sharpened against them. Or he says they became few, as the war had spent them, and had altogether reduced their race to a few. And from very great foolishness, the prophetic word implies to us that the Idumean used empty boastings. For he thought he would be hard to capture by his enemies, not because of his inherent strength and skill in war, but because the roughness and inaccessibility of the country was going to suffice for their salvation. For there were hills everywhere, and dreadful overhanging crags of rocks, and the wildness of mounds, and the heights of mountains. Why then, he says, do you boast in vain against the hand of those who are coming? For even if you have dwelt in a country which has received much inaccessibility, and is lifted on high, and even if you were to become an eagle, having its nest, as it were, in the air—and the word is again hyperbolic—yet from there you will be dashed down, as God drags you down; for absolutely nothing is impossible for him. If thieves had come to you, or robbers by night, where would you have been cast off? Would they not have stolen what was enough for themselves? And if grape-gatherers had come to you, would they not have left some gleanings?

How Esau has been searched out, and his hidden things have been seized! We have already said before that even by searching the clefts of the mountains, and the caves and chasms in the rocks, and the thickets, the foreign peoples who invaded and attacked along with those from Israel slaughtered the Idumeans, so that very few, or no one at all, was able to escape. The word therefore mocks them, and in a way speaks ironically and says: If you had experienced a robber's raid, and tribes of thieves had visited you, would they not have been content to take what was likely to be enough for them? And if indeed some were harvesting like a vine, would not the gleanings have es-

caped notice, even though the eye of those accustomed to harvest is exceedingly curious? But it was necessary for this to happen to them, and not by their own will, because for thieves, fear always commends flight, and to get away unnoticed, and if they snatch any of the things at hand, it seems to be enough for their satisfaction; but for harvesters, the foliage is always an obstacle to their search, taking away and concealing what can be hidden. But to you, he says, O Esau, that is, O Idumean from the blood of Esau, it has happened to suffer worse things; for the hidden things were seized, and no one escaped notice, and flight was useless, and the very inaccessibility of the places. They sent you forth to your borders;

all the men of your covenant have stood against you, the men at peace with you have prevailed against you; those who ate with you have set a trap under you, there is no understanding in them. In that day, says the Lord, I will destroy the wise men from Idumea, and understanding from Mount Esau. And your mighty men from Teman shall be dismayed, so that every man may be cut off from Mount Esau, because of the slaughter and the impiety toward your brother Jacob; and shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever; From the day you stood opposed, on the day that foreigners took his power captive, and strangers entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you also were as one of them. When those from Israel wanted to hinder them from building the temple and fortifying the holy city, those of the blood of Esau made covenants of unanimity with the neighboring nations, as we have already said. But when it happened that their country was captured by the campaigning forces of Israel, then those who were once genuine and conspirators and allies of all the others became more burdensome, ravaging and fighting. Therefore, he says, the war has sent you forth to your borders, that is, it has prepared you to disappear; for this is the meaning of "has sent you forth": not by invading parts of your country, but by taking the whole of it by force, and bringing it to desolation up to its very borders.

But they stood against you and have made war on you, he says, those whom it was perhaps very likely, according to your hope, to feel pain for you in your suffering. But they have laid snares under you, from whom you expected to be saved. But in the phrase, "There is no understanding in him," some such meaning is conveyed. They called wise and understanding men the false prophets and buffoons, the deceivers and augurs, and those who

pour forth the false fables of the stars, who have come to such a point of nonsense as to foolishly suppose that from these things they can grasp the knowledge of future events. Those who were cast into the worship of idols were greatly excited by this. The Idumeans, being sick with this along with the others, when the war was about to be proclaimed, considered the outcome of what was to happen; and gathering the wise men in these matters, they commanded them to report where the affairs of the war would lead for them. And they, as was likely, prophesied victory for them, but they were captured and have fallen, their art having failed them; and the wretched ones were proven to be utterly without understanding, speaking falsely.

And that although the men of Teman were formerly bold, these same Idumeans will be unmanly and terrified, he indicated by adding that "your mighty men from Teman shall be dismayed, so that every man from Mount Esau may be cut off," that is, until they perish down to the last one from Idumea. He therefore makes clear the cause of the disaster brought upon them, that it was "because of the slaughter and the impiety toward your brother. For since you have slain, he says, the one near in blood by kinship, that is, Jacob, or those from Jacob, you will be consumed by war, and you will be completely destroyed, full of shame and disgrace. And that they will have an irreversible fate, and will remain in such terrible disasters, he has signified by saying, "And you shall be cut off forever. And in "From the day," he recalls the time when the Babylonians had taken Judea, and were plundering the things in it, and had received by lot the things gathered from Jerusalem, they themselves lay in wait for the fugitives and slaughtered them, and as it were collaborated with the foreigners and with those who were carrying off the descendants of Jacob into captivity. So they were caught exulting in the disasters of their brothers, and yielding little to the Babylonians in savagery.

And do not look on the day of your brother in the day of strangers, and do not rejoice over the sons of Judah in the day of their destruction, and do not boast in the day of affliction, nor enter into the gates of the peoples in the day of their troubles; nor should you look upon their assembly in the day of their ruin, nor join in attacking their power in the day of their destruction; do not stand at their crossroads to destroy their survivors, nor shut up their fugitives in the day of affliction. He then enumerates again the charges against the Idumeans, the harsh showing that they have become merciless.

The word is fashioned, as if to those already being struck and tortured, with God exclaiming and reproaching the manner of their sin. To look upon is to laugh at and rejoice over suffering brothers, and to make the misfortunes of others an occasion for delight, although the divine scripture says that one must not smile at all at those who suffer. And in 'do not rejoice' and the rest, he again enumerates the crimes of the Idumean, showing that he had become harsh and merciless, and this toward brothers. For he says, do not you yourself hasten inside the gates along with the Assyrians, not extending a helping hand, as to brothers, but rather to plunder. And do not look upon the assembly being miserably destroyed; nor indeed add burdens to those greatly oppressed by you;

nor indeed be a snare to those who flee, guarding the exits and setting traps, so that no one, caught in your lack of affection, might be saved, even if he should escape the sword of the enemies. Everywhere the word accuses the inhumanity of the Idumeans, so that again the divine judgment might be seen as truly holy and blameless, with those who have committed those transgressions being justly punished. Because the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations; as you have done, so shall it be to you; your recompense shall be returned upon your own head. Because as you have drunk upon my holy mountain, all the nations shall drink wine, they shall drink and go down, and they shall be as though they had not been; but in mount Zion there shall be salvation, and it shall be holy. He proclaims again the time of war, during which the neighboring nations, gathered together with the Idumeans in the valley of Jehoshaphat, have paid bitter penalties. And he calls it the day of the Lord. For it was God who delivered to those of Israel those who had unrighteously wronged them; and that they will be punished by a holy judgment, he makes clear, saying, As you have done, so shall it be to you. For the divine nature weighs the faults of each, and in every way brings a corresponding punishment, for those things in which each might be found to have transgressed.

And in 'because as you have drunk,' he indicates something like this: It is perhaps a custom for those who have conquered their enemies, to boast over the conquered, to hold feasts and drinking parties, and indeed to shout out cries of victory and to fulfill the works of drunkenness. As you therefore mocked, he says, and danced upon those of Israel, drinking and dancing in exultation, and making the misfortunes of your brothers an occasion for a

festival, so all the nations shall drink and dance in exultation over you; and they shall come down against you, that is, they will overrun your country. And you yourself shall be counted among those who do not exist. For you shall be so destroyed, as to seem somehow never to have existed. The divinely-inspired scripture calls the Church mount Zion; for it is truly high, and truly a watchtower, and holy in addition to these things, since it is the house and city of the all-holy God. And the house of Jacob shall possess those who possessed them; and the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, but the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall be kindled against them, and shall devour them, and there shall be no survivor for the house of Esau, because the Lord has spoken. And they in the Negeb shall possess the mount of Esau, and they in the Shephelah the Philistines;

and they shall possess the mount of Ephraim and the plain of Samaria and Benjamin and Gilead. The senseless Idumean thought that he would have the house of Jacob as an inheritance, that is, those from the seed of Jacob, and indeed he divided up the land, having helped to ravage it. But, he says, the matter will be unexpectedly reversed for them. For they shall be an inheritance for those of Jacob. And they will be consumed in such a way, as stubble would be by a flame. For the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph will be in no way inferior to the powers of a flame. Therefore they shall be completely devoured, so that one would not be able to find a single survivor from an entire tribe or nation. And it seems that the account, following the trope, speaks of them as fire-bearing, for it named the house of Jacob fire, and in turn the house of Joseph a flame. And the house of Jacob would reasonably be understood as those from Judah and Benjamin, while the house of Joseph, those in Samaria, that is, the ten tribes, whose kings from time to time were from the tribe of Ephraim, and Manasseh and Ephraim were from Joseph. But in the phrase, 'those in the Negeb shall inherit,' this is signified.

For when the Babylonians, leaving their own land, came against Jerusalem, with Nebuchadnezzar rousing them to battle, it necessarily happened that the entire land of the Jews was ravaged, and was consequently brought to such misery as to be reduced to a complete wilderness and seen stripped of its inhabitants. But when, God having taken pity and having loosed the snares of captivity, they were brought back again to their own land, he says they will be so enlarged, and will increase to such a numerous multitude,

that the lands of the neighboring nations will also be allotted, as Judea would likely be too small. And this would be a very clear sign of blessing from God. For 'those in the Negeb,' he says, that is, those in the south; for Negeb is interpreted as south; 'shall make the mountain of Esau their inheritance,' that is, Idumea. For since it is southern, those who inhabited the southern parts of Judea will by all means take possession of it as a neighbor and borderland. And those in the Shephelah, that is, those in the plain—and this part of the land of the Jews is certainly somewhat more northern—'shall inherit the land of the foreigners.' He means the Philistines, or Palestinians. And they shall possess no less the mountain of Ephraim, Samaria, Benjamin, and Gilead. These are allotments that were distributed at various times to the tribes of Israel, when Jesus who came after Moses was general.

But since they had been desolated by the hand of the Assyrians even before Nebuchadnezzar arrived, by the kings Pul and Shalmaneser, for this reason he says that these places too will be inhabited and will escape the desolation that had occurred long ago. And this is the dominion of the captivity for the sons of Israel, the land of the Canaanites as far as Sarepta, and the captivity of Jerusalem as far as Ephrathah; and they shall inherit the cities of the Negeb. And men who have been saved shall go up from mount Zion to take vengeance on the mountain of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's. Here he calls 'captivity' those who were transported from Jerusalem, that is, from all of Judea, to Babylon. And he says that their 'dominion' will be the inheritance that will be under their hand and authority; just as one might speak of the 'rule' of so-and-so in the case of a ruler. Therefore, he says, for those formerly transported, the land of the Canaanites will be both a dominion and an inheritance; he means Arabia, and as far as Sarepta, which is of Sidonia, so that by this you may understand the land of the Phoenicians. And he says it will be extended as far as Ephrathah, that is, as has been rendered by the other interpreters, even to the Bosphorus, which is the southernmost parts of the east. And he says they will bring under themselves the cities of the Negeb, that is, of the south.

And through these things, the discourse seems to us to signify the nations of India; for the Indians and their lands are very far to the south. It is as if he were saying, for instance: 'All things will be full of them, those to the south, to the north, to the east, to the west, and they will simply possess every city and land.' And in the phrase 'and men shall go up,' the purpose of the proph-

ecy is in a way recapitulated. For the inhabitants of Zion, he says, having been saved by God, and having broken the bonds of captivity, shall in due time go up and execute vengeance upon the mountain of Esau. For they made war, as I said, against the Idumeans after the times of the captivity, and God of all has reigned over them, although formerly He had rejected this, and had departed from Judea on account of their apostasy. For they had served idols, and the golden calves. But when they returned, He received them again and reigned over them; for the Master is philanthropic and benevolent, and easy to be reconciled with those who offend; if only we show some small turning towards him; to him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

JONAH

The divine Jonah was the son of Amittai, and he came from Gath-hepher; this is a small town in the land of the Jews, or a village, according to the probable account. It seems that he made his prophetic utterances at that time when those before him did, I mean Hosea and Amos and Micah and the rest. And one might see that he had prophesied very many things to the peoples of the Jews, and had conveyed the words from above and from God, and had clearly announced things to come. Therefore, there is no other written account of his prophecy besides this one. But that he continued to proclaim to the assemblies of the Jews the things that were to be at various times, the divinely inspired scripture has testified. For in the fourth book of Kings, the sacred writing speaks about Jeroboam, not indeed the first one in the beginning, who was the son of Nebat, who also made Israel to sin, as it is written, by persuading them to worship the golden calves, of course, but of another Jeroboam who came after many others; and what the blessed Jonah foretold, it clarified saying, "He restored the border of Is-rael from the entrance of Hamath to the sea of the Arabah," according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which He spoke by the hand of "His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from "Gath-hepher. For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, "that it was very bitter;

and that there were very few shut up and left "destitute and forsaken; and there was no one to help "Israel; and the Lord did not say that He would blot out the "seed from under heaven; and He saved them by the "hand of Jeroboam son of Joash. And it says "by the hand" instead of "through the hand. For Jeroboam, as I said, the son of Joash, had warred against the foreigners, and

again brought under his control cities of the land of the Jews that had been seized, and helped those of Israel not a little, with God defending and willing to save them, although they had reached the end of the uttermost misery of all. Therefore, there were indeed also other prophetic words at various times for the blessed Jonah, but the things concerning him have now been written down both usefully and according to the divine economy. For the matter is worthy to be heard, I mean, the proclamation to the Ninevites, and to suffer the things in between. And it somehow records, as in shadows, also the mystery of the economy of our Savior. And so Christ himself said, speaking to the Jews, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For just as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

Therefore, the mystery of Christ is in a way represented and formed for us in the things concerning the divine Jonah. However, I think I must say that to those who will read this. When an account of spiritual contemplation is formed, with a person set forth, and taken as a type of our Savior of all, Christ, it is necessary for the wise and knowledgeable person to discern, which things are consequently to be regarded as useless for the proposed purpose, and which, on the other hand, are useful and necessary, and are by nature most able to benefit the hearers. For example, let us say: let the blessed Moses be proposed, who presented Israel to God at Mount Sinai, and became a mediator between God and men. For those of Israel, being afraid, begged, saying, "You speak to us, and let not God speak to us, lest we die. But that the matter prefigured the mediation through Christ God the Father himself clearly taught, saying thus: "They have spoken rightly in all that they have said. I will raise up for them a Prophet from their brothers, like you," evidently mediating and presenting the human race to God and announcing to those throughout all the earth the ineffable will of God the Father. "For I will put my words into his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

Therefore, the divine Moses was taken as a type of Christ, but we will not apply all of Moses' characteristics to him, lest we be caught doing and saying something absurd. For Moses confessed that he was of a weak voice and slow of tongue and ill-equipped for the mission; for he said that "I am of a weak voice and slow of tongue; and I am not eloquent, neither yesterday nor the

day before, nor since you have spoken to your servant; and he pleaded, saying: "I pray, Lord, appoint another you are able to send. But Christ is not slow of tongue, nor indeed of a weak voice like him, but he himself is the great trumpet. For so the blessed prophet Isaiah named him, saying, "And it shall be in that day, they will blow the great trumpet. For the word of the Savior is proclaimed, and has been heard by those throughout all the world under heaven. And knowing this, the blessed David said, "The God of gods, the Lord, has spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. Therefore, Moses mediates as a type of Christ, but he is slow of speech, in this no longer showing the type in himself. Again, the blessed Aaron was taken as a prefiguration of Emmanuel, crowned with the glories of the high priesthood, and entering into the holy of holies, and clothed in that glorious and admirable vestment. But again we will not attribute all his characteristics to Christ;

for he was not completely blameless. For he was once rebuked, having spoken against Moses together with Miriam. And he was also otherwise not without fault, when Israel made the calf in the wilderness. Therefore, not all things in the letter and types are useful for spiritual contemplations, but if a person is introduced who prefigures Christ for us in himself, we will reasonably pass over the human aspects, and we will focus only on the necessary ones, turning in every way that which is naturally beneficial to the proposed aim. For so indeed in the case of the divine Jonah we will understand. For he forms for us, as it were, the mystery of Christ. Yet not all the things that happened to him would be understood as useful and necessary for this purpose; for example, he was sent to preach to the Ninevites, but he sought to flee from the presence of God, and is seen hesitating at the mission. The Son was also sent from God the Father to proclaim to the nations, but he was not unwilling for the ministry, nor indeed did he seek to flee from the presence of God the Father. The Prophet pleaded with those on the ship, saying, "Take me and throw me into the sea, and the sea will be calm for you; he was swallowed also by the great fish, then he was cast out after three days, and after this he went to Nineveh and fulfilled the ministry.

But he was greatly grieved that God had mercy on those from Nineveh. Christ also willingly underwent death; he remained in the heart of the earth three days and three nights, and rose again, and after this he went to Galilee, and commanded that the beginning of the preaching to the nations be

made; for he commanded his disciples to make disciples of "all the nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Yet he is not grieved at seeing them saved unto repentance, as indeed was the blessed Jonah. Therefore, if we do not turn the entire account of the story to the aim of spiritual contemplation, let no one blame us. For just as bees, flying around meadows and flowers, always gather what is useful for the construction of honeycombs, so also the wise interpreter, searching the holy and divinely-inspired scripture, the always collecting and composing that which contributes to the clarification of the mysteries of Christ, will produce a discourse that is both skillful and irreproachable. From here, therefore, we must begin the exegesis. And the word of the Lord came to Jonas the son of Amathi, saying, Arise, and go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach in it; for the cry of its wickedness is come up to me.

Having considered the ministry and mission of Jonah's prophecy, one might say very fittingly for the occasion that which is sung through the voice of the blessed Paul, "Is God the God of the Jews only, and not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith. And the divinely-inspired Peter himself, having learned this by experience, proclaimed to us, saying, "In truth we perceive that God is not a respecter of persons, but in every nation he that fears him, and works righteousness, is acceptable to him. For he himself created the earth and the heaven and all things in them, and he made man in the beginning according to his own image and likeness, so that, cleaving to the pursuits of virtue, he might live resplendently in holiness and blessedness, and might have a rich share in his gifts. Then he was brought over to sin, being deceived by the evil deeds of the devil; for this reason he also became accursed and subject to corruption. Christ was therefore predestined and foreknown before the foundation of the world for the restoration of all things. For God the Father was pleased "to sum up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. But such achievements as these were being kept for the Only-Begotten, who became like us and shone upon the world in the flesh.

But that God made his care for those who had gone astray a necessity, even before the times of his coming, and bestowed his visitation upon those who had slipped out of ignorance, he wished to fully convince through deeds. For this reason, he commanded the blessed Prophet to go to Nineveh.

Now Nineveh is a Persian city, situated towards the east, and famous, and, as the prophet Jeremiah says, "It is a land of graven images. For very many of the neighboring cities of the Jews were also devoted to the worship of idols. "For both Tyre and Sidon and all Galilee of the Gentiles" worshipped the works of their own hands, and among them were seats and altars and precincts of innumerable demons. Why then, tell me, passing over the neighboring cities, does he send the Prophet to Nineveh, which lies furthest away, in which especially, as I have already said before, there was a savage multitude who had unrestrainedly consented to the necessity of worshipping the sun and stars and fire? For it was stirred up beyond all reason to a God-hated sorcery. For it was said to her through the voice of Jeremiah, "A beautiful and graceful harlot, mistress of sorceries.

I think, therefore, that the all-knowing God usefully willed to show even to the ancients that even those who are utterly deranged and entangled in the snares of error will at the appointed times be caught in the net for the knowledge of the truth, even if they should be exceedingly terrible and stubborn and have gone very far into unruliness. For the word of God is not without power to nourish the mind and to persuade it to learn the things through which it might become wise. And you will hear him saying to Jeremiah, at one time that, "Behold, I have made my words in your mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them; and at another time again, "Are not my words like a burning fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? Therefore, the divinely-inspired Jonah was sent to the Ninevites not in vain, but so that there might be a pre-demonstration of the gentleness inherent in God, which would be given at the appointed times even to those who had erred out of ignorance. At the same time, what was being done was also for the condemnation of Israel; for it was being convicted as difficult to lead, as disobedient, as having cared little for the laws of God. For the Ninevites, when one prophet preached, are transformed without delay to the necessity of choosing to repent, although they were exceedingly sick with error;

but those who disregarded Moses and the prophets, have also despised our Savior of all, Christ, although He added miracles to His teachings, through which it was likely they would be persuaded, and very easily, that being God by nature, He became man, to save all under heaven, but them before all others. But that this matter would have the power of refutation for those of

Israel, and very likely so, Christ Himself will make clear, saying, "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. But how is that which is in Christ greater than Jonah? For the one only threatened the Ninevites with destruction, but our Lord Jesus Christ, striking them with awe through unspeakable miracles, was marveled at; for a miracle always running concurrently with the word is a drawing towards faith. Most providentially, therefore, the blessed Jonah is sent to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh that the cry of their wickedness has gone up to the God of all. For He is ignorant of absolutely nothing; but if He is moved to visit the things that some have transgressed, then He says the outcry from their works has come up to Him. For He is judge of all things as God. And it is said that the blood of Abel cried out against the murder of Cain, and the wildness of the shameful deeds of the cities in Sodom.

And Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and he went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish, and he paid its fare, and went aboard it, to sail with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. Joppa, then, is a city of Palestine, situated on the sea itself; a convenient seaport for those from Judea going on a voyage, and especially to the cities towards the east. So the Prophet goes down, then having found a ship sailing to Tarshish; for this course had likely been set for the ship there; he paid the fare, and sailed away with the others. But by Tarshish he means those now called Tarsians, or rather Tarsus. Some, then, think that by this is signified the city among the Ethiopians and Indians, and admittedly there is a Tarshish among them; indeed, the entire country of the Indians is signified by Tarshish; however, for the present, I do not think the text wishes to indicate that one; because for those wishing to sail to the nations of India, the voyage would likely not be through Joppa, but rather through the Red Sea, unless someone should happen to think that the Prophet planned to make his escape through Persia and Assyria to innermost Ethiopia. But I think this is utterly foolish; so it seems he calls Tarshish, as I said, what is now Tarsus;

this is a city of the Cilicians, drinking the stream of the Cydnus, and situated at the very foothills of the Taurus; and this is a very great mountain of the Cilicians. So the Prophet sails away, and his pretext for the journey is to flee from the presence of God. Here, then, the matter is not unexamined by

us, or rather, the manner of his flight. I think, then, that to refuse the mission and, as it were, to shrink from the ministry, this is to flee from the presence of God. But for what reason he departs for Tarshish, and what he had considered, I cannot understand. Unless one might consider this for himself, that there was a certain small conception of God in him, as also in the more ancient saints; for some thought that the power of the God of all was attached to the land of the Jews alone, and was, as it were, confined within it and departed from other land. And indeed the divine Jacob at times departed from his ancestral hearth, and hastened to Laban, and into the midst of the rivers. Then he camped in a certain country, and putting a stone under his head as was his custom, he slept. Then he saw the ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it, and the Lord standing upon it. And he said upon rising, "Surely God is in this place, and I did not know it.

Therefore I think, indeed, that having considered some such thing within himself, the blessed Prophet also was estranged from Judea, and withdrew to the cities of the Greeks. And we shall know from his own words the reason for his hesitation and for not choosing eagerly to fulfill the ministry. For he went away later and proclaimed; but since the things of the prophecy did not come to pass for him, he was greatly grieved, and indeed he even said, "O Lord, were not these my words when I was still in my own land? For this reason I made haste to flee to Tarshish, because I knew that you are merciful and compassionate, long-suffering and of great mercy and repenting over evils. And now, O Master Lord, take my soul from me, for it is better for me to die than to live. For as a prophet he was not ignorant of the outcome of the ministry; yet he feared lest, if the proclamations made through him were not brought to fulfillment, the Ninevites might be ignorant of the goodness of the God who had pitied them, and they might destroy him and consume him, as a buffoon, as a deceiver and a liar, and one who had persuaded them to labor in vain. For the barbarian is always prone to wrath, and very ready to be enraged, even if it has no reasonable pretext for its madness.

And the Lord raised up a great wind upon the sea, and there was a great tempest on the sea, and the ship was in danger of being broken up. And the sailors were afraid and cried out each to his own god, and they cast forth the goods that were in the ship into the sea to be lightened of them. The storm rises up against the ship, God so ordering it and stirring up the sea with the

wild blasts of winds; and fear falls upon the sailors, and their speech was already of their last moments, as the vessel, as was likely, was creaking, and all but threatening already in some way that it was about to be broken apart. And the crowd of sailors used their customary aids, and they lighten the ship, so that it might be high above the waves, and so for the future might ride more easily upon the waters. And it is a great proof of the storm that even the mariners themselves were struck with fear, and most earnestly entreated their own gods to come as saviors to them, as they had already despaired of their salvation. But Jonah had gone down into the hold of the ship and was sleeping and snoring. And the shipmaster came to him and said to him, Why are you snoring? Arise and call upon your god, that perhaps God may save us and we may not perish.

Indolence in prayer would least of all befit prophetic sobriety, with dangers impending, and the love of lying on one's back, when time and circumstance call to labors, in which it would be more fitting to propitiate the God of all. From this it is possible to understand that the sleep was before the storm; for being accustomed to be very quiet, he had gone down even into the hold of the ship. For it is always dear and greatly desired by the saints to withdraw from turmoil, and to be separated from crowds, and to continue in solitude, just as the divine prophet Jeremiah says, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth; he will sit alone, because he has taken it upon himself. And again he cried out concerning the multitude of the disobedient, "O Lord Almighty, I did not sit in the council of those who make sport, but I was in awe of your hand; I sat alone, because I was filled with bitterness. But to sit alone, I think, somehow signifies the quiet life, and being freed from worldly care and anxiety, and not going intermingled with others, who have honored the pleasure-loving and flesh-loving life. So then the Prophet dozes off, not disregarding what was fitting, but, as I have already said, before the onset of the storms. Yet the shipmaster makes an end of it, saying that he should rather call upon his God.

For it somehow always grieves those in danger that some seem to be above fear, and honor indolence at an inopportune time. And each one said to his neighbor Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. and they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. The sailors, indeed, are most curious and devise something unusual and strange: to hasten to learn by lot the one on account of whom God is grieved. Nevertheless, this

also is usefully arranged, so that he who thought he could flee from the presence of God might be made manifest; for the lot falls on him, and he is seen enduring the refutation from the event. For he was afraid, as was likely, to make the accusation more readily than his own reflection. It is therefore a good and wise thing for those who are willing to keep it, that: "Do not be ashamed to confess your sins. And they said to him, 'Tell us, for whose cause this evil is upon us;

what is your occupation, and where do you come from, and where are you going, and from what country, and from what people are you?' and he said to them, 'I am a servant of the Lord, and I worship the Lord God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.' And the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, 'What is this that you have done?' For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. They question usefully, as having already recognized the culprit by lot, but not yet having a clear understanding of the nature of the transgression. And since they were idolaters, they command him to say what was his occupation, what country and city, and from what peoples he came, seeking, I think, to learn which god he had offended. For each of those sailing had his own, and there was not one God of all. They thought that by appeasing the demon that was angered at him, they would ward off the harm from the storm. But when the Prophet called himself a servant of the God who fashioned earth and heaven, and said that he himself worshipped him, they immediately understood that he was fleeing from the presence of God. But how did they understand? Because it was not lawful for Jews to depart from the country allotted to them, nor indeed to visit foreigners, nor to enter cities accustomed to idolatry.

And the matter was a reproach among them, and not unsuspected of apostasy; it indeed seemed to be both outside the law, and among things of blame and judgment. And so our Lord Jesus Christ clearly affirmed that they would be deprived of his salvation—I mean that which is in faith—unless they chose to lay hold of it while he was still present and dwelling in the world; for he said, "Yet a little while I am with you, and I go to him who sent me. You will seek me and you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come; but those who reproached the apostasy of the Jews to the Gentiles, said ignorantly, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the dispersion of the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? For as something faded and outside the beaten path, and very far from their

custom, they considered it a reproach to mingle with the peoples of the Greeks. Therefore, because he had not remained within the borders of Judea, but was sailing with them to Tarsus, they entertain suspicions, and they infer that perhaps he is also rejecting the life in the law, and having given himself over to the customs of the Greeks, he has practiced the flight as from the presence of God.

And they said to him, 'What shall we do to you, that the sea may be calm for us?' for the sea was proceeding, and was stirring up a greater surge. And Jonah said to them, 'Take me and cast me into the sea, and the sea will be calm for you; for I know that it is because of me that this great surge is upon you.' They fear the sea raging against them intolerably; but they shudder no less at the God of the Hebrews; for they were not ignorant of the power and glory inherent in him, although they were foreigners. And since he said he was a servant of God, they are now perplexed and divided in their opinions. For they hesitate at the murder, suspecting the wrath of the all-powerful God. But as the sea leapt upon them no less than before, they make necessary provision for themselves. For this reason they ask him to say, what would be done by them, and the surging will be calmed, and the wave will be stilled, and they themselves will escape the ultimate danger. What then does the Prophet do? He confesses his offense, and having stumbled, is ashamed, and condemns his own ill counsel; For he says, 'Take me up and cast me into the sea. For he as much as said that they must exact punishment from him for having shrunk from his mission.

For he knew that the raging sea would somehow be reconciled to the ship if it took the one it was seeking, and the sea would cease its battle, now having the one who had offended. And the men rowed hard to return to the land, but they could not, for the sea went and grew more and more tempestuous against them. and they cried out to the Lord and said, 'By no means, O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life, and do not lay on us innocent blood; for you, O Lord, have done as you pleased. and they took Jonah and cast him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. The Prophet for his part was condemning himself to death, and he thought it right that they should end their terror by the danger to his own life. but they were still very fearful and reluctant to commit murder, and wished to save one who was a servant of God, and to deliver him alive to the dry land; and thus rather to discharge the wrath. For this reason they tried hard to bring the ship to

shore, but the goal of their attempts was unattainable, as the wind stirred up an irresistible wave against them, and rushed upon the vessel with wilder assaults.

For this reason, then, they propitiate through prayer, and they entreat God to be merciful to them, not wishing to kill, but as ones yielding to His judgments, being forced at last to give Jonah to the sea, and indeed they gave him. And it, having received him, is with difficulty appeased, and spreads a calm, and gives the sailors the hope of being saved; and everywhere yielding to the divine nods, and swiftly serving the master's commands, it was evident from the events themselves. And the men feared the Lord with a great fear, and they offered sacrifices to the Lord and made vows. They have profited greatly, and believe that there is one God by nature, although they were divided towards an absurd error, and believed there to be countless gods throughout the world. Therefore they sacrifice to the one who is by nature and alone truly God, leaving their own gods, and bidding farewell to those honored out of deceit, who steal the glory due to God. And they promise vows, although they were accustomed to do this to the sea-demons. For it seems to the children of the Greeks that the power of the sea is also attached to a certain Poseidon; for all things among them are myths, and nonsense, and terrible folly. But we, glorifying the God who is by nature, say to Him truly, "You rule the power of the sea, and you calm the raging of its waves. The heavens are yours and the earth is yours;

the world and its fullness you have founded. And the Lord commanded a great fish to swallow Jonah. and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. God commands the fish by his nod; for to will something to come to completion, this is both law, and fulfillment, and has the power of law. For we do not say, as he does for us, or for the holy angels, that the God of all gave a command to the fish, somehow sounding what must be done into its mind, and putting into its heart the knowledge of what he might choose. For it is utterly foolish and not far from madness to think that the God of all deals with monsters in such a way, but if he is said to command at all either irrational animals or the elements or a part of creation, we say that what seems good to him is law and command. For all things yield to his nods, and the manner of their obedience is completely ineffable to us, but is certainly known to him. Therefore he is swallowed by the fish, having suffered no harm, and was in it for three days and three nights.

But perhaps the matter might seem to some to be in a way unseemly, and beyond fitting reason. For they will disbelieve, and before all others, those who do not know the God who is by nature and truly, but are given over to the deceits of demons. And they will say:

How could he have been saved, being in a whale? And how would he not have been destroyed being swallowed? Or how did he endure the natural heat? And being surrounded by so much moisture, I mean, in the belly, how did he survive, or rather how was he not consumed like food, being digested? For the flesh is altogether weak and all too ready for destruction. We say then, that the event would rightly be considered truly paradoxical, and beyond reason and custom. But if God is said to bring it to pass, who then will disbelieve? For the divine is all-powerful, and easily reshapes the natures of existing things to whatever it may choose, and to its ineffable commands nothing offers resistance. For what is by nature corruptible, might become stronger than corruption, if He wills it, and what is solid and unshakable, and resistant to the laws of corruption, would easily suffer corruption. For I think nature for existing things is what seems good to the Creator. Moreover, this too must be known, that even the children of the Greeks, in the myths composed among them, say that Heracles, the son of Alcmene and Zeus, was swallowed by a sea-monster, and given forth again from its natural heat, with his head made bare, having suffered the loss of his hair alone. Lycophron mentions the story; and he is one of their famous writers; for he said concerning him, "Of the three-nighted lion, whom once the jagged dog of Triton mangled with its jaws.

But we do not confirm divine things from their mythologies, we make mention of them usefully, refuting those who disbelieve, that the account of their own history does not reject such narratives. But since I suppose it is necessary to add to what has happened paradoxically also from the things still done according to the will of God, come let us say, that also in the womb the embryo swims in natural moisture, and is as it were enclosed in the belly of her who bears it, and it does not have breath, and yet it lives thus, and is preserved, being paradoxically nourished by the commands of God. But no such reasoning could attain to it, nor could the things of God be comprehended by anyone. "For who has known the mind of the Lord? as it is written; or who could know the ways of paradoxes? Or whose mind would not be surpassed at all by things that run beyond the power of reason? Therefore it is

precarious to disbelieve, even if God should do something that is far beyond reason; and we shall accept it as true, putting aside untimely inquiry.

And I say that it is necessary, since the blessed Prophet was taken as a type of the ministry understood in Christ, to add of necessity, that the whole earth was in peril, human affairs were storm-tossed, the waves of sin all but leaping upon it, with terrible and unbearable pleasure surging around, and corruption rising up like a flood, and savage spirits breaking forth, I mean both the devil and the evil powers under him and with him. But when we were in these circumstances, the Creator had mercy, God the Father sent us the Son from heaven, who, having become in the flesh, and having come to the endangered and storm-tossed earth, willingly gave Himself over to death, so that He might stop the raging surge, and the sea might grow calm, and the wave might be stilled, and the surge might cease. For we have been saved in the death of Christ. And the storm has passed by, the rain has gone away, the waves have been calmed, the violence of the spirits has been broken, and now a deep calm has been spread, and we are in spiritual fair weather, Christ having suffered for us. You have something similar to this in the evangelical writings. For once the boat of the Apostles was sailing across the sea of Tiberias. Then a violent wind having come upon the waters, they were unbearably storm-tossed; and enduring the utmost danger, they wake Christ who was with them sleeping, saying expressly crying out, "Master, save us, we are perishing.

And he, being awakened, it says, rebuked the sea, saying with authority, "Be silent, be muzzled," and he saved the disciples. Therefore, what was done was a type of what has happened to human nature. For through him, as I said, we have been delivered from both death and corruption and sin and passions, and the storm of old has been driven away, and our affairs have turned to a calm. And Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the sea monster, and he said, "I cried out in my affliction to the Lord my God, and he heard me; from the belly of Hades, from my cry, you heard my voice. Having been wronged in no way, but using the sea monster as a house, being in his right mind, and having been harmed in no way, either in body or mind, he perceives the assistance. He knows that God has become favorable; and not ignorant of what had happened from his shrinking from the ministry, he turns to prayer, and offers up prayers of thanksgiving, at the same time he confesses the glory of the one who saves, and marvels at the au-

thority, and proclaims the gentleness. For he said that his prayer was received, and this, I think, he understood by the prophetic spirit. And the "from the belly of Hades," he says as if from the stomach of the sea monster, cleverly comparing the beast to Hades and death;

since it also knows how to kill, and to swallow savagely the one who is caught. You cast me into the depths of the heart of the sea, and rivers encircled me; all your surges and your waves passed over me. And I said, "I am cast out from your sight. He explains in many ways what happened, carrying up the grace, as it were, on high, and bearing witness to the divine commands that He can easily save from every evil. For he says he was in the very recesses of the sea, and in the confusion of many waters, with river-like waves overwhelming him, and to have slipped into such a calamity, that he then thought he had endured the complete turning away of the divine eyes, and had come to a despair of salvation. But it is a most dreadful thing and a cause of ruin, I mean, to be out of the sight of God. Therefore, the divine David also besought, saying, "Do not turn your face away from me, and do not turn away in anger from your servant. For the necessity of suffering the divine wrath surely follows the turning away, or rather, anger somehow rises up before and precedes the turning away. Shall I look again toward your holy temple? He knows that he has been kept by the power of God, and having been deemed worthy of help from above, he has lived and been saved;

and this in a sea monster and in the belly of a beast, miraculously and beyond reason. He doubts, however, as is likely, whether he will be released and come into the light again. He makes it truly thrice-desired and much-prayed-for to enter the divine temple itself, and to offer up doxologies to God who saved him, and he prays to receive such a grace, bearing witness to God, as I said, that He is able to accomplish all things. Water was poured around me to my soul; the uttermost abyss encircled me, my head went down into the clefts of the mountains; I went down to a land whose bars are eternal bolts. And let my life come up from corruption to you, O Lord my God. Having been saved by the ineffable power of God, he wished to send up more splendid odes of thanksgiving. He surely recounts in some way what happened, and he teaches subtly with what calamity he was encompassed, and again he proclaims how he was saved. That he was, then, in the sea, and in a great abyss, and in the clefts of mountains, as the sea monster likely plunged down among rocks and the caves in the sea, he was not ignorant as a

prophet; but he says he reached a land whose bars are eternal bolts, that is, Hades, not that he had been there; for we shall not find him to have died;

but that the greatness of the danger and the weight of what had happened was in no way short of seeming to have died completely, and to have arrived in Hades itself, from where no one could depart, and one who had once been entrapped would in no way return. For I think this is what "the" signifies to have its bars as possessors forever, as it were unbreakable and never overcome or loosened by anyone. But that he did not die, but lived, as I said, in the sea monster, and was in it, having suffered nothing that leads to death or corruption, would easily show that he was also in hope of being saved again. For this reason he says, "Let my life come up from corruption, O Lord my God. For he prays to be given to the light, and to be brought up, as it were, from Hades, from the belly of the sea monster. When my soul was fainting within me, I remembered the Lord; and let my prayer come to you, into your holy temple. For those who wish to be well-pleasing, toil is not without profit, nor would affliction be considered burdensome. And the blessed David will bear witness, saying, "In my affliction I called upon the Lord; and another of the holy prophets, "O Lord, in affliction we remembered you. And it seemed very fitting to the divine Paul to accept and praise affliction, that is, the affliction that happens for the sake of virtue.

For he said, "Because affliction produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put to shame. So then, as the Prophet's soul was fainting, that is, enduring the toil that leads to danger and to the last extremities, something profitable was again being done. For not, as some, having immediately slipped into despondency, did he make a denunciation of the divine judgments, but he remembered the one who saves. For he cried out to him, he thirsted for help, not ignorant of his gentleness and the preeminence of his strength, he made his supplications to him, begging that his own life be delivered from death and corruption. It is therefore a great and admirable thing not to be despondent in toils, but rather to appease the Master with supplications and prayers, and to seek from him the postponement of the evil and the dissolution of the misfortune. Those who keep to vain and false things have forsaken their own mercy. But I with the voice of praise and thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay to you for my salvation by the Lord. For others, he says, being ignorant of you, the Master of all, the Creat-

or, then being entangled in the snares of vanity, and assigning reverence to falsely-named gods, and chasing flying birds—that is, the hope in them—and shepherding the winds, do not ask mercy from you, nor have they ever come within such a hope. But I am not like them; how could I be?

But I know you as the helper, the good and merciful one. Therefore with voice and supplication I will confess to you, he says, and just as some of the most fragrant incenses I will offer up odes, that is, I will bring to you thanksgiving and spiritual sacrifices, doxology, praises. And I will complete, and very eagerly, the vows for salvation, that is, whatever things work out my salvation and benefit my soul. And this was obedience to anything whatsoever that seems good to God, and the fulfillment of the prophetic ministry, with all hesitation and faint-heartedness removed. So the Prophet, being in the sea monster, prays. And the type is human, but the true image of the matter, that is Christ, was shown before the precious cross, when he was all but entering his passion, saying to the Father in heaven, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from me," and he became very fearful, and as one in distress. And if indeed, having arrived in the regions under the earth, he spoke any human things, he himself would know; for it is precarious to say. However, we will find the divine Peter attributing to him the words through the voice of David, "For this reason you will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor will you let your Holy One see corruption. For his flesh did not see corruption."

For on the third day he rose again, inasmuch as it was not possible for him, being Life by nature, to be held by the bonds of death. And the sea monster was commanded, and it cast out Jonah upon the dry land. The sea monster is again commanded by a certain divine and ineffable power of God, being moved toward what seems good to him; and indeed it releases from its bowels the A prophet, for whom suffering was not without profit, but rather was sharpened by the experience, and had come to know clearly how perilous it is to contradict the decrees of the Master. And the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying: Arise and go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim in it according to the former proclamation that I spoke to you. So then, now using a warmer zeal, God again commands him to go to Nineveh, and to use the same proclamation that was spoken to him at the beginning. And this was "Because the cry of its wickedness has come up to me. Now, I have already spoken of the things concerning Christ, but I will speak again, hesitating in nothing. For it is written that "To say the

same things is not tiresome for me, but for you it is safe. Therefore, before the precious cross we shall find Christ still somehow hesitating, I mean with respect to the need to set forth the word of the evangelical ordinances also to those from the nations.

And indeed he says most clearly, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and he commanded his holy disciples, "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But he was "in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights; and he came "to the springs of the sea, and walked in the tracks of the abyss. And he went down as if into the clefts of the mountains, and descended into the earth, whose bars are eternal holders. Then, having plundered Hades, and having proclaimed to the spirits there, and having opened the immovable gates, he came back to life again. For his life has come up from corruption, and thus he was seen, even before the others, by the women seeking him in the garden. Then, having said "Rejoice," he commanded them to announce to the holy disciples that he goes before them into Galilee; then his word was finally also to the nations through the blessed Apostles; then he preached to those who were astray according to the former proclamation. For he did not instruct Israel with one set of commandments before his death, and those from the nations with another set after this; but the Gospel is one for all;

and the knowledge of the divine disciples is completely one, and not different for those from Israel and for us who from the nations are called through faith into sanctification. And Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, as the Lord had spoken. Now Nineveh was a great city to God, about a three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city, about a one day's journey, and he proclaimed and said: Yet three days and Nineveh will be overthrown. The Prophet is sent, and girded with irresistible zeal he begins what must be done. For indeed he enters, and very vigorously, into the foreign Nineveh, to serve the divine commands. And the city being wide, and extending to such a size as to require a journey of three days, if one should choose to travel around it, he himself goes through it in one day; that is, as it seems to others, having completed a journey of one day within it, he delivered the message of the divine proclamations. The Prophet was surely in every way a marvel, a Hebrew man, having come from a foreign land, and perhaps known to none of those there, walking through the midst of the

city, crying out and saying: Yet three days and Nineveh will be overthrown. Here again, observe and consider this subtly with me. For the God of all commanded to proclaim concerning Nineveh "That the cry of its wickedness has come up to me;

but the Prophet, having come into it, cried out, "Yet three days and Nineveh will be overthrown. What then shall we say? Does he speak falsely, and has he spoken things from his heart, and not rather from the mouth of the Lord, according to some? We do not say this, but rather that, that the prophets often signify the manner of their own mission; but they do not in every case report to us all the words that came to them from God, nor indeed those from them to God; for the Master had spoken to him, "Arise and go to Nineveh and proclaim in it that the cry of its wickedness has come up to me," we heard clearly at the very beginning of the prophecy; but that he himself had spoken something to God, we did not know. However, we shall find him saying, "O Lord, were not these my words, while I was still in my land? For this reason I made haste to flee to Tarshish, because I knew that you are merciful and compassionate. Do you see that most things have been kept silent, and have been spoken secretly by God and to God likewise through the Prophet's voice? Therefore, it is fitting to confirm the truth by the voices of the saints, for they will least of all speak falsely, having been enriched with the spirit of truth. And the men of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloths, from the least to the greatest of them.

The saying is emphatic, for he says the people of Nineveh have believed, that is, those from a city always condemned for all its absurdities, in which there was a great and countless swarm of idols, and innumerable shrines, and secret rites were eagerly practiced. For sorceries and false divinations were honored among them, and he was considered very wise who cast a curious eye upon the stars, and he came to the height of good repute who was amenable to any absurdity whatsoever. But they have believed in God from the least to the greatest, that is, the distinguished and the obscure, the brilliant and the downtrodden, and those who reveled in the luxuries of wealth, and those who were drunk with the burden of poverty; and the one concern for all was to obey the words of the Prophet. Great is the wonder, and very great the praise of those who believed. For they follow immediately, without delay, him who at last calls them to what is better, and they submit their tender

neck to the divine proclamations, and this from a foreigner and a single man, not long known, calling them to repentance. But such were the matters of the Ninevites. But apoplectic Israel disobeys the law; it laughs at the things of Moses, it considers the things of the prophets as nothing. And why do I say this? It has even become a deicide, not even obeying Christ, the Savior of us all.

Therefore the matters of the Ninevites were in a better state, and the God of all has shown this to be true, saying something like this to the blessed prophet Ezekiel, "Son of man, go, enter the house of Israel, not to many peoples of a foreign speech or a foreign tongue, nor of a harsh language, whose words you will not hear; and if I had sent you to such people, they would have listened to you. But the "house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, because they do not want to listen to me, for the whole house of Israel are contentious and hard-hearted. For those of a foreign tongue and deep lips and stately words, that is the Ninevites, honored the oracle, and proceeded without delay to what was necessary to repent; but contentious Israel has not honored, as I said, not even the Lord of the law and the prophets himself. And the word reached the king of Nineveh, and he rose from his throne, and took off his robe from himself, and put on sackcloth, and sat on ashes. And it was proclaimed and spoken in Nineveh by the king and by his great men, saying: Let neither men nor beasts, neither herds nor flocks, taste anything, nor let them graze, and let them not drink water. And the men and the beasts put on sackcloth, and they cried out earnestly to God, and each one turned from their wicked way and from the injustice that was in their hands, saying:

Who knows if God will repent and turn from the anger of his wrath, and we shall not perish? He greatly intensifies the praise of their ready obedience, and he marvels the more at the readiness for obedience of those who were called to repentance. For since they were hearers of the Prophet's words, even he who was honored with the scepter and crowned with the highest glories immediately withdrew from the thrones of the kingdom, and having bidden farewell to the robes that befitted him, and taking off the purple, he put on sackcloth, that is, he was in the attire of mourning; and sitting on ashes, a signal to the he was giving to others the need both to fast and, appeasing God with unceasing prayers, to beg for mercy. But the Ninevites were very wise, combining with their fast the turning away from wickedness; for this

would be the one and only true and blameless manner of repentance. But since Israel, not having skill in these things, at times displayed a most irrational and profane fast, God commanded the prophet, lifting up his voice on high, to announce to them that, "I have not chosen this fast, says the Lord. And for what reason He Himself has made clear, adding immediately: "For in the days of your fasts you find your own wills, and you oppress all your subordinates; you fast for judgements and quarrels, and you strike the humble with your fist.

Why do you fast for me, so that today your voice is heard with a shout? I have not chosen this fast, and a day for a man to humble his soul. Therefore the Ninevites were better, accomplishing for God a pure and blameless fast. For the sacred scripture has testified that each one turned from his wicked way and from the injustice that was in their hands. And what was being done was within reason and good sense. For they believed that God would repent and would turn away the things that came from His wrath. But he says "He will repent" instead of "He will change His mind," and if He should see them having changed from wickedness to the good, He Himself also will move to that calm and love for mankind that is most dear to Him. For He is good by nature. However He brings punishments upon those who transgress, and upon those who have unrestrainedly inclined towards the unruly, He brings the things from His wrath, like some bridle that generally checks and converts them towards obedience. But see how the Ninevites say, "Who knows if God will repent and will turn away from the wrath of His anger and we shall not perish?"; but wise Israel, who was instructed by the law that the Lord is kind and gentle, does not endure to think thus. for in their ignorance they would say "Our errors and our iniquities are upon us, and in them we are wasting away, and how shall we live?

But they would hear God saying clearly, "Turn ye, turn from your wicked way, and why will you die, O house of Israel? which indeed the Ninevites did, by their changes to better things averting the wrath that was hanging over them, however they commanded that the beasts also should suffer along with the people, being deprived of food and drink, and forced, as it were, to mourn. and the matter is an exaggeration, not as having happened of necessity, or as God seeking the suffering from the beasts. And the sacred scripture noted this too, making manifest, as I said, the exaggeration of the Ninevites' repentance. I know, therefore, that some blush at this, and they say that by

"beasts" ought to be understood the most irrational among men. and the saying is true, and it might be well at times, if it were understood in this way by some. but as to the sense of the matters at hand, that would perhaps somehow fit, I mean that the exaggeration of the repentance is signified through the suffering of the beasts themselves also being specified. And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways; and God repented of the evil which He had said He would do to them, and He did not do it. The Lord is quick to mercy and saves those who repent. He immediately frees them from their old accusations, and as the sin among them ceases, He Himself also lays aside His wrath, and decides on good things.

and since He sees them changed towards the good, He moves towards gentleness, and postpones the destruction, and deems them worthy of forbearance. For He is true when He says, "And why will you die, O house of Israel? says the Lord; because I do not desire the death of him who dies, says the Lord Adonai, but that he turn from his way, and his soul live. but when it says 'evil', do not understand it as wickedness, but rather the punishing wrath. For it is not of the Our virtue-loving God, a worker of evils. And Jonah was grieved with a great grief, and was confounded; and he prayed to the Lord and said: O Lord, were not these my words, when I was yet in my land? For this reason I made haste to flee to Tarshish, because I knew that you are merciful and compassionate, long-suffering and of great mercy, and repent over evils. And now, O Master Lord, take my soul from me, for it is better for me to die than to live. When God pitied those who by their repentance were warding off the things that come from wrath, and when the appointed time had already come to its end, after which it was likely that the thing foretold would happen, and then when none of the expected things had happened, the blessed Jonah was greatly grieved, and not because the city had escaped destruction;

for this would be the mark of a wicked and envious man, and in no way fitting for a saint; but because he seemed to be a liar and a buffoon, and to have disturbed them in vain, and to be speaking things from his own mind, and not at all the things from the mouth of the Lord, as it is written. However, some others think that the Prophet was grieved for certain other and secret reasons. For since he knew, they say, that when the flock from the Gentiles was called, Israel would certainly slip from its hope in God, as this kind of time was already coming to an end, he was exceedingly downcast,

and, so to speak, he frowns upon those of his own blood who are perishing. But he himself dissuades us from thinking this, saying most clearly that he fled to Tarshish; and he was caught hesitating in his mission, precisely because he knew clearly that the Master is kind and compassionate, and repents over evils. For since you were such a one, he says, why did you command me to proclaim to them in vain the destruction? And he is faint-hearted as a man, using these words for himself and affirming this in the land of the Jews, and he now begs to die, and, so to speak, he makes no small outcry against the divine economy. But the matter is precarious and not worthy of a holy mind.

For if no one, if he has any sense, would find fault with physicians of the body who change the medicines to ones more useful for the wounds, how could anyone reasonably cry out against the all-knowing God, who devises for our minds the cure that is always fitting and truly most necessary? For He is a physician of spirits, and sometimes by pains, and at other times by the good things that come from gentleness, He soothes the wildness of the passions within us. And the Lord said to Jonah: Are you greatly grieved? And Jonah went out of the city and sat opposite the city, and he made for himself a booth there, and he sat under it in the shade, until he might see what would become of the city. He does not allow the Prophet's mind to be choked by despondency, but He strengthens it as though it were weakened, and though very kindly, He profitably rebukes him because he was grieved. For I think that to inquire and say, "Are you greatly grieved?" would signify absolutely nothing else; but it is as if He rebukes the one who is grieved and who does not understand the purpose of the divine judgments. But when the days had already passed, as I just said, after which it was likely that the things announced would be accomplished, and then, with the wrath still not taking effect, he understands that God has shown mercy, yet he has not gone entirely outside of hope;

but he thinks that a postponement of the evil has been given to them, who chose to repent, yet there will be something from wrath anyway, since they have not shown labors in their repentance equal to their offenses. For what would a three-day sweat profit those buried in every absurd deed, and held fast by such terrible transgressions? Pondering these things to himself, as is likely, he departed from the city, and waits to see what will happen to them; for he expected it either perhaps to fall, being shaken down, or to be

burned up by fire, just as Sodom was. and a shelter is built by him, and what was made was a booth. And the Lord God commanded a gourd, and it came up over the head of Jonah, to be a shade over his head, to shade him from his evils; and Jonah rejoiced over the gourd great joy. God then commands the gourd again, just as also the sea monster, clearly by nodding and merely willing it. And it springs up immediately, both beautiful and flourishing, and straightaway covered the whole booth, and, as it were, anoints him to cheerfulness by shading him very well. And the Prophet rejoices exceedingly over it, and is truly glad as if for some great and noteworthy matter. Observe, then, from this also the inclination of his mind toward simplicity. For he was grieved with great grief because the words of his prophecy had not come to pass;

but then he rejoiced with great joy over a vegetable and a plant. And the guileless mind is very susceptible both to sorrows and to delights. And you will see the truth of this statement by observing the habits of infants, who are often pained by nothing, and cry exceedingly over small things; but then they are glad, and make a sudden transition from being sad to being joyful, being sometimes charmed again by a small thing. For just as in human bodies those that are not accustomed to be very strong fall easily when someone pushes them, even if he does not do this vigorously, but touches them as if with a more delicate hand; so also the guileless mind is easily carried away by whatever is naturally able to delight or to grieve it. And the Lord commanded a morning worm on the next day, and it struck the gourd, and it withered. and it happened that "at the same time as the sun rose, the Lord God commanded a scorching east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah. And he grew faint and gave up his soul, and said, 'It is better for me to die than to live.' He calls the caterpillar a morning worm, because it has the beginnings of its generation from the dew that falls before dawn. Indeed, God commands it and also the scorching wind in the way that He might be understood to have commanded both the gourd and the sea monster, as we have already said.

And it unexpectedly withers; and the scorching wind strikes violently, and sends forth a hot glare upon him as he is distressed, finding him deprived of shade, from which his despondency was especially intensified. And he had already come to such a point of faint-heartedness, as to make death itself much prayed for. And the Lord said to Jonah, 'Are you very grieved

over the gourd?' And he said, 'I am very grieved, even to death.' Observe again the God of all, out of his immeasurable love for mankind, all but playing with the especially guileless souls of the saints, and yielding in nothing to the fond affections of fathers. For the gourd provides shade, and the Prophet is exceedingly gladdened by it; but after this the caterpillar providentially attacks it, and the scorching wind also strikes, showing the shade to be most useful and necessary for his benefit, so that he might be all the more pained at being deprived of the best things; then, being grieved over a small thing, and that terribly, I mean the gourd, he might no longer blame the divine love for mankind, if it chose to dispense forbearance and gentleness to the most distinguished of cities, filled with an innumerable multitude of inhabitants. So he skillfully asks if he is very grieved, and that over a vegetable. And he admits it, and the matter was thereafter a means of defense for the philanthropic God.

And the Lord said, 'You have had pity on the gourd, for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night; and should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, in which dwell more than twelve myriads of people who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?' O, the incomparable and inconceivable gentleness! What speech would suffice for us for hymnody? Or opening what mouth shall we offer up songs of thanksgiving to the merciful and good One? For he removes our iniquities far from us, and as a father pities his sons, so the Lord has pitied those who fear him, because he himself knew our frame. For see how he shows Jonah to be grieved not at the right time, nor for the things he should have been, although it was necessary to applaud in a holy manner and to praise as the good Master. For if you, he says, were sullen, or rather are even brought to extreme grief, because the gourd plant has withered for you, which grew up in one night, and perished in the same way, how could I myself neglect a populous city, in which there are more than twelve myriads of people, who are not able from the time and their age to know which is their right hand, and which their left?

For these things are somehow indistinguishable among those who are still infants, to whom it was fitting, even before others, to grant kindness, having sinned in nothing. For one who does not yet know his own hands, with what faults could he be charged? And if he names also the cattle and deems them worthy of being spared, this too is from love of goodness. For if

"a righteous man has mercy on the souls of his "cattle," and this is to his praise, what is surprising, if the Creator of all things himself bestows sparing and pity upon these as well? Thus indeed Christ saved all, giving himself as a ransom for the small and great, the wise and unwise, the rich and poor, Jew and Greek, to whom it would be rightly said, "You will save men and beasts, O Lord, as you have "multiplied your mercy, O God; and the sons of men will hope in "the shelter of your wings," to him be the glory and the power with the eternal Father and the all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit unto the ages of ages. Amen.

MICAH

Book 1

The purpose for all the holy prophets is one and God-loving, to persuade Israel to depart vigorously from the desire to wander, and to choose rather to serve the living and true God, and to delight in the boasts of righteousness, casting as far away as possible the condemnation for their wicked deeds. And many there have been, one after another, as God in a way testified beforehand, and through as many mouths as possible clearly proclaimed in advance, that if they should not choose to live rightly, nor indeed make it of great importance to practice a return to better things from then on, they themselves would pronounce judgment against themselves, and enduring a self-inflicted destruction, they would attribute the causes of their suffering to their own judgments. But if the words of the holy prophets should contain the same narratives, let no one find fault, accusing them of tautology, but rather let him clearly consider this: for there should have been no time in which there were not those able to correct sinners. And just as no one, if he had any sense, would find fault with the fact that at all times there are physicians, who check the same of our afflictions with the same appropriate remedies, so, I think, no one would reasonably rebuke the holy prophets, if they should appear to be going through the same deeds and words.

For it was one Lord who spoke to all, and who at all times showed to the wandering those who knew how to bring them back to a straight path, as it were. For they all foretell the wars, the captivities, the desolation of cities, the toils, the sorrows, the lamentations for the dead, the miseries of those who are taken away, the cruelty of the destroyers; and one might see that the narratives proceed with all harshness, for the necessary benefit of those who are wandering. For at times, that which has unrestrainedly inclined towards

apostasy and sin is checked by fears. Therefore, the blessed Micah also prophesies in the times of the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz and Hezekiah. And while Jotham was reigning, Pekah son of Remaliah campaigned against Jerusalem, and Rezin king of Syria; but when he died, Ahaz succeeded to the rule, who also, as it was extending for the war he hired the Assyrian with money, and called on him to help, since he was unable to lead out an army against the forces of the attackers; who, having come, captured Damascus and also killed Raasson. Then, at that time, when Jeroboam son of Joash, and after him Azariah, and thirdly Manaeim were reigning in Samaria, Phul king of the Assyrians came up, who, having been persuaded with difficulty by a great deal of money, was brought back to his own land. After Phul, Tiglath-pileser the Assyrian campaigned against the land of the Jews, and he uprooted very many cities of Samaria;

and to them he added also all of Galilee as far as Naphtali. These things were therefore spoken of in detail when we composed the exegesis on the blessed prophet Hosea, and we have now made mention of them necessarily because the times of the prophecy of Micah were also set forth. For it was necessary, it was necessary for the eager listener and lover of learning not to be ignorant of the reason for which those who had reigned over Jerusalem were named, I mean Jotham and Ahaz. The time of the prophecy extends even to the reign of Hezekiah, in whose time again was Sennacherib, he also being king of the Assyrians; he took by force the city of the Samaritans, and also plundered the cities of the Philistines, that is, of the Palestinians. Then having taken Lachish—this being a city of the kingdom of Judah— from there he sends Rabshakeh to besiege Jerusalem, who also pays the penalty for his arrogance and verbal abuse against God, when one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrian army died in one night. The word of the Lord, it says, therefore came to Micah of Morathi. And the word of the Lord came to Micah the Morathite, in the days of Jotham and Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. It is necessary to know again that the Hebrews have written "the Morathite" instead of "of Morathi," so that it might not be designated as from a father, but as from a place.

For they say that Morathi is a village or a small town that was in the country of the Jews. The other commentators also agree with this version. Therefore, Morathi would not be the Prophet's father; but, as I said, it indicates rather from a place, and Morathite. What, then, were the words that

came to him, it is necessary to examine. Concerning what he saw about Samaria and Jerusalem. For he has seen as in a vision the things that will be, and having grasped not only the knowledge of the evils that are about to come or are even at the gates, but inasmuch as it came to sight—I mean as in a vision—fearing the outcome, he necessarily makes his speech about both Samaria and Jerusalem. Hear, all peoples, words, and let the earth and all who are in it pay attention, and the Lord God shall be among you as a witness, the Lord from his holy house. He commands them to prepare for docility, and, as it were, inclining their ear, to understand subtly the power of the divine oracles. And that the narrative is not from human opinion or will, but from the very God who rules over all, he confirms by adding, that the Lord will be among you as a witness. For he says, as it were:

Even if I, Micah, make the speech, and even if I should happen to mediate as a man, yet the God of all things himself testifies to you, and I lend my voice to the Lord's decrees. Therefore he himself will be a witness to you, for whom you have established this renowned and illustrious temple, for whom the divine altar was founded by you, for whom you have been taught by the law to offer worship; who from his own house has always spoken to holy prophets, and before all others to the blessed Moses, who had raised that ancient tabernacle in the wilderness. For he spoke from above the mercy-seat, and as the sacred scripture says: "Moses spoke, and God answered him with a voice. And now he testifies to you, it says, from his house. Therefore hear, O peoples, and let the earth also pay attention. Similar to this is that through the voice of Isaiah: "Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken. For the Most High dwells not in those things made of in temples of stone or in sanctuaries made by hand. But since we say that the holy houses have been raised for the glory of God, for this reason we have believed that the God of all things does not disdain to dwell in them, although He fills the heavens and the earth and the things below.

And one might reasonably apply these things also to Christ, who calls to salvation not only peoples who were also of the blood of Abraham, but indeed also the whole earth. For He testified, as it were, through the voice of David, saying "Hear these things, "all you nations; give ear, all you who inhabit the "world. And how can one doubt that the Word has come down to us from heaven as from His own house, which is exceedingly dear to Him? And it is in no way strange to call heaven the house of God, since the di-

vinely inspired scriptures also call the earthly Zion, which is taken as a type of the Church, both His house and His city. For the divine David somewhere sings and says, "Glorious things have been spoken of you, O "city of God. Therefore, as a city, so also would be the house, the Church of Christ who fills all things according to the nature of His Divinity. For behold, the Lord comes forth from his place, and will mount upon the high places of the earth, and the mountains shall be shaken from under him, and the valleys shall melt like wax before the fire, and like water carried down a steep place. This saying is indeed very obscure and full of riddles.

But we say this of necessity, that even if things concerning God are signified in words according to our manner, yet the one who is skilled in these things, and knows how to understand "a parable and an obscure saying, the words of the wise and their riddles," will understand subtly, and in a way that is as fitting as possible to the divine and ineffable nature. For its establishment, and thrones, and rising are spoken of through the voice of the saints, and indeed also ways and journeys, and certain other small and human things besides these, but, as I said just now, such contemplations would reasonably be understood subtly and finely by the good and sound-minded. For the words come about as if from a likeness and metaphor of things concerning us. Therefore, when you hear the Prophet saying, For behold, the Lord comes forth from his place, and will mount upon the high places of the earth, and he adds that the mountains will be shaken, and the valleys will be melted down, then indeed, being raised a little above the things of sense, ascend in your contemplations to subtle thoughts. Here, therefore, you will understand the going forth of God as from His own place to be, as it were, a movement from rest, upon some of the things to be done.

For he all but says, He who was long-suffering for a long time has at last been moved, and will somehow no longer spare to remain quiet toward those who have offended, and having in a way left behind the gentleness dear to Him, He will at last inflict punishment. For He will mount upon the high places of the earth, that is, He will at last trample upon those in excessive preeminence, that we may understand the kings in both Samaria and in Jerusalem. And the mountains will be shaken, that is, again, they will be moved from their own dignities, those who surpass others and stand very high in glory; for such men are very well compared to mountains. And the valleys shall melt like wax, that is, the humble and the cast down, and those

who have the measure of the common herd, but although they are very hard, and do not endure to yield to the divine decrees, as if encountering the fire from the divine wrath, they will be melted down like wax; and they will become like water carried down a steep place, that is, rushing down a slope in a swift and unrestrained course. For as I have already said, the kings of the Assyrians, having savagely ravaged both Samaria itself and the kingdom of Judah, deported some of the kings, and also killed all the leaders, and like a runner and like water coming down a slope they carried away the multitude of the common people to their own land.

And this was the water carried down a steep place, and running from Samaria into the land of the Persians and Medes. And the word of God has come forth from of this place. For being God by nature He became man; and He seems somehow to have endured motion, in this respect I mean, although not knowing change, but rather being established in his own nature, and having stability as God. And He stepped on the high places of the earth, and shook mountains, and melted valleys, and caused them to flow like water carried downhill. And the high places of the earth could be understood as the intelligible powers that rise up against all, and the spiritual hosts of wickedness; and the shaken mountains as the demons who were driven from their rule over us. For they have been cast out, and we are henceforth called to be subject to the one who is by nature and in truth God. And the valleys in turn are the swarming multitude of demons, the lowly and cast-down, that which has been melted like wax, and which has flowed like water into the recesses of Hades. For the evil spirits came to Christ, and "they begged him not to command them to depart into the "abyss. For since others had already been sent away before, those who were still left shuddered at the event.

But if someone should wish to understand the high places and mountains and valleys as the teachers of the Jews, and indeed also the peoples under them, who on account of their insolence toward Christ were also driven from their own rule; for they were melted, and like wax coming into contact with a flame, so they were with the calamities of the war from the Romans, "But they were made as nothing and as passing water, and as "wax that is melted they are taken away," according to the voice of the psalmist; he will not stray from the proper aim. For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sin of the house of Israel. Saying that the God of all will step upon the high places of the earth, and that the mountains will be shaken by him, and

the valleys will be melted like wax and water and will flow down, he then adds, For the transgression of Jacob is all this. See therefore how he speaks hidden mysteries, and does not limit the meaning of the preceding things to what is perceptible, but knows how to narrate indirectly the calamities that were about to befall those in Samaria and those in Jerusalem. For what terror would it hold, and how would the shaking of the mountains grieve those in Samaria, for instance, or the others? And in what way would the valleys be melted, or be like water carried downhill?

But he knows, as I said, having suitably indicated the things that would happen to those of Israel. For this reason, therefore, he necessarily brings forward the punishments, not speaking to them as if they were ignorant, as I think, but as it were rebuking them, and excellently persuading them to choose to think what is useful and more fitting. He said, therefore, that For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sin of the house of Israel, so that the entire race of Israel might be understood to have sinned against both God and men. For he seems to call the offenses against God transgression, but those against brothers and kinsmen sin. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what is the sin of the house of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem? Having named Jacob those who are from Jacob, I mean Ephraim who is in Samaria, he makes their accusations clear. And he says that Samaria is the form of the transgression. And we certainly do not say that he accuses the country itself; for it is utterly senseless to think this way; but by Samaria he means the things pertaining to Samaria, such as the heifers, Chemosh, Baal, and the things done in it against certain people through the greed of the rulers. For he said that "They struck the heads of the "poor, and turned aside the way of the humble.

And in addition to this they said, "When will the month be over, that we may sell, and "the sabbath, that we may open our treasures, to make the measure "small and the weight great, and to make the balance "unjust? He says that Jerusalem also became a sin for Judah. And thinking rightly, we will by no means accuse the city itself in these matters; but we will rather suppose that the things done in it became a sin for Judah. For God somewhere accused the Jews of their insolence, and indeed also said clearly, "For according to the number of your cities 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. Why do you speak "to me? All of you have committed

iniquity, and all of you have "acted impiously against me, says the Lord Almighty. And He rebukes them also through the voice of Isaiah, saying, "How has the faithful city Zion become "a harlot, full of judgment, in which "righteousness lodged, but now murderers. Your "silver is worthless; your merchants mix wine with water. "Your rulers are disobedient, partners with thieves, loving "gifts, pursuing rewards, not judging for orphans, and "not attending to the judgment of the widow. Therefore the things impiously done in Jerusalem have become a sin for Judah, and not so much the city.

It is necessary, then, to love God, and this from the whole soul and heart, and to cast off laziness in doing good, and in no way to harm one's neighbor, but rather to win them over by good deeds, and to reject evil things, but rather to be devoted to the boasts of righteousness. But for those who are supine regarding such venerable things, and have chosen to be contemptuous, He will bring upon them the things of wrath, and like wax He will melt them down, punishing them in fire, and like water He will scatter them, no longer deeming us worthy of mercy and love. And I will make Samaria as a fruit-watcher's hut in a field and as a planting of a vineyard; and I will drag her stones into chaos, and I will uncover her foundations; and they will cut down all her carved images; and they will burn all her wages in fire; and I will bring all her idols to destruction. He clearly recounts what again will be the sufferings of those who have so offended. For Samaria, he says, will be as a fruit-watcher's hut in a field and as a planting of a vineyard. For some guard the things growing in the fields, weaving together huts and sitting in them. Then they drive away all harm from them. But when the fruits are gathered, the guards cease from their labors, they return home, and they overturn the huts themselves. This we shall find Samaria to have suffered.

For since she has transgressed not moderately, but rather has also acted impiously against the very God of all, attributing reverence to her own works, she was overturned and has fallen, those having been appointed to guard her long ago having perhaps abandoned her, I mean the holy powers and angels. The blessed prophet Isaiah also said something of this sort about her, "The daughter of Zion will be left behind, as a tent in a vineyard "and as a fruit-watcher's hut in a cucumber field. But how was she left behind? For, as I said, the attending and rescuing rational host of the orders above has departed. Therefore it will be as a fruit-watcher's hut in a field and as a planting of a vineyard. It is as if he were saying: both deserted of cities and houses and

transformed into the appearance of fields. Or you will understand it in another way, if you please. The vine-dressers of the vineyards, having taken a place most suitable for them, cut it up with plows, turning it up and down. He threatens that the land of the Samaritans will suffer this, that it will become practically arable land, its cities and houses, as I said, having been removed. Because of this he says, that I will drag her stones into chaos, and I will uncover her foundations. And in addition to this, he says there will be something ridiculous.

For those whom they expected to be saviors to them as gods, these are also destroyed together with those accustomed to worship them; and her wages will be burned up, and he says all her idols will go into destruction. The wages for the idols that are burned up along with them, perhaps indicates the votive offerings. For they used to bring to the sanctuaries, distributing from their own wealth for the glory of the idols, and to those who were accustomed to being of no help, or rather having no strength, as if a wage and recompense for what they thought they received from them, they offered thanksgivings. And we remember that also through the voice of Hosea he accused the Synagogue of the Jews, saying thus, "And she did not know that I gave her the grain "and the wine and the oil, and I multiplied for her silver and gold; "but she made silver and gold things for the "Baal; therefore the votive offerings are clear. But that the senseless Israel reckoned prosperity as wages and a recompense for its zeal in going astray, you will no less understand from God saying again, "And I will destroy her vine "and her fig trees, of which she said, "These are my wages ""that my lovers have given me." For, as I said, she thought that by the nods of idols she boasted in wealth and lived in luxury and prospered. Therefore, the mind of those who go astray is blind.

For surely, had it not been ignorant of the God by nature, it would have offered worship to Him rather, and not to any others; to Him it would have offered prayers of thanksgiving; Him it would have confessed as the giver and ruler of every good thing; and having determined to think thus, it would not have become like a watch-post in a field, nor like a planting of a vineyard, but rather would have continued to be blessed with unshakable prosperity, and fortified by heavenly benevolence, having come into a good state of cheerfulness, it would have been admired. Because she gathered from the wages of prostitution, and from the wages of prostitution she amassed.

The discourse indeed laughs again, and with great character derides the ignorance of the Jews; for it makes manifest the stupefaction of their inherent madness, and clearly lays bare the things that lie within their mind and heart; For yes, he says, Israel, full of sense, grateful and wise, rightly and justly offered thanksgivings to the stones; it knew those who honored it, the providers of its prosperity, those who had gathered wealth for it, and who prepared it to be in a state of well-being. For it thinks that to prosper is the wage of its spiritual prostitution; and since it has sacrificed to idols, and serves wood and stones, it will be in no want of the things it prays for.

It has gathered, as he says, and has grown rich from the wages of prostitution, it has amassed and brought together, it has an unshakable cheerfulness. Therefore, in character and irony, with a threat intertwined, we shall understand the force of what has been said. On account of this she will beat her breast and wail, she will go barefoot and naked, she will make a lamentation like that of dragons and a mourning like that of the daughters of sirens; because her plague has prevailed, because it has come as far as Judah and has reached the gate of my people, as far as Jerusalem. For since she lived, he says, in error, and in no way ceased grieving her own Master, but ascribed to carved images the thanks for which she is well-off and praised, and to this point of impiety, he says, she has now advanced, for this reason she will beat her breast and wail; and she will not grieve for any others perhaps, that is, for foreigners, shedding a tear as if from love, but being struck down by her own calamities. And the nakedness and being barefoot shows the condition of captives; so also the blessed prophet Isaiah, signifying the captivity that was about to befall them, went about Jerusalem, "naked and barefoot," God commanding this thing to happen. She will therefore imitate in her own sufferings the mournings of dragons, and the laments of sirens.

For some say that if a dragon is struck, it then laments being in danger, and signifies this by striking the earth with its tail, and is accustomed to make no moderate sound. And sirens the Greeks and their children say are winged creatures that know how to sing melodiously, and are able to bewitch their hearers with the beautiful rhythms of their songs. But the divinely inspired scripture calls sirens the most talkative and sweet-voiced of sparrows, or sometimes even the nightingales themselves, which nest in maritime bays; then, when their nest is taken by the waves, they sing a mournful song, and in a way bewail the loss of their own offspring. Thus he

said Samaria will bewail the destruction of her own children. For her plague, he says, has prevailed, and has come as far as Judah, and up to the gates of Jerusalem. And the discourse in these things seems to us to allude to the war by Sennacherib, who, having taken all of Samaria, and having ravaged Judea, besieged Jerusalem, and having arrived at the gates, threatened he wished to burn it; but yet he was not able, with God defending it, during the time of the reign of Hezekiah.

Therefore, when having abandoned the one Lord who is so by nature and in truth, we are zealous to cleave to the unclean demons, then we shall by all means and in every way lament for ourselves, and wailing over our own foolish counsels, we shall be stripped of his grace and help, and we shall live a shameful and uncomely life; for this the being unshod signifies. We shall also be subject to Satan striking us, and there will be nothing anymore to prevent us from being in every evil. You in Gath, do not be magnified, you of Enakim, do not rebuild from a house of laughter; sprinkle earth upon your laughter. The saying is circumspect and the meaning of the preceding words and of those which still follow is very hard to grasp. Nevertheless, I will try to explain as far as possible. As the war overran the cities in Samaria, and others under the scepter of Judah and Benjamin were being captured, the neighbors of the foreigners and whatever nations were somewhat bordering the land of the Jews and were neighbors, laughing broadly, were mocking Israel, as having received no help from God. For they thought that the hand of the savior had to suffer weakness and be powerless against the attacks of those who were ravaging them. But it were better to understand that because they had chosen to grieve the savior and had offended God, they experienced terrible things, and were given into the hands of their enemies.

And since it was absurd for them to think to themselves, that by the power of their own objects of worship, they had remained in a good state of prosperity, while Israel had perished and been destroyed through the weakness of their savior, for this reason God also delivered the cities of the neighbors to Sennacherib for desolation. And so the Rabshakeh, speaking to those on the wall of Jerusalem, mentioned these very things, saying, "Where is the "god of Hamath and Arphad? Where is the god of the city "of Sepharvaim? Was he able to deliver Samaria from my "hand? Which of all the gods of these nations has delivered "his land from my hand? Gath, then, is a city of the foreigners called Philistines, and a metropolis of Palestine. But Enakim is

likewise another small town situated in the furthest parts of Judea, near the southern desert, yielding indeed to the scepters of Judah, yet no longer thinking the things of the Jews, but rather attached to the neighboring nations, I mean the Moabites and Idumeans. O then, he says, inhabitants of Gath, O you of Enakim, do not make the misfortunes of others occasions for a festival; do not be magnified because of these things, nor because your neighboring house is desolated, that is, that of Israel, for this reason do you laugh broadly, he says, all but dancing over the perished.

Do not build from a house of laughter, but as you yourselves are about to suffer worse things, sprinkle as with earth the mockery that will be against you, and lament your own misfortunes. For the Babylonians will dance over you, and your enemies will smile upon you when you have miserably perished. It is wise, therefore, to remember him who says, "If your enemy falls, do not rejoice over him, because "the Lord will see and it will not please him, and he will turn "his anger away from him. But those also do this who do not know Christ. For when the churches are sometimes persecuted, and the saints in them are tested, then indeed, at that very time, they especially marvel at their own gods. But their laughter ends in tears, while Christ makes light of their terrible deeds, and calms the things that have been stirred up, and scares away what causes grief, and broadens gladness and joy for the saints; for the end of labors is glory and delight. And it seems to me that the blessed David says something like this to the God of all: "We went through fire and water, and you brought us out "into a place of refreshment. She who dwells beautifully in her cities did not come forth, she who dwells in Sennaar, to lament for the house next to her; she will receive from you a plague of pain. The Seventy have rendered it Sennaar, but Aquila said Senan, but Symmachus has "prospering," perhaps this subtly indicating Senan.

But if Sennaar should be understood, we say that it is a wide region inhabited in cities and villages by foreigners, yet within the borders of Judea; but if indeed Senan should be understood, it signifies a splendid and renowned city of Egypt. And that it prospers because the land is fertile, and covered with crops, how is it possible to doubt? Sennaar, therefore, he says, or Senan, inhabiting her cities well. But the word will come against those who inhabit them; she did not weep for those near who perished piteously and miserably; she did not go out to mourn the neighboring house, that is, she has not lamented her neighbors. And Sennaar is near Judea, as I said, and certainly

also Senan, that is, the Egyptian one. But when Israel was falling and being ravaged, she felt no pain, but mocked, and she herself also rejoiced, just like those from Gath and Enakim. What then of Israel? Will the neighboring nations laugh in vain, and while they are doing these things, will God forbear? Will he endure his glory being mocked by enemies? By no means, he says, but from you or on account of you, she will receive a blow of pain; that is, she also will be ravaged together with the others. And Sennaar has been ravaged, and certainly Egypt too, when Sennacherib overran it.

Therefore indeed it is necessary for him who stands well to fear lest he fall, and to cast as far away as possible the smiling upon those who have suffered, "but rather to weep with those who weep" and not to be haughty at the misfortunes of others, but rather to fear exceedingly falling into the same things. Who, dwelling in sorrows, was the first to return to good things? Because evil came down from the Lord to the gates of Jerusalem, a noise of chariots and of horsemen. O Gittites, he says, O inhabitants of Enakim, O of Sennaar or Senan, you were not struck by the misfortunes of your neighbors; the falling and perishing of the once terrible and unbearable Israel became for you an occasion for laughter. And you thought that God who saves them had become weak, but that your handmade things are strong and have reached such a point of strength as to be able to save your cities without effort. Therefore, from the facts, come, let us observe who is God by nature and in truth; who is the all-powerful, and who bestows invincible aid on whomever He may choose. For they were captured and have been ravaged, he says, both the cities of Israel and those among you, and you have endured a common misfortune, as it were. What city, then, indeed, being in pains and in fears about the utmost things—for this is what "dwelling in pains" is—has unexpectedly turned towards good things, that is, to cheerfulness and prosperity?

Was it one of yours? By no means, he says, but again my Jerusalem. For evils came down upon it from the Lord, that is, I have grieved and disciplined, and I brought the Assyrian upon them, and from my wrath the affliction against them happened. But it has been quenched and loosed, by my conquering hand and miraculously delivering those who revere my dominion. For the distressing thing stood as far as the gates. And we know that Rabshakeh, having many horsemen, arrived indeed at Jerusalem, but all but touched its very gates, yet did not take it at all; for the Assyrian was con-

sumed in one night. And so those in Jerusalem had lamented, as if about to die at any moment, and had spent a sleepless night weeping; but as the dawn scattered, the miracle was seen. For countless corpses lay on the ground, so that those who had miraculously conquered and been saved through God leaped up to say, "Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning. Do you see then how first and alone among the other cities she began to turn toward good things, although dwelling in pains? For God will not completely overlook his own, but having disciplined them in measure, he saves them again, and of the good repute that befits him he does not take moderate care, even if we offend.

For he said somewhere through one of the prophets, "It is not for your sake that I will act, says the Lord, but for my name's sake. Inhabitant of Lachish, she is the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion, because in you were found the impieties of Israel. Lachish, again, is a city subject to the scepter of Judah, a neighbor and bordering the Philistines, and this one is also exceedingly bitter and idolatrous, spurning piety toward God and reverence for the law, but esteeming highly to love to wander and to destroy others besides. Perhaps Sennacherib, having taken this city first among the cities under the scepter of Judah and Benjamin, sent the Rabshakeh from there to Jerusalem. Therefore Lachish, he says, which once was well-inhabited and securely established, has become the beginning of sin to Zion, that is, to Jerusalem. For in it have been found the impieties of Israel, that is, the man-made things and no small number of falsely-named gods. What then does the saying wish to show? It makes a defense in a way to the peoples of the foreigners, and tries to persuade them to be disposed henceforth, that the saving God would not have been weak. But since the cities of Judah have acted impiously toward him, they are delivered up to their enemies. For Lachish, he says, becoming the beginning of sin to Zion, and the first pretext of apostasy, has been given to Sennacherib.

Israel therefore has perished, as it is possible to see from Lachish, not because God was sick with cowardice; far from it; but rather because he was sick with wandering, and senselessly attached to the worship of idols. Therefore you shall give ones sent away as far as the inheritance of Gath, vain houses, it became empty for the kings of Israel, until they lead away the heirs; Lachish inhabiting an inheritance shall come as far as Odolam. Israel having fallen under the impulses of wrath, and paying the penalty for its transgressions

against God, those from Gath and Enakim dared to laugh at the glory of God. For they thought that, as I have already said, he did not save his own, as one being defeated by the hand of the Assyrians. Then concerning this God wished to persuade, from Lachish, that they were given to the enemies because many impieties of Israel were found upon them, and because they became the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion, that is, to Jerusalem. When God said these things, the blessed Prophet, understanding very well what was being shown and before the others, accepts the words, and, as it were, crowning them into truth with his own votes, immediately cried out: Therefore you shall give ones sent away as far as the inheritance of Gath, vain houses.

Yes, he says, O Master, they will go to their enemies, and they will be sent away by you, leaving the land that bore them, and moving to the land of the Assyrians, not only, he says, those in Samaria, but also those in Gath. For the one group became apostates and insolent, not enduring to follow your ordinances; and the others, mocking those who acted miserably, made what happened a contempt for your glory. You yourself therefore will give ones sent away as far as the inheritance of Gath, vain houses. For the houses of both Ephraim and those from Gath are vain, on account of not enduring to honor God, but assigning worship to carved images, and because they have thought only of the things of the flesh, and being attached to earthly things, they made no account of virtue. Then in the midst he becomes indignant in a way, and the blessed Prophet, as it were, strikes his hands together, coming to the thought of the things that were done from time to time in Samaria. He considers the arrogance of the kings, and that the impious deeds for which Israel transgressed were the result of their perversity. For their inventions were both the heifers and the precincts of the other idols. And they did not cease in every way provoking the Creator. The Prophet therefore, being distressed, says: It became empty for the kings of Israel, until they lead away the heirs. It is as if he were saying:

The kings did not cease from their labors unto vanity, until they had fallen into such misery, that the inheritance assigned to them by God became the possession of others. That the Assyrians were about to rule all the land of the Jews, he receives two cities in situated in the extremities of the whole country, I mean both Lachish and Odollam, which Rehoboam built, and he says, The inhabitant of Lachish, an inheritance, will come as far as

Odollam. For he will inherit Lachish, although it was very well fortified; for this is what it is to inhabit; and it extends, he says, even to Odollam. Therefore, if one should choose to be wise and well-reined and hating to oppose the divine commands, he will be in long-lasting prosperity, and will be situated in the good part of his own lots; for he will be full of good hope and will shine forth with the saints in due seasons; but if he should appear harsh and intractable and not yielding to the divine laws, he will be utterly cast out from the hope of the saints and will lose his lot with God, and he will also be the lot of his enemies, according to that which is sung in the psalms concerning some, "They shall be portions for foxes," that is, a portion of wicked, crafty, and malicious powers. The glory of the daughter of Israel, shave yourself and cut your hair for your delicate children;

make your widowhood wide like an eagle's, for they have gone into captivity from you. It is as if he were to say again, O once thrice-blessed daughter of Jerusalem, who received a most glorious and conspicuous glory, Jerusalem or Samaria, your delicate children are gone, and the multitude that once lived lavishly has perished, the brilliant and luxuriously-living, who slept "On beds of ivory, and lived lavishly on their "couches; who ate kids from the flocks "and milk-fed calves from the midst of the herds; who clapped "along to the sound of instruments; who considered them "as abiding and not as fleeting; who drank strained "wine and anointed themselves with the finest myrrh; Therefore, disrobe yourself, O daughter of Jerusalem, that is, put off your glory and be shown naked of that ancient prosperity; then, wailing widely and unusually and striving to imitate the deep grief of eagles; mourn your children, for they will go as captives, and you will be a widow and desolate. And those who are wise in these things and who study the natures of birds as much as possible, say that the eagle is a creature that loves its young; and that it laments terribly when its nestlings have fallen from its nest, or rather, have been snatched by someone.

And that the bird would not be without the character of loving its offspring, the divinely inspired Moses will also persuade us, saying, concerning both God and those of the blood of Israel, "As an eagle would shelter his nest and yearned over his young, he spread his wings and took them up and carried them on his back. You see how he said the eagle yearns over its own nestlings, and loves to place them within its wings, overshadowing what was born out of great love. Make your widowhood wide like an eagle's, therefore,

he says. And one might fittingly exclaim this not only to the more ancient peoples of the Jews, but also to those who lived at the time of our Savior's sojourn, when, having handed him over to the cross, they fell into terrible and inescapable calamities; and they were scattered to every wind, enduring the pains of captivity in another way, as it were. They were devising troubles and working evils in their beds, and with the daylight they accomplished them, because they did not lift up their hands to God; and they desired fields and seized orphans, and oppressed houses, and seized a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.

Whenever the God of all makes long speeches about the punishment of certain ones, so that no one may be thought to be harsh or grievously wrathful, but rather a just Judge, weighing rightly according to the faults of each, and repaying transgressors according to their works, He immediately sets forth their accusations, and lays bare the magnitude of their impiety; Therefore, he says, they have become wicked in their ways and have finally reached such a point of awkwardness as to plan at night and to make an occupation of troubles, that is, to compose against certain ones vexations, and to work evils, that is, again to devise pretexts to fulfill and to be able to harm the weaker. Then, though they should have reconsidered and chosen to do the better thing, giving no time to their own deliberations, at dawn they brought to completion what seemed good to them, although they should rather have lifted up their hands to God, as the morning sacrifice was being offered according to the law. But for them, there were the counsels of the night and the leisurely deliberation, desires for others' fields, the overthrow of houses, oppressions and covetousness, and the plundering of both a man and his inheritance. For this reason they were justly sent away as futile houses, not knowing how to think the things that please God.

It is therefore better and incomparably so to rise above such things, and to depart from all wickedness, casting covetousness as far away as possible, and not desiring superfluous things, to seek food and coverings, and whatever is sufficient for the temperate for living. "For those who want "to be rich fall into many foolish and harmful desires, "which plunge men "into ruin and destruction. And in addition to this, it is harmful to spend the leisure hours of the night on thoughts of sin; but it is good to emulate the blessed Psalmist saying to the God of all, "At midnight I arose to give thanks to you for the judgments of your righteousness. and again "O God, my God,

to you I rise early, my soul has thirsted "for you, how many ways my flesh for you. and again "If I remembered you upon my bed, in the morning "I would meditate on you. Therefore thus says the Lord: Behold, I am devising against this tribe evils, from which you shall not remove your necks, and you shall not walk upright suddenly, because it is an evil time. For since they themselves devised troubles and worked evils for some, thrusting aside the lifting up of their hands to God as unprofitable and useless, for this reason I also, He says, will devise evils against every such tribe, that is, I will consider in what evils they might be, that is, in incurable calamities;

and He says the things that will be brought upon them will be so hard to bear and burdensome that those who suffer them will be in the same state as those who are bent over, and will be bent down in a certain way, being terribly and unbearably weighed down. for it will be an evil time, He says, in which He would inflict upon them the things that come from wrath. And this, I think, is what is wisely sung by someone: "For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they have been heavy upon me. But our Lord Jesus Christ called those who were so weighed down to the laying aside of the things laid upon them, saying, "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy "laden, and I will give you rest. But those who honored the one who called them by faith shook off the burden; but they have remained laboring and oppressed, and very fittingly, those who have grieved by their disobedience, both scribes and Pharisees, and the other multitude with them, who also would not be able to walk upright. And knowing this, the divine David cried out to God, "Let their eyes be darkened "so that they do not see, and their back "bend down always;

so that not seeing the things above, nor indeed being able to lift up the eye of their mind to the hope of the saints and the beautiful city in the heavens, they may look only at the things on the earth, as it were, bent over and fixing their insolent and God-hating mind on temporary and fleshly things. In that day a parable shall be taken up against you, and a lamentation shall be lamented with a song, saying: We have been utterly despoiled; the portion of my people has been measured with a line, and there was no one to hinder him from turning it away. He says that two things will happen at the same time, both a parable and a lamentation. And the parable seems to signify that somehow in the mouth of all the talk against them, or about them, will arise; for there is always remembrance even of extraordinary evils, and the

fame of such things visits both cities and countries, and rushes to the ends of the whole earth. But the lamentation... a tear and the wailings over them, which others might happen to make, or rather, they themselves weeping for their own sufferings among themselves. Therefore he says, We have been afflicted with misery. And what might be understood as the manner of this misery, he makes clear, saying, The portion of my people has been measured with a line, and there was no one to prevent him from turning it away.

The lot, he says, which was assigned to my and beloved people; it is clear, that is, to Israel; has been measured by enemies, that is, has been subjected to tributes and taxes. For that which is measured is under tribute and taxes. Then, when this had happened and occurred contrary to expectation, there was no one to prevent it. Where then, he says, are the heifers, Chemosh, Dagon, Beelphegor, Baal, and the manifold handmade things in the precincts of Samaria? They have fallen silent, they have not set themselves against those dividing the portion; they have not helped their own worshippers; they have not brought wrath upon those measuring the land. He says something similar also through the voice of Jeremiah concerning those from Israel, "And in the time of their evils they will say, 'Arise and save us.' And where are your gods whom you made for yourself? Will they arise and save you in the time of your affliction? But how could they save others, they who would easily suffer whatever anyone might choose to do? For they are "the works of men's hands, silver and gold," and stone and wood, deaf and senseless matter. Let the divine David therefore sing, "May all who make them and all who trust in them become like them. Your fields have been measured out; therefore there will be no one for you to cast a line by lot. He makes clear the meaning of what has been said.

For you have become disinherited, he says, and your things have been measured out to others, but it is not permitted for you to measure out your own. And we will find the arrogant Jews having suffered this at the time of the visitation. For having acted insolently toward Christ they lost the lots that had been assigned to them. For he was the firstborn, and the most wise Paul says the promises belong to them, the fathers are theirs, and from them is Christ according to the flesh. But he has fallen from the hope and from all glory in this regard; and the multitude of the Gentiles has rushed in and ascended to their lot. For the promises have become theirs, Christ is theirs, the fathers are theirs. They are called children of Abraham, following "in the

steps of the faith" of his "uncircumcision"; "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, these are counted as seed'. Therefore also the divine John, bringing down the haughtiness and considerable puffing up of the Jews, says, "Produce therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say within yourselves that 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

Therefore the senseless Israel has fallen away from the inheritance, but the flock from the Gentiles has sprung up in its place, and to them Christ assigns the glorious and worthy lot of the good things from above. For they have become fellow citizens of the saints, and members of the household of God, and fellow members of the body of Christ, and made resplendent by the unity with him through the Spirit, they will live a truly much-prayed-for life, in holiness and sanctification and incorruptibility. In the assembly of the Lord do not weep with tears, nor let your eyes shed tears over this; for he who says, "The house of Jacob has provoked the Spirit of the Lord," will not put away reproaches. Are these his practices? Does he then prevent Israel from choosing to repent? Tell me, does God check his gentleness toward them, even if they should wish to learn what is most especially fitting for them, and to do somehow now what is pleasing to him? He does not say this. But it is a custom for some, if they should happen to be convicted of having erred by one of the wise, to measure the manner of their repentance only as far as shedding tears, and to confess their sin, and by this alone to seek forgiveness; but not yet to cease from their present evils. Some of those from Israel did this, so as not even at times to spare their own garments.

But what does He say Who looks into the heart and reins? "Return to me with all your heart, in fasting and in weeping and in lamentation, and rend your hearts and not your garments. Therefore, that by merely pouring a tear from their eyes, and pretending to speak good words, while not ceasing from their own desires, they would not make the Judge favorable and gentle toward themselves, he teaches, saying, In the assembly of the Lord do not weep with tears. Do not, he says, make the divine temple a house of mourning; nor weep for this reason, so as to seem to weep only in the house of God; for such a thing is completely unprofitable; nor indeed should some say that, The house of Jacob has provoked the Spirit of the Lord. For he would by no

means wipe away the reproaches for the things in which he has transgressed, even if one should choose to use such good words. Are these his practices? And what are these, he says; "They were devising troubles, and working evils in their beds, and with the day they accomplished them, and they did not lift their hands to the Lord; and they coveted fields, and plundered orphans, and oppressed houses, and plundered a man and his house, a man and his inheritance. Therefore, if such, he says, were his practices, how could he ward off the reproaches by merely pouring out a tear, and confessing and saying, The house of Jacob has provoked the Spirit of the Lord?

It is necessary, then, for those who have chosen to repent to be rid, on the one hand, of the accusations of wickedness, and thus to weep and confess to God, having already honored doing good. For God will not look simply at a tear, nor at good words, but at character and ways. And then indeed, he says, weeping will be profitable for some, when the ways of doing good appear to run together with the overthrow of wickedness. For when sin is destroyed in us, the genesis of virtue slips in. Are not his words good with him, and have they not walked uprightly? And before, my people stood up in enmity against his peace. He accuses them again, then, as being accustomed to speak excellently, but having a mind inconsistent with their words. For the words among them are upright, he says, and very good; for they confess their faults, they call God kind and good, and they dissemble in many ways, while in their deeds they have not ceased to provoke him. And one might see them having become enemies to themselves, and scaring away their own peace. For my people themselves, he says, have set themselves up as an enemy to their own peace. For though it was possible for them to be in well-being and luxury and in sure glory and to have a steadfast cheerfulness, if God had been honored, they willingly slid into apostasy.

For this reason also, having cast away remaining in peace, they stir up, as it were, a self-summoned war upon their own heads. But that it is not entirely unprofitable for those who have sinned to speak good words to God, that is, if one should choose to blush at his own failings, we shall demonstrate from the divinely-inspired scripture itself. For it is written in the second book of Chronicles concerning Rehoboam, "And it came to pass, when the kingdom of Rehoboam was established and when "he was strengthened, he forsook the commandments of the Lord, and all " Israel with him. Then Shishak the ruler of the Egyptians armed himself against

Jerusalem, and with his whole army marched out from his own land. And after this, "Shemaiah "the prophet came to Rehoboam and to the rulers of Judah, "who were gathered in Jerusalem from the face of Shi- "shak, and said to them, Thus says the Lord: You "have forsaken me, and I also will forsake you into the hand of Shi- "shak. And they were ashamed, he says, the rulers of Israel and "the king, and said, The Lord is righteous. And when "the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to "Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves; I will not destroy them. Then again he says, "And when he humbled himself, was turned away from him on him the wrath of the Lord, and not for destruction to the "end; for in Judah, it says, there were good words.

Do you see, then, how it is not unprofitable to have good words on the tongue, if it is accompanied by reverence, and blushing for the things in which one has sinned. Therefore as Paul says "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power," and Christ himself somewhere openly said "Not everyone who "says to me 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of heaven, "but the one who does the will of my Father "who is in heaven. It is therefore in vain, then, as I just said, to say good things about God, when that which is approved in deeds does not accompany it. They have flayed his skin, to take away hope, the shattering of war. He again brings the accusations against those appointed to lead for the destruction of the flock. For whereas they should have been sufficiently able to instruct them, and to lead them to the right and uncrooked path, and to hold fast as much as possible to loving piety toward God, while rejecting as useless and a cause of ruin and putting farthest away devotion to carved images, they themselves have become destroyers and corrupters, turning the minds of those under their hand to the very opposite, persuading them to depart from God, and rather to exult in the ways of error. For this reason, offending God, they also slipped away from the hope in him, which if they had continually possessed, nothing would have prevented them from being able to crush their enemies.

Therefore he says, as of a sheep, that they flayed his skin, to take away hope, the shattering of war. It is as if he said: Having shown him naked of the coverings that come from hope, and having stripped him, as it were, of my care and assistance, they have made him vulnerable and easily captured. For their hope in God has been taken away, and this for them was the shattering of war. For just as for irrational animals the hide is a safe garment—

for the naked flesh is entirely vulnerable—so also for us a safe covering and a hide, as it were, is the power of hope in God, which if we possess, in no way grieving God, we will prevail over our enemies, and we will overcome every war, both carnal and spiritual; and we will also tread "Upon the asp and the basilisk, "and we will trample the lion and the dragon," according to what is written; and we will sing with confidence, "O Lord God "of hosts, blessed is the man who hopes in "you. For this reason the leaders of my people will be cast out from their houses of luxury; for their evil deeds they have been driven out.

For since, he says, those who were able to benefit with their guidance and admonitions those subject to them, the guides and fathers, the shepherds and overseers, have flayed his skin, and have taken away the hope in God, through which it was easy for every war to be shattered, for this reason they will justly abandon the good things at home, and being deprived of their most beloved things, and having lost enjoyment and luxury, they will go to their enemies, and will pay a bitter penalty for their indolence and worthlessness. But that the cause of their suffering was not someone else, but they themselves were rather the cause for themselves, he makes clear by saying: For their evil deeds they have been driven out. "For not in vain are nets spread for birds," according to what is written; "for they who partake in murder, "store up evils for themselves. We ourselves then will wrong ourselves, if we should wish to do what is not right; and we are cast out even from houses of luxury. For those who offend God will not see the mansions above and in the heavens, but will remain without a share both of the hope of the saints and of eternal luxury. But the wise and good and those who have set their minds on everything praiseworthy, will not be among these; how could they? But they will have the city, the Church in heaven, and will dwell in the mansions above, delighting in heavenly goods. Approach the eternal mountains.

Arise and go, for this is not your rest. The discourse is still addressed to those appointed to lead. He speaks ironically, and as if it were a custom, introducing what is grievous as something useful. For he all but says, O you leaders of the peoples, perhaps it seems burdensome and troublesome to you to live in luxury at home, and to possess the land that bore you, and to live in peace, and to follow a way of life befitting the free. But since this, as it seems, does not seem good to you, go to your enemies, run off to the land of the

Persians and Armenians. Approach the eternal mountains, he means Ararat; eternal, either because they were destined to spend long periods of time in them, or because they were famous from of old, perhaps because the ark remained in them. The argument could also apply to the Jews at the time of the Lord's coming, who, following the opinions of the scribes and Pharisees, did not accept the faith. For they were like mountains, more illustrious among them, and lifted up by the boasts of the priesthood, and coming to a share of glory. But those things were temporary; for the shadow has ceased, the worship in types has grown old, and the sacred lineage of that time has become inactive.

For the eternal mountains were then revealed, that is, the preachers and deacons of the new covenant, who speak the mystery of Christ, who are renowned and most illustrious, and who are distinguished by the heights of virtue. For God calls them mountains through another prophet, saying thus, "And the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and "all the hills shall be planted. For the word of the theologians is very sweet, and sweeter than honey itself to those who are truly most devoted to God, for whom it would be fitting to say to Christ, the Savior of us all, "How sweet are your words to my throat, "more than honey and the honeycomb to my mouth. Therefore, to these spiritual mountains, those who have not yet believed, if they should draw near, that is, in a spiritual relationship, will find rest. For they will immediately unload the sin that has come upon them, although having no rest in the life according to the law, if it is true that "The letter kills, but the spirit gives life. Therefore let the Jews hear from us ourselves: Arise and go, for this is not your rest. For since you do not have rest in the law, go and move through faith to the teachings of Christ. Because of uncleanness you were destroyed with corruption. By uncleanness he means the infamous defilement of outrageous and abominable idolatry; for it is truly shameful and foul-smelling.

Another kind of filth and uncleanness is to defraud brothers, to seize what belongs to another as plunder, and injustice against many in another way. Because of this uncleanness, he says, you have been utterly destroyed, miserably corrupted with the corruption that leads to death. And those who fight against faith in Christ have also been utterly destroyed, and for no other reason than because of uncleanness. Christ himself will make this clear to us, saying to the disbelieving Jews, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if "you do not

believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. Is this not, 'Because of uncleanness you were destroyed with corruption'? For they did not wash away their offenses, nor, having been freed from their ancient charges, did they partake of the salvation from Christ, as did those who received the faith. You were pursued with no one pursuing. You have endured a voluntary captivity, he says, or rather, the flight to foreigners, and it is clear that it was also to enemies. For with no one pressuring or compelling, they themselves chose to do those things, and very zealously, through which it was necessary to be punished against their will. The multitudes of the Jews, therefore, were pursued with no one pursuing. For though it was possible for them to continue prospering, and to be in every good thing, having honored Christ, they slipped into apostasy, and have stumbled in many ways: disobeying, being insolent, and what evil thing did they not do and say?

Therefore with no one pursuing we will pursue ourselves, and having become responsible for incurable evils to our own souls, we shall no longer piously blame the one of all God the Giver, but rather ourselves, if indeed we are in a good state of both mind and understanding. A spirit has set up a falsehood, it has dripped for you into wine and strong drink. Certain ones in Samaria, sitting before the precincts of idols, practiced divination in many ways, and feigning to have an accurate grasp of future events, they announced things that were pleasing and dear to those who approached, seeking cold and despicable gains, and for a few obols, or "a piece of bread," as it is written, they sold false little words. This especially corrupted and destroyed Israel. He says, therefore, that an evil spirit has set up a falsehood as a snare for Ephraim, and like one of the poisonous drugs, has instilled into wine the demonic error, and has shown him as one who is, so to speak, thoroughly drunk with incontinent impulses towards everything that is most shameful. The evil one, the apostate dragon, also instilled into the Pharisees the false opinion and outlandish error concerning Christ. For at one time he was saying, If this man were from God, he would not break the Sabbath; and at another time they dared to call him a Samaritan, and indeed a drunkard.

And if it is true that no one says, Jesus is accursed, except by Beelzebul, how is it not easy to see that especially among them a spirit has set up a falsehood? And it dripped down into their mind and heart the drunkenness that comes through error, for which they have also justly perished, attacking like wild beasts, using every kind of audacity and slander. And it shall be from

the drop of this people; Jacob shall be gathered together with all, I will surely wait for the remnant of Israel, I will make their turning away one and the same. Evil things, proceeding little by little towards increase, and having blossomed at first among a few, somehow always seize upon even more, and extend beyond their initial measures. And one might see the truth of what I say, if one chose to consider subtly what happened to Ephraim. For first Jeroboam, and some of those who thought like him, after setting up the heifers in the precincts, have worshipped them, and have heeded the words of the unholy false seers, or rather, false prophets. Then, as the evil crept on, and always added other things to the first, all of Israel was finally brought together and ran together to one purpose, and was possessed by the transgression, and no longer in part, but rather in a great multitude and in every way. Therefore, he says, from the drop which the word of the false seers might drip on them;

for very many among Ephraim were accustomed to do this. All of Jacob, he says, will be gathered together, that is, will be brought to one mind, and the disease will be spread among all. But I will not bring upon them the penalties for this in part, but will rather wait for those who will be added to those already corrupted. For this is the meaning of, I will surely wait for the remnant of Israel, and then indeed, then I will make one turning away against all. And this would be an indication of the forbearance inherent in God, who does not punish immediately, but kindly postpones, and awaits the correction and the return of those who have gone astray. But if this should not happen, but the sickness should rather appear to be on the increase, then indeed with difficulty and reluctance He turns away. And in every case, it follows upon His turning away that those who have suffered this must be afflicted. Therefore the divine David also sings in the Psalms, "Turn not your face away from me, and do not turn aside in anger from your servant. But it must be known that just as Beelzebul instilled into the scribes and Pharisees the false and abominable opinion concerning Christ, the disease was also distributed, as it were, among all, and the rest of the multitude concurred with the deceptions of the leaders. Therefore, having also endured one sentence, I mean that of condemnation and turning away, they have paid penalties equal to their sins.

As sheep in affliction, as a flock in the midst of its fold, they shall be utterly destroyed from among men by slaughter; before their face they broke

through, and they passed through the gate, and went out by it, and their king went out before their face, and the Lord will lead them. It is a custom for the holy prophets, even in the visions themselves, often to be in the midst of things foretold as they will be in time, and to see, as it were, present and at work, things that would come to pass many years later. For example, the blessed prophet Isaiah, relating the things concerning Christ, and as it were seeing him being led away to the saving passion, says, "As a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent. And he asks, as if observing the prints of the nails, and says perhaps to him, our Lord Jesus Christ, "What are these wounds between your hands? And he said, 'Those with which I was struck in the house of my beloved.'" Moreover, the divine Jeremiah, having foretold the coming war against Jerusalem, and already seeing a great multitude of the Jews lying dead—that is, clearly, in prophetic visions—laments, saying, "Woe is me, for my soul faints over the slain.

So also the blessed Prophet Micah seems somehow to see the future tumult in the cities of Samaria, with many already terrified, others fleeing, leaping over walls and ditches, and the very hordes of the enemy breaking through gates, and pouring through them along with the conquerors, with God, as it were, defending and inciting those of the blood of Israel, as one who has been grieved. Therefore, he says, they will be so terrified, as if a sheep should happen to be in distress, that is, a whole flock, if it were resting in places, and then some wished to take it, one would see the animals leaping up and down, and where a breach might be made, going and fleeing through it; so, he says, it will be with those against whom the war of the Babylonians should go. And breaking through gates, while they are watching, that is before their face, they will enter and go out through them, that is, effortlessly and without any fear they will pass through into the cities, having the Lord of all as their leader; because it was not the work of their strength to overcome Israel, but rather by the decree of God who delivered Israel over. We say these things happened also to those who had acted insolently toward Emmanuel himself. For their cities and villages were sacked when Vespasian and Titus were then conquering and fulfilling the divine wrath upon them.

And he will say, Hear now these things, you rulers of the house of Jacob and you remnant of Israel. Is it not for you to know judgment? You who hate the good and seek evil, snatching their skin from off them and their flesh from off their bones. In the same way they ate the flesh of my people, and

stripped their skin from their bones, and broke their bones, and chopped them up like flesh for a cauldron, and like meat for a pot; so they will cry to the Lord, and he will not hear them; and he will turn his face away from them at that time, because they have done evil in their practices against them. He who opens the gates to those who war against Israel, he who smooths all things for them, and overthrows difficulties, so that they may then go with great ease, and effortlessly seize those who resist, is the Lord their leader. He himself will also say to the rulers, and to the remnant of the people. And he has put "he will say" instead of "he will converse with. And to those who manage the offices he charges with indolence, and that having neglected those under their hand, they have become destroyers and corrupters; but to those who have been subjugated, and have been deceived by the perversities of the rulers, he gives to understand that for the sake of the sins against them, justice is cast upon those who have done wrong.

For the Creator of all things cares even for those who are led astray, he who created man "for good works, which he also prepared beforehand," as the divine Paul writes, "that we should also walk in them. What then, Is it not for you to know judgment? And he says *judgment*, either the holy and blameless sentence passed upon them, or condemnation; but it would be fitting in these things for the knowledge of the judgment to be understood not as in learning only; for what harm would this have done to those who transgressed those things? Or how would it have grieved the impious? but as through the very experience of what is to come; for those accustomed to transgress, paying the penalty to their punishers, are then said to learn both the excess of the power they possess and the power of the Lord's judgments. Therefore, it is necessary, he says, for you especially to learn the judgment through the things that will happen; you who are always inclined to evil, but spurn what is good; you who make a certain wild and savage assault against my sheep, and yield in nothing to the most cruel of beasts, who flay the sheep, and tear their flesh, and dismember them unsparingly, and as it were boil them in a pot. And through these things he signifies every kind of greed, insatiability, and oppression. And since they have done these things, he says they themselves will cry out; and I would not deem them worthy of my oversight;

nor if they should cry out asking for mercy, would I grant it. For they themselves dealt craftily with those under them, and inflicted on them every

kind of wickedness, of bitter and unholy devices and deeds. And one might very fittingly apply such things to the scribes and Pharisees, who, being leaders of the peoples and set over the flocks, together with the common folk like certain sheep, cruelly attacked those who believe in Christ, and all but flaying them, they dismembered and devoured the saints, differing in nothing from wild beasts. Therefore they also heard God proclaiming beforehand through the voice of Isaiah: "When you stretch forth your hands to me, I will turn away "my eyes from you; and if you make many prayers, "I will not listen to you; for your hands "are full of blood."

Book 2

Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who bite with their teeth and proclaim peace upon him, and when nothing was given into their mouth, they stirred up war against him. He strongly accused those of Israel of enduring destruction willingly, and of giving themselves over to self-inflicted evils, and of greatly tending towards indifference. He added that they were also greatly wronged, with the evil and unclean spirit always deceiving and tricking them. And he spoke thus: "Draw near to the everlasting mountains; arise and go, "for this is not your rest; on account of uncleanness "you are corrupt with corruption. You were pursued with none pursuing. "The spirit set up a lie, it dripped for you into wine and drunkenness. For this reason he rebuked not moderately those chosen to be leaders; and he now usefully turns his discourse to their false prophets and diviners, who all but dripped for them as wine the things from the evil and unclean spirit, that is, false words and deceptions, and thus having enveloped them as with a kind of drunkenness, they drove them out of their sound mind. For they bit and wronged them not moderately, persuading them to adhere to their words, and not rather to those from God through the holy prophets; and they spoke falsely, saying that they would live their lives in peace and prosperity, and that nothing of what is naturally grievous would trouble them at all. But their one word for this was not from God.

For it would not have been given to unclean tongues to speak the things so brilliant and worthy of reception. But when they persuaded them to pay attention to them, they stirred up war against them, not themselves rousing the Assyrians to this; how so? but rather sharpening the holy wrath against them. For because they had paid attention to them, the evils from the war were justly brought upon them. This is an accusation, indeed one of the most

true and fitting, against the chief priests and Pharisees, whom the wretched multitude of the Jews followed and was utterly destroyed and ruined; for it became impious and a slayer of the Lord. Therefore it will be night for you from vision, and darkness for you from divination, and the sun will set on the prophets, and the day will grow dark over them. For since, he says, you have distilled falsehood as wine and strong drink for the people, and bit them like wild beasts, while you proclaimed the good news of peace, lying to them, and prepared them to be caught in the disasters of war, for this reason justly night and darkness will be upon you, even though you pretend to see, and, as you think to yourselves, have practiced divination excellently and truthfully. For the sun will set for you, and the very light of day will grow dark.

And we do not say, of course, that the sun truly withdrew its rays from them, or that the light of dawn was darkened, but that the magnitude of the disaster was like darkness to them and a lightless night, and a setting of the sun's ray and a withdrawal of light, and what of such things did not happen to occur? For terrible and extraordinary evils intoxicate the mind, and trouble the heart, and fill it with darkness. And one might say truthfully that for the peoples of the Jews who acted insolently toward Christ, the intelligible sun finally set, with God no longer shining upon them, nor the intelligible day dawning for them, but rather their hardening spreading over them like night. For they have been hardened, as Paul says, and "Whenever Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. "For professing to be wise, they became fools, and their foolish heart was darkened. And that these things would happen to them, Christ himself foretold, saying "While you have the light, walk in the light, lest darkness overtake you. But since they did not accept the divine light, that is, Christ, they were overtaken by darkness, and it became night for them from vision, according to the Prophet's voice.

This same thing will also happen to the inventors of heresies, who, pretending to see, and insisting that they are able to understand the mystery of Christ brilliantly, the wretches speak falsely, and they almost drip the harms from deceit into the hearts of the more simple, and then lead them away from the doctrines of truth. Therefore, for them there will be night from vision, and darkness, for they will go away into the outer darkness, "having sinned against the brothers and wounding their weak conscience for whom Christ died. And those who see the dreams will be ashamed, and the diviners

will be laughed at, and they will all speak against them, because there will be no one to listen to them. For they were divining that there would be great peace, and seizing those who approached them with silly little dreams, they prepared them to be disposed to think that everything would go smoothly for them, and that their prayers would prevail. But when experience showed the outcome of events to be contrary to what they were saying, and their hopes turned out completely opposite for them, they were then necessarily condemned as false speakers, as buffoons and impostors; and indeed they slipped into such disgrace that no one wanted to pay attention to them; for how, or from where? they who spoke good things, but have cast the deceived into an unexpected disaster, and as far as possible from what was hoped for?

Unless I fill myself with strength in the spirit of the Lord and of judgment and of power to declare to Jacob his impieties and to Israel his sins. He shows that in every way and altogether It is necessary for those who have a counterfeit glory of prophecy to speak falsely. For how could one who does not speak in God, who is truth, speak the truth? For concerning Cain, Christ said somewhere, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and has not stood in the truth, because he is a liar, as is his father; giving him as a father the one who also invented falsehood, that is, satan. How can it be doubted that it is necessary for those who speak from a diabolical spirit, saying his things, to lie? But those who are through God, in every way and altogether, speak excellently and truthfully; for they have the truth in themselves. Therefore, how, he says, could the word of prophecy not be falsified by some, unless I filled some with power and righteousness, that is, judgment, through my Spirit, so as to fearlessly and boldly rise up against sinners and convict them? For I think those who speak the things of God need very great and good boldness. For at times they rebuke whole peoples, and indeed also kings, and those who are in high places, who especially gnash their teeth at those who wish to correct them, and do not consider the word of those who help them tolerable.

For the blessed prophets have labored, or rather, have been endangered, and have been slain in many ways, falling at times into the unholy rages of those being instructed. And the divine disciples were also scourged. For being full of power and judgment and righteousness, they brought to God through faith in Christ the flocks of the Jews. But they rejoiced being tortured, and left the councils exulting, having been dishonored for the name. For they

knew that having suffered with Christ, they would also reign with him. Hear this now, you rulers of the house of Jacob and the remnant of the house of Israel, who abhor judgment and pervert all that is right, who build Zion with blood, and Jeru- salem with iniquities. The Creator, being exceedingly good, and then not being ignorant of the magnitude of the evils that would befall them, comes in every way, and introduces every kind of suggestion and threat, so that perhaps somehow the sinners might be persuaded and choose to repent, unlearning the more shameful things and having chosen to do right those things through which it was likely they could escape the effects of wrath without a struggle.

It is necessary for the eager learner and most devoted to words to know that while the word of the prophets is continuous in books and writings, it came about at times and in parts, so that even if they sometimes seem to say the same thing, it is still logical to understand that they did not, as I said, address such things at one time, nor to the same people, but with long intervals often inter- vening, they spoke to different people at different times. For it was necessary for all to know the things that would happen, and for the prediction of the common calamity to be for those throughout all the land. To you, then, he says, is the word, who have finally come to such a point of madness as to abhor judgment, that is, righteousness, and to declare perverted the law that directs toward good knowledge; to you who think perhaps to restore Zion with murders and unjust bloodshed, and to make Jerusalem glorious and admired. But it were better to understand that they are rather destroy- ing it, although they were appointed for building and for correc- tion, since they were leaders of the flocks, priests and guardians of the law appointed by God. And they have truly torn down Zion with blood. For they have killed the prophets, and they added to them also the Master of all, I mean Christ. For being builders of Zion, they rejected him;

although God said clearly, "Behold, I lay in the foundations of Zion a stone, a chosen, precious corner- stone, and he who believes in him shall not be ashamed. But, as I said, the builders of Zion rejected the chosen and precious stone; yet he has been made the head of the corner; for Christ has reigned over us, and over those of the circum- cision, whom he also created "into one new man, making peace through the cross" and joining them like a corner into unanimity in the Spirit. For it is written that "the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul. But since they have been

conformed through sanctification and faith to the most precious cornerstone, the divine Peter writes well and wisely to them, "and you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house," "into a holy temple, into a dwelling place for God in the Spirit; for Christ has dwelt in the hearts of those who believe. And somewhere concerning them he says through the voice of a prophet, "For I will dwell in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Its leaders judged for a bribe, and its priests gave answers for a price, and its prophets divined for silver, and they rested upon the Lord, saying, "Is not the Lord among us? No evil shall come upon us.

Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall be like a watchtower for fruit, and the mountain of the house as a grove of the forest. An abominable thing, and among those especially hated by the all-holy God, are both unjust judgment and bribery. For it is written that "for one who receives bribes unjustly in his bosom, his ways will not prosper. For some are so defeated by accursed greed and shameful gains as to consider it nothing to pervert justice and to sell the truth. And just as those who get dust in their eyes have the activity of their power of sight weakened, so too those who receive maiming in their mind no longer see; "For gifts blind the eyes of the wise, as it is written, and pervert just words; those who pervert justice wrong the pure beauty of the divine dignities. For it is proper for God alone to judge, and knowing this, the blessed Moses said, "You shall not show partiality in judgment, for the judgment is God's. He who has practiced judging unjustly all but touches the divine and highest thrones, and let him know that he has sinned against the ineffable glory itself, which knows how to judge rightly and justly. For the judgment is God's, as I said. And besides this, it is altogether terrible to make piety a pretext for gain, and to consider the things from God a source of revenue.

For see how he does not leave blameless the prophet and priest who wish to work for hire, so as to promise to speak to those who approach, if indeed they should choose to bring wages and gifts. I think that the word here again makes mention of false prophets, and not entirely of priests of the law and true ones, but of those whose custom it was to run after such honors, and to acquire for themselves a purchasable glory. For a holy prophet, or a true priest, would not make his own soul liable to such offenses. Then, while sinning in such ways, he says, they rested upon the Lord, saying, "Is not the

Lord among us? No evil shall come upon us. For admittedly the God of all was in Israel, and he delivered them from the misery in Egypt, brought them into the land of promise, and showed them to be stronger and more valiant than their enemies. But they surely ought to have understood that when they sin terribly and are condemned for such outrageous things, God would not have endured to be with them. For the holy is incompatible with the profane, and the pure is unconnected with what defiles. That they have thought vain things, therefore, supposing that even if they should be workers of wickedness, even if they should choose to do things beyond all evil, God would nevertheless be with them again, they will recognize, he says, from the things that will happen.

For Zion shall be plowed, and the famous Jerusalem shall be like a watchtower for fruit, that is, desolate and destroyed, and the mountain of the house itself, that is, the temple lying on a high hill, into a grove of the forest. This is like saying, a haunt of wild beasts and the holes of serpents. For just as beasts and the untamed kinds of reptiles dwell in the mountains and in the forests, So also in the deserted places, and wherever very many calamities might appear. But these things have happened to the peoples of the Jews, when they also acted insolently against Emmanuel himself. For then, then they were utterly destroyed, and not a stone has remained upon a stone, according to the voice of the Savior himself; and the once venerable and admirable Zion has finally been shown to be arable land and suitable for farmers. However, it must be known that God will also be in us, not in those having faith alone, nor in those as it were resting on him for this reason, but if there is added to faith also the being well-pleasing from works. "For faith without works is dead" according to what is written. And with works running together with the good things from faith, then indeed then God will also be with us, and he will readily strengthen, and will consider us friends, and will gladden us as genuine, and will deliver us from every evil.

And it shall be in the last days that the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and peoples shall hasten to it, and many nations shall go to it; and they shall say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and they will show us his way, and we will walk in his paths. In these things is now clearly seen the prediction of the Church from the gentiles. With Israel according to the flesh having been, as

it were, removed from the midst, and the sacrifices according to the law having ceased, and the priesthood from the blood of Levi also being at rest, and the renowned temple itself having finally been burnt, and Jerusalem having been destroyed, Christ revealed the Church from the gentiles, and as in the last time, that is, at the consummation of this age; for then he came to be among us. Therefore, he calls the Church a mountain, which is the house of the living God; and a high one, because in it there is nothing at all low; but the knowledge of the dogmas concerning God is raised on high, and the very life of those justified in Christ and sanctified in the Spirit has also been built up.

For there is not in them what is cast on the ground and trodden underfoot with respect to life, just as, of course, one might see in the case of those of the circumcision. For they were overcome by love of the flesh and of shameful gains, and they were caught murdering unjustly, and liable to very many other offenses; "But those who are of Jesus Christ, as the divine Paul says, have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. And they have so hated the need to be rich, that one might hear them crying out with boldness "Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and harmful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. And they have so abstained from murder, that even to those who strike them on the right cheek, they turn the other also. The Church might also be understood as a mountain in another way, when compared to the doctrines of the Greeks. For they most foolishly teach that one must worship stones and wood and creation itself, but she makes manifest the God who is by nature and truly, who fashioned this universe, and holds it together for its well-being, and is Lord of all as God. Indeed, he says the mountain of the Lord has been raised up upon mountains and hills, and to be established, signifying by this that it lies and is, as it were, in great prominence.

For what is set on a mountain is conspicuous, and very easy to see, and perhaps unknown by no one, not even by those lying farthest away. And that the nations were going to rush to it very eagerly, the word of the prophecy has clearly declared. And the very outcome of events has borne witness to this, and shown it to be true. For peoples, he says, will hasten to it, clearly meaning to the Master of the house, that is, Christ. And what will they say? Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of our

God, and they will show us his way and we will walk in it. Do you hear that, urging one another on, they command each other, saying, "Let us go up," both correctly and intelligently; for I would say that of those among the Greeks the lowly and rejected state of dogmas not having been ignorant, they say "Let us go up," as leaping up high henceforth, as far as it pertains to the thoughts concerning the God who is by nature and truly is. And they long for righteousness, and they have thirsted to learn the way of the Lord, and indeed they profess to go, and very eagerly, in his paths. And who might be the teachers of such things? Or clearly the disciples of the Savior, those entrusted with the divine proclamation, to whom Christ said:

"Go and make disciples" of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the "Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching" them to observe all that I have commanded you. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. and he shall judge between many peoples, and shall rebuke strong nations even to a distant land. The myriads and innumerable multitudes of the nations, those who are walking to the mountain of the Lord, that is, the Church, and longing to learn the way of the Lord, and eagerly promising to go by it, here state the reason for no longer wishing, so to speak, to be initiated into the law and to run to Judaism. For before the coming of our Savior, while the customs according to the law were still in force, some of the erring came forward, and bidding farewell to the evils of idolatry, then being circumcised in the flesh, they were eager to live by the customs and laws of the Jews. And such a multitude among them is beyond number. And so Solomon, when he was planning to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, appointed one hundred and fifty thousand stone-cutters and work- men from the proselytes; for so it is written in Chronicles. But what was done was a type of a mystery.

For they were about to build a temple to God, the true and conspicuous one, that is, the Church, not the Jews so much, but those from the nations, bearing the Jew in secret, and having a circumcision not so much in the flesh, but in the spirit. Therefore, before the advent, some of the idolaters came and lived by the laws of the Jews. But when the truly conspicuous mountain of the Lord was at last revealed, they approach it instead, rejoicing and saying: For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And they seem to want to show, and to have proclaimed that clearly as well, perhaps, that Zion will be desolate even of the law, and

Jerusalem bare of the divine words. For in a way the law and the word of God spoken through angels has departed from them. For the shadow has been abolished, and the things in types have ceased, and the sacrifices have also been taken away, and all the things through Moses have now in a way been brought to a close, as far as the letter is concerned, I mean. But that Christ was about to judge and convict many nations, they, so to speak, prophesy and foretell; but it is necessary to say how and in what manner he would judge and convict.

For by persuading them to abstain from the ways of error, and showing them clearly that they are hastening to destruction, if they should not choose to live rightly, and to wipe away the charges of their ancient transgressions, he will in a way judge and convict and not only one nation, but even to a distant land, that is, to the ends of the earth under heaven; for everywhere the saving word is sung. "For this gospel," he says, "will be preached in the whole world. And the prophetic word seems to hint to us at another subtle and hidden mystery. For it relates, as it were, in what way those from the nations would be received, and leaving that ancient error they will henceforth walk to the mountain of the Lord, that is, the Church. For he says, from the Zion above, and from the spiritual Jerusalem, a law and a word of the Lord will go forth. For the Word of God has come down to us from heaven, who also has become for us a law and a lawgiver, and he himself will judge between many peoples, and will rebuke strong nations even to a distant land. But what the 'will judge' and 'will rebuke' might mean, I will say according to what has come to mind.

Satan has tyrannized over all, and together with the evil powers with him he waged war against the world under the sun, and placing the yoke of his greed upon all, he led astray from God the race upon the earth. But "The Lord God has appeared to us," according to what is written, the good shepherd then appeared on earth, and rescued those who had gone astray from that one's greed, and condemned those who led them astray, and convicted those who did wrong, that is, "The principalities, the authorities, the cosmic rulers "of this age, the spiritual forces of evil "in the heavenly places. And Christ himself makes this clear to us, saying, "Now is the judgment of this age, "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. For he has judged for many and innumerable peoples, that is clearly, for those who were wronged, and

he has justified them in mercy and faith. He has cast out the ruler of this age, and has driven him away from his rule over us, convicting him as unjust, as unholy, as a murderer, as one who has taken advantage of the world under heaven. And with him were surely also convicted the other nations of demons, those once terrible and strong, not wandering about one city, but scattered as far as a distant land, that is, to the ends of the world under heaven.

For they had divided the earth as it were, and no one at all was without experience of their wickedness. 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; and each one shall rest under his vine, and each one under his fig tree, and there shall be no one to make them afraid, because the mouth of the Lord Almighty has spoken these things. All things have become new in Christ, and Paul speaks the truth when he says that "in Christ, a new creation, and the old things "have passed away. For the state of affairs itself has also changed for the better, no longer giving birth to wars and battles, which had an unbearable and truly wretched assault against all. For the reshaping of the instruments of war for the work of farmers, and for each to rest, says the Prophet, under his own fig tree and indeed his vine, and for there to be no one to frighten them, what else could this suggest to us, other than that there will be a deep and unbreakable peace, and a time without war? And these things were accomplished during the times of the visitation. And indeed Christ himself said, "My peace I give to you, my peace "I leave with you. But when or how did peace in the world come to be?

For since the rule and most glorious kingdom of the Romans then held sway over the world under heaven, all the nations were brought together and came under one yoke, and they ceased from war against one another, and turned to the works of peace, clearly to agriculture, and each inhabited their own cities in safety. For before the hand of the Romans held sway over them, wars and uprisings of countries and cities occurred everywhere, and it was possible for those who wished to ravage whomever they chose, to plunder the property of others as if they had conquered them, and it was necessary for those in each country and city to be well fitted with the implements of war, and to practice military tactics, to defend themselves and their children. But since the strength of the Roman kingdom was then established, such things

have ceased, and the implements of war have become mattocks and sickles and indeed also plows, and they were then reshaped into certain other such things. But if someone should choose to approach the preceding things also spiritually, he will understand again that with Christ awarding us peace from his own gentleness, and abolishing the principalities and those who formerly fought against those who wish to be pious, we have ceased from fears, and we have been put beyond assault and battle, having turned to the cultivation of spiritual things, and we gather the fruits of righteousness, and we have rested at last under a fig tree and of the vine.

And the fig tree will be a symbol of sweetness, but the vine of spiritual gladness. For the word of the Savior is exceedingly sweet, and knows how to gladden the heart of man, according to what is written. And in addition to this, sweet and full of gladness is the hope for the future, which we have richly received in Christ. For all the peoples will walk, each in his own way, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and beyond. Those who have made it their business to go up to the mountain of the Lord, and who wish to learn his paths, profess docility, and accept the glories of the life in Christ, and that they will pursue with all their strength the studies of piety, they signify this very well to us through these things. For each one, he says, of those in every country and city, may travel whatever path he should choose, and may live again according to what seems good to him or is even supposed to be right; but for us, Christ is our care, and we will make his ordinances our straight path, and we will walk with him, as it were, and not only for the present and passing age, but for much longer and beyond. And the saying is true; for those who now suffer with him, will be with him forever and will be glorified with him and will reign with him.

Indeed, they make Christ their care who prefer nothing to the love for him, who cease from the vain distractions of the world, but seek rather righteousness, and what is pleasing to him, and to excel in virtues, such a one as was also the divine Paul. For he writes that, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And again, "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. In that day, says the Lord, I will assemble the one that is crushed and I will receive the one that was cast off, and those whom I cast off; and I will make the one that was crushed into a remnant, and the one that was cast off into a strong nation, and the Lord will reign over them on Mount Zion from now

and forever. That Israel would in no way completely slip from hope, he then indicates; for it was crushed and became an outcast, that is, it has been rejected on account of its very great impiety; for it was a fighter against God and an idolater, abominable and profane, and was held not moderately by the charges of blood-guilt. For they killed the prophets, then finally they also crucified the Savior and Redeemer of all, yet the remnant has been shown mercy on account of the fathers and has been saved, and it has also become a great nation.

For it is true that the holy multitude of those justified in Christ would be considered a very great nation, and very reasonably so. And its excellent qualities, and the things for which it ought to be admired, are the good things for the mind, the glories for the heart, that is, sanctification, hope in Christ, genuineness in faith, what is marveled at in virtues, what is worthy of admiration in endurance, and to be ruled by Christ himself and to be shepherded by him, and to make him our guide; "For one is our guide, Christ. And if indeed the dead should be raised, also "we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. And by Mount Zion he means the Jerusalem above, the mother of the firstborn, in which we will also be with Christ himself. And you, tower of the flock, parched, daughter of Zion, upon you will come and enter the first dominion, the kingdom of Babylon to the daughter of Jerusalem. Things from gentleness are announced to those who have suffered, and he said that in due time he will receive the crushed one, and will make her into a great nation. Yet in the meantime he lays blame, and that she has suffered utterly, has been crushed and cast out, he helpfully reproaches. For as the blessed Paul said, "Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret.

He strikes, therefore, out of love, and because, while it was possible to experience none of the grievous things, she came to this through voluntary inclinations. But he calls Sion a squalid tower of the flock, that is, he also names Jerusalem itself, speaking as it were in character, almost even frowning at her. O Sion, that is, Jerusalem, wretched daughter, O wretched and lightless dwelling of my sheep, you will certainly be given over, even unwillingly, to your enemies. For she will come, she will come, and not long from now upon you, the preeminent and stronger of the kingdoms on earth, that is, that of the Babylonians. And he calls Sion, that is, Jerusalem, a squalid

tower and a dark dwelling, because all who were in her walked as it were in darkness, from not wishing to make the law of God a lamp, as it were, and a light, and to receive into their mind the illumination from him. For thus, and not otherwise, was it possible to traverse a straight path, and to depart from pits, and to leap over sin, and not to stumble over the evils that fall in between. Let us therefore also sing ourselves, saying to God, "Enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep in death, lest my enemy say, I have prevailed against him.

For being illumined by divine light, and having received into our mind the brightness of the wisdom from above and from God, we shall be unconquerable by our enemies, and escaping the things from divine wrath, we shall be in the goodness of cheerfulness from above, and in Christ we shall certainly prosper. And now, why have you known evils? Was there not a king for you? Or has your counsel perished, because pains have seized you as a woman in labor? Be in labor and be strong and draw near, daughter of Sion, as a woman in labor, because now you shall go forth from the city, and you shall dwell in the plain, and you shall come to Babylon; from there he will rescue you, and from there the Lord your God will deliver you from the hand of your enemies. The first rule, he says, will therefore come upon you. But what then is the reason for which you are crushed by such terrible evils? For to know evils is to fall into evils, that is, into the things that are accustomed to do evil, I mean the calamities of war. Was there then not a king for you? Or have you not practiced deliberating wisely, and making the best decisions for yourself? But again he cleverly rebukes, and indirectly reproaches her as being utterly senseless and not refraining from offending God. And what is the manner, I will speak briefly.

God of all ruled over the children of Israel in the beginning, through the mediation of the all-wise Moses, then after him, Jesus the son of Nun was taken into the generalship; then through the judges appointed from time to time, and after them through the blessed Samuel. But when their affairs were in this state, and were arranged in the best possible order, the wretched ones contrived bitter things against themselves. And shaking off, as it were, the yoke of the kingdom under God, they went to the blessed Samuel saying, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your way, and now set a king over us to judge us, as do the other nations; and the word was, he says, evil in the eyes of Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us; and Samuel prayed to the Lord; and the Lord said to Samuel, Listen to the

voice of the people in whatever they may say to you, because they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from reigning over them. Then when the blessed Samuel announced to them the rights of the kingdom, and terrified them with very many fears, and strongly turned them away from such unsound and unholy thoughts, they no less insisted, saying, "No, but a king shall be over us, and we also shall be as the other nations, and our king will judge us, and he will go out before our face, and he will fight our war.

Therefore he brings them to the remembrance of those ancient and perilous counsels, and as it were, he speaks ironically of what has happened and says, How have you known evils? Was there not a king for you? Or has your counsel perished? "Did you not ask for a king," he says, "saying, he will go before our face, and will fight our war. Did you then ever deliberate well? Behold of the matters the at last showed your counsel, that it was both best and necessary. You made the yoke of the kingdom under God a thing to be cast off. Behold, birth pangs have seized you like a woman in labor. Therefore be in travail and be courageous, O daughter of Zion. Again the discourse is in a moral tone: for, O good daughter, he says, be patient in your pains, endure your sorrows, draw near to giving birth, that is, you will not be far from what is expected; but like a woman already in labor you will cry out from your toils, and having left your well-towered cities you will encamp in the plain, you will lodge, he says, in deserted places; and you will even arrive in Babylon itself; yet He does not leave her completely without comfort; for He immediately added that she will both escape and be brought back again by the mercy of God.

It is therefore most excellent to remain under God and be ruled by Him and to make Him one's power, defender and helper, to bow the neck of the soul to Him alone, to live by His will, and to consider what pleases Him worthy of all account. Or if we do not do this, we shall in every way and altogether be under the spiritual Babylonians, I mean the opposing and unclean powers, and under the first principle, that is, Satan, and cast out as it were from the holy city "whose architect and builder is God," we shall inhabit the city of the Babylonians. For we shall be in confusion and turmoil, with sufficient distractions of the present life. For Babylon is interpreted as confusion. And now many nations have gathered against you, who say, 'Let us rejoice,' and 'Our eyes will look upon Zion.' But they did not know the reasoning of the Lord, and did not understand his counsel, that he has gathered them

like sheaves of the threshing floor. Arise and thresh them, O daughter of Zion, for I will make your horns iron, and I will make your hooves bronze; and you will crush many peoples, and you will dedicate their multitude to the Lord, and their strength to the Lord of all the earth. We have already said many times that while Hezekiah was governing the kingdom in Jerusalem, Sennacherib ravaged Samaria, and took many cities of Judah along with it.

Then he sent the Rabshakeh from Lachish, who babbled not moderately against the divine glory, at which time one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians perished in one night by the hand of an angel. He mentions this history again. For many nations were gathered against you, he says, almost playing wantonly and dancing over her who was not yet laid low. But they did not know what God had planned. For they were gathered as to a threshing floor, and like a sheaf they will be subject to your feet. Arise, therefore, and thresh them, for you will have horns of iron and hooves of bronze, that is, you will be difficult to conquer and invincible to your enemies, and you will all but trample down those who stand against you. For since he has made mention of a threshing floor and a sheaf, he has preserved the fitting manner in the metaphor, and as if speaking of a calf he mentions horns and hooves. But since they were not consumed and did not fall by human hand, but lay as a work of divine wrath, do not, he says, take the boasts for these things to yourself, but rather ascribe to the Lord of all the earth both their multitude and the strength of the perished. But this is the sense of the history, and perhaps the very sudden turn of the prophetic proclamations will disturb some of those who encounter them.

For just now we heard him saying, 'The first dominion, the kingdom of the Babylonians, will come and enter upon you,' and the manner of the captivity was described to us; then immediately we see her saved, and trampling on her enemies. Therefore, there is need of a clear distinction of the times; for thus the consideration of what is said will be unconfused and clear. For while Hezekiah was reigning, Sennacherib went up against Jerusalem, then after the death of Hezekiah there were four other kings, and the fifth was Jehoniah. Then Nebuchadnezzar took all of Judea and Jerusalem itself, and carried away all Israel into captivity. And the blessed one clearly writes for us the history concerning these things The prophet Jeremiah. Now the daughter of Ephraim shall be completely hedged in: he has set a siege against you: with a rod they shall strike the tribes of Israel on the cheek. For many

peoples and many nations will be gathered together against Zion, then, expecting to dance over her and mock her, they have been threshed and crushed, God casting them down at the feet of the victors as in the form of a sheaf. And the city of the Samaritans was captured and destroyed, and has been consumed by the war, and concerning her he says, that she will be fenced in and restrained, God clearly ordaining that she be in distress and must suffer it. He calls Samaria the daughter of Ephraim, that is, the populace in Samaria.

For it seems that in some way the one entrusted with kingship is in the position of a father to those under his yoke. And those from Ephraim have reigned over Samaria. Therefore, he says, the city of the Samaritans will be, as it were, surrounded and girdled by the forces of the enemies, who will all but strike her on the cheek, not slapping with merciful hands, but even crushing with rods and abusing her violently. And through these things he indicates, in addition to the dishonors, also the unbearable pain of captivity. For slaps on the cheek are an unambiguous sign of dishonor. But if it should be understood as being done also with a rod, it will certainly convey what is wicked, and what is fitting, as it were, for a slave. Therefore, he says, Samaria, which is ruled by those from the tribe of Ephraim, will be dishonored and in abuses and pains. But the hand of the one who strikes will be idle, and we will remain untouched by abuse, if with all our strength we refuse to provoke to wrath against ourselves the Lord of all by doing what is not lawful and by making a special effort for what is hateful to Him. But rather by honoring Him with kindnesses we will be in a good state of prosperity, and we will live through a life truly brilliant and worthy. And you, Bethlehem, house of Ephrathah, you are too little to be among the thousands of Judah;

out of you shall come forth to me one who is to be a ruler in Israel, and his goings forth are from the beginning, from the days of eternity. In these things the prophetic word proclaims to us the return of our affairs to their original state. And it also remembers very clearly the recapitulation which is said to have happened in Christ. For the things in him are a new creation, as it is written, and "The old things "have passed away, but through him new things have come to be," transforming human things and renewing them again for well-being. For he has reigned, and has again made the rule over all things desirable. And the universal is signified also through the things that are particularly dispensed. For Israel was ruled, as I said, in the begin-

ning by God, with the saints mediating. Then, not long after, having fallen ill with foolishness, and dishonoring acting under God, they have honored human powers more. And so they asked for Saul as king over themselves. Then they offended not moderately; for the God of all, being grieved, said to the blessed Samuel, "They have not despised "you, but they have despised me, that I should not reign over "them. But that the matter was in no way beneficial for them, but rather bitter and harmful and a cause of destruction, experience itself has shown; how could anyone doubt it? For because of this they have fallen into terrible and inescapable evils.

Therefore, bringing Israel back, as it were, to its original state, I mean to being ruled by God himself, he proclaimed beforehand Christ, who would be for them the Savior and Redeemer from Bethlehem. And it would not be off the mark even if it should seem to someone to make the statement a kind of general one. For since we on earth have fallen away from the kingdom under God, fashioning a foreign yoke for ourselves, and inscribing as master one who is not by nature a master, but rather a boaster and an apostate, I mean Satan, we have been in every evil; but, as I just said, God the Father was pleased "to sum up all "things in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things on "the earth," and "He has rescued us from the dominion of "darkness, and transferred into the kingdom of the Son of "his love in the light. Therefore, he makes the discourse to Bethlehem, that is, the house of Ephrathah. And the region is called Ephrathah, but the town Bethlehem, that is, the village in the region, from where were Jesse and David, and she again, the holy virgin, who bore to us the divine infant, her own son Jesus, "Whose government was upon his shoulder, and his name is called Angel of Great Counsel.

for he has reigned through the cross, and since he became "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," for this reason, as the divine Paul says, "God also has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus Christ every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, amen. O then Bethlehem, he says, house of Ephrathah, though you are little to be among the thousands of Judah, that is, countless are the splendid and great cities of Judea, and teeming with a populous multitude of inhabitants, but even if very few are those who dwell in and possess you, you

will become a nurse, and will be called the city of the one who rules over Israel, who is a good shepherd so as even to lay down his life for the sheep, and he will rule over all of Israel. And not at all only of Israel according to the flesh, but also of those from the promise promised beforehand to Abraham; for God said somewhere to him, "For in Isaac shall your seed be called. And the 'In Isaac,' he says, is by promise.

Therefore the promise is sure not only to those of the lineage of Israel, "but also to those who walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while still uncircumcised; for these are Israel, because "the children of the promise are counted for the seed. It is therefore as if he were to say: He will rule over everyone who believes in him and who appropriates himself to me through him. For we have been brought to the Father through the Son, and he himself will testify, saying, "No one comes to the Father except through me. Therefore, Christ was revealed from Bethlehem, the good shepherd, "who feeds us in the gardens and among the lilies," and setting forth the fragrance of the evangelical decrees, and bringing as it were ripe flowers concerning himself, to those willing to pluck them and to be filled with their fragrance spiritually; for he said, "I am a flower of the plain, a lily of the valleys. But he says his goings forth are from the beginning and from the days of eternity, either signifying the pre-eternal existence of the Word; for he is, he is co-eternal with his own Begetter, and he himself is the maker of the ages; that is, that he became man as in the last time of the age, but the mystery concerning him was predestined in the foreknowledge of the Father even before the foundation of the ages.

Therefore, by 'going forth' he means either the timeless birth from God the Father into the Son's own existence, or his manifestation, which would be in due time, when he became flesh, even if from the beginning and from the days of eternity he was predestined and appointed by the Father as Savior and Redeemer, who was not ignorant of the intervening things that would happen to the human race on account of the transgression in Adam. Therefore you will give them up until the time of her who is in labor. She will give birth, and the rest of their brethren will return to the sons of Israel. The Prophet seems to have considered this in himself and perhaps to reason and say: God will not speak falsely, but will by all means bring to pass the things that have been promised. And if Israel is in such splendid hopes, and the ruler will be born for them, and he will rule, and will deliver from every evil,

why will he be captured by the spear at all? Then, having understood the time of the promise, and perceiving it was not yet present, he in a way apologizes to himself, saying:

For since the time of the promise is still at a long postponement, and they themselves are in no small stumblings, and do not cease from sinning at all, for this reason you will give them up, that is, you will deliver them to enemies, O Master, until the time of her who is in labor, until, he says, that divine an infant from a virgin's loins. For then there will be the most complete redemption, and they will be established in sure prosperity, with nothing at all that leads to gladness lacking for them. As the Prophet was pondering these things, as I said, and as it were whispering to himself, God overhears "She will bear a son," and calls him to a firm faith. Similar to this is what was said to the prophet Habakkuk, "Yet a little while, and he who is to come will come, and will not delay. For he says that he will be born in every way and in all circumstances, and the remnant of their brothers will return to the sons of Israel. For not a few of the Jews accepted the faith in Christ, and before all others, the blessed disciples; but those who were insolent in their disobedience have slipped from hope. However, in the last times they will be brought to the others, and as if from a late start they will with difficulty run back to what it was better to have come to in the beginning.

And he will stand and see, and the Lord will shepherd his flock in strength, and they will exist in the glory of the name of the Lord their God; because now he will be magnified to the ends of the earth. And this will be peace. The phrase "he will stand," he says, is instead of "and he will take charge. And the shepherd will be the one who works for his own sheep, not entrusting the instruction to another, as he did long ago to the blessed Moses, but he himself through himself; for it is true that "Not an ambassador, not an angel, but the Lord himself saved us; and he will shepherd us in strength, placing us above all sweat and toil. For he will act as a shield, as it were, and will save them universally, not allowing false shepherds to wrong them through deceit, nor wild beasts to leap upon the flocks, nor permitting the wicked and opposing powers, just as they did carelessly of old, to lord it over those who have believed and to take advantage of the sanctified, but rather giving them "to tread upon the asp and the basilisk, and to trample the lion and the dragon. For we have become glorious through him, and we have been lifted up on high, brilliant and transparent, and we have reached

the ends of the world under heaven. For he himself is our strength and power, he is the mediator and reconciler, he is our peace.

For he broke down "the dividing wall of the partition," and abolished in his decrees "the law of commandments," and created the two peoples into one "new man, making peace," according to what is written, and binding them into unity with the bonds of love. Therefore, a fitting and true name for him is peace, even if he is called Christ. When the Assyrian comes upon your land, and when he treads upon your country, then there will be raised up against him seven shepherds and eight bites of men, and they will shepherd Asshur with the sword and the land of Nebrod in its trench, and he will deliver from the Assyrian, when he comes upon your land and when he treads upon your borders. The Hebrew version of the present chapter begins with, "And this will be peace, when the Assyrian comes upon your land and when he treads upon your country. For this, he says, will be the manner of peace, if indeed the Assyrian should wish to attack your land and country. But in interpreting the verses, we will say that the discourse again departs from perceptible and more manifest matters, and is lifted up on high, as it were, and from a visible image subtly leads to things that happen intellectually.

For in these verses "Assyrian" no longer signifies the man from Babylon, but rather signifies the inventor of sin, I mean Satan, or rather, to speak simply, the untamable and warlike multitude of demons, which rises up intellectually against every saint, and fights against the holy city, the spiritual Zion, "which is the church of the living God," and is a kind of type and a similar image of the Jerusalem which is understood to be above and heavenly. Thus also the divine psalmist remembered her, saying, "Glorious things have been spoken of you, O city of God; for Christ inhabits the Church, and has made it a kind of city of his own, although by the nature of his divinity filling all things. This city of God, then, is a kind of land and country of the sanctified, who have been enriched with unity toward God in the Spirit. When, therefore, it says, the Assyrian comes upon your land, that is, if the barbarian and opposing powers should fight against the saints, they will not find them destitute of leaders. For there shall rise up against them seven shepherds and eight bites of men. But the meaning of the prophecy seems, from the times, that is, from the numbers seven and eight, I say, to wish to

signify the saints: those before the advent, and at the same time those during it, and those who have come after it.

For before the advent, according to the Law of Moses, the sabbath rest on the seventh day was honored, and it was still the time of the shadow. Then also the company of the holy prophets was revealed, instructing toward piety and the knowledge of Christ. But when at last the Only-Begotten appeared, and endured the cross for the life of all, and rose again, having plundered Hades on the eighth day, then he commanded the holy Apostles to "make disciples of all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son "and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that he had "commanded them. These, then, he calls the eight bites of men, signifying those who came at the time of the resurrection and after it. When, therefore, he says, the Assyrian or the foreigner and barbarian comes, then indeed he will come against seven shepherds, and against eight bites. For we will find both the saints who were in the time of the Law, whom he calls seven shepherds, and in addition to these, the Apostles and Evangelists, and the teachers of the churches in their times, always warring against and generally resisting the deceits of the demons, and setting forth their own sobriety, as it were, against the perversities of the evil one. For they save those who inhabit the holy country and land, fortifying them with admonitions and securing them with instructions unto everything that is best.

And that the choir of the saints was about to plot in a certain way against Satan, and to consume him intellectually with bites, God again made clear through the voice of a holy one, saying concerning him: "Woe to him who multiplies for himself what is not his! For how long? "and who makes his yoke heavy and strong. For suddenly "those who bite him shall arise, and those who plot against you shall awaken, "and you shall be plunder for them. Because you "have plundered many nations, all the peoples that are left "shall plunder you. Do you hear that he says that the one who multiplies for himself what is not his, that is, Satan, will be bitten and plundered? Then he names those who plundered him 'the remnant,' that is, those from the remnant, or rather, those from Jacob. But if, he says, some Assyrian should come, that is, a man of a different mind and gone astray, not having the faith that runs straight, but limping, as it were, and broken in mind, they set against this one also the power of the truth, and showing the unpleasantness of his rottenness, they drive him away as a wolf, almost biting him down and

making him, though unwilling, to be for a time very far away from the flock of spiritual sheep and to be carried outside. These, then, the seven shepherds, also understood as eight bites, will shepherd the Assyrian with a sword.

He says 'they will shepherd' instead of 'they will pursue.' For since he mentioned shepherds, he has kept what is fitting to the metaphor of the word, by saying 'they will shepherd.' And what the sword might fittingly be understood to be, which it is the custom of the saints to use, the psalmist will make clear, saying of them: "And "two-edged swords in their hands, to execute vengeance "on the nations, and rebukes on the peoples; "For "the word of God is living and active, and sharper than "any two-edged sword. And Paul also, equipping the soldier understood to be in Christ, gives him "The "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. But that the divine and all-powerful sword pursues the Assyrian, that is, the Word of God, no less will the prophet Isaiah persuade us, saying "And it shall be in that day, God will bring "his holy and great and strong sword upon the dragon, the crooked serpent, and will slay "the dragon; and again "And it shall be, when the "Lord has finished doing all things in mount Zion and in Jerusa- "lem, he will bring punishment upon the great mind of the ruler of the "Assyrians, and upon the height of the glory of his eyes. "For he said, By my strength I will do it, and by the wisdom of my under- "standing I will remove the boundaries of nations, and their strength I will plun- "der, and I will shake inhabited cities.

With this sword, then, they will shepherd Assyria, and all the land of Nebrod in its trench. But through these things he wishes to say this. He names the land of Nebrod the country of the Assyrians, that is, Babylon, around which, as they say, a deep trench was cast. And he names it the land of Nebrod, because he was the beginning and origin and father of the race of the Babylonians. For it is written thus in Genesis concerning him, "And the sons of Raamah, Sheba and Dedan. And Cush begat "Nebrod; he began to be a giant on the earth. He was "a giant hunter before the Lord God; for this reason "they will say, As Nebrod a giant hunter before the Lord. And "the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon and Orech "and Archad and Calneh in the land of Shinar. That the tower was raised in Calneh; and this is a Persian place; so says the divine scripture. Therefore, then, he says the land of Nebrod is Babylon, which is girded by a trench, just as I said recently. Thus then, he says, they will shepherd Assyria, and all the land of Nebrod, so that

it remains within the trench, and no longer expands into cities and countries, but remains as it were at home, full of fear and trembling; this very thing we shall find the hordes of demons have suffered through Christ. For they no longer boast over the world under the sun, as they did long ago and before the visitation;

but they remain as it were where they are, being checked by the vigilance and good counsels of the saints, and being barred from the land of the saints, so that they might be able to live through a quiet and warless life, accomplishing what is pleasing to God, and being brightened through the good order most dear to Him. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations in the midst of many peoples, as dew falling from the Lord and as lambs on the grass, so that no one might be gathered nor stand among the sons of men. I have already said many times, that the remnant of Israel has been saved, and the race from Jacob has not utterly perished. For not a few in number have believed in Christ, and have been enriched with salvation through faith even before the others, I mean, those from the nations. But from this part that was left and preserved through faith have come the divine disciples themselves and those who struggled and suffered with them in the gospel of Christ. These then, he says, have been saved among the nations, as some dew poured out upon the fields, and putting an end to the burning heat of diabolical mischief. For just as in gardens or in fields, if the glare of the sun's ray falls upon the grasses and lilies, it causes them to slacken into ugliness, and seem to have already withered into it;

so too the inventor of sin, when with worldly pleasures he inflames the human mind, withers it in a way and makes it appear very ugly indeed. But the Word of God sets it upright again, just as the dew does a flower or grasses. And so shall be, he says, those from Jacob among the nations, watering the souls of those who are persuaded with some dew by their words of piety, and richly fattening them with evangelical teachings. And they shall dance upon it like lambs on the herbage, that is, they will find the most abundant and plentiful pasture; for the nations are always somehow more ready for obedience and much inclined to believe in Christ, and, I say, to choose the incomparably better life than their former one. But just as when for lambs much and flowering grass lies beside them, then indeed then they both luxuriate and rejoice; in the same way, I think, the mind of teachers also makes the tractability of their pupils and the obedience of their initiates a delight and a

pleasure. And indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ made the obedience of the Samaritan woman his own food, as was fitting for him. For he said to the holy Apostles, "I have food to eat that you do not know. Then, explaining this, he added, saying, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Therefore, the work of God is food and delight for the saints.

Therefore, he says, they will leap about as though mowing common grass, that is, a flowering herb, and those of Jacob in a way feeding on the believers from the nations, and they will find the way of preaching so widened, that no one will be able to be gathered together and withstand them, that is, neither to assemble nor to resist; for this is to withstand, if some of the sons of men should choose to do evil. For many plots and attempts have been devised against them by many, but they have been harmed in no way, as God calms the anger of the powerful, and surrounds his own as with the weapon of goodwill, and paradoxically delivers and saves them from every temptation. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, as a lion among the beasts of the forest, and as a cub in the flocks of sheep, in the manner that when it passes through and tearing seizes, there is no one to deliver. Your hand shall be lifted up against those who afflict you, and all your enemies shall be utterly destroyed. The good and worthy narratives, even if they should come through the same words, would not be burdensome, but rather much charm will follow them.

The remnant of Jacob, he says, that is, those of Jacob saved through faith in Christ and appointed preachers and priests of the evangelical decrees, will be as dew among the nations, and will also graze like lambs rejoicing in good and abundant grass. But they will become no less also like a lion among the beasts of the forest, roaring fiercely and dreadfully, and instilling unbearable terror even in those far away. And they will be as lion's cubs in the flocks, clearly rising up nobly and pouncing on whomever they choose, with no one resisting, that is, able to deliver what has been seized. For our Lord Jesus Christ said to the holy disciples, "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves," that is, gentle and submissive; even if some in the world should be ready to kill, and yield in no way to the cruelty of wolves, yet by my own strength I will crush the hearts of those who make war; I will make them cowardly and unmanly; and I will work a great reverence concerning you. Thus they have prevailed over their enemies, they have conquered those

who resisted, they have become fearsome to the wolves, although being in the rank of sheep. They escaped the plots, "dangers from robbers, as the blessed Paul writes, dangers from my own people, dangers from false brothers," and the flocks of the nations were seized as if by lions;

but Satan, who had fed them for destruction by his own will, was not able to defend them, nor to snatch from the hands of the apostles what had been taken for salvation. And this was what was said to him through the voice of Habakkuk: "Woe to him who multiplies for himself what is not his! For how long? And who makes his yoke heavy and strong. Because suddenly those who bite you will rise up, and your plotters will awake, and you will become plunder for them. Because you plundered many nations, all the remaining peoples will plunder you. For the eight bit down, and like cubs they seized what had been gathered by him; for he gathered to himself what was not his, for man belongs to God, or rather all things do, and nothing at all is his; but he was plundered by the of the remaining peoples, that is, of those from the remnant, so that you may again understand the ministers of the evangelical ordinances. Then to them the Lord who strengthens and holds them together: Your hand, he says, shall be lifted up against those who afflict you, and all your enemies shall be utterly destroyed. For they have conquered, as I said, in Christ, and were superior to every plot, and shone forth in the world, and prevailed over enemies, acquiring for God those who were lost.

And it shall be in that day, says the Lord, I will destroy your horses from your midst and I will destroy your chariots, and I will destroy the cities of your land and I will remove all your strongholds; and I will remove your sorceries from your hands, and there shall be no soothsayers in you; and I will destroy your carved images and your pillars from your midst, and you shall no more worship the works of your hands; and I will cut down the groves from your midst, and I will destroy your cities, and I will execute vengeance in wrath and in anger among the nations, because they did not listen. The discourse returns again to the sorrowful things, and for a time ceases from the brilliant and admirable narratives concerning Christ, and connects these things, as it were, to what came before, and declares the things that will come from wrath. He said therefore that "And you, O tower of the flock, a parched place, O daughter of Zion, to you it shall come, and shall enter the first dominion, the kingdom of Babylon. At that time, therefore, at that time, he says, your cavalry will be gone, and with them the arrogance of

chariots will be destroyed, and the cities will be ravaged, and you shall be desolate of your strongholds, that is, of your walls; for the Babylonians burned their cities along with the men;

And the practices of your folly, both sorceries and false divinations, and the very workshops of deceit, and the sacred precincts together with the idols will certainly be utterly destroyed, and the groves will fall from their foundations. And what follows from this? The judgment is renowned, and the manner of the punishment would not escape the neighboring nations. And they will know that it befell them to suffer all things because they did not listen, that is, the charges of disobedience. Wisdom also said something of this kind to those who have an unbridled inclination to disobedience: "Because I stretched out my words and you paid no attention, but you made my counsels void, and you did not heed my words; therefore I also will laugh at your destruction, and I will rejoice when ruin comes upon you, and when tumult suddenly comes upon you, and your overthrow is present like a tempest; And the fruits of turning away are "wrath and anger, tribulation and anguish" upon everyone beyond the one who is accustomed to listen. It is necessary, therefore, and very much without delay, to follow God swiftly when he calls to what is profitable, and to fulfill what is pleasing to him; since to choose to be slow and indolent in doing the good will be a cause of great loss to us, and involves us in bitter pains. But see how God also benefits by demanding penalties for sins.

For he frees Israel from profane and abominable idolatry, and from unholy enterprises, sorcery and false divination, altars, precincts, sacrifices, and from worshipping the works of their own hands. Therefore, to be disciplined is not without profit, "provided it be in judgment, and not in wrath," according to the prophet's voice. But if anyone should say that these things happened to the Jewish peoples who had behaved insolently toward Christ, he will not err in a thought that has probability in itself. For it is true that the cities among them have been desolated, and the whole fighting class has perished, consumed by the hands of the Romans. And perhaps they have been held accountable for that ancient idolatry, even if there were those among them who still wished to worship creation and engage in sorceries. For somehow these things always tend to follow those who have chosen to practice idolatry, and there is nothing among them of the things that are excessively out of place, which has a base reputation. Hear then what the

Lord has said: Arise and plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, O hills, the judgment of the Lord, and the ravines, the foundations of the earth, for the Lord has a judgment against his people, and he will argue his case with Israel.

The word is indeed reproachful, and it cries out, as it were, against the insensibility of the Jews, if they should treat the divine words as nothing, which would be spoken gently and with restraint, as from a father to children, revealing the genuineness of his love, and making their obedience without excuse. But it is a custom for the benevolent God at times to frighten sinners beforehand with a foretelling of terrible things; not, however, to leave them unsoftened and harsh as though having despaired, but along with the things that are about to happen to bring in the word of comfort, and to keep a place for them, as it were, to escape, if they should choose to return to repentance. This indeed He now does again out of His innate gentleness. Hear therefore, he says, what the Lord has said. And what has he commanded me? Arise and plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. This, then, seems similar to that through the voice of Isaiah, "Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken. For he probably calls the mountains and hills the intelligible powers, which manage this whole universe according to the will of God, warding off the aggressions of demons from those on the earth.

And since these especially, even before others, recognize the excess of God's gentleness, and have learned how much care He takes for our affairs from what they effect for us, obeying the laws from Him, He commands that the judgment should take place before them. But it is likely that the prophetic word also indicates something else to us. For since the people of Israel, occupying mountains and hills, there offered rites and sacrifices to demons "under every oak and white poplar," for this reason, then, the judgment is against the hills, on which the crimes of the accused were manifest. It is likely that he calls hills and foundations of the earth those who are superior in glory and preeminent in honor over the common crowd, who especially have become for those under them both a path and a snare to destruction. For he said somewhere to them, "Because the judgment is for you, because you have become a snare "at the watchtower, and like a net spread upon Tabor. O therefore, he says, you who are raised up above the others, O foundations of the earth, that is, on whom the affairs of others are established,

hear the judgment of the Lord of all against you. But he who thinks rightly psalms and says to the Master of all, "Do not enter into judgment with your servant. For He who knows all things will surely prevail, and no one will boast that he has a pure heart, nor would he be clean from sins.

Therefore it is a very terrible thing to be judged by God. But it must be known that the edition of the Seventy has "ravines"; but that of the Hebrews names "hills" and "foundations of the earth," so that we might know through "hills" how the leaders of the peoples were lifted up high, and how they surpassed and rose above the measure of others, and "foundations" refers to the same people. For the leaders of countries or cities, just as they are conspicuous in glory and lifted up on high, so also would they be foundations of the earth, that is, lying as a support, in a way, and a pedestal for affairs. For the affairs of others depend on them, and are in a way established on them, as I just said. My people, what have I done to you, or how have I grieved you, or how have I wearied you? Answer me. For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and from the house of bondage I redeemed you, and I sent before your face Moses and Aaron and Miriam. God pleads his case through the voice of the Prophet, showing the manner of apostasy of those who acted impiously against him to be without excuse, and their acts of audacity to be beyond proper reason, or rather, beyond all madness, and the magnitude of their insensibility to be unusual and strange even perhaps to the very ungrateful. For what, tell me, he says, is the pretext for the impieties committed against me?

And what at all is unbearable or at all burdensome in my ordinances? or what is grieving? he brought into the middle, showing; I have sinned, it seems, against fitting reason, because I delivered you from bitter slavery, I powerfully brought you out from clay and brick-making and the sweats that come from them; I have offended those who have received mercy when I also armed creation itself against the wrongdoing Egyptians, and saved my own. Perhaps you will even blame my instructor, I mean Moses, who leads to glorious understanding, and clearly shows what is pleasing to God, so that you might have an unshakable basis for living splendidly, and attain the height of prosperity and glory; and perhaps you will also make no small outcry against the priestly service itself; For I have anointed Aaron, and have appointed him to mediate between God and you, and to appease God with sacrifices in type. Are you yourselves distressed at this also? And what might I say

of Miriam, who mocked the perished Egyptians, and led the dancing women? For she, striking the tambourine, saw both horse and rider drowned in the waters; but for you, perhaps, even victory is to be shunned, and the things of God are of no account, He who grants you to pass through the midst of the waves, but makes the sea savage for your enemies.

Therefore, he makes his complaints in character, stirring up to remembrance the good things they have had, and as it were gracefully reproaching them as having received forgetfulness of things which it were better to remember always, and to delight the Benefactor in return with obedience in all things whatsoever. But the Savior also led us ourselves out of a spiritual Egypt, that is, from darkness and the rapacity of demons, and delivered us from clay and brick-making, namely, from fleshly passions and unclean love of pleasure; and He brought across the sea the distractions in this world, and all but delivered them from the bitter waves of the dangers upon them, and He engraved the divine laws upon the mind; and He also appointed a priest, the "author and finisher of our salvation, Jesus. And He sent forth, as it were, a Miriam, that is, clearly, the Church, who will shout triumphantly over the plot of the enemies, ascribing the glory to God who has saved. For always there are hymns and thanksgivings, and praises and proclamations of the glory of God in the churches. We ourselves must therefore be on our guard, lest indifference somehow subject us to the charges of the Jews, and lest we consider what is pleasing to God to be burdensome. For as the blessed John says, "His commandments "are not burdensome; and Christ himself, "For my "yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Let us therefore offer what is pleasing to God, for nothing from him is burdensome;

but all things are good and entirely well-ordered for those who have chosen to live best. My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab devised against you, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim to Gilgal, that the righteousness of the Lord might be known. He corrects them again, as having impiously acted insolently against His dominions, although having nothing to say for which it was likely that, being justly grieved, they would incline toward apostasy. For, he says, I deemed you worthy of so much forbearance and love from me, as not even to endure the thought of your being slandered. For the accursed Balak, the tyrant of the Moabites, hired Balaam the sorcerer and augur, and then called upon him to curse Israel; but the God of all accomplished something paradoxical and ex-

traordinary, turning the tongue of the false prophet into a blessing. And when Balak made this an accusation, and blamed the augur, he immediately took him away to other hills. Then, ordering him to erect altars and to sacrifice bulls, he thought perhaps that God was not able in every place, but He blessed them everywhere, although running about from what is called Shittim; a place of Moab; to mount Gilgal. Remember, therefore, what Balak devised, and what Balaam answered. For I was checking the very slanders against you, not even allowing the augur to grieve you with words.

But you also having been unmindful of these things, you have assigned the glory fitting for me to lifeless matter, crying out and saying to the golden calves, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Therefore, while God distributes to us good things out of love, and enriches us with the greatest generosity, and shakes our enemies, and paralyzes their attempts against us, what should we ourselves do, we who have chosen to think rightly, except that very thing by which we ourselves might also be seen as beloved of God. And this is, to follow His will, and to accomplish very well what is pleasing to Him, having, so to speak, drawn near by the disposition of our mind, to say that which is in the Psalms, "My soul has clung close to you."

Book 3

With what shall I take hold of the Lord? Shall I lay hold of God most high? If I shall take hold of him with whole burnt offerings, with year-old calves? Will the Lord accept thousands of rams, or ten thousands of fat he-goats? If I give my firstborn for my impiety, the fruit of my womb for the sin of my soul? Has it not been told to you, O man, what is good? Or what does the Lord seek from you, but to do judgment and to love mercy and to be ready to walk with the Lord your God? After God showed that the apostasy of those from Israel was without excuse, and in a certain way judged and clearly convicted them, that while He had been a benefactor in countless ways, they, having driven to immeasurable insensibility, grieved not moderately the one who saved them, the person of the penitent is immediately introduced, as if weeping over the things already sinned, and seeking to learn in what way he might put aside the charges, and hold fast to the pursuits most dear to God. He says then, With what shall I take hold of the Lord? For what shall I offer, he says, and what shall I do now, having thus offended? Will I be clean by sacrificing young and tender calves? And will God praise me if I should

choose to make a burnt offering? And I might find him; that is, I will be near, and I will be received into spiritual intimacy;

even if I should dedicate a great multitude of cattle? But leaving those things, I will take hold of the fruits of my womb; and will I be well-pleasing, having sacrificed to him the choicest of my children, that is, the firstborn? While someone is, as it were, considering and saying these things, the Prophet answers again, and says in the spirit: The matter is not obscure, nor is it to be obtained with sweat. You surely know the good will of God; you have heard what seems good and is dear to Him. Therefore, do you doubt, O man? For what else does the God of all seek from you, than only to do judgment and to love mercy and to be ready to walk with the Lord your God? Now to do judgment is to work out and fulfill righteousness; for judgment is righteousness; and to love mercy has the boasts of love for one another, and enriches the glory of love for the brethren. And to be ready to walk with the Lord your God, signifies being obedient and tractable in everything whatsoever. And the blessed Paul said that we also must put on "the breastplate of righteousness, and have our feet shod with the readiness of the Gospel of peace," that is, of Christ; and he further commands, saying, "Put on tender mercies," and indeed the Savior Himself says, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

These things are a dear and acceptable sacrifice to God, an odor of spiritual whole burnt offerings beyond blood and smoke and frankincense. For those things were in types; but the truth itself makes it fragrant to God, who also says through another prophet "I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God" rather than burnt offerings. But observe how the person of the repenting one considered fulfilling the sacrifices according to the law; but God, showing beforehand that it is indeed powerless, and the law is incapable of purifying from sin, and that much better and incomparably superior is the power of the way of life in Christ, as it were, He makes unacceptable the things according to the law, and said that what is pleasing to God is, to do justice and to love mercy and to be ready to walk with Him. And these are the boasts of the life in Christ. The voice of the Lord shall be called upon to the city, and He shall save those who fear His name. And in another way He makes it clear, that there is no fruit from the offering of blood, but the power of spiritual worship would benefit someone not moderately. And in these things He has placed the voice instead of the name, that

is, of the invocation. It is as if he were to say, perhaps, "If the name of God were proclaimed to the city, it will be saved in every way and altogether.

For do not think, O man, He says, that I delight in sacrifices of blood, nor consider a city impious and lawless if it does not offer calves for a burnt offering; but I would not save it at all when in danger, having chosen to sacrifice oxen, even if it should stain the altar with the slaughter of sheep, and should choose to offer flocks of rams, but it will be more sufficient for its salvation for the name of God to be called upon. For mine altogether is she who honors my dominions, and chooses to do diligently and to think the things pleasing to me. Then I will save those who fear me. Therefore, when we are called God's, then we also fear Him, and are saved by Him, and the power of spiritual worship might reasonably be understood as such. The God of all said something like this also through the voice of David, "Hear, my people, "and I will speak to you; Israel, and I will testify to you; God, "your God, I am. I will not reprove you "for your sacrifices, for your burnt offerings are before me "continually. Then, adding to these things, that He will not eat the flesh of bulls, nor will He drink the blood of goats, again He says, "Offer to God a sacrifice of praise, and pay your vows "to the Most High; and call upon me in the day of your affliction, "and I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.

Hear, O tribe, and who shall adorn the city? Is it fire and the house of the law- less, treasuring up treasures of lawlessness and with insolent injustice? For according to tribes and families they have inhabited the land of the Jews, and indeed also Samaria, those of the blood of Israel, the land of promise being allotted to them as an inheritance by Jesus, who is called the son of Nun. Therefore God speaks not to one tribe, but as it were to all, that is to each, the word being fitting both specifically to each one, and to all. Hear then, O every tribe, a city is saved upon which the name of God might be proclaimed. For He will by no means overlook those who fear Him, but will be an unbreachable wall, and an adornment and glory to those who wish to do what is pleasing to God. But if you wish, He says, to see the opposite, what will adorn a city? The house of the lawless, or injustice with insolence? Is it then, He says, if a city, because of much sin, is consumed by fire, having been captured by the hands of enemies, will it be seemly and beautiful, and would a house of the lawless, the one treasuring up treasures of injustice, render it splendid and most glorious, and will injustice with insolence profit it? But no

one of those accustomed to thinking rightly would doubt, that such things render it inglorious.

For a city would not have been captured and consumed by fire unless it had altogether stumbled because of much sin. Why then, He says, having abandoned the things by which a city might be saved and beautified, have you rather made enviable the things that are by nature destructive, and have honored the things by which it might be seen as shameful and unlovely, having wicked inhabitants, lovers of money and unjust and treasuring up lawlessness? And shall the lawless be justified with a balance, and in a bag the weights of deceit, from which they filled their wealth with impiety, and its inhabitants spoke lies, and their tongue was exalted in their mouth? For do you think, he says, that the lawless man will be justified in the balance? That is, if I should test and, as it were, weigh the life of each one, have you believed that I, the lover of virtue, would ever endure to cast a vote of righteousness for the unrighteous? And have you considered that those with treacherous weights in a bag, that is, those wishing to be rich from greed and inequality and unseemly avarice, are able to escape my wrath? For from such gains they have filled their wealth with impiety. They have also become liars and boasters. For the love of lying always follows the lovers of inequality, and those overcome by shameful gains and avarice; and boasting and arrogance follow those who have already become rich.

And the inventors of unholy doctrines also have treacherous weights in bags, those who “pervert all the right paths,” and who undermine the mind of the more simple with deceits and tricks, and who become rich by ensnaring many; yet they gather for themselves such wealth full of impiety, they speak confessedly nothing true, but counterfeit and false things, and as it were colored with elegances from deceit. And such men again lift up their own tongue, “speaking iniquity against God,” according to what is written, and “uttering pompous words of vanity,” to whom it is fitting to say, “Hear, O tribe, and what will adorn a city? Shall not fire, or a house of the lawless treasuring up treasures of lawlessness, and iniquity with insolence? For the fire of punishment will be for them not for adornment, but for judgment. And since they have become houses treasuring up lawlessness, they will be for a curse and judgment and will fall into every evil. And I will begin to strike you and I will destroy you in your sins. You will eat and not be filled, and I will cast you out from within yourself, and you will be caught and not be

saved, and whoever may be saved will be given over to the sword; you will sow and not reap, you will press the olive and not anoint yourself with oil, and wine and you will not drink, and the statutes of my people will be destroyed.

And you have kept the ordinances of Zimri and all the works of the house of Ahab, and you have walked in their counsels, so that I may give you over to destruction and its inhabitants to hissing, and you will receive the reproaches of peoples. For since they have become houses of the impious, treasuring up lawlessness and gathering wealth from injustices, he then threatens judgment, and says that the attack of things expected to be has somehow already been placed in its beginnings, so that the destruction will be upon them in proportion to their offenses. And he usefully terrifies, and with the fears of things to come, as with a kind of bridle, he turns them to choose to do better things, and to appease God with secondary considerations. And he enumerates, as it were, and places the plagues before their eyes. For he says they will be punished with famine, and with lack of necessities, and they will be destroyed among themselves, and will be caught, but not able to escape completely. But even if any should be able to escape the immediate harm, these will be caught, and not long after, and will become the work of another's sword. And he seems to us to declare this through this. For very many wars have been stirred up against those of Israel, that is, against all of Judah, yet not always by enemies;

but they also armed themselves against each other, so that at one time Ephraim, that is, the ten tribes, rose up against Judah, and at another time those in Jerusalem themselves made war against Ephraim; and not a few cities were destroyed, so that they were often cast out from among themselves; and in this way, being driven from cities, they seized others, yet were captured at times, either when the Syrians and the kings of Damascus invaded, or perhaps even by the Persians and Medes themselves. This, I think, is the meaning of, I will cast you out from within yourself, and you will be caught and not be saved, and whoever may be saved will be given over to the sword. That also being deprived of the fruitfulness of the fields, and in the want of necessary things wasted away, they will live wretchedly, but they will pay the penalty for the impious things done by them, he makes it clear through what follows. For you will sow, he says, and you will not reap, God, I think, destroying the fruits, and you yourself will press the olive; for the country of

the Samaritans is olive-bearing; but you will be so in want of oil, he says, that not even if you wished, would you perhaps be able to find any for anointing. And though your country is exceedingly rich in vines and produces abundant wine, so as even to distribute it to other cities, you yourself would not find any to drink.

And the statutes will cease, he says, which you have established for the idols, offering to them the first-fruits of your harvest. For what offering of first-fruits will there be then, if all your fruit has perished and the things in the fields have been destroyed? Or what thank-offerings will you bring, and for what, reasonably, you who are falling wretchedly and being consumed? Then, teaching that not another would be considered responsible for his misfortune, but he himself will be convicted of having wronged himself, having emulated the ways of those who were most impious, he adds and says: And you have kept the statutes of Zimri and all the works of the house of Ahab, and you have walked in their counsels, so that I may deliver you to destruction. Zimri was king over Israel, and he is the father of Ahab, but as the holy scripture says, he walked "in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat," who made Israel to sin; "and he did evil above all who were before him. Therefore he was also consumed by fire, having himself set fire to his own house over himself; for it is written thus. And the house of Ahab, as it seems, he calls Jezebel; and in her were murders and robberies and the practices of persecuting saints. These things, then, you have kept, he says, so that I may justly destroy you, and make you a laughingstock and a reproach to others.

But we will apply such a word also to the enemies of the truth, who, emboldened by their own eloquence, and gathering heaps of wretched thoughts, grow rich as if by injustice, collecting for themselves things that are not theirs, and being accustomed to ravage the flocks of the more simple like enemies, and carrying them away into monstrous error. Let them hear God saying, then, "And I will begin to strike you and I will destroy you for your sins. You will eat and not be satisfied. For encountering the divine scriptures, then not being filled with the dogmas of the truth, although seeming to eat, they are destroyed by famine, and thinking they are grasping the way of salvation, they would not find it, and sowing, as they suppose, they will find no reward for their labors, and pressing out the spiritual olive, that is, the holy scripture, they are in no way fattened by the grace of the Spirit, and thinking they are gathering wine, they will be far from spiritual gladness;

for they have kept the statutes of Zimri and all the works of the house of Ahab, that is, they have done evil, they have been greedy, and they have worked persecutions against the saints. They will be, then, for destruction, and they will truly come to a reproachful and accursed end. Woe is me, for I have become as one gathering stubble in the harvest and as a gleaner in the vintage, when there is no cluster to eat the first-ripe fruits.

Out of love the Prophet bewails Israel, as it will presently go away to destruction, and will henceforth come to such a number, that very few and scarcely any will be left, and that they will be like the ears of corn that fall, which the hands of the reapers pass by, and these are few and rarely caught by those gathering the stubble. And to be no less like the so-called gleanings, which the sickles of the vintagers passed over. But I think that through these things he also indicates that the saints are hard to find, as being among the few remnants at that time, and being found in such a way, as if a single ear of corn in reaped fields, or even among the first-born clusters the offshoots of the second crop. For when the air is warm, the cluster which is at the beginning and first is brought forth from the vines. But as time goes on, there is sometimes also a spurious one and a second gathering of grape clusters follows after them. These are indeed hard for the vintagers to find, both because they are easily hidden in the abundant foliage, and because they are in small clusters. Those who follow the vintagers gather these, not without sweat, casting their eye more carefully into the vines. It seems, therefore, that the prophetic word laments to us in these things the scarcity of the decent.

But that this matter became a loss for those of Israel, I mean, being in want of the saints, how can one doubt? For sometimes He cares for both lands and cities, and He forgives very many charges, the Master being philanthropic, when scarcely five saints are found in them, and even the cities of the Sodomites would have been saved at one time, with God taking pity out of respect for the saints, though very few, and checking his wrath. Woe is me, O soul, for the pious one has perished from the earth, and there is no one who acts uprightly among men; they all lie in wait for blood, each one oppresses his neighbor with oppression, they prepare their hands for evil; the ruler asks, and the judge has spoken words of peace, the desire of his soul. The word, as it seems to us, is precise. For the Prophet laments that there is no pious person in all the earth, that is, clearly, the land of the Jews, al-

though it once boasted of very many heads of saints, who had a manifest glory. For this reason God also says through the voice of Isaiah, "How has the faithful city "Zion become a harlot! She was full of judgment, in her righteousness "lodged, but now murderers.

For what was most burdensome and caused them to rush to the extreme of depravity was that they were judged for blood and murdered savagely, and that doing good was completely cast aside as stale, so that they also made it a necessary endeavor to have their hands ready only for doing evil to others. For nothing is unattempted by those accustomed to live this way, even if it is punished by law, even if it is decried by the ways of freedom. Has then the subject part in these matters grown weak, while the ruling part is strong, and the judging part is healthy? Not at all, he says; for the ruler asks and the judge has spoken words of peace. Many times, many of those appointed to rule have become unholy and most avaricious, and they easily sell their own judgments to those willing to corrupt them. But even if they have already inclined to seem thus conquered by gains and bribery, they somehow turn away and hasten to adorn their own ways with a good reputation; but to have finally come to this point of wretchedness of mind and shameful ways, so as to all but hold out one's hand, and even if one does not receive, to corrupt the word of justice when judging, and to threaten shamelessly, how would this not be beyond all abomination? With emphasis, therefore, is the word, and as if crying out against greed: The ruler asks and the judge has spoken words of peace.

Would one then blame him who brings together into peace those who are divided into disagreement? Then how would it be true that "Blessed are the peacemakers," and what is their reward? But the boasts from this are preserved for the arbiters of peace. However, he who judges rightly interprets what seems right to the divine law, and he will convict the wrongdoers, and will certainly speak in favor of those who have been wronged. But when we speak peaceful words to wrongdoers, not convicting them as having sinned, then indeed we shall clearly undermine what seems right to the Lawgiver. For He said that "The priest's mouth shall keep judgment, and they shall seek the law "from his mouth. But it always somehow follows for those accustomed to taking bribes that they are neither able to judge rightly, nor indeed to convict sinners with boldness, but rather to advise things that lead to peace, even if they inflict the greatest possible greed on some. And making

the cause of the disease clear, the Prophet says, It is the desire of his soul; for what has happened outrageously is perhaps pleasing to him, he says. Then how will he rebuke those who have done wrong? For what he has praised has, how could he still find fault? Truly, therefore, greed and the oppression of others are an unholy and harmful thing.

And in addition to this, it is accursed to be overcome by shameful gains, and to come to such ill-counsel as to then disregard even ways leading to uprightness, and to judge without taking bribes, and not to hold it of great account, but rather to incline towards those accustomed to doing wrong, and to share their impiety with them, and thus to partake in the sins of others. But that he who gives himself over to such terrible offenses will in every way and manner be subject to wrath and justice, how could anyone doubt, if he should choose to think rightly? And I will take away their good things as one who eats up moths, and walking by a rule as in a day of watching. He threatened to bring upon them a twofold manner of justice. For he said that, "And I will begin to strike you, and I will destroy you for your sins. You shall eat, and shall not be filled, and I will cast you out from among you, and you shall be caught and shall not be saved. And he added that "You shall sow and shall not reap, you shall press the olive and shall not anoint with oil, and wine and you shall not drink.

Therefore, that the abundance of the good harvest from their fields will be gone for them, and that the means of life will fail, and they will be oppressed by a lack of the most necessary things, he teaches by saying, as if in the form of a moth he would consume all their good things, that is, those things in which it was likely they luxuriated not moderately, and possessed the breadth of prosperity. And that they were about to be struck and destroyed, and cast out, as if even among themselves, that is, to be destroyed along with one another, and to be piteously sent out from their own homes and cities, he makes clear by saying "And walking by a rule as in a day of watching"; for "I will take away their good things," he says. And not only "as one who eats up moths," but also "walking by a rule as in a day of watching. And the saying is quite difficult to grasp, but I myself think it could not be understood by us in any other way, unless a clear preliminary narration of the histories that look to this matter were given, which indeed I will try to do. Geba, then, is a certain village, or rather a small town in Judea, situated

on a hill, and it was allotted as an inheritance to those of the tribe of Benjamin, and it is named both hill and watchtower.

And we remember that a Levite man, as is written in the book of Judges, when his concubine was violated by those of the tribe of Benjamin in the very land of Gibeah, cut up the body into twelve pieces and sent them to all the tribes, making the offense of the tribe of Benjamin manifest to all. Then it happened from this that the other tribes rose up against the tribe of Benjamin according to the law of war, and a number not easy to count fell, with the tribe of Benjamin being victorious at first, but later the other tribes completely destroyed them. The prophet Hosea also mentions this history. For he says, "They have set up madness in the house of the Lord, they were corrupted" according to the days of the hill. For since, he says, idolatry and false prophecy—for madness indicates these things to us here—they established in the house of the Lord, for this reason also they were corrupted as in the days of the hill, that is, of Gibeah. And that the hill, or Gibeah, is also called a watchtower, you will learn clearly from what is written in the third book of Kings. For Asa was king of Jerusalem, and Baasha of Samaria at the same time.

But since they were divided into discord, and being angry with one another armed themselves with the law of war, "Baasha," it says, "king of Israel went up against Judah, and built "Ramah, so that there would be no one going out or coming in "to Asa king of Judah. And as Adad was overrunning the Samaritans, Baasha was moving out of Ramah, rising up against the enemy. And Asa ran out of Jerusalem, and then having come to Ramah, "He commanded," it says, "all Judah in Enacim, and they take the stones of "Ramah and its timbers which Baasha had built, and "with them king Asa built every hill Ben- "jamin and the watchtower. Therefore Gabaa was called both a hill and a watchtower; for Gabaa is thus interpreted, because it was raised high, and situated on a mound and a watchtower. "I will begin, therefore, to strike you, and I will destroy you for "your sins," and in no other way, than that very one in the day of the watchtower. For I will walk as if by a rule, and I will not turn to the right nor indeed to the left, coming on the path of judgment against you. And again the prophetic word seems to suggest some such thing to us. For Micah prophesies in the days of Jotham and Ahaz and Hezekiah. But Jotham was a pious man, while Ahaz was abominable and hateful and one of those most notoriously accused of impiety.

And during his reigning Pekah the son of Remaliah, then reigning over Samaria, made war on Judah, having as an ally Rezin the king of Damascus, and he killed a great many in one day. For it is so written in the second book of Chronicles concerning Ahaz "And the Lord his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria, and he struck him, and took many of them captive, and brought them to Damascus, and into the hands of the king of Israel he delivered him, and he struck him with a great blow, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, killed in Judah, in one day one hundred and twenty thousand mighty men of valor, because they had forsaken the Lord their God. It must be known, therefore, that by offending God we shall immediately be in want of every good thing, and a terrible famine of divine and spiritual goods will consume us, and we shall consume one another as if by biting. For Christ does not award his own peace to those who do not love him, which is seen to happen especially to the enemies of the truth, among whom it is not possible to find a spiritual gift, but as it were cannibalism and strife, contention and contentiousness and schisms; and concerning them God would say "For I have removed my peace from this people, and they will die by a morbid death" and strength and concord not to them; whence?

but distributing to those who revere his things, and to whom he would reasonably grant the good of peace, to those who honor the power of truth, and who do not tolerating being cut off by strange and foolish counsels, but are eager only to admire the beauty of the truth. Woe, woe, your vengeance have come, now will be their wailings. Do you hear how he also imitates the voices of those who mourn, not expecting the calamities any longer, but as if they had already happened, and they were weeping like women? For he says, your vengeance have come, that is, the time of judgment is at hand, the war is in our hands, the trouble is at the gates. For by adding that Now will be their wailings, he has shown clearly that the things of the prophecy are not for a long postponement, but lie as it were before our eyes. For indeed immediately after Jotham came Ahaz, wicked and an apostate, and a slayer of his own children, whom he offered on the altars of demons. In his time "in one day one hundred and twenty thousand" from the tribe of Judah and Benjamin fell. But it must be known that at that time Israel itself also paid the penalty.

For while Pekah was reigning, Tiglath-pileser, king of the Assyrians, came up against Samaria, and very many of its cities he destroyed, and he took Damascus, and killed Rezin himself, so that at one time it happened that Judah and Benjamin were destroyed by the ten tribes in Samaria, and that those in Samaria themselves suffered what they had done at the hand of the Babylonian. Do you see, therefore, how almost running through the rule of wrath, that in the time of the hill, or of the watchtower, he has punished the sinners. But those things "happened to the ancients as a type, and were written "for our instruction," so that by always avoiding being caught in the same offenses, we may continue in a state of well-being, having the God of all as gracious and friendly and our protector. And he might be angry, and very rightly so, with those who pervert what is right, and paralyze the faith of the more simple, and we ourselves so to speak, Woe, woe, your vengeance have come, now shall be their lamentations. "For by sinning against the brethren and wounding their weak conscience, "you sin against Christ. and that in every way and altogether they will give an account to the Judge, and "will eat the fruits of their own impiety," how is it possible to doubt? "For because "they wronged infants, they will be slain, and examination "will destroy the impious," as it is written.

Do not trust in friends, nor hope in leaders, from your wife beware of entrusting anything to her; because a son dishonors a father, a daughter will rise up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, all the men in his house are enemies. Those of Israel, sinning in many ways, and bringing down upon themselves to wrath the Master of all, then learning beforehand through the holy prophets that they would be in inescapable evils unless they chose to appease the Master with kindnesses, though it was necessary to choose to think rightly, and to tame the aggrieved one by returning to what is better; this the wretched ones did not do; from where could they? but rather they slipped into such ill counsel, as to suppose and believe that they would be safe from the divine wrath, and would prevail, and very easily, over every war, if they had the aid of the neighboring nations, and the conspiracies and promises of the rulers. But that they have put their trust in cold and vain deceits, and will have a completely unprofitable hope, the Prophet tries to teach them, saying, Do not trust in friends, nor hope in leaders; for the thing is precarious and completely unprofitable.

For when the Babylonian came to ravage Samaria, then indeed the leaders of the neighboring nations, although they had promised them the greatest possible aid, having no small struggles on their own behalf, considered it welcome just to be saved, but the need to also help others, they perhaps did not even take into mind at all. Therefore do not trust in friends, nor hope in leaders; but know, he says, that when God moves things out of wrath against you, not even the law of nature itself nor the power of innate affection will grant you goodwill, even from those close by blood and kin according to the flesh, but they too will imitate enemies. And a wife will then disregard her husband, and sons will rise up against fathers, and indeed daughters against mothers. For he himself, he says, who engraves the laws of affection on nature, could easily persuade and change it towards indifference. Except that the manner of our indifference in these things would not be understood as one and the same, but twofold and different. For some stumble against the laws of affection, impiously attacking their own parents, while others do this both pleasing God and saving their own souls. And so the Savior said, "Do you think that I came to give peace "on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from "now on five in one house will be divided, three "against two and two against three.

Father will be divided against "son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law "and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. Therefore with a right judgment we will crown such a splendid lack of affection. for it makes one familiar to God, even if it cuts some off from kinship according to the flesh, so as to sing very well that which is by the voice of "David, For my father and my mother have forsaken "me, but the Lord has taken me up. But I will look to the Lord, I will wait for God my Savior, my God will hear me. This would be fitting, and very rightly so, for Zion as she repents and foresees that the end of the toils of captivity will come in due time. For Cyrus took the city of the Babylonians, but with difficulty he sent up in that Israel, being a remnant, along with the sacred vessels, he commanded to go home and to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. For then, as if escaping from darkness and unbreakable bonds, they came into the light, as God had mercy, and were somehow brought up to the freedom from above most fitting for them, being released and rejoicing. I therefore, he says, will look

upon the Lord, very late indeed and after the experience of those things whose attack one ought to avoid.

Nevertheless, he says that he will have his hope in God, and will wait for salvation from him, and be firmly disposed, because being a lover of mankind, he will be an attentive hearer of her laments and will accept her prayers. But the beginning of salvation, I think, would be understood as putting away for a time the mind from the ancient deceit, and choosing hereafter to think rightly, and to consider the Lord of all to be the provider and governor of salvation, and not to assign so excellent a good to assistances from men, or rather, most foolishly and ignorantly to expect it to be a gift from the most powerless multitude of idols. For of old they would go down to the Egyptians, and they departed also to the Assyrians, purchasing alliances and aid from both for no small amount of money. And they would approach lifeless idols, offering sacrifices, and in addition to this, offering up prayers for themselves. But now they say that they will look upon the Lord, and they will wait for him, that is, they will await the salvation and grace from him, and indeed that they will be heard by him, offering their supplications clearly to him and no longer to others. And this was Zion, as I said, becoming sober again, and seeing already what was necessary, to cast off that ancient error, and to change her mind for the better and choose to do what is useful. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy:

when I fall, I shall arise; for if I sit in darkness, the Lord shall give me light. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. The speech of Zion seems to me now to have been most gracefully fashioned against the harsh and insolent and arrogant city, clearly that of the Babylonians, which was in a way mocking the land of the Jews as having been sacked. For do not exult, she says, over me as one who has fallen. For you have conquered, not by being stronger yourself, but by casting down me who was sick from stumbling against God, and for this reason lying prostrate. But a time will come, when I shall also rise again, even if I have been, she says, in darkness, 'Saying to a stock, Thou art my God; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth' and uttering the saying about the heifers; for I said, I said in my frenzy, 'These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt;' but I

shall even come into the light, I shall know the Lord, the savior, the helper, the provider of strength;

and I will endure the things that have happened, and I will bear the terrible things, and I will in no way cry out as though God were unjust, but I will rather be disposed as one upon whom he has passed a right sentence, even if he has sent me into captivity. For I have transgressed, and I bear the consequences of his wrath, until he vindicate my cause, that is, until having measured out a punishment equal to my transgressions, he at last has mercy, and makes bright her who was formerly darkened by the mist of error, by causing her, through the knowledge of the true God by nature, to be in the light as it were; and he might be justly marveled at, she says, showing upon me the purity of his own righteousness. For just as he did not punish her for transgressing without justice, so in the same way will he account her worthy of care, having now suffered and repented, and will have mercy on her as she lies prostrate. Therefore the Lord of all is good, and to those who turn to him he distributes mercy without delay, and he gladdens them very richly with the good things that come from his gentleness, forgiving without remembrance the sins committed long ago. And mine enemy shall see it, and will be clothed with shame, saying to me, Where is the Lord your God? my eyes will look upon her; now she will be for trampling like mud in the streets;

a day of plastering brick, that day is your erasure. The land of the Jews was indeed captured, and Israel was carried away captive by the spear to Babylon and the Medes at different times, not because their conqueror prevailed by his own powers, but rather because God who saves was turning away from him as one who had sinned, and, as it were, bringing him under the hand of his enemies, because he chose to worship lifeless idols, and to shake off the law long ago established through Moses, and simply to incline towards everything that is amiss, and to leave no manner of wickedness unpracticed. Then the Babylonians, having taken them, and attributing the victory to their own powers, behaved insolently even against the divine glory, and they thought they would conquer Judea, even if the God of all chose to save them; and having taken the sinners under their hand, they tormented them with terrible and unbearable labors, imposing a harsh servitude upon them. And so God said somewhere through the voice of Jeremiah to the unholy multitude of the Assyrians, that is, to Babylon, "Behold, I am "against you, O in-

solent one," and yet also concerning those of Israel, "I gave them into your hands, but you "showed them no mercy; on the aged you made your "yoke very heavy, and you said, 'I shall be a queen forever.'" For there was no mercy with them, no sparing of age, no reverence for old age, no bowels of compassion.

For this very reason, therefore, they themselves were justly given into the hands of both Persians and Medes, under the generalship of Cyrus, who captured Babylon. And perhaps concerning them the prophet Jeremiah says somewhere, "They shall set upon "you, and you will be captured, O Babylon, and you will not know it; you were found "and taken, because you opposed the Lord. The Lord has opened his "treasury and has brought out the instruments of his wrath. And by instruments of wrath he means those who sacked her. It happened, then, that the city of the Babylonians was taken by Cyrus, and Israel was released from captivity. For this reason the redeemed say, that my enemy will see it and will be clothed with shame. For when she sees her own children lying on the ground, having perished miserably and unexpectedly, and those once under her hand rejoicing and set free, and finally running back home, how will she not in every way and altogether be clothed with shame, although she once said, "Where is the Lord your God? For I will look upon her like mud in the streets, cast down and trampled under the feet of enemies. Then the word says to Babylon herself, "That day is your erasure," meaning, "The time in which you will be," it says, "under the feet of your enemies," that is, Cyrus trampling and crushing the boastful and insolent one like mud.

Therefore, as far as it is necessary to understand such things again historically, our account has been made sufficiently well and properly. But one could no less apply these things also to the spiritual Zion, that is, to the Church, which prevails over its enemies and tramples on its persecutors and mocks the powerlessness of those accustomed to warring against her, even if at times they seem to overcome and prevail. For many indeed are those who impiously gnash their teeth at her and whet their angers and contrive every kind of plot; on the one hand, the children of the Greeks, striving not moderately with their own foolish inventions, and generally contending for the deceit of idols; on the other hand, the heretics who especially rage against the saints, and perhaps rage more harshly against those who have chosen to think rightly, than even those who have not accepted the faith. For when at

times the all-powerful God trains the saints, and allows them to fall into temptations, and tests his genuine worshipers as if in a fire, the wretched ones raise their arrogant brow against them, and when they see them suffering, so to speak, they foolishly cry out the "Where is the Lord your God? But she... a wise and all-pure and holy virgin, the one having no spot or wrinkle, would reasonably say, "But I will look upon the "Lord, I will wait for God my Savior, my God will hear "me;

and that he will trample down those who oppose him as the mire of the streets, and how can one doubt that those accustomed to tempt her would not rejoice at all over her, even if she were somehow shaken? "for she is founded upon the rock," and her support is Christ, an unshakable foundation, and continuous security, Savior and Redeemer. And I suppose the human soul might say, "Do not rejoice over me, my enemy, "because I have fallen," and all that is harmonious with this, having transgressed and been condemned, but turning somehow to the need to repent and awaiting the grace of salvation through Christ. for she will say as to an enemy, the sin that tyrannized her, Do not rejoice over me; for I have admittedly fallen, having transgressed what seemed good to God, and having cast down my own mind to worldly pleasures. but I am not far from the hope that I will also rise again, even if I have somehow been in mist and darkness; for I myself will find Christ as a light, and the sun of righteousness rising in my mind will show me whitened. "I will bear the Lord's wrath, because I have also sinned against "him. For if indeed I have been, he says, for a short time out of his presence, and have been given over to a reprobate mind, yet I shall be wise, and having justly suffered rejection I will know the judgment, and indeed I say it has happened rightly;

for I have not been punished in vain. But since I have paid the most fitting penalty, "I will see his "righteousness. And what else could the righteousness of God the Father be, but Christ? For thus God the Father calls him to us, saying, "My righteousness is near to come, "and my mercy to be revealed. Then such a soul, having likely understood the grace of righteousness in Christ and the destruction of sin, will wisely and keenly cry out, And my enemy will see and shame will cover her who says to me, Where is the Lord your God? My eyes will look upon her; now she will be for trampling like the mire in the streets; a day of smearing a brick, that day is your erasure. For since Christ has come, justifying sinners by faith, the mouth of lawlessness

has been stopped, and its inventor has been put to shame as well. And he has been driven out, and has fallen from his rule over us, and it has finally been trampled like mire in the streets, having been, as it were, subjected to the feet of the saints. And the day of Christ has also become its erasure, on which he declares each of those who come to him clean from their old accusations through holy baptism, and seals them with the Spirit for sanctification, and enrolls them among the children of God. And that day will cast away ordinances;

and your cities will come to be leveled and to a division of the Assyrians, and your fortified cities to a division from Tyre to the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to the mountain. and the earth will be for destruction with those who dwell in it, from the fruits of their deeds. The person of Zion is placed in the midst, that is, of Jerusalem already somehow turned to repentance, and having placed her hope in God, and disposed that she will also be redeemed, and will see that of the Babylonians trampled, although it says to her out of arrogance, "Where is the Lord your God? But one would apply the meaning of what has been said not so much to the intermediate things, but to what comes shortly after; and what these things were, we will recall in a few words. For he has commanded them not to trust in friends, nor indeed to hope in leaders. And it showed that even a wife will disregard her husband, and a child will neglect its father, and daughters will be unsparing of respect for their mothers, the terrors of war calling them to this. For wherever the fear of suffering might appear to run equally against all, there indeed surely for each one the more urgent concern will be for his own life, that of another being in every way neglected.

According to Therefore, he says that of the time, that is, on that day, on which sons might become neglectful of their affection for fathers, and daughters in turn of that for mothers, the customs will be cast aside, that is, the principle of what is fitting will then also grow weak; for a father will not have the leisure to accuse his son as having neglected the laws of nature, nor indeed will a grieved mother subject her daughter to the punishments of duty, another care being imminent, or rather of destruction and the ultimate evils. For the cities will go into desolation, and into division and destruction. For some will campaign against that city, others against its neighbor, and others against the one bordering it, and they will overrun the whole land from mountain to mountain, from east to west, as from north to

south, so that the entire land is simply ravaged to its ends, from Tyre to the river and from mountain to mountain. And it is likely again to speak of "customs" in these things as the festivals established by custom in the precincts of idols, that is, the sacrifices. For with their cities having been destroyed, and their houses and all things in them plundered, who will still fulfill the customary rites, and bring worship to the statues and temples of the idols? And the argument might go, and very likely, also against those, if one should choose, who are heterodox and would-be-wise and who distort the correct doctrines of the Church.

For they were captured like cities, and became a portion for the enemies; clearly, that is, for the world-rulers of this age; and they have become portions for foxes, as it is written, having divided among themselves impiety and the ways of blasphemy and the rejection of the truth. And these things also happened to the peoples of the Jews, when, having wickedly insulted Emmanuel, they cast him out of the vineyard, as it is written, and handed him over to the cross, although saying and having recognized that he is the heir. Therefore they have been sacked and have perished ingloriously, not for any other reason, than from the fruits of their own practices. For though it was necessary to admire the Creator for his love for the world, because "He gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him should not perish but have eternal life," this they did not do; how could they? But being puffed up to arrogance they killed the Master, returning to him evil for good, as it is written, and wickedly practicing every form of impiety. Therefore let them hear, "Walk by the light of your fire and by the flame which you have kindled," and indeed also this, "You shall eat the fruits of your own practices. Shepherd your people with your rod, your tribe, the sheep of your inheritance, who dwell by themselves in a forest in the midst of Carmel, they will graze Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.

And according to the days of your exodus from Egypt you will see wondrous things. The discourse is again applied to what lies in between, and turns toward the good, urging toward the better with the hope of the good things understood in Christ and changing very well toward choosing to live rightly. For it has disturbed not moderately with the prediction of grim things those who easily go toward negligence, but it recovers them again, inserting very well that which knows how to cheer, so that those to whom the discourse of admonition is made, not despairing, might rush down a cliff, ir-

revocably and unbridled. For it is written, "When the wicked man comes into the depth of evils, he scorns. Therefore there is introduced either the very person of God the Father, saying to the Son "Shepherd your people with your rod, your tribe, the sheep of your inheritance," or else again for us the prophetic person in a certain way crying out to Emmanuel himself, that he must shepherd with a rod his own people or inheritance. And the people of Christ, and indeed also the sheep of his pasture, might be understood as both those who believed from the circumcision, and those called to holiness from the multitude of the Gentiles. For he created the two peoples into one new man, making peace and he reconciled both through His body to spiritual union. And so Christ Himself said, "And other sheep I have; namely those of the circumcision;

"them also I must bring, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. Therefore, the people of Christ, both tribe and sheep and inheritance are those "not by works of the law," but rather justified through faith. For the one group was under a curse, according to the voice of the blessed Paul; but the other might say, speaking truly of themselves, "Blessed are we by the Lord who made heaven and earth. The Lord is God, and has appeared to us. But Christ shepherds His own with a rod, not striking them with one of iron, and shattering them like a potter's vessel, according to the voice of the psalmist, but turning them back in gentleness, and like a good shepherd, checking with moderate fears the impulses towards indolence of those who have believed; for thus says the Master of all, as in the person of David, fashioning the discourse concerning the Son: "If his sons forsake my law, and do not walk in my judgments; if they profane my statutes, and do not keep my commandments, I will visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with scourges; but my mercy I will not scatter from them. Therefore, He shatters, as if striking with an iron rod, the unbridled, the disobedient and arrogant, and the one who does not accept the faith;

but He kindly instructs those who have believed, and pastures them among lilies, and brings them to a good pasture and a rich place, clearly the divinely-inspired scripture, making plain through the Spirit to the more intelligent the things hidden in it, so that they may "ascend to a perfect man, and to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," having a rich and well-nourished mind, and revelling in intelligible delights. But we, the chosen and the elect, dwell apart, having withdrawn from the others, who

mind only the things upon the earth and have prized the possession of temporary things, and being clothed in the pleasures of the flesh, have immoderately inclined towards everything that is amiss. Therefore, having a quiet mind, and freeing it from vain and detestable turmoil, we are placed somewhere outside, and we live a revered and admirable life, and we are alone, just as indeed was the prophet Jeremiah. For he said that, "O Lord Almighty, I did not sit in the council of those who were mocking, but I was cautious because of your hand; I sat alone, because I was filled with bitterness. And we dwell alone as in a thicket and on a mountain. And you will understand the thicket as the two-fold discipline, well-wooded and flourishing, I mean both moral and dogmatic, and the mountain as that which is, as it were, lofty and exalted. For nothing of what is philosophized among us, and deemed worthy of zeal in the Church, is lowly.

But that such pasture is rich and good for grazing, he indicates again as from more concrete examples, saying that those who are instructed by Christ will graze in both Bashan and Gilead; and these are regions which cause to gush forth for the flocks a very great and abundant pasture, and are richly crowned with varied grass. Therefore, leaping up wisely from things corporeal and lying, as it were, in the senses, to things spiritual, we also understand the inner and hidden contemplation, that by delighting in the theorems of the divinely-inspired scripture the mind of the saints is preened, and is filled as if with a certain richness, having partaken abundantly, as I said, of practical and theoretical virtue, not for a certain short and contracted time, but as the Prophet says, as the days of the age, that is, for a long and endless time. For the things that delight the flesh fall with it and wither and, passing by like shadows, after a short time are contracted; but the participation in the good things from above and spiritual things is extended through long ages; for the possession of such things cannot be lost. And he said that you shall see wonderful things according to the days of your exodus from the land of Egypt.

just as For when the God of all was freeing Israel from the slavery in Egypt, he punished with various plagues those who wished to oppress and wear him out with clay and brickmaking, so also the Savior, placing us who have believed outside the hand of the devil and spiritual slavery, bound the strong man, as he himself says, and cast out the ruler of this age. And just as Pharaoh was drowned and perished together with his own shield-bearers; so

again Satan, together with the unclean spirits, has all but been submerged, cast down to Tartarus with chains of darkness. And just as Israel were baptized into Moses, yet in the cloud and in the sea; so we also have been baptized into Christ. For he is the spiritual cloud, which waters the world under the sun, as with rains, with the evangelical proclamations. And just as for them he sent down the manna in the desert, so also to us he gives himself for food, "the living bread which came down from heaven, and gives life to the world. And they were brought into the perceptible land; but we inherit the city above, the heavenly Jerusalem, the Church of the firstborn; and the Savior says this is the land which he also promised to the meek. Therefore, as from the likeness of things that happened of old to Israel you will learn clearly the power of the things accomplished in us through Christ.

But since it is necessary for us to provide from every source what tends to the benefit of the hearers, come, let us go another way, and speak, taking from the interpretation of the names. For Carmel is interpreted as knowledge of Circumcision, Bashan as shame, and Gilead as transference of the Covenant. And the argument has very much plausibility especially in these things. We shall be, therefore, with Christ as shepherd, in knowledge of circumcision, that is, the one understood in the Spirit. for we have been circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, and we bear the Jew who is one inwardly, while Israel according to the flesh has only the perceptible one and the one in letter, and not at all the one in the heart through the Spirit. For this is the true circumcision, making those who receive it known to God. Therefore the prophetic word also said to us: "Be circumcised to God, and circumcise the hardness of your heart, O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. We shall be, then, in Carmel, with Christ shepherding, that is, in knowledge of circumcision, and we shall be no less also in Bashan, that is, in shame and disgrace, not being convicted for sin, but because we have transgressed, for this very reason repenting, and finally coming to an awareness of the things sinned in ignorance; and this thing is a way of salvation.

For a clear proof of the utmost insensibility is for some to choose to live with a hard and shameless heart, and least of all to blush at their own faults; and to lie perhaps even in ignorance of the things sinned. Therefore, those in the knowledge of the spiritual and divine circumcision will blush at their own faults, and having come into an awareness of that which is naturally unjust, they will by all means turn to that which is most fitting for them. And

such people will be also in Gilead, that is, in a change of legislation, or rather, of a covenant. for we, having come under Christ, shall live as citizens, no longer according to the law, but we shall live rather evangelically, and running past the crudeness of the letter, we shall perform spiritual worship to God, and being transferred to what is incomparably better, we shall exchange the types for the truth. Nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might, they shall lay their hands on their mouth, their ears shall be deafened. They shall lick the dust like serpents dragging themselves on the ground, they shall be confounded in their confinement.

By nations in these words he means the abominable and unclean hordes of demons, who in every way and altogether, whenever they see those called in Christ to justification, to sanctification, to redemption, to adoption, into incorruption, into glory, into a relaxed and free life, then indeed then they will be put to shame, being thrust out from their dominion over them and seeing their own strength failing and growing weak. For our Lord Jesus Christ has given us "to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. Therefore they will lie under the feet of those who have believed, those who formerly conquered, having grown weak in their cowardice and being enervated through Christ. And they will put their hands on their mouths, no longer being permitted to accuse the sinners; "For it is God who justifies, who is he who condemns? according to what is written. And the blessed David said somewhere that "All iniquity shall stop its mouth. Therefore they will be silent, and not willingly, he says, those who are clever at accusations, and as if struck by thunder by the wonder concerning us, that is, they will be deafened.

For the report concerning us is extraordinary, and like a great and truly supernatural crash, if it is true "That while we were still sinners, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly," so that we who were formerly entangled in terrible and unbearable offenses, might now be sanctified, and "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but" by mercy and grace, we who were formerly grieved and as far as possible from all hope, now beloved, bright and conspicuous, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. Therefore, he says, they will be deafened, having become, so to speak, even thunderstruck because of God's serenity toward us and the excess of his wondrous goodness, they will lick the dust, creeping on the ground like serpents, that is, they will not find food. For it is the custom of serpents, if they should be

in want of things to eat, at times to knead the dust with their tongue, and to consider whatever they happen upon as food. And he says that the unclean demons will also be in equal want. For those accustomed to revel of old and to utterly devour all upon the earth, will no longer find one who endures to suffer this, because all have been saved by Christ, and have henceforth come to such spiritual strength, as not to endure those ancient bites, but rather to tread upon the asp and the basilisk, according to what is written.

Not only will they lick the earth, but they will also be confounded in their confinement, that is, being constrained by weaknesses and griefs, and as if besieged by the power of the one afflicting them, I mean, of Christ, they will not be in moderate terrors. And it is likely that the confinement hints at something else for us in these things. For when the Only-begotten became as we are, he worked countless wonders, but I suppose the things unseen were more numerous than the things seen. For he commanded the unclean spirits to go down to Hades, and to be shut up henceforth in the abyss, so that he might rid the earth of the bitterest beasts. And we have seen an image of this matter in the more ancient writings; for when Joshua son of Nun took the lands of the nations, he shut up five kings in a cave, and rolled a stone over its mouth, prefiguring, as I said, in himself the power of the Savior's dispensation. And indeed the demons "begged him not to command them to go into the abyss. Therefore, he says they will be confounded in their confinement, as if being shut up henceforth into Hades, and cast into Tartarus with chains of darkness, so that, as I said, he might henceforth deliver the human race from the bitter and savage beasts. They shall be amazed at the Lord our God, and shall be afraid of you. Who is a God like you?

taking away iniquities and passing over injustices for the remnant of his inheritance, and he did not keep his anger for a testimony, because he is a willer of mercy. he will turn again and have compassion on us, he will sink our injustices and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. He will give truth to Jacob, mercy to Abraham, as he swore to our fathers in the days of old. For the mystery of Christ is truly an ecstasy, and all- the superiority of the gentleness towards us is beyond the power of words for one who knows how to marvel. And indeed the divine Habakkuk, being astonished at the manner of the incarnation, cried out clearly, "O Lord, I have heard thy report, and was afraid; O Lord, I have considered thy works, and was amazed. For being in the form and in the equality of God the Father, the Only-be-

gotten, and being rich as God, became poor for our sakes, that we through his poverty might become rich; that he might save that which was lost, heal that which was sick, bind up that which was broken, give life to that which was corrupted, cleanse that which was defiled, release from judgment that which was condemned, declare blessed that which was cursed, and adorn with the honor of adoption that which was by nature a slave. Therefore let him hear from all, "Who is a God like unto thee? that is, good and forgiving, pardoning iniquities for the remnant of his inheritance;

and the remnant of his inheritance would be understood as those from Israel who believed, since the other multitude was destroyed because they did not believe. And Christ said somewhere, "He that believeth on the Son is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the Son of God. He therefore leaps over sins and passes over iniquities and has not kept his anger for a testimony. The phrase "for a testimony" means "to the end," or "forever. For we were cast out in Adam, but we were received in Christ. And he cursed in the one, but blessed again in the other; "For as," he says, "by one man's offense many died," so also by the one man's righteous act shall the many live. He has therefore ceased from his anger, because he is a desirer of mercy; and in the time of the conversion of all, that is, of the incarnation, he will, as it were, baptize the sins of all in the sea. And since to the holy fathers, I mean Abraham and Jacob, he promised to multiply their seed as the stars of heaven, he says he will give them the things promised. For they will be called fathers of many nations, their children being counted not only among those of the blood of Israel, but also among those of the promise.

And these are they of faith, also called the uncircumcision, being mixed, as it were, into spiritual unity with those of the law and circumcision. For it is written that "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel: But, the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For as many as are "of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. And the manner of the blessing would be understood as the grace which is in Christ, through whom and with whom, to God the Father be the glory with the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

NAHUM

Each of the holy prophets was taken up at times for some useful and necessary matter to minister to the divine commands, and to convey the voices

from above to men. And some, frightening the sinning Israel, announced the calamities that would befall them, and if they did not choose to do what was pleasing to God, they openly threatened that they would fall into terrible and inescapable evils; others, bringing into the open the very things that had happened, and grieving with those who had suffered, skillfully persuaded them to be willing to live more equitably, and thus finally to ward off the wrath; while others nourish the suffering Israel with good hope, and prepared them to be disposed to believe that, having fared miserably because of their own sins, they would prosper again when their affairs were restored to their original state, by the mercy and grace and power of God who easily reshapes all things to whatever he wishes. We shall find some such purpose now also in the treatise before us. For since the land of the Jews was captured, and were carried off as captives into the land of the Persians and Medes, those who by their outrageous apostasies had grieved God who always presides over and champions them and shows them to be superior to their adversaries, some, having already suffered this, continued to be held in the evils of captivity and to have an unbearable misery;

while others, who had barely managed to get out of the snares and escape the savagery of the Babylonians, were in unceasing terrors and in great suspicion, lest somehow they too should fall into the same or even worse evils, with the all-powerful God being wroth with them, not yet having let go of His indignation; and they came to such a point of fear as to be scattered in the lands of the neighboring nations, and to all but serve others, and these foreigners and idolaters. And this matter was not without penalty for them; for they learned to live by their customs, and among whomever each was found, to make their worship in the place of God. For this reason also the God of all, when Jerusalem had been burned at times by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, commanded those who had been saved not to go down to Egypt, but rather, having settled at home, to hold to their ancestral worship, with His help. So that, therefore, having the hope of returning in due time, those from Israel might not remain too disheartened, and that those who had become captives might rather reject despair, and might always be intent on prayers, and choose to worship Him who is mighty to deliver and able to redeem; and that those dwelling in Judea might no longer mix with the lands of the nations; the Prophet receives the vision from God against Nineveh; this is the chief city of the Assyrians;

and he foretells that it will fall, with the whole country also being devastated with it, which indeed was also accomplished when Cyrus the son of Cambyses and Mandane armed the Persians and Medes and Elamites and certain other nations with them against Nineveh. For he took it by force, and released Israel from captivity, and commanded them to go home together with the sacred vessels. This, then, is our purpose for the present treatise; and we shall add the subsequent parts, as is possible, and in detail. The burden of Nineveh, the book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. First, he defines the purpose of the prophecy, and usefully clarifies what and where it looks to; then he makes clear who is speaking and from where. For he says "burden," that is, the prophecy that has been received and set forth and is at hand would be understood not about any others, but against Nineveh, or in other words, let the burden of the prophecy be understood as Nineveh. And the book is inscribed "The Vision of Nahum of Elkosh. This is doubtless a village somewhere in the land of the Jews. For we shall take 'of Elkosh' not as from a father, but rather as from a place. And we say this, having the tradition from the readings. God is jealous and the Lord avenges; the Lord avenges with wrath; the Lord avenges his adversaries, and he cuts off his enemies.

The Lord is long-suffering and his strength is great, and he will by no means clear the guilty. The saying is profound, and not easy to grasp, except only for those who are willing to examine closely the things in it. And if it should be understood as having been directed to the Jews, we will find the exhortation suitably mixed with moderate rebuke. But if someone should think it was made and spoken against Nineveh, the mind will be turned to another of the interpretations, and to those who have suffered the devastation it gives and confirms the hopes of recovering again. We shall therefore make the purpose of the meaning for both as clear as possible. For the Jews, having spurned love for God, and holding the genuineness of piety toward Him in no account whatsoever, descended into polytheism and strange error and a life outside the law, and they built altars, they set up precincts to the works of their own hands, they brought rites and sacrifices to Astarte, to Chemosh, to Baal-peor, to the golden calves, and what is even more irrational than these, to them they dedicated songs of thanksgiving. For the wretched ones said out of their madness, "These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of the land of E-gypt.

But by such terrible impious acts they have forgotten themselves, sharpening against themselves the God who of old presided over and saved them, to whom they have become enemies, and have been placed in the portion of adversaries, assigning themselves to gods that are not so by nature, although Moses long ago cried out concerning God, that He is a jealous God, and a consuming fire, and that He would not endure those who chose to grieve Him. For He proclaimed beforehand that, "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. And I will move them to jealousy with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. Having therefore offended in many ways, they have also rightly perished. This is what the Prophet now says, practically rebuking and at the same time comforting the people of the Jews who are vexed at what has happened. For yes, he says, you are grieved, having suffered unexpectedly the desolation, driven out of homes and country and cities, although you were always conquering your opponents; but you have fallen under the feet of enemies. How then was it not necessary to understand before the experience, that God is a jealous God, and the Lord avenges with wrath, avenging His adversaries, and taking away His enemies?

But if we have been taken away, he says, and removed from the midst, and are under the hand of our foes, yet we have stood as enemies, we have impiously warred against the one who is all-powerful, and we have gone to everything whatsoever that is discordant to Him. But you will say, that the Master is long-suffering. Yes, I myself agree, for He is such by nature. Nevertheless, He will not acquit the guilty, that is, He will not completely free from charges and justice those who have offended Him, and this unceasingly and beyond measure. For He defers His wrath out of His innate gentleness, and sometimes bears with those who transgress, awaiting their repentance; but those who delay and long put it off, He finally punishes and subjects to penalties as those who have become hardened. Thus then our discourse will be and be understood as being so, if it looks towards the Jews; but if it should be brought against Nineveh, we will understand it differently. For the Assyrians took the country of the Jews, God granting the victory to them, because the people of Israel were held by very many transgressions. But they were savage and arrogant and had a completely boorish mind, and they did not at all cease from practically trampling upon the very glory of God with harsh and

accursed words. For they thought that they had conquered even against His will, and along with the Jews had overcome the hand that defended them.

And so the Rabshakeh used blasphemous words, saying those things to those on the wall of Jerusalem which would befit only the impious foul mouths of those who do not know the God who is by nature and truly God. But he immediately paid the penalty for his arrogance. However, after capturing the cities in Samaria, the men with Shalmaneser, and also burning others in addition to these, boasted over the conquered, and acted insolently toward the divine glory. The Prophet therefore comforts the people of the Jews who are not moderately distressed, and that the God of all will in every way and entirely bring punishments upon those who warred against them, he teaches, saying, A jealous God and the Lord avenges with wrath, avenging His adversaries and He Himself taking away His enemies. The Lord is long-suffering and His strength is great. For He will somehow prevail, he says, having invincible power, and will overcome those who have caused grief. For even if He is long-suffering, and is seen for a time as forbearing, yet in the end He will not acquit; for He is jealous. And we will find the God of all Himself not moderately moved at what the people of Israel have suffered through the cruelty of the Babylonians. For He said through the voice of Jeremiah to the multitude or city of the Babylonians, "I gave them into your hands, but you showed them no mercy.

And indeed also through the voice of Zechariah again He says thus "I have been jealous for "Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, and with great "anger I am angry against the nations that join in the attack, "because I was a little angry, but they joined in "for evil. But the phrase 'a jealous God' and what follows, would fittingly apply also to those who are unwilling to go the gentle and God-loving path, but have rather turned aside to choose to live carnally. For that he will take vengeance, subjecting the unruly and sinful to punishments and penalties, how can one doubt, if it is true that "we must all appear "before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive "the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether it be good "or bad. No less would the saying fittingly apply also to the teachers of the Jews, I mean the scribes and Pharisees, who, thrusting away faith in Christ, were found destroying both themselves and others. For they have thought hostile things, and have warred against the economy in the flesh of the Only-begotten, and they took the key of knowledge, as he himself says,

and neither entered themselves, nor indeed allowed others to enter. Therefore, even if he is long-suffering, yet he will by no means clear those who have warred against the true faith. The Lord's way is in destruction and in shaking, and clouds are the dust of his feet.

As the Prophet is about to proclaim beforehand the capture of Nineveh for the comfort of those who have suffered, and to make clear to the wronged that it will be shaken down by God, he usefully recounts first the all-powerful nature of the divine, and that for it, when it chooses to accomplish anything whatsoever, there is nothing that resists, but rather everything follows easily, and what seems good to it will prevail, even if some earthly matter seems difficult for us and for those like us to accomplish. For the Jews thought that the Babylonians would be most difficult to capture, and possessed a hand so invincible, that not even if God wished it, could they be weak against their enemies. For I think the things dared by them cruelly and savagely throughout their whole country called them to this despair. Therefore, so that they might know that they will lie down without a struggle when the wrath of God rises up against them, and they will be captured, and very easily, he necessarily says, The Lord's way is in destruction and in shaking, and clouds are the dust of his feet. For if, he says, you should plan against some—for this is the way—it will surely run down upon them as in an earthquake. An earthquake and destruction are an invincible and altogether inescapable thing, and in addition to these, clouds flying like dust and covering the sky.

And the Prophet seems to be bringing them to the remembrance of the flood that happened against the whole race of men in the time of Noah, for then God went forth, as it were, in destruction and in an earthquake against all, raising up clouds and, as the sacred scripture says, opening the floodgates of heaven, and inundating the world under heaven with irresistible rains. He, therefore, he says, who easily prevailed against the whole earth, and with a single decree destroyed all who were in it, how could he be weak against one nation, the Babylonian? And very fittingly for God he says, Clouds are the dust of his feet. For as it is easy for a man to stir up soil and dust with his foot, in the same way, I think, it is easy also for the God who has power over all things to cover the sky with a storm and clouds. But if it is fitting also to investigate the secret meaning of what has been set forth, I will think it necessary to say this, that we say the Only-begotten Word of God has made the

way of the economy in the flesh, that is, its fulfillment, in destruction and in shaking. For since he became as we are, he has brought to an end and shaken "principalities and powers and the world-rulers of this age," driving out their advantage over us, and scaring away that ancient strength, having overthrown both the dominion of death itself and, in addition to this, sin.

And clouds have become the dust of his feet. For just as dust flies up before one who is walking, so of the economy in the flesh The intelligible clouds went before the Only-Begotten, that is, the blessed prophets, using a more obscure and not very manifest word, yet with life-giving proclamations watering the mind of those able to understand. Rebuking the sea and drying it up, and laying waste all the rivers. He composes the account of the narrative from what they knew and had experienced, setting it apart from things too ancient. For when the protecting God brought Israel out from the impiety of the Egyptians and their unbearable greed, he led them through the middle of the sea, and commanded them to walk as on dry land; "for the waters were solidified like a wall," according to what is written. Therefore, he rebuked the sea, and it was passable like dry land. But if someone should wish to connect the first things with these thoughts, I mean the phrase "The Lord, in consummation and in shaking is his way," he will think what is fitting in this way too. For the Lord of all but consummated and shook the land of the Egyptians through the signs that happened in it and the death of the first-born; for they perished in one night, and all things, as he said, were filled with lamentation and wailing; he led Israel through the middle of the sea, with the cloud from heaven suspended over them.

The blessed David also said something like this. For he sings thus: "O God, when you went forth before your people, when you passed through the wilderness, the earth was shaken, and for the heavens dropped down. And by the earth being shaken, as I suppose, he means that of the Egyptians. But that a cloud also was hanging over, going before the sons of Israel, is unclear to no one, and the divine Paul will also confirm it, saying that all the fathers of Israel were baptized "in the cloud and in the sea. And the Prophet added to the drying up of the sea, also the laying waste of the rivers, recalling to memory another miracle. For when they were being brought into the land of promise, with Jesus presiding after Moses, then the Jordan stood again in its place, as the all-powerful God checked the flow of the streams with inflexible commands and bonds. And the blessed David esteems these things

worthy of the greatest wonder, saying thus: "Come and see the works of God, how he is terrible in his counsels above the sons of men; who turns the sea into dry land, they shall go through the river on foot. For again they crossed the Jordan on foot. And if indeed he should say that all the rivers are dried up, he commands us to be disposed to the idea that what happened to one will also happen to all, if God so wills.

But to some it seems to apply to the sense of the preceding things in another way. For if the Master of all, he says, should choose to make a raid against Nineveh, he will do it indeed with consummation and shaking; for he will consummate it and shake it easily; and since it is broad, and like a sea causing wars to surge against the other nations, he will dry it up without delay. And even if, he says, the nations from it should come up like torrents, they will in every way and altogether be laid waste. And we say that the sea and rivers that flood and drown are no less the wicked and opposing powers, and before all others, Satan. But Christ has dried up their whole power, and though it was once invincible, he has subjected it to the feet of those who worship him. Bashan and Carmel are diminished, and the flowering things of Lebanon have failed. The mountains were shaken by him, and the hills were moved, and the whole earth was removed from his presence, and all who dwell in it. And the discourse immediately comes through other proofs, testifying to the all-powerful and invincible authority of the divine nature. For Bashan is a flourishing and fertile land; and Carmel and Lebanon, the one a mountain of Phoenicia, the other of Judea, are both very well-wooded, and boast of abundant forests.

But all these things, I mean Bashan, and the country itself lying beside the mountains, terrible and most warlike races inhabited it, and sons of giants, as it is written. Yet they have been removed and conquered by the sons of Israel, with God as their champion, and they have inherited their land. It is therefore as if he said again: The regions once teeming with terrible and most mighty men, and as it were proud with many forests of warriors within them, are gone and have been plundered, having suffered the desolation of their inhabitants. For this, I think, is what it means to say they have become few. Then how would the renowned Nineveh not be captured with God's assent? And besides Bashan and Carmel, the blossoms of Lebanon also failed. Lebanon, then, as I said, is a mountain of Phoenicia, but by it he means the entire land lying under it and around it. By the blossoms of Lebanon, then,

he means those who reigned from time to time in Damascus and Phoenicia, who have also been given into the hands of the sons of Israel; for they too were conquered at times, although having a very great force, puffed up with terrible and irresistible reinforcements. And going through the books of the kingdoms, we will find the kingdom of the Damascenes plundered at times, by those who reigned from the tribe of Judah.

Thus, the blossoms of Lebanon have failed, that is, the chosen ones of Phoenicia, or Lebanon, have been removed and have perished many times, that is, those who held power there. And why do I say these things, he says, when even very easily, if God wills it, the mountains themselves would be shaken and the hills will be moved, and the whole earth with its inhabitants will be destroyed, that is, it will pass into non-existence, and will be again as though it did not exist? For he who made it in the beginning will surely destroy it with ease, and great things are absolutely nothing to him. And the blessed David also seems to have understood and spoken in harmony with what is set before us: "What is it to you, O sea, that you fled? And you, O Jordan, that you turned back? The mountains, that you leaped like rams, and the hills like lambs of the flock? The earth was shaken at the presence of the Lord. For as he already said, "His way is in an earthquake. But that the whole earth is nothing, and the things in it would be considered of almost no account, if one were to measure the divine and ineffable glory, the prophet Isaiah will testify, saying, "If all the nations are as a drop from a bucket, and were considered as the turn of a scale, and will be reckoned as spittle;

and Lebanon is not sufficient for burning, and all the four-footed beasts are not sufficient for a whole burnt offering, and all the nations are as nothing, and were reckoned as nothing; to whom have you likened the Lord, and to what likeness have you likened him? But again, it seems right to others if these things were reckoned obliquely even of Nineveh itself. For they wish to compare it both to Bashan as an excellent and renowned country, and again to Carmel and Lebanon, as distinguished and most conspicuous mountains; and Nineveh was wonderful and distinguished. And he says it has become few, as it is about to be ravaged along with the blossoms in it, that is, the leaders and generals and the most illustrious of the other peoples. For since he made mention of mountains and of a very wooded country, I mean Bashan, he has maintained the figure of speech throughout the discourse; he called the richest and most flourishing those who were perhaps more distin-

guished by wealth, or preeminent in bodily strength, or in some other way raised above the others in superiority. But if one examines the audacious acts of the Jews against Christ, and the desolation brought upon them and their complete crushing and destruction, after he came back to life and ascended into heaven, one might reasonably apply these things to them as well. For Judea might reasonably be understood as Bashan and Carmel and indeed Lebanon;

and Bashan, since it has also been named a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of wheat and oil and vineyards; and Carmel and Lebanon because it was raised high in glory, and became conspicuous and prominent, and as it were with unending forests to rejoice for its inhabitants. But he says that it has been diminished; for they have been consumed by the hand of the Romans, and having encountered, so to speak, dreadful and most mighty woodcutters, they have fallen just like plants. And the blessed prophet Isaiah hints at something of this kind, speaking as if to Jerusalem: "Open "O Lebanon, your doors, and let fire devour your "cedars. Howl, O pine, because the cedar has fallen, "because the great ones have been greatly afflicted. Howl, you oaks "of Bashan, because the dense forest has been torn down; and somewhere else he says more clearly: "And the mourning "of Jerusalem will be like the mourning for a pomegranate grove in a plain that is being cut "down; for since he again compares Jerusalem to Lebanon, he said that the falling cedars and pines are the exalted men in it, and he calls them oaks of Bashan; but the figure of speech, as I said, is metaphorical. Who can stand before his indignation? And who can withstand the fierceness of his anger? His fury melts rulers, and the rocks are shattered by him.

He seals these words as truth for those who have experienced the divine wrath, saying that it is something bitter and hard to encounter. For I think that, falling upon them like fire, it would easily melt away principalities and powers, both earthly and spiritual, and it would effortlessly shatter even rocks, that is, those who have become hardened like rocks, and who have a relentless mind. And we shall find that such were the kings of the Assyrians, and indeed also the leader of the unclean spirits himself, Satan, about whom holy scripture says: "His heart is hardened like a stone, and it stands like an anvil "that cannot be hammered. But that the leaders of the Jews and those appointed among them to rule were also hard and obstinate and had become sick with the greatest insensibility, I mean the priests and the profane crowds

of the unholy scribes and Pharisees, how is this not evident to all? They were also consumed by the war from the Romans, melting like wax in incurable misfortunes, but being exceedingly hard, they were shattered by evils, and they paid the penalty for their drunken violence against Christ. And in another way our Lord Jesus Christ also crushed for our sake "Principalities and powers and the world rulers "of the darkness of this age, the spiritual forces "of wickedness," so that he might deliver us and save us. And knowing this, the blessed David sings in a psalm: "You are fearsome, and who "will withstand you from the time of your wrath?

From heaven "you made your judgment heard; the earth feared and was still, when "God arose to judgment, to save all the meek "of the earth. And he has given us "to tread upon snakes and scorpions, "and over all the power of the enemy. For he melted rulers, he shattered like rocks the arrogance of the unholy spirits. And as he was angry on our account and for our sake with those who had done wrong, it was necessary for them to give way, even unwillingly. The Lord is good to those who wait for him in the day of affliction, and he knows those who fear him. And in a flood of passage he will make an end; darkness will pursue those who rise up and his enemies. He admonishes usefully and very skillfully, neither cutting off the hope of prosperity, through which he said he would be good to those who wait for the Lord, nor yet permitting a dissolute and dissolute life; but rather leading one to good order and to choosing to live according to the law, by saying again that if he should make his way against some as in a flood, he will create something like a shock, and just as the rush of many and unbearable waters going down a steep place is something dreadful and altogether hard to escape, so if he should rush against certain people with things from divine wrath, he will utterly destroy all against whom he might go and be carried.

Indeed, he says that his enemies will be pursued and overtaken by darkness. And certainly not entirely by the darkness of night, but I think of another, a spiritual darkness, conceived as a way of suffering. For he knows how to darken the human mind, and relentless a misfortune and a bitter and unexpected suffering, which indeed happened to the ancients, being carried off into captivity, and their land being captured. Therefore God, likening such evils to wine and strong drink, said very well to the blessed Jeremiah "Take the cup "of this unmixed wine from my hand, and you shall make "all the nations drink to whom I send you, "and they shall drink and vomit, and be

mad because of "the sword that I send among them; and indeed also through the voice of Isaiah to her "For you have drunk and drained the cup "of stumbling, the bowl of wrath. He says, therefore, that those who think hostile things toward God will be seized by drunkenness and darkness, very well frightening them toward choosing to think what it was better for them both to know and to do. And the God of all has also advanced against the Jews in a flood of marching, and has consumed them, exacting the penalties for what was done to Christ. And they have been in darkness, and being utterly deprived of the divine light, the wretched ones remain foolish and blind.

For they were not willing to follow Christ when He cried out "While you have the light, "walk in the light, that darkness may not overtake you. But since they were disobedient and unruly, for this reason then, as the prophet says "When they waited for light, there was "darkness for them, and waiting for brightness, they walked in gloom. For they became enemies of the divine light, and unholily rose up against the glory of Christ. What do you devise against the Lord? He will make a full end; he will not take vengeance twice on the same thing in affliction. I have already said also at the beginning, that when Shalmaneser king of the Assyrians had sacked Samaria, and had also ravaged with it other cities and villages subject to the scepter of Judah, then those who were left from the war were in unbearable fears and fleeing to the lands of the neighboring nations; for they thought, as was likely, that they would fall into the same evils a second time when the Babylonians returned against them; God made the exhortation necessary through the voice of the Prophet, promising these two things: that He would have mercy in due time on those already taken by the war and in unbearable misfortunes, and would release them from the bonds of captivity, and that He would deliver Nineveh to desolation and destruction.

So that, therefore, expecting to fall into the same evils again, they might not now make their flight from Judea to foreigners an easy matter, He, so to speak, inquires, saying what it is they are devising and have resolved to think about the Lord; Do you think, he says, that the Master of all is harsh and grievously wrathful, so as to demand double penalties for the same offenses? But you are very much mistaken about what is fitting. For if you have added nothing of all that is outside the law and provokes the law's establisher to wrath, He would not still inflict a second blow. He has afflicted you suffi-

ciently for the impieties in which you were already caught. Stop the sin, and He will check his wrath. He has chastened sufficiently; He will now have mercy on those who have chosen to be prudent. The discourse is therefore mixed, and has a blended exhortation. For at the same time it both persuades them to choose genuinely to do what is pleasing to God, and gives courage to those who have chosen to do this, that He will be good to them, not letting loose unbridled wrath upon them, as they themselves thought. But observe how the discourse has again preserved the remnant for Israel. For that God will not make a full end of them, he has clearly proclaimed beforehand, speaking as if in a question, What do you devise against the Lord? Will He Himself make a full end?

For he says He will not make a full end, nor, having shaken Israel from its very foundations, will He deliver it to utter destruction. But He will spare them for the sake of the fathers, and they will be saved in due time, entering after the gentiles through faith in Christ into sanctification and intimacy with God through the Son in the Spirit. For up to their foundations they will be laid waste, and as a bindweed intertwined, it will be devoured, and like a stalk full of dryness. From you shall come forth a thought against the Lord, plotting wicked things, contrary things. Having shown through many things that the ability to accomplish all things easily belongs to the God of all, and that nothing is at all impossible for him, he transfers the discourse now to Nineveh itself, and says that even if it should advance to such a point of splendor as to appear equal to the most wooded of mountains, I mean Lebanon and Carmel, boasting in its many and innumerable peoples; and even if it should lack nothing of Bashan, yet a time will come when it will be completely desolated. For I think this is what it means to be laid waste to its foundation, the discourse having maintained the trope as of mountains and earth, of woods and timber. He says it will be devoured when the Persians and Medes are in a way distributed. For these took Nineveh, when Cyrus was commander.

And he compares the multitude of the Assyrians to bindweed, for they dwelt in Nineveh. And what could be the reason for such a thing again? For bindweed is an ivy-like plant, and it always creeps upwards and sends forth thin shoots, and it seizes upon the plants standing near, so that often even the tallest of trees are choked by it. And the Assyrians did this too, ever leaping upon countries and cities, and as it were choking and overwhelming

them with the entanglements of wars and with unbearable tyrannies. And he said that it would be burned up, and like a stalk full of dryness. And the stalk is a thing most ready to be consumed by fire. And so, to Nineveh, as it were, being set on fire and suffering the things of wrath and being consumed, the Prophet then exclaims and clarifies the reason for suffering such things, saying, From you shall come forth a thought against the Lord, plotting wicked things, contrary things. You are destined for desolation, he says, and you will be like a wasteland, and indeed you will also be burned with fire, for you will devise dreadful and arrogant and contrary things against God. For the God of all, punishing a sinning Israel, made it vulnerable and brought it under your feet. But you will not be so disposed yourself, but you will think rather that you have taken Judea, and not with his consent.

For we shall find the Rabshakeh's superfluous speech to be of this sort, when he mocked the glory of God, saying to those sitting on the wall, "Let not Hezekiah deceive you with words that will not be able to deliver you; and let not Hezekiah say to you that God will deliver Jerusalem from my hand. To this truly most senseless and unholy loose-tongued speech, God answered through the voice of Isaiah, saying, "Shall the axe glorify itself without him who hews with it, or shall the saw be exalted without him who pulls it? For just as the axe, even if it were very sharp and of good bronze, would not be effective in cutting down trees, unless someone were to wield it with his own powers against something, and likewise the saw will accomplish nothing at all at its own task, with no one pulling it down or up; so also the power of the kingdom of the Ninevites, or rather of their army, would not have conquered Samaria, had not divine wrath brought it against its cities and villages, and used it as a tool, which is moved by another and is useful when taken for service, but would do nothing by itself. Nineveh is therefore punished for devising wicked things against God and contrary things rather than what the nature of the matter truly held. For the God of all handed over a sinning Israel, and she did not rather take it while God was defending and still wishing to save them.

Thus says the Lord, who commands many waters: And so shall they be scattered, and your report shall no longer be heard. The discourse, then, is to the arrogant and God-fighting Nineveh. And he says that waters in this context are the innumerable multitudes throughout countries and cities and nations, poured out easily like rivers or the sea, of whomever God should

choose. For he himself is their commander, as Creator, as Lord and God of all, as one who steers by his own commands the things that have come to be by him, and who changes the inclination of all hearts toward what seems good to him, thus distinguishing and shaping in whatever way he himself might wish. For this reason he says, O Nineveh, you will finally cease from being terrible, all-powerful and famous. For the report of you will no longer be heard, that is, there will no longer be much talk about you among all people. For long ago you were splendid, and on the tongues of all were great stories about you; but now no longer, but they will sound a mournful song over you. There will be nothing great and worth hearing about you any more. And now I will break his rod from off you, and I will burst your bonds, and the Lord will give command concerning you. Again the word of the Prophet has shifted to Israel.

It is as if he were to say, Having put away the memory of those former transgressions, I will finally have mercy, as one who has paid the penalty; as one sufficiently punished I will release you from their greed, and you will in no way be subject to the rod of the Assyrians, that is, to their scepter or their kingdom; for the scepter is a symbol of kingship; and I will release you from the bonds of fears and slavery, and I will bring you again into the good day of freedom. As for the phrase, The Lord will give command concerning you, you will understand it thus. For to whom does he give command? Is it to good spirits and the armies of angels, which have been appointed by God to watch over Israel? Or rather, he gives command perhaps to the very one who at the appointed time released them from captivity; and this was Cyrus, the son of Cambyses; and he gives command not at all as speaking to a holy man and a prophet, but by putting his own will into his mind, and making him a minister of what seems good to him, although he was profane and an idolater. For just as he commanded the sea monster to swallow Jonah, and again the gourd to spring up over his head and to shade him, and indeed also the morning worm to strike the gourd; so we say he also gave command to Cyrus. And this is the historical sense;

but God the Father might also proclaim to Jerusalem, which had become the killer of the Lord, that is, to the land of the Jews "That it shall be laid waste to its foundations, "and like intertwined bindweed it shall be devoured, and like a "stalk full of dryness. Out of you will come a calculation "against the Lord, plotting evil things in opposition. For it has been burned

and laid waste, and like a dry stalk it has been consumed. For they dared to devise evil things against the Lord, and indeed to use an unbridled tongue; for at one time they called him a Samaritan and wine-sodden and born of fornication; and at another time they even said that "he is misleading the crowd," although for this very reason he was sent by God the Father, that he might deliver from wandering what was wandering and bring to God what had leaped away from him, and that he might bring through faith what had in many ways slipped into apostasy, and that he might enlighten what was in darkness, and bind up what was broken. But since he did not utterly destroy Israel, but, as I have already said many times, the remnant was preserved for him; for not a few even from the Jews have believed, and mingled with the Gentiles they glorify Christ; let those of the circumcision according to the flesh hear that I will break his rod from off you and I will burst your bonds and the Lord will give command concerning you.

But what rod, he says, or what bonds at all, how is it not necessary to say? For they were subject as to a kind of scepter, being weighed down by the folly and savageness of the scribes and Pharisees, and being held, so to speak, in bonds by their commandments, they did not accept the faith. But the rod, that is, the rule, has been taken away, and the bonds have been burst, and finally with a free mind they have run to Christ, so to speak, headlong, calling out to one another, and saying that which is from the psalmist's lyre: "Let us break their bonds, and cast away their yoke from us. And besides those, let the gentiles no less hear, And now I will break his rod from you and your bonds I will break apart and the Lord will give command concerning you. For of old, yoked under the scepters of the devil, and bound tight with the chains of worldly pleasures, they used to worship "the creation rather than the creator; they did not know God who is so by nature and in truth, and differing little from irrational beasts, they were enslaved to the pleasures of the flesh, living a pitiful and most irrational life.

But they too have been set free, since Christ shattered that ancient rod and tore apart the bonds, and drew them out of sin, and transferred them from error to the knowledge of God, and justified them by faith, and henceforth gave command concerning them, clearly to the holy angels. For it is written that "He who dwells in the help of the Most High will lodge in the shelter of the God of heaven. For He will command the holy angels to guard us in all our ways and to take us up in their hands, lest we strike our foot

against a stone. And it is true that "The angel of the Lord will encamp around those who fear him, and will deliver them. No more shall your name be sown. This is like saying again: You will no longer be scattered among all the nations, or taken captive by the spear and a wanderer and far from the land that bore you, enduring very harsh servitude in the cities of enemies, pitifully and wretchedly and miserably scattered. But it should be noted that the Prophet Nahum was before the second captivity in Babylon, and after these words of the Prophet, Judah was captured and went into captivity and served the Assyrians.

For while Hezekiah was reigning in Jerusalem, Sennacherib campaigned against Samaria, and after plundering the cities in it, and burning others besides, he sent Rabshakeh from Lachish, who let loose his boorish tongue against God, and then by the hand of an angel one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the army of the Assyrians fell; but after the reign of Hezekiah, when no little time had passed in between, when Zedekiah, who was the son of Josiah, was reigning, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, having first plundered all of Judea, and then having taken the holy city by force, and having burned that famous temple, he deported Judah and added them to those who had been carried away from Samaria by Sennacherib. Does, then, the God of all falsify the promise, saying through the Prophet to those of the blood of Israel, 'No more shall your name be sown?' Then how is it not ignorant, but rather would reach the limit of all evil, to think God speaks falsely? For the divine is in no way prone to error in speech, far from it; but it will prove true in this way. For having first recalled the release which happened in due time, when Cyrus the Persian had destroyed the empire, he then says that after this Israel would no longer be a wanderer and an exile. For having been recalled to their own lands and having returned to Judea, they dwelt securely. And wars were indeed stirred up against them by Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes, and by certain others after him;

however, they did not depart into captivity; but, as I said, they have dwelt securely in the land that bore them. Thus, then, 'No more shall your name be sown' might be understood concerning Israel according to the flesh; but the spiritual Israel will also hear it, and very fittingly, that is, those who with the eyes of the mind see God and are amazed at the glory of the Only-begotten: 'No more shall your name be sown.' For before faith they were under the hands of enemies, having yoked the neck of their mind to Satan and the

wicked powers with him, and having been bound in the evils of the love of the flesh. But henceforth the oppression of those who formerly held sway has been removed, sin has been shaken off and has fallen along with them, the power of the passions has been taken away. For Christ has set us free, He has gathered us through faith into holiness, although we were scattered in many ways into manifold and fleeting passions, and into immeasurable polytheism. But we will no longer be scattered, but we will remain in every way in Christ, having one faith, one baptism, and one Lord, Savior and Redeemer, and through him we are bound to God the Father in spiritual unity. From the house of your God I will destroy the carved images, and I will make the molten images your grave.

Israel had stumbled not moderately, having inclined to apostasy, and having unholily departed from the God who saved them, but adhering to the worship of idols, for this reason also, having become captive, he has gone to his enemies, and was thus carried away to Nineveh. And those who were left behind in Jerusalem were no less indifferent towards the love of God, and insecure in reverence, and rejecting what is pleasing to God, and shaking off the yoke of slavery under him; but still sacrificing to Baal and to Astarte and to the host of heaven. But since threats came through the holy prophets, with God saying clearly that Jerusalem would be destroyed, and that its inhabitants would go captive along with the others in every way and altogether into the hands of foreigners, some of those who had reigned in it sobered up at times, and tore down the sacred precincts, overturned altars, and consumed the carved images with fire. But Josiah especially excelled among the others in these things, about whom the man of God also spoke to Jeroboam son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, while he was once sacrificing. For he was standing to offer sacrifices to the golden calves; but he says to the altar by the word of the Lord, "O altar, altar, thus says the Lord:

Behold, a son is born to the house of David, Josiah is his name, and he will sacrifice upon you the priests of the high places who sacrifice upon you, and he will burn the bones of men upon you. But that what was promised has come to pass, the sacred scripture has clearly testified. And it is written thus in the fourth book of Kings concerning Josiah: "And the king commanded Hilkiiah the high priest and the priests of the second order and the keepers of the threshold to bring out from the house of the Lord all the vessels that were made for Baal and for the grove and for all the host of heaven, and he

burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and he took their ashes to Bethel, and he deposed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained, and they burned incense in the high places and in the cities of Judah and in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal and to the grove and to the sun and to the moon and to the constellations and to all the host of heaven. And he brought out the grove from the house of the Lord outside Jerusalem to the brook of Kidron, and he burned them in the brook of Kidron, and ground them to dust, and cast their dust on the grave of the sons of the people.

Do you understand then, how the molten images were in a way made a grave, and the carved images were destroyed from the house of the Lord? And another scripture will confirm the word on this. For it said thus in the second book of Chronicles, "In the eighth year of his reign," clearly that of Josiah, "while he was still a boy, he began to seek the Lord, the God of David his father; and in the twelfth year of his reign he began to cleanse Judah and Jerusalem from the high places and the groves and from the molten images, and they tore down in his presence the altars of the Baals, and the high places that were on them, and he cut down the groves and the carved images, and he broke in pieces the molten images and ground them to powder and scattered it on the face of the tombs of those who had sacrificed to them; and he burned the bones of priests on the altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. Therefore they were destroyed in their very precincts, as I said, and altars, and they were all but buried together with the molten images, according to the word of the Prophet. And it should be known that Nahum prophesied during the times of Hezekiah. Then from Hezekiah was born Manasseh, who reigned for fifty-five years;

and the son of Manasseh Amos, who lived for barely two years, and after him Josiah, in whose time the things of the prophecy were fulfilled, as the discourse has just shown us. For behold, swift upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news and proclaims peace. The sons of Israel, having become captives, were indeed living in Babylon, yet they were in hopes of being brought back again in due time, and would return before long to their noble lineage from above and from their fathers, as this had been promised by the holy prophets as if God were speaking. And the time of their hope was the reign of Cyrus, who was about to take Nineveh by force, and this again Isaiah had proclaimed to them beforehand. For he said, "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 shall not be shut. I will go before you, and I will level mountains, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze, and I will shatter the bars of iron. And after other things, again, "This man shall build the city of Jerusalem, and he shall bring back the captivity of my people, not with ransom nor with gifts, said the Lord of hosts.

Therefore, he says, a messenger of peace will come to those of Israel, signifying the expedition of Cyrus, when they also shook off the yoke of captivity, and broke the rod of their rulers, and having broken the bonds of their unaccustomed servitude, they returned home again and were saved. But if someone should choose to apply the meaning of the preceding words to the proclamations of the holy Baptist, he too would rightly take this course. For he spent his time in the desert, and as if crying out in the mountains he proclaimed the good news of peace, that is, Christ. Beautiful, therefore, and swift are the feet of him who says, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. Celebrate your feasts, O Judah, pay your vows, because they shall no longer continue to pass through into ruin. Since the law had commanded that one must not sacrifice outside the holy and divine court, but "in the place which the Lord your God shall choose for his name to be called upon it," the people of Israel, being in a foreign land and inhabiting the country of the Persians and Medes, were in every way, I suppose, inactive and inert concerning their established customs, not fulfilling their customary feasts, not offering sacrifices, nor first-fruits, nor thank-offerings according to the law, not slaughtering the lamb in the new month; perhaps even hesitating at mere doxologies. And we say this from the inspired David, as speaking in the person of the people in Babylon:

"By the river of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. Upon the willows in the midst thereof we hung our instruments. And in addition to these things, also, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? For, as I said, since they were outside the holy land, outside the temple and tabernacle, and not having the sacred place, it was necessary for them to be inactive regarding the things of the law. But since the time for release was then revealed, someone fittingly proclaims to them, either the messenger of peace, whose feet are swift, or the Prophet himself, that it is possible for them to fulfill feasts, to kindle songs of thanksgiving,

and to carry out very well the things in their vows, that is, their promises. And he also promises the imminent destruction of their enemies. For they shall not, he says, continue to pass through into ruin, that is, they will not remain for long times, nor indeed will they have a prosperity that grows old, that is, unending. For it will cease and come to an end, being curtailed. But let the spiritual Judah also hear such voices more fittingly. "For 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 that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God.

Such a one, therefore, will celebrate splendidly, having his faith firmly fixed, clearly that which is in Christ, sanctified by the Spirit, and by the shining with the grace of adoption. He will offer spiritual sacrifices to God, dedicating himself as a fragrant aroma, and practicing every kind of virtue: prudence, self-control, courage, patience, love, hope, love for the poor, kindness, long-suffering; "For with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Let the spiritual Judah know, however, concerning every enemy and those who formerly prevailed, that they will no longer pass into old age, that is, they will be removed from the midst, being sent, clearly, to punishment. This Christ has fulfilled, commanding the unclean spirits to depart into the abyss, and giving to those who love him [the power] to rise up against their enemies, and to act manfully against passions and to overcome sin and "to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. It is finished, it is taken away; he has come up breathing into your face, delivering from affliction. As it was already fixed, and in every way and altogether about to happen that Nineveh must be destroyed, he says that it is finished, indicating by this its coming to an end, as it were. And indeed also that it is taken away, that is, that it has been cut off completely and utterly destroyed.

And very well indeed he says "he has come up" concerning Cyrus, signifying something emphatic, I think, such as the prophet Jeremiah also said about him, foretelling what would happen in due time to Nineveh: "A lion has come up from his den, a destroyer of nations has set out, and has gone forth from his place, to make your land a desolation, and your cities shall be laid waste, so that none shall dwell in them. For like a wild beast leaping upon Nineveh, he devoured those in it. But to them he was a terrible and relentless enemy, and became unyielding in his wrath, but to those of Israel he

was breathing into their face and delivering from affliction, that is, releasing them from their unusual servitude, loosing their bonds, recovering them as captives, by sending them home, and also commanding that the divine temple be rebuilt for them. But he says "breathing into the face" as from a Jewish tradition and custom. We will find mention of such things at times in the divinely inspired scriptures, such as the Jews thinking it necessary to tear their garments at blasphemies against God. And so Caiaphas, when Christ said he was the Son of God, tore his robe, crying out and saying, "He has blasphemed. And the divine disciples Paul and Barnabas also did this. For they were in Lycaonia.

And when they had freed one of the sick from his suffering, and the thing was marvelous to those who saw it, the spectators of the divine sign wanted to sacrifice to them. For they said, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men! They called Barnabas Zeus, and Paul Hermes, because," it says, "he was the chief speaker. But since what was being done was a kind of blasphemy, they tore their own garments, still following Jewish traditions and unwritten customs. But the custom has been disparaged, as not being from the law, and completely useless. And so the God of all said to the Jews who were fashioning such things and straying far from true piety: "Return to me with all your heart, with fasting and with weeping and with mourning, and rend your hearts, and not your garments. Just as, therefore, it was a custom for some to tear their garment when someone had blasphemed, so also was the practice of breathing into the face of the sick in some way or another. Those who were accustomed to exorcise and with curious incantations, pretending to release the weary from spirits and pains, did this especially, and quite strangely. He takes, therefore, the example from their custom, and says, "He has come up breathing into your face"; that is, Cyrus; "and delivering you from affliction. For some pretended to be able to accomplish this, as I said, by breathing on others.

But it is wise and true to say that both that of the devil and that against us the power of sin which tyrannized has been curtailed, and death has been captured as it were, and corruption has been entirely removed. For Christ has risen from Hades and lived again, who breathes on the face of the holy apostles and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit. For in this way we have been delivered from all evil, and having become partakers of the Holy Spirit, we are being restored to the ancient beauty of our nature, and are being mentally

re-stamped into the first image. For our Lord Jesus Christ is being formed in us through the Spirit. Watch the road, brace your loins, be exceedingly courageous in your strength, because the Lord has turned away the insolence of Jacob, as the insolence of Israel. To those about to go very soon into Judea, and intending to go home, he necessarily adds that it is needful for the future both to watch the road and brace their loins, that is to be ready and prepared for the toils of the journey, and to be courageous against all hesitation, and to be seen to love being superior to long distances, using invincible eagerness for this. A sign of readiness is to have one's loins, as it were, well-ordered and girded. And indeed our Lord Jesus Christ says to the holy apostles, or rather to all who believe in him, "Let your loins be girded.

For the posture is that of a traveler, and is most especially fitting for those who preach the divine gospel, and have their feet most ready for this. Therefore, he says, brace your loins, instead of, be prepared and, as it were, ready for a journey. For the Lord has turned away, he says, the insolence of Jacob as the insolence of Israel. Observe again in these words the distinction that is necessarily introduced. For by Jacob he means those who dwelt in Samaria, that is the ten tribes, over whom reigned those from the tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh, who came from Joseph, who was from Jacob; but by Israel he names those in Jerusalem, I mean Judah and Benjamin. And since, when Sennacherib had sacked Samaria, Jerusalem was not captured, as God at that time defended it and destroyed the Assyrian by the hand of an angel; and Cyrus released not only the captives from Samaria who had been carried away to Nineveh, but also those from Jerusalem, when Nebuchadnezzar had captured the land; the Prophet necessarily says that the Lord turned away the insolence of Jacob as the insolence of Israel. And by insolence he means slavery or servitude. And that God will release all, not defending some while allowing others to languish in their toils, he teaches by saying thus: He turned away the insolence of Jacob as that of Israel is also turned away. For all, as we said, ran back to Judea, having escaped the harm of captivity.

But I say that it is necessary, and very rightly so, for those who have been redeemed in Christ to no longer wish to live uncircumspectly; but rather to survey the road of the way of life that pleases God and to go on the good path and brace their loins, that is, to be seen to be superior to the belly and love of pleasure, "and to make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires," and to be courageous against passions and all hesitation; for in this way they will

come to the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, and there they will offer spiritual sacrifices to God, and having shaken off the yoke of their former slavery, they will live a glorious and free life, delivered from all worthlessness. Because emptying they have emptied them out and their branches. They destroyed the weapons of their power from among men, mighty men mocking in fire. The reins of their chariots on the day of his preparation, and the horsemen shall be thrown into confusion in the ways, and the chariots shall be thrown into confusion and shall clash together in the broad ways; their appearance is like torches of fire and like lightnings running to and fro. As the God who knows all things sounded in the holy prophets the things that would be at various times, they necessarily announced them according to what seemed good to him. And many times they occurred even in the very with visions of things.

Therefore they were astonished, and seeing them all but fulfilled, they made their pronouncements about them; something of which sort the Prophet now seems to have experienced concerning the inhabitants of Nineveh, and those who shielded themselves with Cyrus, that they both shook them off and their branches. But the account is made as from what is accustomed to happen to vines. For the cluster is shaken off and spits out the grapes, either when a most violent wind attacks, or when a scorching heat burns it, or when any other harm befalls it, so that the branch itself appears with the fruits, stripped even of its blossom. So then they shook them off like vines. And their weapons have been destroyed, that is, their power; for 'weapons' sometimes signifies power. But he says that being terrible horsemen, and knowing the battles from chariots, they were in such unbearable terrors, that they were turned to flight, and entangled with one another, and were shattered dashing against each other, and he thought he so gazed upon the phalanxes of the enemy, that they yielded in no way to torches, or even like lightning consumed them, darting with a swift and unrestrained course. And their nobles shall be mindful, and they shall flee by day and shall be feeble in their going, and they shall hasten to the walls, and shall prepare their defenses.

When the war weighs heavily upon even the most powerful of them along with the others, he says, they will receive into their mind what they did when they took Judea, that is, the outrageous things they have said, uttering reviling words, and, as it were, slinging down the glory of God with their

own unbridled mouths, the wretches. Then, being brought to the remembrance of these things, they will know at last that they have God as their enemy, who is putting them under the feet of those who war against them, although they were formerly exceedingly terrible, and had practiced making their attack completely irresistible against whomever they went. But if indeed they should turn to flight, finding the matter difficult to escape, and having grown weak in their journeys, they will betake themselves to other counsels. For they will take care of the walls, and will place guards upon them. And by these things he shows that they are at a loss in every way, and do not know at all what it is fitting to do, because their mind has been darkened, and all but drunk as with wine on the unmixed calamities, they lament the failure of their salvation and are scattered everywhere, changing easily from these things to those, and from those to others, and having unprofitable labor in all these things. But if he also says, 'And they shall flee by day,' I think it means this.

For being terrible, as I said, hard to conquer and harsh, they will have sunk at last to such cowardice as to choose to flee openly, and to do this now without concealment, although formerly they refused it and were accused of it only by bare suspicions. But the wicked powers also have been defeated by the majesty of Christ, and being unable to act against his divine commands—on our behalf, that is—they were broken by terrors and have truly fled, no longer being saved by any security. For when God brings on punishments, who could escape? Or what manner of thing will deliver those who have offended? The gates of the cities have been opened, and the palaces have fallen, and the substance has been revealed. And she went up, and her handmaids were led away as doves, moaning in their hearts. The nobles, therefore, he says, finding flight impossible, will hasten to the walls, and will prepare their defenses. But their plan will be unprofitable for them, as God opens the gates of the cities to their adversaries, and delivers up the palaces, that is, the houses of the kings, revealing the things hidden in them, and setting forth their substance for plunder. And he calls 'substance' the wealth clearly gathered from plunder and greed against others.

Then again, as being in contemplation of what will happen, being dragged now looks toward captivity, both the ruling city, I mean Nineveh, and those under it and around it, which he also calls handmaidens, because they were yoked and subject, perhaps, and served it. And he says they speak as

doves in their hearts, that is, not openly but secretly. For it is the custom of the bird to cry out in its heart something heavy and grievous. Indeed, for those who have fallen into the hands of enemies, and are then being dragged off into captivity, it is not at all unlikely that something of this sort happens. For they lament their own misfortune, almost suppressing their lamentations within themselves, since at times it is not even free for them to weep. And Nineveh is like a pool of water, her waters, and they themselves fleeing did not stand, and there was no one who looked upon them. They plundered the silver, they plundered the gold, and there was no end to her adornment; they have become heavier than all her desirable vessels. He compares Nineveh to a pool both filled and poured out, because of the very great multitude inhabiting it, and the countless tribes of nations flowing in to assist.

And he is astounded, as it were, or rather, he scoffs, as it were, at those who flee, that though they were very many and beyond number, they departed in cowardice, although long ago with their populous hand they had been confident in every war, and raised a high brow over themselves. But it was the God of all who was loading down their mind with cowardice and bringing it to baseness, and paralyzing their fighting spirit. For it is true that "A king is not saved by a great force, and a giant will not be saved by the greatness of his strength; but rather the Lord of all saves whomever He might choose, and very easily. Then what does the Prophet say? they plundered the silver and they plundered the gold; and these things were their substance; And there was no end to their adornment, and in this he seems to also name the Indian stones, with which he says she was especially weighed down, although she was also disheartened by other vessels. For it was the custom of the Assyrians, that is, the Ninevites, to make a great and zealous collection of stones, and to adorn themselves like girls, so that even in battles themselves they strove for the splendor of adornment and were seen decked with flowers.

But the Prophet speaks very concisely in these matters, according to a plan, and at one time he depicts in his account them falling, at another time entangled with one another, and at a loss for flight, and having their guards to no avail, and at another time even plundered, cutting short the sorrows of those in captivity, and artfully charming them with the prediction of such things, and leading them to cheerfulness with the sweetest narratives. " And satan has also been plundered, first through the Savior Christ, then after him through the holy Apostles, concerning whom the prophet Jeremiah also said

somewhere, "Because suddenly those "who bite him will arise, and your plotters will awaken, "and you will be plunder for them. And Christ has also introduced the narrative as in the form of a parable in the evangelical preachings, for he said, "Or how can one enter "the house of the strong man and plunder his goods, "unless he first binds the strong man, and then plunders his "goods? For those who worship satan, his choice and precious vessels, have run to the faith, as the Savior of us all, Christ, transfers them to the worship of God, and as the holy Apostles themselves persuade them to walk in this way. A shaking out and a shaking up and a boiling over and a breaking of heart and a loosening of knees and pains upon every loin, and the face of all as the scorching of a pot. He says every kind of crushing will be crushed.

For what else could being shaken out and shaken up and indeed boiled over signify to us, but this? For what is shaken and shaken up is scattered everywhere. And he says a breaking of heart will follow, God clearly crushing them into cowardice, and a loosening of knees, that is, weakness and paralysis of bodies, and upon these things, pains, clearly those from unpleasantness; for how were they not going to be in such evils, who had been brought down to everything that is accustomed to grieve God? And in addition to these things he affirms, And the face of all as the blackness of a pot. For the faces of those in despondency are always darkened, and the assault of terrors terribly takes away the brightness of their eyes. And speaking the truth, we say that such things happened both to Satan himself, who tyrannized over us, and to the evil powers with him. For since they were being cast out from that ancient honor and glory, how was it not likely that they would suffer such things in every way and altogether? Where is the dwelling place of the lions, and the pasture that was for the cubs? Where the lion went to enter there; a lion's cub, and there was no one to frighten him? The lion seized enough for his cubs and strangled for his lionesses, and he filled his den with prey and his dwelling place with plunder. He calls Nineveh the dwelling place of lions.

for in it have dwelt, and made for themselves a splendid and admirable habitation and a secure palace, those who reigned over it at various times: Pul and Shalmaneser and Sennacherib and indeed also Nebuchadnezzar; for these have warred against Judea. But the "Where is it" is not, I think, of one asking a question; for I think one must reject the simple-minded view; but rather of one mocking, and showing through this that it has been utterly

destroyed, so that it is no longer even seen where it once was. for it has been finished and taken away, as he himself says. where then, indeed, he says, is the dwelling place of the lions, that is, Nineveh? And where is the pasture of the cubs? And cubs, as I think, he calls those acting and placed under the greatest king, and holding an honorable position with him in glory, I mean satraps and generals; and their pasture he calls those under their hand and subject to them, and paying tribute and making a collection of money; "For the poor are the pastures of the rich," according to what is written. Since, therefore, Nineveh has been completely taken away, and all the surrounding country, where then, he says, is the lodging of the lions? And where is the pasture of the cubs?

But that Nineveh had become, as it were, a secure base of operations for the kings of various times, he has shown by saying, Where the lion went to enter there, a lion's cub, and there was no one to frighten him. For the wall of the city was impregnable, having been very well made with works of magnitude beyond description. But since Nebuchadnezzar, having ravaged all Samaria, and Judea itself, and the holy city, I mean Jerusalem, carried away those of the blood of Israel to his own land, and so disposed of those once captured under his authority, as to make some his own and hold them in bonds, and to give others to others and sell them, and to have his own country and city full of captives. For this reason he says that, The lion seized enough for his cubs and strangled for his lionesses and filled his den with prey and his dwelling place with plunder. And again the word is formed as from what naturally happens. For beasts, simply seizing what falls in their way, then having eaten enough, with the remainder they nourish their cubs, lending their own labors to them. And such things might be said again also of Satan himself, Christ having destroyed both him and his things, and having taken away his prey from the earth. For he broke the molars of the lions, according to the voice of the psalmist, "The Lord has shattered the molars of the lions.

Behold, I am against you, says the Lord Almighty, and I will burn up your multitude in smoke, and the sword will devour your lions, and I will destroy your prey from the earth, and your deeds shall no longer be heard. God Himself opposes them, and rises up as the agent, turning them to despair of their salvation. For when God wills to do harm, who is there still to save? Or who will turn away the one who wills to ravage the Lord of hosts? "For who

shall turn back his mighty hand? according to what is written. He says indeed that he will burn up her multitude in smoke, so that we may again understand something of this sort. Beekeepers from time to time, when they wish to dig out the honeycombs from the hives, light a fire and drive away the bees with smoke, so that they may not fight and wound them with their stings, flying around them in a swarm. Something like this has also happened to those summoned to aid Nineveh in its danger. For they departed and fled as the smoke of war fell upon them, terrifying them into cowardice and casting them into unbearable fears. Indeed, he calls lions the most valiant and bold, who perhaps even took courage in their resistance; nevertheless, they have become the work of the sword of Cyrus.

Since the discourse has brought to our minds the memory of lions, it necessarily says that their prey will also be utterly destroyed, so that nothing among them worth hearing of will any longer exist. For it was their habit to attack cities and countries, and to leap upon them beast-like, on whomsoever they might happen to choose, and to do countless things, so that the misfortunes of the sufferers became a song and a lament for many. Therefore, he says that their prey will be utterly destroyed. For how or whom were they going to hunt any longer, when the common folk were terrified and had fled as from smoke, and the most warlike had fallen, who like lions attacked those who resisted them? And the God of all has been roused against the Jews who killed the Lord, so that the multitude of the common folk was scattered to every wind, and those more distinguished than others, like savage beasts, were destroyed along with the many. For they have acted impiously in an intolerable way against the Savior of all, Christ. Woe to the bloody city, all full of lies and injustice. He has called it a city of blood; for those who had reigned in Nineveh were most ready for murder and exceedingly bloodthirsty; and those in it were otherwise warlike, and always eager to make their attacks untamable against whomever they might go. And he says "full of lies," because it was also full of idols, in which falsehood is especially not unproven.

For they are falsely named, and the handmade gods steal the glory of divinity, "Silver and gold, according to what is written, the works of men's hands. And the wise Jeremiah somewhere also called it a land of graven images. But "full of lies" might also be understood in another way, with falsehood being understood as villainy and guile and deceit hateful to God, with

injustice clearly running alongside. For where there is deceit and guile, there injustice will surely follow. And a city of blood, full of lies and injustice, is also Jerusalem, which killed the Lord. For we remember Christ saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. And he said somewhere through the voice of the prophets, "Woe to them, because they have departed from me; they are miserable, because they have acted impiously against me; I redeemed them, but they have spoken lies against me. For they have spoken against the glory of Christ, at one time saying that he casts out demons by Beelzebul; at another time calling him a winebibber, and in addition to this, a Samaritan, and things much more shameful. For it would be fitting for their foul mouths alone to babble those things which they have dared to say. The prey shall not be handled.

The sound of whips and the sound of the rattling of wheels, and of a pursuing horse and of a jolting chariot, and of a horseman mounting, and of a gleaming sword and of flashing weapons, and a multitude of slain and a heavy fall; and there was no end to her nations, and they shall be weak in their bodies from the multitude of fornication. The discourse is again made from what naturally happens. For fowlers, covering the leafy bushes densely with nets, often seize those hidden beneath them by touching them with their hands. And this is a skill of theirs. Therefore, he says, the prey will no longer be handled by them, that is, they could no longer hunt as they did before some, that is, those who plunder the things of others for themselves, would not become a snare and a noose for the weaker, since another care has come upon them, and the struggle for the ultimate things is imminent. For there will be in it the sound of whips. And again the Prophet seems to me to be clearly describing the turmoil from the war, as if it were set before his eyes. For he sees the city as if it were resounding with horses, and being battered by the wheels of chariots, and those who ravage it flashing in brilliant armor, and the slain being beyond number, and the houses in it shaken down; for he also mentions a heavy fall.

But he is astonished that while the multitude of the nations gathered in it is very great, they are all unmanly and strangely afflicted with cowardice, and far too prone to timidity. And he immediately gives the reason, saying that they will be weak in their bodies from the abundance of fornication. For since they have become base and wicked in their ways, and moreover idolaters, and have turned aside to error in an extraordinary way, for this reason

they will justly be weak and terrified, not even enduring so much as to speak or even just to think of resistance. A beautiful and graceful harlot, a mistress of sorceries, who sells nations through her harlotry and tribes through her sorceries. Praise for shameful things is an intensification of the accusations, as for instance if someone should choose to say about one of his associates, that he is a skillful thief and a brave robber and an ingenious sorcerer. Therefore, even if it were said of Nineveh, "A beautiful and graceful harlot," the matter will not be for her praise—far from it—but rather will make the condemnation more severe. For courtesan women then especially seem to practice much grace, when they appear to be both talkative and elegant in speech. Such also was Nineveh, skilled in evildoing, and not incapable of capturing cities and countries, and persuading them to think what seemed right and pleasing to her. And these things were sorceries and false divinations and profane rites and the trifles of idols.

For it reached such a point of foolishness as to make a claim of good repute out of seeming already to be a mistress of sorceries, and to make a boast of things so shameful and deserving of the utmost outcry. And it was the custom of some in it to sell nations and countries through their sorceries. But how or in what manner, we will say as we are able. It was the custom for the Assyrians, when they wished to make war and take up arms against others, to hasten to learn in advance what was to come by the arts of the magi, who, eagerly seeking honors from the king, commanded them to be of good courage for every war, and by their own practices they falsely claimed to have hamstrung their opponents beforehand. Something of the sort that Balak, the king of the Moabites, wished to do. For he hired the wicked Balaam and even brought him up to a mountain, "saying 'Come, curse Israel for me.'" For they thought that events would follow the curses of the magi. Therefore, in these matters he calls the art of sorcery and magic "fornication," by which those wise in these things sold nations and tribes, always promising victory to those who brought them wages. Behold, I am against you, says the Lord God Almighty, and I will lift your skirts over your face, and I will show the nations your shame and the kingdoms your disgrace;

and I will cast abominations upon you according to your uncleannesses, and I will make an example of you. That her word is not against man nor indeed her war, but rather the Lord of hosts has become angry, and is raising up against her Persians and Medes, he indicates again. But to the God who

has authority over all and who holds power over all things, who can lead out an army against him, if he should choose to make war on some? Then he says that I will also lift your skirts over your face. And again the saying has been spoken as if about a courtesan woman, who, as far as her face and external adornment are concerned, seems to be lovely to those who see her; but if indeed she should suffer the disrobing and the removal of her adornment, she will surely be disgraced by her naked body, of her members showing its ugliness without concealment. Therefore, he says, I will uncover your backside, that is, everything that is unseemly in you, and I will show it to you before others. For what else could "to your face" signify to us than this? He said he would no less reveal her dishonor plainly to nations and kingdoms. For Nineveh seemed to be beautiful and lovely, proud in the arts of magicians, and seizing rule and dominion over all, exceedingly strong and taking victory from all without a fight.

But when she was captured and fell, she appeared unseemly and unpleasant to those who knew her, who then considered her an abomination, having condemned her for boasting about nothing and for foolishly trusting in the help of magicians, or rather, in their impostures and deceptions. And it was affirmed that she would also be set forth as an example, so that some might sometimes say, if a city or country were destroyed, that it has been plundered and has fallen, just like wretched Nineveh. But, as I said, the God of all has also at times waged war against the Synagogue of the Jews, and exacted penalties for its impiety towards Christ, revealing it as naked and unseemly and utterly devoid of the covering from above. And he proclaimed this beforehand through the voice of Hosea, saying, "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 that they may not cover her shame. And now I will uncover her uncleanness before her lovers, and no one shall deliver her out of my hand. For the church from the Gentiles will give glory, saying, "Let my soul rejoice in the Lord; for he has clothed me with a garment of salvation and a tunic of gladness;

but the other, as I said, is henceforth seen as naked and unseemly and ugly, not having the covering of the divine gifts, and has become both an example and most abominable, afflicted with every kind of worldly impurity. And it shall be that everyone who sees you will shrink from you and will say, Wretched Nineveh, who will bemoan her? From where shall I seek com-

fort for her? If someone, he says, of those who formerly knew your dominions were to see you fallen and desolate, he will lament greatly and depart quickly, saying this: Who will bemoan her? For as if there were no one, that is, left behind, who was even able to merely lament, he says such things. And very wisely he has added to this: From where shall I seek comfort for her? And the meaning of what has been said is something like this. When war and battle are joined against cities or countries, a part is sometimes wronged, but another part is saved and perhaps has escaped the victors; and this is a comfort to the inhabitants. For either not all of it has been burned, and a portion has remained unsacked, or some have fallen, but another multitude has been saved; but in the case of Nineveh, from where could one find comfort? Or what manner of thing will console her? For all of her was captured and all of her was sacked and everyone in her has perished. But "Who will bemoan her? might be understood again in another way;

for it is like saying: Will there be any artist so skilled in laments and funeral odes as to say something worthy of what has happened, and to shed a sufficient tear for her sufferings? Have you prepared a portion, have you fitted a string, have you prepared a portion of Ammon, who dwells among the rivers; water is round about her, whose dominion is the sea and water her walls; and Ethiopia her strength and Egypt, and there is no end of your flight, and the Libyans became her helpers; and she herself will go into exile as a captive, and they will dash her infants to the ground at the head of all her streets, and they will cast lots for all her glorious things, and all her great men will be bound in manacles. The meaning of what is set forth is very obscure, and could not be understood otherwise, unless there were some preliminary narrative of the history in it; and it is as follows. When Israel turned to apostasy, and worshipped idols, and through countless impieties sharpened against itself the God of all things, Nebuchadnezzar was armed against Judea and against Jerusalem, with divine wrath stirring him to this. Then, when it was necessary for those of Israel to cease from the impiety at hand, and to refrain from desiring to worship other gods, but to overturn altars and burn down sacred precincts and shatter the molten images, and by their zeal for repentance and clemency to appease God and call upon him for aid.

The wretched ones did not do this; but they thought that by being aided by the help of men, they would both be superior to the Babylonians and

would prevail over their enemies, even if God should not choose to save them. Therefore they hired many of the neighboring nations, and sent embassies also to the Egyptians, and to the city called On, that is, Ammon, which is now Alexandria. And they promised to fight alongside them, and to be able to easily drive away the Babylonians, and they became an occasion for those of Israel to think that even if God would not save them, they themselves would be sufficient for this, needing nothing. But when Nebuchadnezzar took Judea, with God defending and subduing his opponents for him, he proceeded after this also against the land of the Egyptians, with divine wrath sending him, and he took all of it, and On itself, that is, Ammon; for so Alexandria was named at times, as I said; which indeed, more than the other cities of Egypt, was exceedingly splendid, and a safe and secure base, on account of being girded everywhere with water, and having the sea on its northern side, and on the southern side a wide and long and, as it were, another sea, I mean Lake Mareotis, and being fortified also by other rivers and surrounding marshes. And the inhabitants of neighboring Libya also assisted it, a land extending as far as the land of the Ethiopians, to the west and south;

these are the Garamantes, situated behind the land of the Africans; and some of the Ethiopians to the east and south also took up arms with them, who inhabit Meroë, the innermost city, and possess a wild and black land. But let the account of the history end here for us, and let us now proceed to the clarification of the meaning of the contents. **Prepare a portion**, he says, as if he were to say, O wretched Nineveh, choose a portion for yourself; for since you have grown very proud, and think that you will be in every way and altogether impregnable on account of being surrounded by great walls and having countless men willing to fight alongside you; like which of the regions do you wish to be, which have been sacked by you, although they possessed, he says, the greatest aptitude for being able to be hard to capture and unconquerable. **Tune a string**, that is, become yourself a song and melody for cities and lands, having suffered such things from the Persians and Medes, as you yourself have done to others. **Prepare the portion of Ammon**, let Ammon, he says, be your portion and lot; what you have done to her, it is necessary for you to suffer the same things. And what was Ammon, she who dwells among rivers?

That is, she who was very well fortified by sea and rivers, she who boasted in the aid of the Egyptians and the archery of the Ethiopians, she who possessed the most valiant multitude of the Libyans. But even though she was so well-situated and strong and had outside help, she has gone into exile, and she has become a captive, and her infants have been dashed to the ground, and her illustrious men have become lots, and her most glorious men the portions of the conquerors, and they have been bound with manacles. Therefore, just as you took Ammon, impregnable as she was with respect to aid and position; for it was God who delivered her up; so you too will certainly be given into the hands of enemies, even if you are very proud of the multitude of your warriors and your walls. For I am against you, and no one will turn back my hand. And you shall be drunken and shall be overlooked, and you shall seek for yourself a refuge from enemies. For in the same way, he says, that Ammon has suffered, enduring the arrows of your savagery and the calamities from your attack, so you too will be dizzy with darkness, and you will become as if drunk, not a refuge having, that is, being shaken and falling by enemies, and deprived of the oversight from above. For whom God would visit, He certainly pities and makes them stand in the things according to their prayer.

But she is drunk, just as was the God-fighting Jerusalem, not being sober, because of not being illuminated by the divine light, nor indeed willing to hear Christ saying, "I am the light of the world. and again, "While you have the light, walk in the light, that darkness may not overtake you. Drunkenness could be understood as darkness in the mind and night in the heart, the ignorance of what is profitable, and the inability to perceive from anywhere the way of salvation. But that she is also shaken, and does not have a firm standing for the works of righteousness, how or from where could anyone doubt? For she has fallen from the foundation of all things, and does not have the unbreakable foundation, that is, Christ. And she has been overlooked and given over to enemies, either to the Romans perhaps, that is, to those who carry one away into any passion whatsoever, I mean, to the unclean spirits. Therefore, Christ, and faith in him, will deliver us from every evil, and will make us superior to the wickedness of our enemies, and sets us in the eyes of God. For He will in no way overlook those who love him. All your strongholds are fig trees with first-ripe figs. If they are shaken, they will even fall into the mouth of the eater. The ripe figs fall off easily if the plant is

shaken, and they almost leap into the hand of the one shaking it, and they come automatically to those who need to eat.

Therefore, since Cyrus was attacking and already besieging Nineveh, and was setting up siege engines or battering rams against its walls, the defenders were guarding the battlements; then the attackers, shooting arrows, easily brought them down to the ground. He takes the likeness from what naturally happens with ripe figs. For this reason he says that all your strongholds, that is, the walls, are fig trees with first-ripe figs, which rush into the hand of the one wishing to eat, and very easily, if one only shakes the plant. And so also will be every soul that falls away and is deprived of help from above, easy and vulnerable and taken without a sweat by the devouring Satan. For it is written that "His foods are choice. Behold, your people are like women in your midst; the gates of your land will be opened wide to your enemies; fire will devour your bars. He shows their hope to be in vain. For they thought that they would never be captured, having gathered an innumerable multitude of those fighting with them, and inhabiting a city fortified with unbreakable walls. But he has clearly proclaimed beforehand that these things would be completely useless to them, saying that the defenders would fall into such cowardice as to differ in no way from weak little women; and he says that the gates will be opened, with the enemies clearly forcing their way in. For it is true that, "Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

Therefore, we must have security from above, and trust least of all in ourselves, but rather in God who saves, and not boast in help from men, nor indeed think that we can escape wrath, if God should be provoked. For no one will deliver from trouble and evils the one against whom the Lord of all is wroth. And the divine David was very wise, singing and saying, "I will not trust in my bow, and my arm will not save me. "For I will find strength in God," according to his voice again. Draw for yourself water for a siege. They say that when Cyrus and those with him were ravaging the surrounding lands of Nineveh, and cutting off all their aid beforehand, the Ninevites, now fearing the sack of the city, then cut many long ditches in the areas around the city, and indeed they made them difficult for the enemies to cross, by diverting rivers, and filling them with water, and making the land full of marshes. But the attackers were superior even to such attempts, or rather, the will of God handing them over. Therefore, that this effort of

theirs will also be nothing, he shows by saying "Draw water for yourself for the siege. But it seems to some that "water drawn" here means the gathering or multitude of the summoned nations for assistance. For in this way too our interpretation will not be off the mark, for in many places the multitude of the nations has been called waters. Strengthen your fortifications;

go into the clay and tread in the straw, make it stronger than brick. God would not encourage such things; but since He knew beforehand what was to come, He mocks their plan, and that, as I just said, all their effort will be in vain, He shows through these things. For since it happened that the walls needed battlements, that is, some other care, they were making bricks, evidently from clay, but very strong ones; for a baked brick is most necessary for construction, and would not be easily crumbled. Therefore, it says, "tread in the straw, and make bricks. Become then so bold and unyielding for battle, just as indeed the brick itself is; for even so you will be easily captured, and by no means unbreakable, but very easy for those who know how to shake you down, and who have an impulse stronger than your hardness. There fire will devour you, the sword will destroy you, it will devour you like a locust, and you will be weighted down like a locust larva. You will understand "there" instead of "then," for we will accept the word in a temporal and not a local sense. For if indeed these things should happen, he says, and you should make bricks, you will be consumed even so as if by fire, and the enemy will portion you out and your land, in the manner of a locust. And you will be shackled by hesitation and slow to flee like a locust larva weighed down.

For they say that when hail falls and rains pour down, the locust larva is inactive for flight, its wings having been weighed down. Therefore, he indicates again the Ninevites' helplessness in flight from what happens to the locust larvae. You have multiplied your trade beyond the stars of heaven; the locust larva attacked and flew away; your mixed multitude was driven away like the grasshopper, like a locust that has settled on a fence in a day of frost; the sun rose, and it flew away, and its place was not known. He seems to mean "trade" here not as transactions involving money, for profit and gain, but rather that which has come about from the gathering and assembling of nations. For, as I said, they hired the neighboring nations, trading, as it were, for those who were about to die, and gathering for battle those who would very soon perish; and these were very many and beyond number. Therefore they are also compared to the multitude of the stars. But even if

they have been gathered, he says, and have run together, they will be terrified by the war, and will run away again like a locust larva and like a grasshopper. This is a type of small locust, which whenever it falls on fences or the walls of gardens, when there is frost, as I said, and rain pouring down, it is still and quiet, its flight taken away by the force of the moisture;

but when the sun rises and sends a warm ray upon them, they make a swift departure, and fly away as is their custom. So, he says, will your mixed multitudes be. For they will fly away and run back home again, having made your hope void. "It is therefore good and true to trust in the Lord, rather than to trust in man," according to the voice of the prophet. Woe to them. Your shepherds have slumbered, O king of Assyria, he has put your mighty men to sleep; your people were scattered upon the mountains, and there was no one to gather them. He laments the crowds, as having slipped into such cowardice and fear, so as to be faint at the mere attack of war, and to leap up to the peaks of the mountains, and to make the difficult places a sort of rampart against the danger. Then giving the cause of their terror, he makes an elegant narrative of the destruction of those allotted to lead; as if speaking in character, instead of "they have been destroyed and utterly perished," and "they have become helpless in the arts of strategy," the phrase "they have slumbered" placing, and that those in powers and authorities and the demagogues and those who have obtained high and conspicuous honors have fallen asleep. And they have suffered this drowsiness by the king of Assyria, that is, one who has his lineage from them. For Cyrus is a native, and of Persian blood.

And the prophetic word to us feigns, in short, to lament, that is, to smile at those easily given to panic. For he says, your people were scattered upon the mountains and there was no one to gather them, that is, one who holds them up to courage, one who cuts short the cowardice of the fugitives, and is able to rally the inactive and shield-throwing multitude of the traitors. For those accustomed to do this have perished beforehand, and the masters of skill in war. And it might be understood, and very likely, concerning the flock of the Jews, the 'Woe to them.' Your shepherds slumbered, the king of Assyria has put your mighty ones to sleep. For woe indeed to those who killed the Savior and Redeemer of all, and who unholily added to the blood of the saints even that of the Lord. And it happened that they suffered this, on account of the leadership and those taken up in the rank of shepherds having

greatly slumbered towards ill counsel, I mean the scribes and Pharisees and those crowned with the boasts of the priesthood, whom the Assyrian king, that is, Satan, spiritually put to sleep. For the rule of the Babylonians is often taken for his person. And that the shepherds and the rulers among them slumbered, how is it possible to doubt, when the divinely-inspired scripture from top to bottom attributes the perdition of the peoples to them? For it is written, "O shepherds who scatter and destroy the sheep of the pasture.

And again, "The priests did not say, Where is the Lord, and those who handle the law did not know me and the shepherds were impious against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal; And Isaiah again says, "How has the faithful city Zion, full of judgment, become a harlot? In which righteousness slept in her, but now murderers. Your silver is dross, your vintners mix wine with water, your rulers disobey, companions of thieves, loving gifts, pursuing reward, not judging orphans and not attending to the judgment of widows. There is no healing for your fracture, your wound has festered. When something dreadful happens, if it proceeds with measure, and not at all beyond what is due, there is good hope for those who have endured the suffering, that they will be able to recover as from sickness to be able to live strongly and that they will pass over to prosperity, their affairs having been brought up to a better state. But when their affairs have come to the end of misery, then indeed the misfortune is hard to escape, or rather, completely indelible. This having happened to Nineveh, he says that it was both crushed and destroyed, with the hope of being able to obtain healing having been taken away, and as it were, the evil miserably festering and seeking the final cut upon itself. And that the Jerusalem that killed the Lord has come to this, is true to say.

For it was often struck, with its enemies running it down, but healings followed, as God had compassion and, as it were, soothed the wound that had befallen them. But since they have acted insolently against the Master of all, it has been crushed and has fallen and there was no healing, according to the voice of the Prophet, and the inflammation of what happened to them has remained unsoothed. Therefore the blessed prophets also said, comparing it to that of the Babylonians, "We would have healed Babylon, but she was not healed; let us each forsake her, and go to his own land, for her judgment has reached to heaven, and has been lifted up even to the stars. And the judgment is to heaven and the transgression on high. For they have acted in-

solently, as I said, not simply against one of the saints, but against the Master of the saints. All who hear the report of you, will rejoice and clap their hands over you; because upon whom has your wickedness not come continually? A decree that has become just from God, destroying the rule of the Babylonians, will testify brilliantly that absolutely no one is sad for her; but rather they applaud, and rejoice and smile at her lying fallen, on account of having endured unbearable calamities and greed, and having come to the experience of things most accustomed to cause grief. For she was burdensome and unbearable to all, sending even to those far off the sense of the perversity within her.

And I would say that even the inventor of sin, that is, Satan, who widens the net of his own perversity everywhere, and has ensnared the world under heaven into error, and bound them in the snares of perdition, would fittingly hear, having been deposed by Christ, and driven out from his tyranny over us: All who hear the report of you will rejoice and clap their hands over you, for upon whom has your wickedness not come continually?

HABAKKUK

Book 1

It has been arranged for us very wisely and skillfully and of the proposed prophecy's manner, yet we will find it full of a holy economy; for it is fitting for the saints themselves to exclaim and say, "It is not you "who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks "in you. But those who wish to understand need no small intelligence; since one might perceive the purpose of the prophecy laboring with a twofold contemplation within itself, both spiritual and historical at the same time; I will narrate beforehand usefully, and having brought together as in brief, the parts of the prophecy, and I will say for what purpose it was made. For thus the meaning would come to the readers with ease, and will find nothing arduous. Since Israel, then, was not moderately vexed at what was foretold through the prophets; for they knew, they knew, that at times it would be captive, and would fall into the hands of enemies, and lie under the yoke of unaccustomed slavery; this blessed Habakkuk tries to teach that by a just decree of God who rules all things, such things would happen to them at times, and for reasonable causes. For having prized a lawless and most outlandish life, and having inclined towards every falsehood, they did not cease sharpening the undefiled mind against themselves, until their affairs finally descended to this misery.

And this he makes clear, making a condemnation of those who chose to live unholily, and placing this matter as a kind of prelude and hypothesis for the whole prophecy, then having brought in God threatening the despisers with the attack of the Babylonians. And since it was necessary for him not only to appear as a foreteller of grim things and of those which are most accustomed to cause grief, and to come into the midst, and to proclaim beforehand the most shameful of evils that would at times befall them, but also to narrate beforehand usefully something of the things that lead to a cure, and to utter beforehand the things through which it was likely that the sufferers would find respite; he cried out against the cruelty of the Babylonians themselves, and calls despisers those who burned down the divine temple itself, and sacked the holy city, and had no regard for the sacred vessels. "For why," he says, "do you look upon those who despise, will you be silent "when the wicked swallows up the righteous man? Then he adds also very clearly the capture of Babylon itself, and the redemption from unaccustomed slavery of those who had suffered, through Cyrus at the appointed times. And from the partial redemption he passes to the the discourse cleverly on the universal and most general, that is, that which has come about through Christ for all those redeemed through faith, and laying a- side the yoke of sin, and escaping a bitter and savage master, Satan.

You have in these things the purpose of the whole prophecy for us collected as if in brief; and we will speak, treating each point in turn as is possible. The oracle which Habakkuk the Prophet saw. By "oracle" he means in this the reception of the vision, or of foreknowledge, which one might take, God giving it; for he multiplied visions according to what is written, and he has spoken to prophets, revealing to them beforehand through the Holy Spirit the things that will be, and placing them almost as if already present and in sight. that they are not known to speak from their own hearts, but rather convey to us the words from God, he clearly persuades, by naming himself a Prophet and showing himself full of the grace for this. How long, O Lord, shall I cry out, and you will not hear? I will cry out to you being wronged, and you will not save? The Prophet indeed assumes the person of one who is defrauded, and who endures unbearable insolence and drunken violence from those accustomed to do wrong; and very skillfully he testifies to God's love for humanity which is beyond description. For he shows Him as being very patient, although He is accustomed to hating the wicked.

and that he does not immediately inflict punishments on those who stumble, he has shown clearly, saying that He has come to such a point of silence and long-suffering as to require henceforth even an outcry, as some are no longer making their greed against others bearable, but as it were are letting loose unbri- dled insolence upon the weaker. For through the things by which he cries out against God's patience, by these very things he testifies to God's love for humanity which is beyond measure. For "how long," he says, "O Lord, shall I cry out, and you will not hear? I will cry out to you being wronged, and you will not save? although threatening very many and bitter punishments for those who wish to transgress. Why have you shown me toils and labors to look upon, misery and impiety? From this you might learn the hatred of evil of the saints; for they call the labors of others their own. For this reason also the most- wise Paul says, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who "is made to stumble, and I do not burn? and He has commanded us ourselves to "weep with those who weep," showing that compassion and love for one another are most befitting of saints; But he says that God showed him toils and labors; clearly, of those who are transgress- ing;

and the impiety of those accustomed to do wrong, not as if He him- self had prepared this suffering for him, but as one who has been long-suffering with those who have done these things and for so long a time, that is, as one who could have removed him from life, so that he would not be a spectator of such extremely monstrous things. But it is a custom for the saints in such bitter discouragements to seek to depart, just as indeed the blessed Jonah [says], "And now, Lord, take, he says, "my soul from me, for it is better for me to die than "to live; and the most wise Paul also writes that "It is far better "to depart and be with Christ. For the laying aside of labors for those who wish to live holily is to be freed at last from the affairs in this world, and to be released, as it were, from the dreadful care of this place. Judgment has come to be against me, and the judge accepts [bribes]; because of this the law is scattered, and judgment is not carried out to the end, because the impious man oppresses the just, for this reason judgment will go forth perverted.

That nothing of his own persuades him to be discouraged, but rather he is distressed as a saint and a lover of justice seeing those who disregard the divine commandment, not just any random people, but those who are resplendent with the highest honors, and who are set o- ver the peoples, and who are appointed to the dignity of judges he shows clearly, saying that the votes

for righteousness have been subverted, although the law has clearly forbidden, "You shall not show "partiality in judgment, for the judgment is God's. Therefore, to judge is a great thing, and a wise and incorruptible man would become an imitator of the divine pre-eminence and glory a judge, and not enduring to pervert the vote of the just; but exceedingly insolent, and the bribe-taker comes against the divine dignities themselves, since he indeed defaces the beauty of truth, and has practiced perverting what is right, saying "evil is good and good is evil," and impiously reckoning "darkness for light, and light for darkness. Therefore, the Prophet reveals that in this one most excellent and exceedingly renowned commandment, the whole law is immediately trampled. For he who has erred concerning the most important part of what is fitting, how could he be secure concerning the greater? And the Prophet has brought himself in as a witness and spectator of the greed.

But since he says that judging rightly is neglected, for this reason the law is weak, and the correctness of judgments is not carried out according to what seems good to you, O Lord, and the impious man oppresses the just. This is an accusation against the Synagogue of the Jews, and it has been brought by God through the voice of other prophets. For he said that "Her leaders judged for bribes; and again to her through the voice of Isaiah, "Your silver is dross, your wine merchants mix wine with water, your rulers are disobedient, companions of thieves, loving gifts, pursuing rewards, not judging orphans, and not attending to the judgment of the widow. And now the Prophet Habakkuk seems to want to fulfill that which is in the book of Proverbs, "What your eyes have seen, speak; and he further demonstrates that he made a most reasonable outcry against the serenity inherent in God, who is long-suffering in such a way as befits him; for God is good; except insofar as it came to the human mind that his long-suffering was beyond all measure. And against Christ the judgment has gone forth perverted, and the law has been scattered. For him whom it was better to honor as God, and for this reason a wonder-worker, the leaders of the Jews did not cease slandering, and setting everything in motion with their own foul mouths, there is nothing absurd which they have not dared to say against him;

so that at one time they thought he cast out demons by Beelzebul, and at another they called him a winebibber and demon-possessed. Then, when it was necessary to name him Savior and Redeemer of all, they impiously killed him, the wretched ones having brought forth a perverse verdict against him,

although the law clearly stated, "You shall not kill the innocent and the just. And Christ also accused them in another way, as not enduring to think right and just things, but being silent, and as it were closing the eye of their mind to what Moses might say, although he broke the law concerning the sabbath; but leaping up, and very bitterly, at the god-befitting things he himself would do on the sabbath; for he spoke thus: "I have done one work, and you all marvel. For this reason Moses gave you circumcision, not that it is from Moses, but that it is from the fathers, and on the sabbath you circumcise a man. If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because I made a whole man well on the sabbath? Do not judge by appearance, but judge with righteous judgment. Behold, you scoffers, and look, and wonder marvelously, and perish; for I am doing a work in your days that you will not believe, if anyone should declare it to you.

When the Prophet had cried out against the greed of the lawless, and almost accused the delay of the long-suffering towards them; for a just and virtue-loving soul is a thing that hates evil; to those who are accustomed to scoff, the God of all then proclaims to see and to look and to deem worthy of wonder all such things as ought to be wondered at. And these were the things that were somehow impending, and about to happen almost immediately, and having a dreadful attack and a hated assault, which indeed he has usefully commanded them to look up at beforehand, not being unable to destroy those against whom it might appear to be coming; but wonderful that they are also unexpected, and beyond hope and hard to bear and, because of their extreme terribleness, apt to strike with terror, and perhaps somewhere even disbelieved. For somehow evils of great magnitude are always very near to having to be disbelieved, especially if they are seen happening to those who had in no way hoped to suffer.

For who would ever have thought that the beloved Israel, the firstborn among children, for whose sake Egypt perished, and countless nations have fallen, of Canaanites and Amorites, Hivites and Perizzites and Jebusites, would arrive at this point of misery, so that their whole country would be driven out, and they would endure an inglorious and unbearable slavery, wandering in a foreign land after the attacks of the war, for which every word is insufficient, if one should wish to explain each thing clearly? For there have been arsons and murders, and the dragging of women, and the

dashing of infants against the ground, and as the prophet Jeremiah says, "The hands of compassionate women have boiled their own children. And the holy places themselves have been sacked, and by the captors, who had come to the very height of wickedness, nothing was left unattempted. Therefore, they are unbelievable and, as it were, unpersuasive for narration on account of the extreme cruelty of those who committed them. For this reason he says that in their days he will do a work which they will not believe, if anyone should happen to relate it to them. And by saying "in your days," he allows it to be understood that not a long time will gallop past in between; but that the war is, as it were, at the door and immediate and near, and the judgment is not far off.

For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, the warriors, the swift and bitter nation, which goes upon the breadth of the earth, to take possession of dwellings not its own. What the thing disbelieved is, if the story should be told, he shows immediately. For he threatened to bring upon them the Babylonians, the most warlike and savage race, and one in no way yielding to untamed beasts in cruelty, and always condemned for its unbridled madnenses; and he called it swift, for they are for the most part horsemen; and bitter because it is sharp and very difficult and not unskillful in tactics, having practiced generalship excellently. And strength running together with intelligence for the needs of war would, I think, most easily achieve what seems best to those warring, and will easily overcome those who are eager to resist. But since it was the custom of the Babylonians neither to always stay at home, nor indeed to ward off the attacks of those coming against them by defending themselves, but to spread out as if over all the earth, and to ravage the lands of others, and to be fond of always making their inheritance things which in no way belong to them, he says necessarily "the nation which goes upon the breadth of the earth, to take possession of dwellings not its own. For, as I said, it is fond of raging against the lands of others, and of always extending its own dominion.

And the Jews, having killed the Lord, have suffered something of this kind; for although it was possible to inhabit their own land freely, with no one oppressing them, they have been given over to their conquerors, and have come under tribute and taxes, and have been placed under the scepters of those who are always expanding and have conquered all under heaven. For shaking off for themselves being ruled by Christ, they said expressly, "We

have no king but Caesar. But it must be known that the soul of a man also, if it should treat the divine laws as nothing, will be under bitter tyrants, the unclean demons, and will serve wicked powers, which are always thirsting to inherit dwellings that are not their own; For man belongs to God; for He dwells in holy ones, and lodges in the souls of the pious. He is terrible and renowned; from himself his judgment shall be, and his dignity shall go forth from himself. The discourse passes to the leader of the nation, that is, to the tyrant of the Babylonians, perhaps Nebuchadnezzar, who took Judea, and having burned down the divine temple itself, carried away Judah as a captive into his own lands. Therefore, he says that he is terrible on account of his cruelty and lack of restraint in anger and his untamed mind and his harshness in judgments, but renowned again, as ambitious and boastful and an insatiable lover of glory; for those who have reigned in Babylon are always boastful and exceedingly ambitious.

But since they themselves were the source of every counsel, yes, and of undertakings, commanding that what seemed good to them should simply be carried out by their subjects, for this reason he says, From him his judgment shall be; that is, he goes with self-willed impulses toward what moves him, and from excessive haughtiness would not tolerate the opinion of others, even if he did not command something that was possible to be done. For the counsels of the Persians are arrogant. But since it was again their custom to divine beforehand concerning battles, and to try to learn in advance by the art of magic where the matter at hand would end, he said again, that his oracle shall go forth from himself. And he calls the oracle a **lēm̄ma**. For he will not summon those who know divination from other nations or lands, he says; but rather has them living with him, always lying and knowing nothing of the truth, except that they are always somehow stirring him up and are accustomed to proclaiming in advance that he will be victorious. And the rule of the Babylonians was exceedingly proud of this. And indeed Balak the king of the Moabites, when he planned to curse those of Israel and sought knowledge of the future, had Balaam summoned from Mesopotamia. For he thought that the magi of the Babylonians were clever and precise, and most mighty to accomplish anything whatsoever through the art of magic.

But let us also receive, if you please, the interpretation of the text at hand in another way. For having defined the tyrant of the Babylonians, and having said that he is terrible and illustrious, he immediately added, From him

his judgment shall be, and his oracle shall go forth from himself. And it will be possible to understand something like this. For God, the Master of all things, planned to punish Israel, which had chosen to live shamefully and wickedly. This judgment upon it, therefore, will come from him, he says, the Babylonian. It is similar to if he were to say, He will be a vessel of my wrath, and through him I will punish you, and the oracle concerning you, that is, whatever deliberation and will I might take up, will go forth from him again, that is, it will be accomplished; for he will bring to completion the things from my counsel and deliberation. And his horses will leap more than leopards, and will be swifter than the wolves of Arabia; and his horsemen will ride forth and will rush from afar, and they will fly like an eagle eager to eat. He strikes them again with exaggerations of the terrors, and tries to teach that the multitude of the enemies is terrible and unbreakable; and he drives them to repentance and to the need to learn the things which it was better for them to be seen to have accomplished.

That the Babylonians, therefore, are very light-footed for running, all-daring and bold, and differing in nothing from wild beasts, and as it were swooping down on those who can be caught, he again intimates, comparing the horses to leopards; for the leopard is very good at leaping, and very agile in being able to pounce on those it pursues; and them to the wolves of Arabia, which they say are indeed wilder than all others, and dart with a swift run, making an assault on whomever they might choose; and he says they are not only like wolves, but also like eagles that run down upon dead bodies without delay and swoop down, as I said. And the mind of the Jews has become easy to capture and their heart, as it were, trampled by horses, that is, easily overrun, both by the passions of the flesh, and by the unclean spirits themselves, and in addition to these, by the most powerful attacks of the Romans. For they have stumbled against him who says, "And I will be to them," says the Lord, "a wall of fire round about, and I will be for glory in the midst of her. But I think every mind deprived of strength from above is easy to capture and completely easy to overturn; for all our strength and safety is from God; for in him we shall also "do valiantly, and he will bring to nothing those who afflict us," according to what is written.

Destruction will come upon the ungodly, who have resisted in opposition to their faces. This indeed is the end and crown of the evils that were foretold. For he says the Chaldeans will come, and they will be of such a kind,

and they will do this, and they will add that, and the result of these things, is that the impious will be destroyed utterly and with their whole household, along with the cities and villages themselves, with God pitying them in no way, but giving up to desolation, as it were, those who had impiously resisted His commands, and meeting Him face to face, as it were, and openly rising up against and clearly opposing what God might wish as His own will. The Synagogue of the Jews has also been brought to an end in this way, thinking things contrary to Christ, and fighting against the Lord's doctrines and for this very reason unreservedly and shamelessly raising its face against Him, and doing and saying, so to speak, the most monstrous of all evils, and indeed nailing Him to the wood, and slandering the resurrection. For not only did they kill the Savior and Redeemer of all, but they also gave money to Pilate's soldiers, after Christ had been raised, so that they might say that He by no means came back to life, but rather the disciples stole Him secretly. And he will gather captives like sand;

and he will revel among kings, and tyrants will be his playthings, and he will mock at every fortress, and he will cast up a mound and take it. Although the holy prophets had proclaimed up and down to the people of the Jews the things that would happen to them, and were almost charming them with such evils, they themselves slipped into such ignorance and unholy thoughts, that they were inflamed with boldness and anger, raising a high brow, and sometimes they thought they would very easily overcome their enemies by their own multitude; and at other times, gathering the surrounding kingdoms for aid, they were confident that the attackers would perhaps concede victory to them even without a fight. But having grown negligent of their ancestral customs, they no longer sought aid from God and from above, but collecting, as I said, that of the neighboring nations, sometimes that of the Egyptians, sometimes that of the Syrians, yes, and that of the Tyrians, they based their hope on unshakable prosperities, and they continued to be delicate and cheerful. That therefore such a thought of theirs is exceedingly vain, and the outcome of their affairs will not proceed in this way, he explains again.

For when the Babylonian comes, he says, even if he should find the race of Israel equal in number to the sands, he will nevertheless be brought back home again, holding the inhabitants of Judea as spear-won captives, even if they should have ten thousand and most valiant defenders, yet he will easily

overcome these too. And he will revel among kings and tyrants will be his playthings. For he deported Jeconiah to Babylon in chains, and not a few others of the local rulers, who were also made a laughingstock to their captors. And he will so overpower the cities, even the most well-walled, that the capture of each was reckoned by him as a kind of plaything. And he will also raise up earthworks. And thus he took Tyre, although it was extended far from the mainland into the sea like an island. And Satan also took Israel captive when it disobeyed Christ, and all the leaders became his delight, and those who boasted in the glory of the priesthood, whom I think it is not unseemly to call tyrants, because of their presiding over peoples, and being held in great glory and power over them. But they would not have become playthings of diabolical perversity, if they had followed the Savior's commandments, and had kept the faith, and the sanctification through the Spirit.

For the Savior of all, who places every enemy under his feet, would have said to them too, "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and "scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. Then his spirit will change, and he will pass through and be propitiated. That the race of Israel will not be utterly destroyed, nor will it be overlooked forever, but there will be for them some season of prosperity, and a release from the incurable disaster having been brought home, and the yoke of slavery having been broken, it allows us to understand, as he says the Lord of all will be in a change of spirit, that is, in a change of mind and a different counsel. And we certainly do not say that he will condemn the counsel already made against them, as if it did not have in itself the quality of having been well made at that time, but rather this, that having exacted sufficient justice, and having inflicted punishment in proportion to their transgressions, He will turn to mercy, and His anger will pass, and He will be gracious to those who have suffered. For I think this is what "he will be propitious" signifies. This is the strength to my God. Are you not from the beginning, O Lord my God, my Holy One? And we shall not die.

God having promised to pity them, and having announced the change of their gloomy circumstances for the better, the Prophet out of great joy all but leaps up and says that it would not be fitting for any other to restore Israel, and to free him from bonds and slavery, and to pity him when crushed, except for God alone, who is able easily to accomplish all things, smoothing

the rough, and as it were leveling what is high and steep, to whom it might be said by every saint, "You can do all things, and nothing is impossible for you. Then the Prophet says, Are you not from the beginning, O Lord my God, my Holy One? and we shall not die. For even if Israel has been deceived, he says, and led astray into error and strange false worships, yet you were again the God of all, who as holy also pities those who have long transgressed, and preserves them from destruction, and does not allow Israel to perish completely. Therefore, it is not far from hope, that he will both be saved and will pass beyond his gloomy circumstances, since you pity him, and accomplish things beyond reason. And the saints also rejoiced, learning of the salvation of Israel in the last times, and they offered up prayers, and raised thanksgiving voices and odes.

And indeed the blessed David, having foreknown through the Spirit the clemency that would be shown to them, and all but seeing them released from the bonds of captivity, sings and says, "Lord, you have been favorable 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. Lord, you have appointed him for judgment, and he has formed me to reprove his chastisement. Your eye is pure, so that you do not see evil, and you will not be able to look upon troubles. The word is again with the Prophet; but about whom he says he was appointed for judgment by God is very obscure indeed. Come now, therefore, let us, out of necessity investigating the meaning of what has been said, consider these things. For if it were said concerning the king of the Babylonians, that he has been appointed by God for judgment, we say that he has been appointed to fulfill the judgment that has come down from above against those of Israel, that is, the sack, the captivity, the burning of the cities, and, in short, the devastation of Judea. But if not this, and we turn the force of the meaning to the person of Israel, we say this again, that he himself has also been appointed for judgment by God; and we say "for judgment" means for condemnation.

And indeed our Lord Jesus Christ said somewhere concerning the Jews, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind; and he says "for judgment," for condemnation. Israel, therefore, has been condemned as having done wrong, as having been neglectful of the laws, as having grieved the Lord of all not moderately. But me, he says, that is, the Prophet, He formed, that is,

He made and prepared, for the necessity of reproof the chastisement which He ordained against him; for as a chastisement and a scourge the war has been brought upon Israel, and what happened was a form of punishment, not simply an undertaking of the Babylonians. But if anyone should ask and say, he says, For what reason indeed has the Babylonian been appointed as a punisher, that is, for condemnation and for suffering, Israel, he will hear in reply That the Lord's is pure an eye, and it would never endure to become a spectator of wicked and unholy things, nor would it look upon the toils that come from injustices and greed happening to the weaker ones. For it always turns its eye away from those accustomed to do such things. When this has happened, in every way and altogether dreadful things will happen, and he who has suffered the turning away will be in the last of evils.

And knowing this, the divine David begged, "Turn not your face away from me, and do not "turn aside in anger from your servant. For the things that happen out of anger will surely follow the divine turnings away. Why do you look upon 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 creeping things that have no ruler? Having announced beforehand that the eye of the divinity is pure, and that it would never look upon the workers of wickedness, nor would it look favorably upon any who have chosen to be greedy, and who weave pains for the weaker, the Prophet is immediately seized by thoughts of this kind. For the most savage multitude of the Babylonians has wrought countless dreadful and very difficult evils upon the peoples of the Jews, who also brought the excess of their own savagery to this measure of dreadfulness, so as not even to abstain from the divine places themselves, but to burn down along with Jerusalem also the renowned temple, and together with the common people to seize the priests of the divine altars and to profane the holy things, according to what is written. But when they were at home, they continued to be cheerful, and possessing wealth from plunder, not demanding justice for the unholy things they had committed, not fearing enemies, nor the terrors of war;

but rather rising up themselves against all, and easily overpowering whomever they chose, and prospering exceedingly, and exulting in the misfortunes of the destroyed, and making a matter of boasting their unrestrained anger, their unbridled greed, their superiority over all. The Prophet therefore is astonished, seeing them expanding in prosperity, and he now

touches upon divine judgments, and things unsearchable to all, and un-touchable by any mind, he attempts to investigate and prays to learn, what then could be the reason for such long forbearance of the all-powerful God, so as to at times cast a mild and gentle eye even upon those accustomed to despise thus and who have chosen to live unholy lives, and to be silent and to endure a wicked man all but devouring the gentle and just man. From this, he says, that the necessity of being punished does not follow immediately on the heels of the transgressors, but rather wrath has proceeded to a postpone-ment, for this reason those on earth have slipped into planning hereafter, and indeed also to attempt in the same manner as fish to devour the weaker, and as it were to swallow one another with a gaping and insatiable mouth;

and to pursue thus a hard and unsociable and harsh life, so as to differ little from the creeping things in mountains and holes, which through great savagery and excess of bitterness are both untamable and do not imitate the natures of other animals, which at times even in a herd and under one leader and one set over the herd make their pastures, and are seen as if led by a general. And the Babylonians are unsociable, and unapproachable to others, both bitter and venomous and full of destruction and greedily swallowing the weaker. But it does not seem improbable that the voice of the Prophet was against both the devil and the wicked powers with him. For they are truly despisers, completely shaking off the divine fear, and coming to the full measure of all depravity and indeed perversity, although God is very forbearing. But since we have once come under them, we wretches have devoured one another. For the arbiter of peace was not ruling over us, that is, Christ, the lord of earth and heaven and all things; for this reason we have become like fish, most irrational and completely speechless.

For there was not in us a word of piety, nor a voice of doxology to God, but rather killing one another and having a most irrational life, we lived in the world on a par with fish, and the mind in each was so bitter, that we seemed to have become completely bestial, and as far as anger and bitterness were concerned, to be equal to venomous creatures, or even to hasten to surpass them. He drew up the full number with a hook, and drew him with a casting-net, and gathered him in his drag-nets; for this his heart shall be glad and rejoice; for this he shall sacrifice to his drag-net and burn incense to his casting-net, because in them he fattened his portion and his foods are choice; for this reason he will cast his casting-net, and he will not spare to

slay nations forever. Having named them fish, he still dwells on the trope, and makes his words as if about one of those who work the sea, that is, of the fishermen. For the fish-catchers engage in their own pursuits in many ways. For either they snatch the fish with hooks, and draw them up struggling from the waves with their lines, or surrounding them with drag-nets they pull them in great numbers, or they enclose them with some other nets. And when they do well, with many gathered, they rejoice in their craft, and almost sacrifice to their nets, as having provided them a very rich portion.

The Prophet says that something of this kind was done by Nebuchadnezzar, who, as with a hook and drag-nets and indeed also his casting-net, having encompassed Israel itself, and other nations with it, gathered them to himself, and as if setting a feast before his own shield-bearers, he commanded them to revel, and that the captured should become the inheritance and richest portion of those who had once seized them. For this reason, he says, perhaps he will both sacrifice to his drag-net and burn incense to his casting-net, that is, to his own powers, by which he caught the nations in a net, and in addition Israel, he will light the thank-offerings. And since the matter has turned out so very successfully for him, he says he would not refrain from slaying nations, and seizing tribes, and making countries his own, and deeming absolutely no one worthy of mercy; Satan has done this both against the whole human race, and especially against Israel. For with one net, as it were, and a single drag-net, I mean that of sin, he has encompassed all; but especially Israel on account of its impiety towards Christ. For it says his foods are choice. And the Jews are chosen in their way of life above all others. "For when, he says, 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 Lord's portion became his people "Jacob, the measuring-line of his inheritance Israel.

Israel, therefore, was chosen above the others, as also the firstborn among the children, as from a holy root, that of the fathers I mean, and as having the law as a tutor, and as being called to the knowledge of the one who is by nature and truly God; but even though possessing glory and grace, he himself was also captured along with the others. And some, because they have been led astray, have become the devil's portion; but others, because having known the God by nature, they have unholily killed the Son begotten of him according to nature, who had come in human form and in a shape like

ours, are bound in his drag-nets; and his purpose is to destroy completely all upon the earth and to spare no one. I will stand on my watch and mount upon a rock, and I will look out to see what he will speak in me, and what I will answer to my reproof. In these words he explains to us a prophetic mystery;

for it is a custom for the saints, if they wish to learn the things from God, and to receive knowledge of future things, with him sounding in their mind and heart, to keep the mind far from distractions and cares and all worldly anxiety, and thus having and keeping it at leisure and quiet, just as to some hill and to then leap up to a watchtower and a rock for the contemplation of whatever the Lord of knowledge might choose to make clear to them. For indeed the low and dejected state of the mind is hateful to him, and he seeks hearts able to fly on high, and raised above earthly affairs and temporary desires. For it is written, "For the mighty ones of the earth have been greatly exalted unto God. And again, "And the young of the vulture fly on high. For the mind of the saints is far removed from earthly habits and more worldly affairs. Therefore, I will stand upon my watch, he says, that is, I will again make practiced and customary soberness my own, I will purify my mind, I will rid it of worldly care, and I will fly up as to a rock, that is, to a most firm and, as it were, highly-placed security of thoughts;

having arrived there, as from a summit, I will consider in my mind what words might come to me from God, and what I myself might be about to say, if God should wish to reprove me, as one who has not spoken safely the words, "Why do you look upon those who despise? Will you be silent when the wicked devours the righteous? And the Lord answered me and said, "Write the vision clearly on a tablet, that he who reads it may run. Because the vision is yet for a time, and it will rise up at the end and not in vain. He commands that the vision be committed to writing, that is, the revelation of things to come; for the matter is worthy to be heard, and among the most wonderful things; and somehow writings directed to what is exceptional are always accustomed to be honored with long and unending remembrance. Write therefore, O Prophet, he says, the vision, so that those in due time might know the things foretold, and encountering your words they may pursue them, that is, desire to understand the power in them, and so they might believe that the prophecy will surely be true. For the vision is for a time, that is, for a delay and a postponement, and a short time will pass in

between. But it will end in truth and not after a long time, and not in vain; for the truth will in no way speak falsely;

and nothing spoken by it could become empty and futile. If he should delay, wait for him, because he who is coming will come and will not delay. If he should draw back, my soul has no pleasure in him; but the righteous shall live by faith. Naming no one clearly, he says, "wait for him," that is, expect him who is to come, and do not entertain a faltering hope in him, but rather one that is firm and established, even if there should be some extension of time in between. It seems, therefore, that the God of all has whispered in the mind of the Prophet and has revealed mystically that the one foretold will surely come; but he commanded to wait for him, on account of the time of delay in between, as I just said. For if there should be any drawing back and hesitation from the one who has believed, "I would have no pleasure," he says, "in him," seeing him held fast by the faults of his soul, nor would I be forgiving to such a one; but rather I will count him as faithless and hateful. And it will surely follow for the one who testifies to the truth of my words, that he will also be a partaker of life, and this is a prize for those who honor God, and a good wage for goodwill. Now, as far as the historical account is concerned, it was Cyrus, son of Cambyses, about whom he says, "if he should delay, wait for him.

For he did take Babylon, having laid waste along with it the other cities as well. But as for the mystical words and for the spiritual narrative, I would say that the power of the preceding words would rightly be understood as concerning Christ, the Savior of all. For he is "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come," and the word of the holy prophets has proclaimed beforehand that he would be present in due time. And that having arrived he was about to overthrow the power of the devil, and to drive out the unholy and profane multitude of demons from their greed against us, the sacred scripture has clearly prophesied, and furthermore the outcome of the deeds accomplished will enter as its own witness, except the prophecy is "for a time. For in the days In the last times of the present age the Only-begotten shone forth, and the one who drew back, and most foolishly rejected faith in him, has offended God and remained without a taste of the heavenly goods, and has been driven out from the sacred multitude of the saints, according to the word of the prophet, "like the wild tamarisk in the desert, which will not see when good things come.

But the one who is superior to hesitation and drawing back, and who has made love and faith in him to dwell in his mind and heart, has as a recompense for such a disposition, and as an extraordinary prize, unending life, and the putting away of transgressions, and sanctification through the Spirit. For we have been justified "not by works of the law," as it is written, but rather through faith in Christ. And "The law brings about wrath," for it calls transgressors to judgment, but grace sets aside wrath, absolving their offenses. But the arrogant and contemptuous man, a boastful man, will accomplish nothing. Having foretold that the one who was fore-announced will be present at the proper times, to put an end to sad things and to deliver the crushed from all misery, he then mentions the one who laid waste, and who had fulfilled every kind of inhumanity and beast-like cruelty against them all. And by these things are signified, historically, the profane and God-fighting Nebuchadnezzar, but spiritually, again, Satan. And he calls him arrogant and contemptuous and boastful, and very rightly so. For this is his nature, whether the force of the words is understood of Satan himself, or whether one speaks of the Babylonian man. He says arrogant, meaning one who is presumptuous or stupid concerning himself, and again contemptuous and boastful, as one who from excessive haughtiness and empty puffing up is not willing to consider, so to speak, the incomparable preeminence of the all-powerful God.

And such a one, he says, will accomplish nothing; for the outcome of affairs will not in every case turn out according to his mind, nor will he revel forever and be enlarged and be in brilliant glory. And it is true, which the blessed David also said in song: "I have seen the ungodly 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 arrogance always creeps toward humiliation; but a measured disposition is crowned with the highest honors. And the disciple of the Savior confirms this for us, having written and saying, "Let the lowly brother glory "in his exaltation, but the rich in his humiliation, because as a "flower of the grass he will pass away. Who has enlarged his soul like hades, and he, like death, is not satisfied, and he will gather to himself all the nations, and will receive to himself all the peoples. God is in harmony with the Prophet, and has shown him to be speaking truth, sealing as true by his own words the accusations of both the devil and Nebuchadnezzar. For the Prophet was saying, "He has drawn up a

consummation with a hook, "and has dragged him with a casting-net, and has gathered him "in his dragnets; but the God of all, referring the causes to something still greater and truer, compares him finally to hades and death. For a thing insatiable are both death and hades.

And it is true that, at least according to what seemed good to the Babylonian, all the nations would have been gathered to him. And such evils might rightly be understood as accusations of Persian ambition. For what is under heaven is small to them, and all the races of men would not be sufficient to serve them. And the inventor of sin himself might also be caught, that is, Satan, striving to place the whole earth, so to speak, under himself, and like hades swallowing up those who are perishing by his perversities. And he himself also said somewhere, that "I will grasp the whole inhabited world in my hand as "a nest, and as abandoned eggs I will take them up, and there is no one who "will escape me or speak against me. For the beast is insatiable and untamable and full of arrogance, truly abominable and misanthropic. Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a riddle as a tale about him? And they shall say, Woe to him who multiplies for himself what is not his! For how long? And who makes his yoke heavy and strong. That his rule is not unshakable, nor indeed that he should revel in the multitude of things gathered, but that he will certainly fall from power and glory, and that when he has fallen he will be a song for many, he has clearly indicated.

For he said that a parable would be taken up against him, like a riddle and a popular saying and on the tongues of many. And what is this? Woe to him who multiplies for himself what is not his and makes his yoke heavy and strong, that is, always making the penalty for his impieties more burdensome for himself, having destroyed nations and brought together whole countries, and always leaping upon those who in no way belong to him, and placing them under his own scepters as if by necessity, and having countless peoples under his hand. And in the midst he has exclaimed, For how long? showing that he is insatiable in greed, unbridled in cruelty, and not hating the limit of injustice. Therefore, the tyrants of the Babylonians were insatiable and terrible in cruelty and accustomed to dare the most shameful things of all. Such also is Satan, always gathering what is not his own, and imposing a more grievous punishment upon himself. And it has been said somewhere to him, "Just as a garment stained in blood "will not be clean; so you also will not be clean, "because you have destroyed my land, and you have slain my

people; "you shall not remain for eternal time. For what peoples has he not destroyed? Or what nations has he spared? What of the most odious things might he not be caught having dared to do?

Therefore, the woe will justly follow him, and he will become a parable, his rule having been taken down, and his greed against all having been driven out. And again, the wise Jeremiah alludes to this for us, saying about him, "A partridge cried out, it gathered what "it did not hatch, making its wealth not with judgment, in the midst "of its days they will abandon it, and at its end "it will be a fool. And this has been done historically. For the Babylonian took Judea, and indeed also Samaria, and having depopulated other countries along with them, he carried them away to his own lands; but when Cyrus with the Persians and Medes encamped against the Babylonians, those who had been gathered went away again, and those held in the bonds of captivity, as if flying away, went home again. And the gentiles have departed from the worship under the devil, and having left desolate him who of old cried out and called them to himself, they have run to Christ. For that one gathered what was not his, but Christ received what was his. For he is Lord of all, as God. Because suddenly those who bite him will rise up, and your plotters will awaken, and you will be plunder for them. He says that unexpectedly those who, as it were, bite and devour him will rise up against him, and by the attacks of war will consume the strength under him;

and these were certainly Cyrus, and around him the Persians and Medes and Elamites, who, as if shaking sleep from their eyes, and sobering up as from drunkenness, will barely be stronger than their old fears and taking up the battle against him, will generally overrun him. Then, plotting in many ways, they will easily crush him, leading and carrying off the affairs of the Chaldeans and plundering those of the Babylonians. And we will find that the accursed Satan has also suffered this. For he gathered to himself all the nations, spreading the net of polytheistic error, and binding them fast with the snares of sin. But those who bite him rose up, that is, the heralds of the evangelical decrees, tearing his body as with teeth, namely those who have chosen to think his thoughts. For just as "He who is joined "to the Lord is one spirit," so he who is joined to the devil is one body with him. They will awaken then therefore counselling him. For understanding that he is finally placed under the feet of the saints, Christ saying clearly, "Behold, I have given "you to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all "the power of the

enemy," they will seize those who think his thoughts, and will easily transport them to the knowledge of the truth, teaching who is by nature and truly God, and explaining the mystery of Christ, who indeed is also seen as the first to have plundered him.

For one can hear him saying, "Or how can one 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. And immediately upon being born of the holy virgin, he began to plunder his goods. For the Magi came from the east, "saying, Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? "For we have seen his star in the east, and have come "to worship him. And indeed they have worshipped, and have honored him with gifts, and have become the firstfruits of the church of the gentiles; and being diabolical vessels, and of his members the most honored of all the others, have run to Christ. But that he was about to plunder the goods of the strong man, the prophet Isaiah also proclaimed enigmatically beforehand; for he spoke thus again concerning him, "For "before the child knows how to call father or mother, he will take "the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria before the "king of the Assyrians. Now the force of the saying seems to allude to something of what was done historically; for Samaria had been sacked both by the king of Damascus and by the ruler of the Assyrians. Yet it implies an intelligible mystery. For the prophetic word has shown us that the power of the Savior will easily despoil those who have sacked his people.

Because you have spoiled many nations, all the remaining peoples will spoil you, because of the blood of men and the impiety of the land and of the city and of all who dwell in it. The word is precise, even if it is understood again of both. For the Babylonian sacked many nations; and Satan has done this also. Therefore they have suffered being caught in the same things. And the affairs of the Chaldeans were sacked by Cyrus; but Satan by the saints. For both, the accusations are equal, and the transgressions are kindred, and the savagery and cruelty against all is as if related. For they have slain countries and cities, the one carnally, the other intelligibly, using sin as a sharp missile. But it says very well indeed that all the remaining peoples will spoil him. For as the Babylonian had destroyed all, it says that those who were strong enough to escape became most hostile to him, and that being few they would easily prevail, God apportioning the victory and granting to them to be able to accomplish all things. And the matter would be under-

stood as true, even if it were applied to the enemy of all, I mean, Satan. For he both seized and sacked all those on the earth, and bound them in the yokes of sin. But he himself was also plundered by the remaining peoples, that is, by those justified in faith through Christ and sanctified in the Spirit. For the remnant of Israel has been saved.

And the divine disciples, being from them, have become the firstfruits of those who have plundered the sinner. Then after them, even until now, the leaders of the peoples plunder, both rightly dividing the word of truth, and bringing back to the path of piety those who have been yoked. Woe to him who is greedy with an evil greed for his house, to set his nest on high, to be delivered from the hand of evils. You have devised shame for your house, you have finished off many peoples, and your soul has sinned. The word rebukes the Babylonian again, who wishes to build up his own rule from greed against all, and lifting up his own house on high, and indeed being accustomed to gild it with excellencies beyond measure and to fortify it exceedingly, so that perhaps he might be able readily to be delivered from the hand of evils, that is, to always escape the evils that occur. For the aim of the Babylonians was always to be fenced in by great multitudes of defenders, and to have innumerable men who knew tactics and were equipped with the law of war, so as to be able to effortlessly repel the harm from those attacking them. But that the matter would be to his shame and disgrace, as his hope fell away to its opposite, he taught by saying, You have devised shame for your house. For you have finished, that is, you have brought to an end, many peoples, having destroyed them with utter ruin.

And since your soul has sinned, you will pay bitter penalties, you who were once glorious and setting your nest on high, pitiful and cast down and unexpectedly found under the feet of your enemies. This saying would be most fitting indeed both for Satan himself and for the inventors of heresies, who, being overcome by love of power and of seeming to lead many, have brought many peoples to an end, and have truly caused an evil greed in their own houses, and have set their nests on high, "speaking swelling words of vanity," and belching out against the divine glory things which would be fitting only for their tongues and minds. Therefore their souls have sinned; for they have acted insolently towards the Savior of all, Christ himself, "sinning against the brothers and wounding their weak conscience," according to what is written. Because a stone from the wall will cry out, and a beetle from

the wood will utter these things. Holy Scripture often gives voices even to inanimate and senseless things, not as if they were able to say anything, but as if the things themselves were almost crying aloud. And so the blessed Isaiah says, "Be ashamed, O Sidon, says the sea"; and David indeed, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims the work of his hands. For creation itself, through those things for which it is admired as being well-made, through these very things proclaims the glory of the one who made it.

Therefore, the voices are in the things themselves, even if they do not become words. You will understand something of this sort here also. For it says a stone from a wall, and a beetle from wood will cry out against the Babylonian; and in what way, we shall say: the Babylonian, invading the cities of Judea, or also others, burned down all the houses in them. Then it necessarily happened that stones were also shattered and walls shaken down, and timbers fell with them, and roofs from extreme old age, having small beetles, that is, woodworms. For this reason, he says the ruined things will cry out against his cruelty; and these, as I said, were scattered stones, and lying in the middle of the squares, and timbers certainly half-burnt, and from their decay testifying at last to the ancient state of the cities. So it is an accusation against the Babylonian for having thus burned the old and most ancient cities, and for tearing down houses as well, the people in them having clearly been killed. But it should be known that instead of saying, beetle, other interpreters have published "a bond of wood. Whence one may understand that perhaps at that time they called the joints of the houses and the interlocking of the timbers in them, that is the bond, beetles, because it holds up the roof laid upon them as if with many feet. Woe to him who builds a city with blood, and prepares a city with iniquities.

Are not these things from the Lord Almighty? And mighty peoples have failed in the fire, and many nations have grown faint-hearted. He pronounces the Babylonian wretched again, as one who raises his own glory on high, and the renown of his rule, being zealous to do so not from things which he ought to have, but rather from things which he least ought to have. For it was not necessary for him to be famous because he destroyed many peoples, but rather to be dignified with a different kind of ornament, and to be seen resplendent in boasts of righteousness. But having abandoned this as useless, he built it with blood and iniquities. For that the rule of the

Chaldeans became most cruel, and by leaping upon simply all cities and countries in a beastly manner, has wrought evils beyond all description, would be manifest to all who have the divine to those who have read scripture. But these things are not from the Lord Almighty. For it is not, it is not possible to say that such evils have come from above; nor would it be thought God-given, that one ought to glory in these things. Therefore, they will not be unsupported, or rather not outside of justice. For what the divine and pure mind does not know how to praise, it certainly punishes, as not having what is fitting.

For how is it not dissonant and completely unholy, for sufficient peoples to fail in fire, and for many nations to lose heart, that is, for splendid cities to be burned down along with their inhabitants, and for whole nations and tribes to give up in evils? And one might rightly exclaim this also to the leaders of the Jews, who killed all the holy prophets; indeed they thought to benefit Jerusalem not a little, and to build it in blood and with greed against all; for some they insulted, some they killed, and some they stoned, and finally to the others they added the Son, and the law was their pretext for their madness. For they feigned to be grieved that the commandment through Moses was set aside by Christ. But that their zeal was God-hated, and "not according to knowledge," as, at any rate, the divine Paul writes, the Prophet would easily show, saying, These things are not from the Lord Almighty. Therefore they have also failed in fire and lost heart, as the war consumed them and famine wasted them away. For such things have happened to the peoples of the Jews who have acted violently against the Son, and killed, as I said, the prophets before him. Because the whole earth was filled with knowing the glory of the Lord, as much water to cover the seas. The divine scripture is often indifferent concerning times, and it sets down future things as though they have already been completed.

So then, we shall find this to have happened here also. For whereas it should have said "will be filled," it says "was filled. Therefore, when the divine wrath is cast upon Babylon, and all things in it come to pass through both Cyrus and those with him, and she who was long ago terrible and unbreakable, and always raising up her own difficult-to-meet cruelty against others, appears henceforth pitiable and weak, and utterly desolate and under the feet of her enemies, then indeed, then all that is under heaven will understand how great and of what sort the divine glory is, and will be filled with the

knowledge of it. For the rule of the Chaldeans prevailed, and was so conspicuous, terrible and invincible, with God being forbearing and giving it power to rule even over Judea, and to destroy countless cities. But when it considered inflicting its own fitting evils, it was shaken and has fallen and has been given over to desolation. The prophet Jeremiah also says something like this about it: "How the hammer of the whole earth was broken and shattered? "How Babylon became a desolation among the nations? "They will set upon you, and you will be captured, Babylon, and you will not know it; "you were found and were taken, because you resisted the Lord. The Lord "has opened his treasury and has brought out the instruments of "his wrath, for there is a work for the Lord God in the land of the Chaldeans, "for her times have come.

But it must be known that after the sack of Jerusalem, Christ passed over to the nations, and then all under heaven knew the glory of God the Father, that is, him, as a torrent flooding the earth. For Christ turned toward them like a river, He who also long ago said through the voice of a prophet: "Behold, I am turning "toward them like a river of peace, and like a torrent "flooding the glory of nations. For when Israel once made a calf in the desert, and had for this reason offended God, He promised the manifestation of the Savior and the abundance of grace through him, saying: "But as I live, and my name lives, "the glory of the Lord will fill all the "earth. For all things are full of Christ, who is the glory of the Father. Therefore he also said, "I have glorified you on the "earth; I have finished the work which you have given me to do. Woe to him who gives his neighbor a murky overthrow to drink, and makes him drunk, so that he may look upon upon their caves; drink a surfeit of dishonor from glory. He utters again the "Woe" to the unholy audacities of Nebuchadnezzar, proclaiming what he will suffer, and signifying through this that the blow is full of bitter pain.

He seems to call "murky overthrow" the unmixed grief or torment, which, by almost giving it as a drink, he caused those who were captured to be seen as differing little from those in wine and drunkenness. And what of that? As if opening a cave, he made the mind of each one transparent to all the others. For, as I said, by inflicting bitter torments upon the more distinguished of the captives, or perhaps even upon the kings themselves, he caused them to lament and to lay bare their sometimes hidden pusillanimity or cowardice, as if from unbearable necessity. But he was so terrible and harsh

that, when it was necessary to feel pain for them and pity them, he reveled in their groaning, and made this a boast of his own rule. And this, I think, is what it is to give one's neighbor a murky overthrow to drink, so that he may look upon their caves, that is, the hidden and secretly inherent things of some. Since, therefore, he employed unrestrained passions and, with all mercy removed, clothed small and great, illustrious and obscure, with incurable misfortunes, for this reason the Master of all says, "Drink a surfeit of dishonor from glory. That is, for you were indeed renowned and famous and conspicuous to all everywhere and most well-known for your cruelty; but you shall henceforth be dishonored, and for your preeminence in fame you will endure a commensurate punishment. This would also be fitting to say, if one should choose, concerning the unholy Pharisees themselves.

For they have given their neighbor a murky overthrow to drink; and we say this is their teaching, the commandments of men, and in addition to these, their madness against Christ, and the accusations of their unbridled mouths. For he was calling them to life, but they had slipped into such folly as to say even to their listeners, "He has a demon and is mad; why do you listen to him? And they did this so that, shaking off the word of salvation which enlightens the mind, they might look into their own caves, that is, into their dark and lightless and dead teachings. Therefore they have drunk a surfeit of dishonor, although they were formerly illustrious and had attained no small glory. For they were leaders of flocks, and they were also priests and judges. And such a saying would also be fitting for the inventors of unholy dogmas, who truly give their neighbor a murky overthrow to drink, pouring the poison of deceit into the souls of the more simple, so that they may look upon their caves. For their mind is dark, full of deceit, truly filled with diabolical mist, and differing, I think, in nothing from caves, which are full of dead bodies and all stench and impurity. But I think it is necessary, for a more accurate clarification of what has been said before, to say this as well.

The Hebrews say—and the account is again from tradition—that after Nebuchadnezzar sacked both Judea and all the other countries, and brought the leaders of the nations to his own land, he would hold drinking parties from time to time. Then bringing in the captives, and making them drunk with exotic drinks, he would compel them to dance; and as they were shaken about and fell down and were stripped bare, sometimes showing even the

hidden parts of the body, he would smile and make the affair a luxury and a pretext for merriment. They say that these things were cleverly called caves; and the account has some verisimilitude. For the other translators have rendered "nakedness" instead of "caves," so that what is said is of this sort: Woe to him who gives his neighbor a murky overthrow to drink and makes him drunk, so that he may look upon their nakedness. And you, heart, be tossed and shaken; the cup of the right hand of the Lord has come around to you, and dishonor has been gathered upon your glory. Because the impiety of Lebanon will cover you, and the misery of beasts will terrify you, because of the blood of men and the impieties of the land and of the city, and of all who dwell in it.

Somehow it is always present and seen to be terribly attached to the souls of the arrogant to have the greatest possible insensibility of mind, and moreover, in addition to this, to think that they themselves will have an unshakable share of prosperity, and they shake off, as it were, and very generally, the expectation that there will ever be a change of affairs for the worse. Such is that which is said through the voice of David as from the person of those who are in comforts and luxuries, "But I said in my "prosperity, I shall not be moved forever. Therefore, since the Babylonian was sick with insensibility from excessive arrogance, he almost rebukes him now as being inflexible, saying, "And you, O heart, be shaken," that is, do not think you are settled in unshakable prosperity, receive now the thoughts [about] grievous things, come to an awareness of what will happen, and yield to experience, although before it you did not deign to grasp, so to speak, even in mere thoughts, that you yourself will one day be in gloomy circumstances, and your heart will fall into things naturally not moderately distressing. What then is it that shakes it and agitates it into sorrows? A cup from the right hand of the Lord has come around upon you, and dishonor has been gathered upon your glory.

For just as you gave your neighbor to drink with a murky overthrow, in the same way, having fallen under the things to be brought on by divine wrath, you will be loathsome, dishonored by all, pitiful and cast out, and in every way overcome by that ancient renown. But by saying that the cup is of the right hand of the Lord, the blessed Prophet persuades one to think, as it were, that it would not be possible not to drink it, since God himself offers it. For it was necessary by all means to endure the things from wrath; "For if

he shuts a man in, who can "open? according to what is written, and as the prophet says, "Who will turn back the high hand? And for what reason, then, these things will happen, he makes clear, saying, "Because the impiety of Lebanon will cover you, and the misery of beasts will terrify you. And Lebanon is a mountain of Phoenicia, one of the most distinguished, with goodly wood and fragrant as incense-bearing. And the sacred scripture at times compares Jerusalem to it, on account of its being glorified with many holy heads, raised on high and thinking the things in heaven, and submerged in the beauty of piety. The blessed David also remembers these, saying thus to God, "The cedars of "Lebanon which you planted, there the sparrows will make their nests.

For like a cedar, each of the saints, as I just said, is raised on high, by not enduring to think on the things that are cast down, that is, the things on earth, and he becomes like a shelter to others, receiving like sparrows those wishing to be discipled under him. Therefore, since the Chaldean sacked Jerusalem, and was impious and offended God, setting fire to the divine temple in the city, and was captured for also having insulted the holy things themselves, for this reason he says that the impiety of Lebanon which was directed against it will cover him. And Lebanon, as I said, he calls either Judea, or Jerusalem; and one might think perhaps that he also means the temple itself, having much fragrance, and adorned with the heads of the priests as with certain cedars. And in what manner the impiety committed against Lebanon was to cover him, he showed by adding, "Because the misery of beasts will terrify you. And he seems again to call beasts the Persians and Medes armed with Cyrus, as having much untamable spirit, and being whetted for cruelty. But that God does not punish in vain, but brings balanced penalties for whatever one might do, he taught by adding, "For the blood of men and the impiety of the city and of all who dwell in it. Each of the Pharisees also will hear, who were inventors and composers of the madness against Christ, "And you, O heart, be moved and be shaken.

For a cup from the right hand of the Lord has come around upon them, and dishonor has been gathered upon their glory. And they have drunk as a cup of destruction the wrath that came upon them, dishonored they have become and as far as possible from all good repute. For they also acted impiously against Lebanon. You will understand Lebanon to be the Church, which is truly fragrant, the conspicuous mountain, and most well-known

everywhere. They persecuted the Church after the cross of the Savior. Therefore they have also been terrified as if by beasts that have ravaged them, and having become guilty of much blood of the holy prophets, they added to these also that of those who have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the blessed Stephen became the first-fruits, having been shown to be a kind of first spoils and first-fruit of the holy martyrs. What does a graven image profit, that they have graven it? A molten image has fashioned it, a false fantasy, because the one who fashioned it trusts in his own fashioning to make mute idols. So the proposition of the saying is in this manner. For what, he says, does the graven image profit that they have graven it? And what does the fashioner profit by his own fashioning, that he trusts in it? But what, again, is the Prophet's purpose, we will say as best we can.

Cyrus and the Medes having invaded the land of the Babylonians, and war having at last been announced all around, the magi, doing their customary things, called upon the falsely-named gods for aid to the city in peril, and they brought sacrifices and libations to the senseless things, placing on them their whole hope of being saved. But those things were nonsense and deception, deceit and vain counsel, and nothing else; for it was captured and has been ravaged, though it never thought to suffer this. Therefore, the God of all things laughs at the thought of the transgressors, and their hope in lifeless things. For what, he says, does the graven image profit, being nothing other than a false fantasy having nothing true? For how or from where could divine power at all be believed to be in things fabricated by human hands? Therefore, to trust in them is indeed vain, and the matter is truly ridiculous, at least to those who have a sound mind and an awakened spirit. But it seems someone might unfold the force of the preceding words in another way. For the Babylonian, having taken the cities and, so to speak, having desolated all the lands, turned immoderately to the lofty and unbridled, and was henceforth sick with arrogance, and the wretched one, having placed the glory of God upon his own head, fashions a golden image, just as the divine prophet Daniel has written.

Then he commanded tribes and tongues to worship it, and for those who did not endure to do this, death was the penalty. What then was the benefit from this? Tell me, he says. For he who thought he was also a god has now at last come to the end of all evil, and has fallen into disasters beyond description. Woe to him who says to the wood, 'Awake, arise,' and to the stone, 'Be

exalted.' And it is a fantasy, and this is an overlay of gold and silver, and there is no spirit at all in it. But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be reverent before his face. Again, as I just said, the force of the preceding words follows. For he rightly pronounces wretched the deluded, who, having abandoned the one God who is so by nature and in truth, and running past the path of reverence toward him, proceed to destruction, crying out to the wood, 'Awake, arise,' and saying most mindlessly to the stone, 'Be exalted.' For it is the custom of the deluded, if any fear should terrify them, to light altars, to open shrines, and to cry out to lifeless idols: 'Have mercy, save us, be exalted you also, O stone, defending as a god the realms of those who revere your power and have chosen to worship you.' Woe then indeed to such people, rightly, because, cleaving to things made of gold and silver, to things that have no spirit, they utter such words, which it were surely better to say to God who inhabits heaven and has the city above as his own temple. For the holy one dwells among the holy, and abides with those who revere him.

Therefore the Prophet utters something useful and necessary to us: 'Let all the earth be reverent before his face.' For those who are truly sound of mind must worship the one who is by nature and truly God, and to him every wise man will kindle reverence, to him he will bring also his supplications, from him he will seek to be saved, and him he will confess as Creator, Lord of all, Savior and Redeemer, all-powerful, all-holy, and the one who transforms the natures of things, to whatever he might choose at various times and by his own commands directing this universe.

Book 2

Having thoroughly completed the discourse on Babylon, and that they will pay bitter penalties who ravaged the holy city, and having very clearly proclaimed beforehand that they would carry off Israel captive, he aptly comes to the mystery of Christ, and as from the redemption which happened for one nation and partially, he brings the discourse to the one that is for all and most general, by which the remnant of Israel was saved, and no less was the whole earth saved. For Cyrus, the son of Cambyses, released Israel from captivity, having overthrown the arrogant and God-hated kingdom, I mean that of the Chaldeans. But what was done was therefore an image and a type of the things accomplished through Christ; who found all humanity as if taken by the spear, and laboring under the tyrannical hand; for Satan had

reigned over us as it were through sin; He made them free from bonds and labors, and having released them from that monstrous servitude, he brought them back as if to the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem. For we have become, according to what is written, "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of "God," and we have henceforth claimed heaven as our homeland.

Therefore, the Prophet, astonished at the power of the mystery, and exceedingly admiring the ineffable and God-befitting economy of the Only-begotten's coming in the flesh, makes his prayer in the manner of a song, according to that which is spoken through the voice of David, "My tongue shall meditate on your "righteousness, all the day long your praise. O Lord, I have heard your report, and I was afraid, O Lord, I considered your works, and I was amazed. The saying might be understood as addressed to him, if one should choose, who is the Father and God of all, as revealing the Son, and making clear the report concerning him through the Spirit; or also, reasonably, to the incarnate Word himself. And if one should say it was directed to the Father, we shall understand it as something like this: O Lord of all, he says, the given revelation, that is, the report concerning your offspring, has astonished me; for the accounts are dreadful and beyond speech, and the manner of the economy would henceforth be beyond all mind; but if, sending forth the slender eye of my heart, I should perceive the power of your works, the result will be ecstasy, and nothing else. But with the discourse looking to the Son, we shall no less approach it in some such way as this: O Lord and ruler of all, even though you have become flesh, having received the report concerning you, that is, the hearing and revelation, I have fallen into fear.

And I am astounded, and very reasonably so, at the extraordinariness of the matter. For I learn that, existing in the form and equality in every respect with the one who begot you, you will bring yourself down to a voluntary emptying, and will become a man like us from a woman, and will endure the form of a slave, and with us will call your own Father God, and you will become obedient, even "unto death, and the death of the cross. Therefore, I have heard your report and was afraid, I considered your works and was amazed. For you preached recovery of sight to the blind, you proclaimed release to the captives, you healed those broken in heart, you turned back the one who was wandering, you bound up that which was broken, you became a

light to those in darkness, a door and a way to life and sanctification, you have become peace, uniting through faith into one people those from the circumcision, and also those from the nations, you have become "a cornerstone, chosen, precious; you have acquired the world for God the Father, you have freed from sins those who were captured by weakness, you rescued from the hand of the devil, by the grace of adoption the servile was made glorious, the man from earth has become a citizen of heaven; and besides these, that is also worthy of hearing, I think; for you, who give life to all things, have endured with us the death of the flesh.

But you have become "the firstborn from the dead," and the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep, and the first offering of humanity brought back to incorruption. For you rose again as God, having trampled the harsh and irresistible beast, that is, death, you have undone the power of that ancient curse. And in you and through you has ceased "You are earth and to earth you shall return," spoken against us. You will be known between two living creatures. This has been interpreted by some in different ways. And one said that the Spirit and the Son are called two living creatures, and that God the Father is known between them. But I think it is ignorant to understand it this way, and has much foolishness in it. For who would dare to say that life is a living creature, that is, the Son or the Holy Spirit? For life is rather that which makes alive, while a living creature is that which partakes of life from another. It is also absurd in another way for the Father to be understood as being between both, who is indeed named first according to the arrangement of the confession of the holy and consubstantial Trinity. And surely we do not say that, being placed before the Son and the Spirit in naming, he has precedence over them; for this is nonsense and false speech;

but rather we hold and have believed that he also has the co-eternal Word who appeared from him, and he was, what he is, not without his own Spirit, but as soon as God the Father is conceived, the existence of him through whom he is Father, and his own divine and holy Spirit, immediately enters with him. But since he is, as it were, a source of his own offspring, he has been named first economically. How then he will be between the Son and the Spirit, I cannot conceive. But perhaps they will say, as is likely, that the "between" should be understood in terms of place. But this too is absurd. For the divine is not in a place, because it is neither in quantity, nor indeed according to a body. Others again have said that the two living creatures are

the new and the old testament, between which Christ is known. But in such speculations let anyone take whatever path he wishes for himself; but we, turning the discourse once for all to the person of Christ, will make our exposition of the concepts according to the Law. Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ has become a propitiation through faith; for so the divine Paul seemed to think and to say; for through him we have been freed from every accusation, and have found the Father merciful and approachable. And the wise John will testify, saying, "My little children, I write these things to you, so that you may not sin.

"And if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the "Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he himself is the propitiation "for our sins; not for ours only, "but also for the whole world. And since the things represented of old through riddles were types of things that were to be in truth, let us say something showing the Son to be the propitiatory made in the holy tabernacle by the Father. Therefore the God of all commanded an ark to be made, and a lampstand, and also a table in the holy tabernacle; then in addition to these, a propitiatory of gold and purple and fine twisted linen and scarlet finely woven, and this, raised on four pillars, was hung over the holy ark; then two Cherubim on the right and on the left, made of gold, surrounded the propitiatory, their faces stretching towards it. And the thing was again a riddle of the mystery concerning Christ. For the Word became flesh, although he was God and Lord of all, as from God the Father having been revealed according to nature. But even if he became flesh, and was set forth by the Father as a propitiation, he has not cast off what he was, that is, being God; but even so he is in power and glory befitting God, and again the powers above stand around him, completing the liturgies assigned to them. For this reason the Cherubim stand around the mercy-seat, and look towards it continually.

For it is the custom of the powers above, being holy and all-pure, to always contemplate the things of God, and to look to him, and to be turned continually to the things that seem good and are dear to him. You will be known, then, O Master, he says, who you will be, having become like us; for that you are a propitiation, as from the example of the one in the holy tabernacle, you will be clearly known. For you stand in the midst of two living creatures, that is, the Cherubim, and your name is the mercy-seat. And the saying is true; for as Christ himself says, "The Father did not send "the Son

into the world to judge the world, but that "the world might be saved through him. When the years draw near, you will be recognized; when the time comes, you will be revealed. The law has indeed prophesied the mystery of Christ; and indeed also the choir of the holy prophets proclaimed it beforehand; and the mystagogues in various ways establish us more firmly in the faith in him, by usefully connecting the things that happened and were accomplished at the time of his sojourning with the things written about him long ago, and we will often find them strengthening their own understanding from this; such as that which is through the voice of the evangelists.

For our Lord Jesus Christ cast out of the temple those who sold the sheep and the oxen, and overturned the tables of the money-changers, "And making a whip "of cords he drove them all out, saying, 'Do not make my Father's "house a house of trade'; and what of it? "His disciples remembered," it says, "that it was written, ""Zeal for your house will consume me."" And when Joseph once thought that the virgin betrothed to him had been defiled, and was wanting to dismiss her secretly, "An angel of the Lord appeared," it says, "to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not "be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which "is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear "a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he "will save his people from their sins.'" Then he brought forward a sacred oracle for assurance; for he spoke again thus:

"All this took place to fulfill what was spoken through "the prophet, saying, 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child "and bear a son, and they shall call his name Em- "manuel.'" And we will find Emmanuel himself strengthening faith in himself from the things foretold by the prophets, and deeming it right to be recognized already through these deeds, and by bringing together the outcome of the results with what had already been said, that one should in no way doubt that he himself was, therefore, the one who was preached through the law and the prophets. For some of John's disciples came to him, inquiring and saying, "John the Baptist has sent "us saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect another?'" But he, although it was possible for him to say, "I am, and not another," persuades them to return to the ancient proclamation, saying, "Go "and tell John what you hear and see: the blind "receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and "the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news preached "to

them, and blessed is the one who is not offended by "me. It is certain, therefore, that, as the Prophet says, when the years draw near, you will be recognized, and that at the times long ago foreordained, according to the will and counsel of God the Father, Christ was revealed.

For in the last times of the age he appeared to us, and was recognized and confessed, just as, indeed, even before the others, Nathanael cried out, saying, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the king of "Israel. He was recognized, then, when the years drew near, that is, at the time of the economy in the flesh. And he was recognized both by of the saints and of all, now henceforth, that is under heaven. For we have known the one in the midst of two living creatures, prefigured as a propitiation in legal enigmas, that is, Christ. In the troubling of my soul in anger, you will remember mercy. Human nature has offended the Creator through the transgression in Adam, who gave almost no regard to the commandment that was given. Therefore we have been troubled and have been destroyed, we wretches having fallen into a curse and a judgment, and we have been held by death, God having been angered; for our forefather Adam, as the root of the race, heard, "You are earth, and to earth you shall return. Yet the Creator did not overlook us forever, but had mercy as God. For even if "death having grown strong has swallowed up" according to the voice of the Prophet, yet "again God has taken away every tear from every face; the reproach of the people He has taken away from all the earth.

For in Christ the power of death has been abolished, sin having been destroyed, on account of which we were also reproached; "For the Lord has remembered us, and has had mercy on us," just as the divine David also sings. For he has brought us back to incorruption and life, although we were troubled, as I just said, by the divine anger, so as to be in a departure of the spirit, that is, in the laying aside and casting off of the soul; for thus is death accomplished in us. But that we were condemned to death for having offended God, and have been saved again through mercy, the blessed David will confirm, saying to the Creator of all, "When you turn your face away, they shall be troubled, and they will return to their dust. You will send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you will renew the face of the earth. For having suffered the turning away on account of the transgression in Adam, we have returned to the dust from which we also came. But since again in Christ and through Christ we have been enriched with the divine Spirit,

having become partakers of his nature, according to the scriptures, we are re-constituted to what was in the beginning, and have been made new and have been saved.

For it is true, what the divine Paul himself also wrote to us, that all things "in Christ are a new creation, and the old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new. Therefore we were troubled from the beginning, having endured the things from the divine anger. But since, when the years drew near, Christ was known, and was revealed according to the times foreordained of old, he then remembered mercy. For we have been justified not "by the works of the law," according to the scriptures, nor "by the works in righteousness which we have done, but according to his great mercy. God will come from Teman, and the holy one from Mount Paran, a thick-shaded forest. The mind has a twofold contemplation of the things set forth, and indeed we shall speak on them as is possible; for Teman is interpreted as the south. And the desert of Paran is very southerly, where Mount Horeb is also said to be, where Moses presented to God the people of Israel as he was defining the laws that determine what must be done. Therefore, applying one understanding to what is set forth, we say this:

God will come, he says, from Teman, from Mount Paran or Horeb, that is, he who of old appeared in the most southerly desert on Mount Horeb to the fathers in the form of fire, he who of old spoke the law, will come, and will be seen with flesh like us, in the role of a prophet and mediator, just as, of course, the divine Moses, to whom it was said by God, "I will raise up for them a prophet from among their brothers like you, and I will put my words into his mouth, and he will speak to them according to all that I shall command him. But if one should wish to approach what is written in another way, it is also thus. Teman, as I said, they called the most southerly desert. Therefore they say that Bethlehem, in which Christ was born, is situated in the most southerly parts of Judea; for it has been said somewhere to her through the voice of a prophet, "And you, Bethlehem, house of Ephrathah, you are too little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of you shall come forth to me a ruler, who will shepherd my people Israel. Therefore God from Teman shall come, that is, from Bethlehem which is to the south. For the Word, the Only-begotten of the Father, who is by nature and truly God, having become as we are, was born of a woman in Bethlehem.

And since it is the custom of the divine Scripture to sometimes liken the Synagogue of the Jews to the more conspicuous of the mountains, because it is seen to be luxuriant with very many and most glorious men, for this reason it now likens it to Mount Paran, saying that he will come from a thick, shady mountain; and it says the mountain is shady and thick because of the fathers from whom Christ is genealogically descended. For it is possible to hear clearly the blessed Luke tracing the reckoning of the genealogy from Joseph up to Adam, and Matthew in turn bringing it down in order from David and Abraham, as I said, to Joseph. The Synagogue, therefore, is a thick and shady mountain, having brought forth in due season many from whom Christ sprang. For that he is from the Jews, how is it possible to doubt? For he was born of the blood of Abraham and David, I mean according to the flesh, and he himself somewhere says of himself, "For salvation is from the Jews. His virtue covered the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise. For the Only-begotten Word of God became a propitiation through faith for those on earth, when he appeared as we are and in the form of a servant, that is, a man. And for this reason he seemed in a way to be made inferior to the holy angels themselves, and to come after their glory; but he was again supreme as God.

And the most wise Paul will confirm this, saying, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor. For since he became "obedient unto death, even death on a cross," for this reason; as the same one wrote again, "God also has highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore the Prophet will indeed speak truth in saying, His virtue covered the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise. For those who inhabit the holy city, and dwell in the mansions above, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? But he is seated on the thrones of divinity; and to none of them was it said by God the Father, "You are my Son," but him he both confesses as Son and names beloved, and has as his associate, co-hymned and co-worshipped.

For again the divine Paul said of him, "And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, 'And let all the angels of God worship

him." Therefore, even if he became a propitiation, having descended into humanity for us and on our behalf, he is no less God, and above all creation, I mean both visible and invisible. For thus his virtue covers the heavens; and the earth will be full of his praise. This the holy Seraphim also have cried out clearly, standing around his divine throne, and with praises greatly honoring him as Lord Sabaoth and God of all; for they say that heaven and earth are full of his glory. But if someone should wish to say this, that the virtue of Christ is great and surpassing, so as to cover the heavens themselves, if it were conceived in measurable size, he will accept a plausible thought; for somewhere the blessed David also said, "O Lord, your mercy is in heaven, and your truth reaches to the clouds," signifying the loftiness of his goodness and the excellence of his truth as in a quantity according to body and according to places. And his brightness will be as the light. That the propitiation through faith, that is, Christ, has come to enlighten those in darkness, would become clear also through the voice of the holy prophets.

For one said, "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and the rest who dwell by the sea, Galilee of the Gentiles, the the people who sat in darkness, have seen a great light; and "Shine, shine O Jerusalem, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you," and God the Father himself has also testified, saying thus "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. For Christ is righteousness and salvation, "who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption," according to the scriptures. Therefore, Christ was revealed to us as a torch for those walking as it were in darkness, through evangelical instruction delivering from that ancient mist, which the enemy of all, casting into our minds, did not permit us to behold the God who is by nature and truly is, nor indeed to contemplate the path of piety and life. The brightness, therefore, which Christ showed us, will be as light, that is, not dim nor as if weak, just as, of course, that which was through Moses; for the law was in riddles and shadows; but as a light pure and unmixed with mist, and entering into mind and heart, and flashing on us the intelligible radiance, and implanting the ray of unadulterated knowledge. Horns are in his hands.

The horn is always taken in the divinely-inspired scriptures either for kingdom and power, or for arrogance. And the blessed David teaches this,

saying "I said to the transgressors, "Do not transgress," and to the sinners, "Do not lift up the horn; do not lift up your horn on high, and do not speak injustice against God. "For "uttering" arrogant "words of vanity," some, according to what is written, speak injustice against God, falsifying the orthodoxy of the dogmas concerning him, or even insulting in any other way. But the horn is significant of power, when it is said concerning God the Father who revealed the Son to us; "he has raised up a horn of salvation for us," and again, "His horn shall be exalted in glory. And in good repute are all things wondrously accomplished in the power of Christ. So then, the Only-begotten has come in a form like ours, and insofar as he came into flesh and humanity, enduring the appearance of the weakness in us; except, as God, holding in his hands all the horns, that is, all the kingdoms, according to all the power of opposing energies. And when we say "in his hands," we mean "in his authority. And indeed we have been taught to say to God in our prayers, "In your hands are my lots. That every diabolical power is subject to Christ, and the so-called horns, that is, the tyrannies of the unclean spirits throughout cities and countries; for they divided among themselves the entire earth; how could anyone doubt?

For he cast some out with authority from men, and others came "and begged him not to command them to go away into the abyss. For it is written thus by the holy Evangelists. And that he scared away from his tyranny over us even the overseer of the unclean spirits himself, that is, Satan, we will easily perceive, from Christ himself saying, "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. Therefore, even if he became man, nevertheless in his hands, that is, in his authority, he has the tyrannies or kingdoms or even powers of the opposing forces. But if someone should wish to understand that more simply, that Christ has horns in his hands, that is, an invincible and unconquerable strength, and one which easily gores and readily destroys whichever of his enemies it should choose, and like a calf leaps upon them unbearably, he will again understand correctly. And he established a strong love of his strength. Christ came to accomplish these two things, to cast down those who are in opposition, who led astray all under heaven; for they carried away from God the creator, stealing the glory most fitting for him and him alone, and for their own kindling on their

heads; and that he would save those who had been deceived and had endured a truly inescapable greed.

But that their things are gone and have completely vanished, he taught by saying "Horns are in his hands," that is, those that overthrow their powers, and as it were de-horn their arrogance. But that he was about to save us, he further demonstrates by saying He set a mighty love of his strength. For we have been saved "not by works of righteousness which we have done" ourselves, not by legal boasts; for the law has perfected no one; but by the gentleness of God the Father, who set the love of the Son on our behalf as mighty, that is, strong and great. "For God the Father so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that everyone who believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. We have been saved therefore by the love of God the Father, and indeed also of the Son himself, who endured death for us; even though he rose again, having abolished the power of corruption, and having removed sin from us. Therefore he also said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. Mighty therefore, truly, is the love of the strength of God the Father, through which we have been delivered from death and sin and the greed of the devil. A word shall go before his face. A proclamation will go before him, he says, and a rumor will fly ahead, and there will be much talk about him.

For as soon as Christ was born of the holy virgin, the Magi came immediately from the east, with the star that miraculously appeared in the sky all but announcing his birth to them according to the divine plan. But when, as time went on, he began signs and to be a worker of miracles, then "the report of him went out," as the evangelist says, "into all Syria. And in other ways he became famous in all truth under heaven. For who has not known the glory of Christ? What nation or country has remained unheard or unexperienced of the strength that is in him? For as he himself said again, the gospel has been preached to all the nations, and the splendor of the things done by him has traversed the whole earth like the sun. And his feet shall go out into the plains. It is as if he should say again, Nothing is steep for him or impracticable; but he will walk as if on each matter by a bare and smooth road. For the bare parts of the plains are passable and easy to travel; but those rising into hills are difficult and not fit for horses. All things therefore are easy for Christ, and whatever path he should wish to traverse, I mean in re-

spect to each of the things being done, this is surely completely free of all difficulty. For what could he not accomplish, and very effortlessly, being God by nature and Lord of hosts?

Therefore he makes the declaration from the likeness of those going in the plains to the consideration of things. But if someone should wish to understand "plains" as the humble in heart, who are also called a "delightful land" and "God's tillage," since they receive the seed from above and from heaven, and produce fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty, he will again understand correctly. For the Son will go out as if to farm such plains, according to that which was certainly said by him in the form of a parable, "A sower went out to sow his seed. And David also sings somewhere, "And your fields shall be filled with fatness; and he added that "And the valleys will abound with grain. But that the valleys are again to be understood spiritually he allowed us to understand by adding immediately, "They will cry out, and indeed they will sing hymns. For it is not for the unfeeling valleys to sing hymns, or to have cried out, but for the spiritual ones; and on these the divine and heavenly word would settle like dew. He stood, and the earth was shaken. The word "he stood" may often be understood in the divinely-inspired scripture as concerning some matter that has come to its completion. For example, as if someone should say perhaps, "This matter stood," that is, the word concerning this, which is to say, it has been determined and done.

So also the Zipporah the wife of Moses, circumcising her child with a stone, said to the destroying angel, "The blood of the circumcision of my child is staunch. For she did not mean to signify that the flow of blood had ceased, but that the deed of circumcision had been done, and what was sought had been accomplished; for he who is circumcised with the spiritual stone averts death; and this is the Spirit of Christ, just as indeed Joshua, who after Moses led the sons of Israel across the Jordan, commanded them to be circumcised with stone knives, fulfilling the type of the circumcision in the spirit. For just as Christ is called a rock, so also a stone, that is, a stone knife, is His Spirit. Therefore "it stood" often signifies also the fulfillment of a matter. Therefore Christ "stood"; that is, the things concerning him have come to fulfillment, and he appeared to those upon the earth; and the earth was shaken. And by "earth" he means the inhabitants of the earth, who were also shaken. And in what manner, then, let us say as far as we can. For those who

formerly had their minds, as it were, unshaken in the will to do evil things, those who were firm in impieties, fixed in love of the flesh, established in error, have been shaken and moved, having been transferred to the knowledge of God and to the desire for virtue.

And likewise those of the blood of Israel have been moved from the worship according to the law, having accepted faith in him; for they have passed over to choosing to live according to the Gospel, and to be governed by the Savior's laws. And that "to be shaken" sometimes signifies a transfer from one thing to another would be clear from the blessed David, who psalmed and said, "You who are seated upon the Cherubim, let the earth be shaken. For we do not say that he was entreating him for the earth to be shaken violently—I mean this perceptible one under the feet of men—but rather he was seeking the transition to occur from the worse to the better. And this is one meaning of the proposed text, but one might also accept another for it in some such way. He says, "It stood and the earth was shaken. The earth has experienced these two things, for it both stood and has been shaken. And what again might be the explanation for both, it is necessary to make clear. It stood, therefore; for being drunk, as it were, and easily shaken toward anything whatsoever that is amiss, and, as it were, carried about by every wind, it now has a firm and established position, with Christ making it firm, according to that which was in some way said through the voice of Isaiah to the Synagogue of the Jews, "Establish yourself, Zion.

And it has been shaken again, as I have already said, having departed from the ancient deceit, and honoring the transfer to anything whatsoever that is pleasing to God. It is truly paradoxical, therefore, that at one and the same time the earth both stood and was shaken. For Christ is the one who both makes it established for every good work, and persuades it to practice the movement from the worse to the better. He looked, and the nations melted; the mountains were shattered by force. For God to look upon sometimes signifies a consideration as in meekness and love, but at other times one in anger and threat. "And indeed, upon whom," he says, "will I look, but "upon the one who is meek and quiet and who trembles at my "words? And somewhere the divine David also besought, saying thus, "Look upon me and have mercy on me; but through the voice of Ezekiel he said concerning someone, "And I will set my "face against that man, and I will make "him a desolation and a ruin, and I will cut him off from the "midst of my people,

and you shall know that I am the Lord. and this was of one threatening anger and destruction and the fitting justice for those who provoke. Therefore as soon as Christ looked, that is, he brought his eye in anger upon some, and immediately they melted like wax, and as if by a consuming fire the mountains were shattered by force.

And by "nations" and "mountains" he means the unclean spirits, and those among them who are lofty and exalted and standing like mountains above the others; but the preeminence is entirely in worthlessness, and the advantage in arrogance. or perhaps also according to the strength, the measure of the ferocity inherent in them. For the demons are arrogant, and indeed he sets in opposition to God, and they hasten to claim for themselves the glory that is fitting for Him. But they were violently shattered. For they are crushed by the power of Christ, and have come to nothing, and have been placed under the feet of those who have believed. And elsewhere again satan has been called a mountain, to whom God spoke somewhere through the voice of the prophet, as from the person of Nebuchadnezzar, "Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, who destroys all the earth. The eternal hills melted. Having mentioned enigmatically the evil and opposing powers, which also work against the glory of Christ, casting down to sin those on the earth, he has necessarily introduced also the leaders of the Jewish Synagogue, whom he also calls hills, because they seem to be raised up high and to be above the others, at least according to the order of the priestly ministry and the honor from it. And he calls them eternal, because of the perpetual nature of the matter; for the liturgy of God is unceasing; for he is glorified in every season and time.

For even if the power of the worship in shadows and types has perhaps ceased, yet the nature of the matter has passed over to something better. For the leaders of the holy churches minister to God no less, and perform for him the bloodless sacrifice. Therefore the hills are eternal because of the perpetual and unceasing nature of the liturgy. But they were crushed together with the spiritual mountains, and melted together with the nations. For since they have thought what is pleasing to demons, and have fulfilled what seemed good to the devil, by delivering the author of life to the cross, and having behaved insolently toward him in many ways, for this reason, justly enduring the same punishment as they, they have been deposed and have fallen, and as the prophet says, "The house of Israel has fallen, there is no one

who will raise it up. They saw his eternal ways as toils. Sometimes the sacred writings are accustomed to call the divine commandments 'ways' and 'roads' and 'paths', such as what is said through the voice of Jeremiah, "Stand by the roads and ask for the eternal paths of the Lord, and see which is the good way, and walk in it and you will find purification for your souls; and indeed also through the voice of the blessed David, "I ran the way of your commandments, when you enlarged my heart.

The hills melted, he says, that is, those among the Jews who had received the glory of leadership, and the boasts attached to the priestly ministry according to the law. For they saw the ways, that is the commandments of Emmanuel—clearly, the evangelical decrees, and the incomparably better and more manifest instruction of the ancient oracles—as toils, that is, they considered it burdensome and full of sweat, although Christ the Savior of us all says clearly, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. And in another way some made his ways unbearable, through which it was possible to pass easily into eternal life. For our Lord Jesus Christ was clarifying what the power of the mystical blessing is, saying, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. But those who heard such sacred words spoke deliriously, saying, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it? How can this man give us his flesh to eat? And the Evangelist testified, saying that "After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

when Christ added this to the disciples themselves, if they also chose to depart from him, saying, "Do you also want to go away? But the divine Peter answered, crying out, "Lord, to whom shall we depart? You have the "words of eternal life. For they did not see the journeys as labors, but the word was truly sweet and worthy of being heard by them. And he says that the journeys are eternal. For it will in no way cease, but will rather extend into the present age, and the evangelical and saving proclamation will stand forever, even though the older and legal commandment has grown old and does not have blamelessness, as the most wise Paul says, and for this reason the second has been introduced, "which is said to have been enacted on better promises. And so the divine David cried out beforehand in the spirit, saying to our Lord Je-

sus Christ, "Your righteousness is a righteousness for "the age, and your law is truth. For, as I said, the things in shadows have not remained, but the types have ceased, while the things of Christ have been firmly established, and have their unshakeable nature forever. The dwellings of the Ethiopians will be terrified, and the tents of the land of Midian. The better of the narratives somehow always has what is worthy of being heard, and an unobjectionable promise, even if one should go through the same words.

Therefore, having previously narrated the rush to cowardice of the opposing powers, and having shown them as melting in the likeness of nations, and indeed also as being crushed like mountains, he again compares them to the foreigners who campaigned against the land of the Jews. These were the Ethiopians to the east and south inhabiting the Indian sea, and indeed also the Midianites, themselves inhabiting the neighboring desert. Therefore, he says, those who fight against the holy city will be terrified, that we might understand the spiritual Zion, which is the Church of Christ, which the saints inhabit, and the chosen race, as in a type of old, Israel, just as Israel is also interpreted as Mind seeing God. And Nathanael was also admired, as "truly being an Israelite, in whom there is no "deceit. Therefore, as in an image and in types in the Ethiopians and Midianites, who always wished to harm the chosen race, that is, Israel, we will understand the hordes of demons that stand against the saints. And one might say in another way that the idolaters are called Ethiopians, whose life is carnal, earthly and in impurities; and such are the Ethiopians; for they do not have the divine light in their mind, but are, so to speak, black in heart and darkened in their minds, to whom the dragon is also said to have been given for consumption.

For David somewhere sings and says to the God of all, "You crushed the head of the dra-"gon, you gave him as food to the Ethiopian peoples. For just as we have made the life-giving Word of God our spiritual and holy food, so also the lovers of sin and those who have not known the God by nature, so to speak, feed on Satan, having him in mind, and thinking and saying his things. And the Midianites again would be, as I said, those hostile to the saints. But if someone should choose also to investigate the power of the name, Midianite is interpreted as judged, or rather condemned; and such a name would be fitting for Satan himself and for the wicked powers with him, "For whom the gloom of darkness has been kept for "eternity. Are you angry with the rivers, Lord? or is your wrath in the rivers? or your assault in

the sea? For you will mount your horses, and your riding is salvation. Bending you will bend your bow against the scepters, says the Lord. The Prophet's purpose is to show that the second economy is better and more manifest than the ancient one and has come about with incomparably greater goods. For long ago through Moses he led Israel out of carnal slavery, having changed the rivers of the Egyptians into blood, and having performed signs and wonders; then parting the Red Sea, and bringing across the redeemed, but drowning in the waters the most warlike of the Egyptians.

But when the Only-begotten Word of God became man, he delivered the whole world under heaven, which was yoked to the greediness of the devil, not rivers having changed [it] into blood, not pouring out His own wrath upon waters, not dividing the waves of the sea, not bringing destruction upon men; but rather killing the blood-guilty serpent himself, and casting down the sin found by him and through him, and destroying the irresistible power of death, and calling everyone to the knowledge of God, through the holy Apostles, who, running all over the world under heaven, and carrying the name of Christ, and very justly, were admired. O then Master, he says, very worthy to be heard are the things of which You Yourself have become the author, and the things accomplished again by You are much better than those through Moses. For You will not bring wrath upon rivers; You will not rush against the sea; not in those things; from where? The wonder of Your God-befitting authority will shine forth; but You will rather mount upon Your horses, and Your riding is salvation. And who might the horses be, again?

The blessed disciples, both Apostles and Evangelists, who were wholly yoked to His divine will, who were gentle and easy to rein and ready for anything whatsoever that seemed good to Him, who had Christ as both rider and charioteer, of whom the blessed Paul is one, concerning whom He Himself says, "For this one is a chosen instrument of Mine to bear My name before the Gentiles. And very swift indeed are the horses, traveling all over the world under heaven. Thus also "The chariot of God is said to be ten thousandfold, having thousands of prospering ones. For very many who from time to time, and after them, have become leaders of peoples and have submitted the neck of their mind to the yokes of the Savior, and carrying His glory everywhere, and rightly dividing the word of truth, and, as it were, making the whole earth resound with the clatter of hooves. And the riding

of the horses is salvation. For they ran not in vain, but so that they might save cities, and countries and nations alike, as Christ was overthrowing the principalities of demons, who had divided the whole earth, so to speak, subjecting its inhabitants to their own wills. But since the ancient principalities of the demons were about to fall, for this reason he says fittingly, Bending you will bend your bow against the scepters. For he will rush, as I just said, not in rivers or seas, but will rather overthrow the scepters of the demons.

The land of rivers will be rent, peoples will see you and be in travail; scattering the waters of his course. He remembers again the achievements of the Savior, and to the other nations, against which the bow is bent, or rather, will be bent, he says that the land of rivers will also be added, perhaps indicating that of the Babylonians; for under it at that time was also the land between the rivers; so that through this, again as by an image of perceptible enemies, the multitude of the intelligible and invisible ones might also be signified, against which is the struggle for the saints. But in some way the word of the prophets is always hidden. Therefore, as from a part of the land between the rivers, the land of the Babylonians is signified, and through it, enigmatically, the herd of demons. Or perhaps the prophetic word hints at something else for us. For he seems to call Judea the land of rivers, because of the many prophets who arose in it, watering the nation like rivers, and, as it were, flooding it with divine streams. concerning whom, I think, the blessed David also says, "The rivers will clap their hands together; and indeed also through the voice of Isaiah, God [says]: "The beasts of the field will bless me, the sirens and the daughters of ostriches, because I gave water in the desert, and rivers in a waterless land to give drink to my chosen race, my people whom I have acquired to declare my virtues.

For our Lord Jesus Christ has perhaps been named a torrent of delight, and He truly is, and indeed also a river; for He said somewhere concerning Him through the voice of the saints, "Behold, I am turning upon them like a river of peace, and like a torrent flooding the glory of the nations. And it was also said through the voice of David, "The streams of the river make glad the city of God. And it in no way harms, in likeness to Him, the saints themselves to be called rivers, since indeed they have become conformed to him spiritually. For just as he is the true light, he said somewhere to the holy apostles "You "are the light of the world; so also, being himself a river and indeed living water, he grants to the saints to be glorified by the same titles.

The land of the spiritual rivers, therefore, that is, Judea, not having endured to drink the living water, and not having received the word of the holy prophets, nor indeed that through Moses; for if they had believed Moses, they would have believed Christ, for he wrote about him; it will be broken, that is, it will thirst. For thirsty land breaks apart. The Prophet therefore marvels, and as if in character says: The land that formerly had many rivers, and a most abundant supply of the divine streams, will be thirsty and unwatered land.

But since, he says, O Master, the peoples have seen you appear spiritually, that is, those from the nations who understood the mystery concerning you, they immediately received the good in birth-pangs, and have become fruitful. And it would be fitting for them to say "Through "fear of you, O Lord, we have conceived in the womb and have been in travail "and have brought forth. We have wrought the spirit of your salvation upon the "earth. For those who have inscribed Emmanuel as Savior and Redeemer travail with the divine fear, and every conception of their mind will be a fruit of virtue, and their endeavor will result in a spirit of salvation; therefore peoples will see you and will travail, drinking your stream, and having become drunk with the streams of the gospel. For they eagerly approached him as he said "If anyone "thirsts, let him come to me and drink," for you were, he says, so bountiful and good, as to scatter waters even in your journeys, that is, the life-giving word of evangelical instruction. For as Matthew says "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, "teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the "gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease "and every infirmity among the people. This, I think, is the meaning of scattering the waters of his journey. But that the word of divinely inspired teaching is called water everywhere in the sacred writings, how can it be doubted? The abyss gave its voice, the height of its appearance.

The sun was lifted up, and the moon stood in its order for a light. He calls the peoples who have been in travail and have now become fruitful an abyss, showing that they are many and innumerable; for such is the abyss. And by such a name the multitude of the holy angels is also called through the voice of Ezekiel. And so God said somewhere, as from the person of the prince of Tyre concerning Satan, When I cast him down into Hades, the abyss mourned for him. For with him who was beyond all and preeminent in glory, who was also placed with the Cherubim, according to the voice of the

prophet himself, having been cast down and having fallen, it is not at all unlikely that the spiritual abyss, that is, the hosts of the spirits above, was greatly grieved, and as it were, became sad for him who had suffered and had offended the God of all. Therefore the abyss, he says, that is, the immeasurable and incomprehensible multitude of those who have believed, and indeed also the height of the appearance in it, that is, again, all that is splendid and exalted in it, and adorned with the appearances in this world, or rather with vain glories, gave its voice. For Christ is glorified by every nation of men, and one may see small and great, illustrious and obscure, and those more distinguished than others, having pre-eminence either perhaps in glory, or in wealth and splendor in life, doing this eagerly;

which he very rightly called appearances or the height of appearance. For to them it is nothing other than an opinion, because "All flesh is grass" and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. And that the abyss gave its voice, and that small and great honor our Lord Jesus Christ with praises, the blessed David will also make clear when he says "Praise the Lord" from the earth, you dragons and all deeps. And having added to these mountains and hills, fruitful trees and all cedars, beasts and cattle, creeping things and winged birds, he adds again "Rulers and all judges of the earth, young men and maidens, old men with younger men, let them praise the name of the Lord. And somewhere our great Isaiah also said concerning him "Kings shall see him and be afraid; rulers and they shall worship him. And he gives as it were the reason for the deep, and indeed the height of its appearance, to give its voice, adding immediately: The sun was lifted up, and the moon stood in its order for light. And just as we have understood the deep, not according to the sensible account, for it is too crude, but rather spiritually and intellectually, so also now we will not fix the eye of the mind on the elements, I mean the sun and the moon; but by the likeness from them, darting toward better things, we shall perceive the power of the concepts.

Therefore, we say the sun is the luminous and brilliant initiation into the evangelical ordinances, and the moon, in turn, the lesser and dimmer light of the Law, shining, as in night and darkness, in the time before the advent. For it is called day in which Christ shone forth, the sun of righteousness, the spiritual morning star, rising in the hearts of those who have believed. And indeed the divine David says, "This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. And just as the physical sun, while still low and

barely rising from the earth, does not yet have a broad and brilliant light, but has its own light as if contracted within itself, but leaping up on high, it makes the emission of its ray most brilliant to all everywhere; so also the instruction through Christ, that is, the evangelical, was contracted in the beginning, and was unknown to many; but like the sun, all but rising, and going on high little by little, and sending forth the gleam of the knowledge of God everywhere, it stuns the deep, that is, the whole race of men; for this reason it also gave its voice. For it gives glory, as I said, and names God, and confesses Emmanuel as Lord and redeemer of all. Therefore, the sun was lifted up, and no less the moon, that is, the Law, stood in its order for light.

For the instruction through Moses comes after the evangelical instruction, and this is its order, because it is both a shadow and a type. But since Christ is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets, the Law also shone forth. For by comparing the things that have come to pass with those formerly announced through it, we have already marveled also at the light of the Law itself prefiguring to us elegantly in many ways the mystery of Christ. It stood, therefore, for light. And Christ himself also blesses those who have brought together in themselves both the legal and the evangelical instruction. For he spoke thus: "Therefore I say to you, that every scribe," that is, one who knows the law, "who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven, is like a rich man, who brings out of his treasure new and old things. But we will also accept another meaning for this, not an implausible one, as it seems to me, but rather one that approaches what is likely. For we say, and very rightly, that Emmanuel is the sun. For so he has been named, and so he truly is. And it must be supposed that the Church of God is called the moon, by likeness to the element, shining for those in darkness, and gleaming as if in the night.

When, therefore, the sun was lifted up, according to the voice of the Prophet—for Christ ascended the precious cross for us—then also the church from the gentiles shone forth and stood in its order for light, that is, like a full moon, and preserving the order of its own cycle, it became a light for those in darkness, just as I said a moment ago. And that when Christ was lifted up and endured the cross for the life of all, the Church was then established, he himself will teach again: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, fruit bears more fruit. And again, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people

to my- self. Therefore, the sun being lifted up, surely signifies either the passion on the cross, or the ascent to the heavens; for indeed we also say that he is lifted up in this way. Your missiles will go forth into the light of the lightning of your weapons. Here he calls missiles those who went throughout the whole earth, and as if sent from a bow, that is, from a strong hand, the holy apostles and evangelists, about whom the blessed David also said somewhere, “Like arrows in the hand of a mighty one, “so are the sons of those who have been cast out. For the nation of the Jews was cast out and expelled, for insulting Christ who was calling them to life;

but their sons, who are also of the blood of Israel, the chosen disciples, became missiles and arrows, as if running from a most mighty hand, and easily piercing everything struck for death. Such missiles are sent, as from the hand of Christ, and are fixed in the entrails of the devil, and destroy the dragon. And so the blessed David also sings somewhere, saying to our Lord Jesus Christ, “Your arrows are sharpened, O mighty “one, peoples will fall under you, in the heart of the king’s enemies. Therefore, by such arrows the hordes of demons are destroyed, and they become a means of destruction to the enemies; but for those who have recognized his epiphany and honored him through faith, they fulfill another need. for they make them wounded with love, according to the bride who says in the Song of Songs, “For I am wounded “with love. And they are found in another way to be the light of the lightning of his weapons; and his weapons could be understood as those with which the blessed Paul commands that we ourselves must be armed, saying, “Put on the whole armor of God. And this is the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, having shod your feet with the readiness of the gospel of peace, the sword of the Spirit. Therefore, such are the weapons of Christ, not clothing himself, but rather being given by him to the worthy. And the weapons are bright, and as if full of lightning;

for virtue is most manifest; therefore, the missiles will be a light of the lightning of your weapons. For because the weapons flash, they themselves will give light, teaching those who were ignorant. For among lovers of sin, virtue is a kind of unadorned thing, and not yet bright; but among those who know it, it is nothing less than lightning, making a person bright and transparent, and most well-known everywhere. Therefore, the divine disciples, having the lightning of your weapons first, will also be a light of it for

others. For just as experts in the medical art, when they free those who have fallen into diseases of the eyes and who flee the light of the sun's ray from their suffering, they then persuade them to endure the assault of the light, and having become a kind of light for them, they would be taken, and very reasonably so; so also the divine disciples, admiring and praising the virtues, which have also been appointed as weapons of Christ, are found to be a kind of light of the lightning in them, that is, of their radiance, for others. In threat you will make the earth small, and in wrath you will bring down nations. Through these things, the Prophet subtly indicates to us the devastation of the land of the Jews, and the destruction of the nations dwelling in it.

For since they did not accept faith in Christ, but rose up against him, and killed the author of life, for this reason they have been given over to desolation, and Isaiah foretold this to them, saying, "Woe to the lawless one; evil according to his works will "befall him. You went out for the salvation of your people, to save your anointed ones; you cast death upon the heads of the lawless, you raised up bonds to the neck forever. Again he explains to us, as it were, the whole economy of the incarnation of the Only-begotten. For he has saved those through faith justified, and anointed with the Holy Spirit, and shown to be partakers of his divine nature; but he has permitted those who have chosen to disobey to be consumed in their sins, to whom he also said clearly, "Amen, amen, I say "to you, that if you do not believe that I am, you will die in your "sins. You went out, therefore, it says, as a king coming against the hordes of the enemy, and armed with the law of war. And the purpose of the departure was to save your anointed ones; clearly meaning those anointed with the Holy Spirit, concerning whom he also long ago commanded through prophets, saying "Do not touch my anointed ones, "and do no evil to my prophets; but to prepare death for the lawless, which they, having drawn it down upon their own heads, would be caught in, by not accepting the justifying faith.

For this reason they are also bound with unbreakable bonds, and are tightened by the chains of their own transgressions; and not partially, but as it were through the whole body, and up to the neck. But if indeed the bonds are said to be of Christ, let no one be disturbed. For always somehow the things that happen to some by the permission of God are said to be his; such as the saying, "There is no evil in a city, "which the Lord has not done. For he himself does not do the evil, but rather he often permits it to happen to

the sinning cities. But if indeed the bonds spoken of here might be understood as things to be praised, again we say this, that death is indeed cast upon the heads of the lawless, but the God of all binds, as with bonds of love, those who approach him, and have been justified by faith and sanctified in the Spirit, in accordance with that which was certainly spoken through the voice of the prophet concerning those of the blood of Israel, "And I bound the feet of "Ephraim, I took him up on my arm, I drew "them with the bonds of my love. But the bond upon the necks is here understood also as the easy rein of those who have submitted to him the neck of their mind, and have taken upon themselves the truly good yoke of our Savior.

You have cut off in ecstasy the heads of rulers, they will be shaken in it. The name of ecstasy is understood in different ways in the divinely-inspired scripture. For sometimes it means astonishment, as if it might be said, for example, concerning the sins of those of Israel, "Heaven was astonished at this; and again, "Astonishment and horrible things have happened in the land; and then again at other times the removal from an earthly way of thinking to a certain divine and spiritual state of character and of life. And so the divine Paul writes to some, and says, "For if "we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. And just as we say that the turning from worse things to better things is an ecstasy beloved by God; so also we maintain that the change from useful things to shameful things is an ecstasy that is wicked and reproached. In such an ecstasy, therefore, he says, you have cut off the heads of the rulers. and he indicates those of the leaders of Israel, certainly scribes and Pharisees, and of the priests according to the law. for they were truly driven out of their senses and out of right thinking and a good mind and of the love for God, not receiving the Son, but rather even killing him, although they both knew and said, that "this is the heir. And what, then, might the manner of the cutting off be understood to be?

The divine David will fittingly clarify, saying to the Savior God of all, "Divide them in their life; for "Israel" was both the "portion" of God, and "the line of his inheritance. But since they have wickedly provoked the Son, the beloved has become sent away, and has been divided, and has been separated from the hope of those who have believed, disinherited and cast off, and has been put out of his presence, and in a second portion, and after the nations, who indeed also say of themselves that, "Blessed "are we by the Lord who made heaven and "earth; "God is the Lord, and he has appeared to us.

Therefore Israel was cut off, and having fallen from the blessing, a portion... no longer of God, but rather diabolical and most dishonorable and profane. Then concerning the ecstasy he says that they will be shaken in it, that is, they will fall. For what is in vibration and agitation is near to falling. And the prophet laments for them, as if they were destroyed in many ways, saying, "The house of Israel has fallen, there is no one who will raise it. They will open their bridles, like a poor man eating secretly. The difficulty of both its syntax and its wording is very great indeed; nevertheless we will speak as we are able, distinguishing very well the meaning of the thoughts.

Having narrated, then, the situation in which the heads of the rulers absolutely had to be, that is, those who had been chosen to lead the Synagogue of the Jews, he moves on immediately to the holy apostles, who in the beginning had great fear of their persecutors. For they were scourged in the councils and commanded to speak to no one in the name of Christ; and coming together secretly they made their supplications to God, saying, "For in truth both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together in this city against your holy child Jesus, whom you anointed. And now, Lord, look upon their threats; clearly, those of the Jews; "and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness. Therefore, those who were, so to speak, constrained by fear as by a bridle and forced to be silent, those who were scourged and afflicted, who spoke to some secretly and with difficulty, and who resembled a poor man eating, will open their bridles. It is as if he were to say, they will by all means be broadened into the boldness that is most dear and fitting for them. For they will in no way care about the Synagogue of the Jews; but spitting on the threats, and, so to speak, breaking the bridle cast upon them, like some noble and proud horses, they will henceforth neigh, with no one rebuking them, and will fill the whole world with their voice.

The divine Isaiah says something similar to those who minister the evangelical proclamation: "Go up on a high mountain, you who bring good news to Zion; lift up your voice with strength, you who bring good news to Jerusalem. Lift it up, do not be afraid; behold our God, behold the Lord comes with strength, and his arm with dominion. Therefore, he says, those who were formerly like a poor man eating secretly, that is, those who had no boldness, those who were secretly and with difficulty nourished by the faith of the believers, will open their bridles to cheerfulness, in the manner

already stated. And that the faith of those who are saved is a kind of food for both God and the saints, Christ himself confirms when he says concerning the conversion of the Samaritans, "I have food to eat that you do not know. And again, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work. And you mounted your horses into the sea, troubling many waters. The discourse has again maintained the figure of a trope. For having named bridles, he called the holy Apostles horses, on whom Christ himself also rides, having settled as it were into their mind and heart. Therefore, he tries to teach that they were destined to lead to faith not only those of Israel, but also the very great and countless multitude of the other nations.

For he compares the world to the sea, according to what is sung in the Psalms, "This is the sea, great and wide; there are creeping things without number; and to many waters the herds of the nations, throughout all the earth; and indeed, as I said, the holy Apostles to horses, who, travelling about the whole world, usefully troubled the idolaters who were, so to speak, snoring and resting in error; for they have caused a disturbance, summoning to fear those who were proceeding to punishment, and who would undergo the judgment by fire, if they did not choose to repent and to know the God who is by nature and truly God. And indeed the divine Paul, speaking to the Athenians, and then to all the others having called them more superstitious, he has disturbed them not a little, adding this, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but "now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the "world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, having offered assurance "to all by raising him from the dead. Therefore the troubled water is the multitude throughout the world; for at times it is compared to waters, and very fittingly; since the life of men is like the sea; because great is the turmoil of the affairs in it, and the pouring forth and movement upwards and downwards and towards everything whatsoever; and the troubled water is much, at least in comparison with Israel;

for they were one nation; but these are greater than any number. I watched, and my heart was startled at the voice of the prayer of my lips, and trembling entered into my bones, and underneath me my frame was troubled. I will rest in my day of affliction, that I may go up to the people of my sojourning. It is a custom for the holy prophets to call the watchfulness in heart and mind, which they might happen to make, when the Holy Spirit

proclaimed to them beforehand the knowledge of things to come, a "watch" or a "hearing. Therefore the same Habakkuk says, "I will stand on my watch, and mount upon "the rock, and watch to see what he will say in me, "and what I shall answer to my reproof; and another again, "I have heard a report from the Lord, and he sent a message to the "nations," and indeed in addition to this the divine David also says, "I will hear," he says, "what the Lord "God will speak in me. The Prophet now implies something of this sort, saying, "I watched and my heart was startled. "I have observed," he says, "the power of the things that were said; then I have been terribly startled at the voice of the prayer of my lips. For he made his supplication to God with an ode, and the manner of his prophecy was a song;

but his aim and mind were not on the rhythmic utterance, but he was rather embittered into grief, and was exceedingly fearful, as the Spirit articulated in him the things that would happen to those of Israel in the last times. And that which especially disturbed him and persuaded him to fear was, in all likelihood, perhaps this alone, lest he somehow be left behind in the evils, and witness the crushing of the people, and see death cast upon the heads of the lawless, and them being cut off in ecstasy, and shaken in it, according to the sense already explained. Then, learning that the vision would be for appointed times, and the things foretold for a long postponement, almost recovering from his utter despondency from then on, he says, "I will rest in my day of affliction, that I may go up to the people of my sojourning. "For I will not be held fast," he says, "in such evils, nor will I be found in this life, when the time is at hand in which such evils will surely befall those of Israel. "For I will go from here, and I will depart to the people that has become such a sojourner in this life, just as, indeed, I myself am. For all the saints are sojourners and strangers in this world. Therefore they say, "Here we have no lasting "city, but we seek the city that is to come.

And David also sings somewhere to the God of all, "Spare me, for "I am a sojourner in the land and a stranger, as all "my fathers were. Therefore the aim of the saints is worthy of admiration, not even bearing, so to speak, to see those things on account of which God might happen to be provoked; and having practiced making their departure from this world more pleasant than life itself, if the things for the glory of God were not saved by us. And indeed the divine Paul said that to depart is better, and to be with Christ for those who have come to this mind, so as to consider life in the body a so-

journing. Because the fig tree will not bear fruit, and there will be no produce on the vines; the work of the olive will fail, and the fields will produce no food; the sheep have failed from the food, and there will be no oxen at the stalls from their healing. Just as to one who was asking and wishing to learn, for what reason he made it of great account to die, or rather to ascend to the people of his sojourning, he overshadows with much obscurity the abolition of the Synagogue of the Jews, and all but seems to lament the barrenness that would befall it. And he indicates it to us in many ways, saying that it would be like a fig tree, from which no fruit would come.

For the Savior Himself also named it thus, speaking as in a parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his "vineyard. And since it was barren, He said that it must finally be cut down, lest it render the ground useless. And somewhere He also cursed the fig tree before Jerusalem; for not finding fruit on it, "May no fruit," he says, "come from you "forever. He also compares it to a vine devoid of grape clusters. For it is again, as the prophet Isaiah says: "The "vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth is a man of Judah, a new plant, "beloved. But "he trenched it, and put a hedge "about it, and built a tower in it, and dug a "winepress, and waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced "thorns. For this reason, then, it was laid waste, as David says, "A boar from the wood, and a wild solitary beast has "devoured it; and he took down "its hedge, and all "who pass by the way have plucked its fruit. And the produce of the olive also failed, that is, again, of the Synagogue of the Jews. For the prophet Jeremiah also indicates it thus, saying, "A beautiful olive tree, shady in appearance, "the Lord called your name. At the sound of its pruning "a fire was kindled upon it, great is the tribulation upon you, its "branches were made useless, and the Lord of hosts who "planted you has spoken evil against you. But since, as the Prophet says, its produce failed;

for though they were tutored for Christ through the law and the prophets, they did not accept the faith; for this reason it was also cut off, and its branches have fallen, and those from the wild olive tree, that is, those from the Gentiles, were then grafted in, "and have become partakers of the root "and of the richness of the cultivated olive tree. Then he says that the fields will not produce food. He again compares Israel to ruined crops, I think, from which the farmer could not even gather enough for food. And this would be a clear proof of the utmost barrenness. And he clarified that they were about to suffer a famine of divine teachings and fall into the last of all

evils, adding that the sheep have failed from food, that is, from having no food; and that there are no oxen at the manger. By this is signified the complete failure among them of the sacred and chosen race, that is, those from the tribe of Levi, who, like oxen, thresh the spiritual threshing-floor and strip the word given through the all-wise Moses of the veils of obscurity, and set forth a kind of grain of wheat to others for understanding and as a sort of spiritual food. But they themselves were feeding at mangers on the offerings from the people, tithes, first-fruits, thanksgiving offerings. Therefore, the sheep have failed from food; and there were no longer oxen at the manger, that is, the guides and teachers of the peoples.

For this reason also the divine Paul applies the saying, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," to the heads of the teachers, clearly interpreting for us the things in the law. Moreover, he says the oxen have failed from their healing. And the saying is obscure; yet it signifies this, as I think again. For since they foolishly spurned being healed by Christ, although He strengthens the weak and justifies the ungodly, for this reason they have also failed, that is, they have been completely weakened and have come to nothing. It is a terrible thing, then, to stumble against God, and it will be the cause of the utmost barrenness. And we shall lack spiritual food, and as a result we shall be in a state beyond all evil. But I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be glad in God my Savior; the Lord God my strength, and He will set my feet for a consummation; He will make me walk upon high places, that I may be victorious in His song. Here then either the very person of the Prophet is clearly introduced, saying such things; or one might say the words belong to those justified in faith, who make Christ their delight, and rejoice in Him, and they record him as the provider of their inherent strength, and say that they can do all things in Him, just as, of course, the divine Paul also says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

And somewhere the blessed David also sings, "For you are the boast of their strength; and they expect to be well and truly enriched by Him alone with a firm standing in piety. For "He will set my feet for a consummation" surely indicates to us nothing other than this. And indeed the Hebrew edition has put "security" instead of "consummation". But feet being set for security, what else would it signify to us, than a firm standing, as I said, in piety, and the unshakable in virtue, and being fixed in faith and love for

Christ? And that the life of those justified in Christ is not lowly and groveling, but is both lofty and removed from every earthly and carnal matter, he makes clear by saying "He will make me walk upon high places". For the boasts of the evangelical way of life are truly lofty before God. And that we shall overcome those who oppose us, and shall be superior to our enemies, glorifying Him, he will persuade by saying, "That I may be victorious in His song".

ZEPHANIAH

The word of the Lord, which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah. The blessed Zephaniah prophesies in Jerusalem, not being of obscure birth according to the flesh, nor yet being among those whose custom it was to speak falsely, and to invent divine words for their listeners, concerning whom the divine Ezekiel also said, "Woe to those who prophesy from their own heart, and see nothing at all," and indeed God of all Himself said through the voice of Jeremiah, "I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied. But he was truly a prophet, conveying the words from the mouth of the Lord, and being filled with the Holy Spirit, pouring forth good things from his heart as from a good spring; for the tongue of the saints does not know how to speak falsely. Now, the purpose of the prophecy contains a rebuke of the two tribes that were in Jerusalem; I mean Judah and Benjamin. For it is written of them as having been impious, and having unholily assented to the deceits of idols, and as rushing eagerly to anything whatsoever that is displeasing to God;

and the time of the reign has also been usefully added, during which he spoke such things to those who had offended, so that by examining the state of affairs at that time, we may then understand for what reason and how great the movement of divine wrath against them was. Therefore, for I will relate in detail the things that will also benefit those who read them; Hezekiah reigned at that time in Jerusalem, a man most especially beloved of God, a lover of piety, a champion of righteousness, an enemy of deceit, and one who cut away the harm from idolatry; for the sacred scripture has clearly testified such things of him. while he was governing in royal honor to Jerusalem, Sennacherib, the tyrant of the Assyrians, went up, and he captured Samaria, and deported Israel; that is, the ten tribes; to the mountains of the Persians and Medes, and having also burned not a few cities of the

kingdom of Judah, he did not take Jerusalem, since God was its defender. But it is necessary to pass over the account of the history, being clear. Then, when Hezekiah died, Manasseh, his son, succeeded to the kingdom, who was so impious as to leave no form of wickedness unpracticed. And it is written thus about him in the fourth book of Kings: "And he did "evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominations of the "nations whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel.

"And he returned and built the high places which Hezekiah his "father had torn down, and he raised up an altar to "Baal, and made groves, as Ahab king of "Israel had done, and he worshipped all the host of "heaven, and served them; and he built an altar "in the house of the Lord, of which He had said, In Jerusalem I will put my "name, and he built an altar to all the host of "heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord, and he made "his sons pass through the fire, and practiced augury and divination, "and appointed a sorcerer, and multiplied diviners to do "evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. And "he set the carved image of the grove in the house of which the Lord said "to David and to Solomon his son, In this "house and in Jerusalem which I have chosen out of all the "tribes of Israel I will put my name there for "ever. While Manasseh was impiously doing these things, God of all, then, was indignant, and very rightly so, and he clearly threatened to bring upon Jerusalem the consequences of his wrath. And it is written thus again:

"And the Lord spoke by the hand of his servants "the prophets, saying, Because Manasseh the "king of Judah has done these wicked abominations beyond "all that the Amorite who was before him did, and has made "Judah also to sin with their idols, not so, "thus says the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil "upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, "both his ears shall tingle, and I will stretch over "Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house "of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man "wipes an alabaster jar, wiping it and turning it upside down "before them, and I will cast off the remnant of my "inheritance, and deliver them into the hands of their enemies, "and they shall become a spoil and a prey to all "their enemies, because of all the evil they have done in "my sight. And these things, as I said, God threatened he would bring not long after upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem. But when Manasseh was already deceased, Amon his son reigned, in no way inferior to his father in impiety of ways,

but competing so with his impieties, as perhaps even to surpass him then. And when he also died, Josiah reigned, his son, but one who emulated the piety of Hezekiah, and an excellent lover of his ways.

For he tore down altars and precincts, and having declared the divine temple clean of Manasseh's abominations, he commanded the priests according to the law to perform the customary rites for the glory of God; in addition to this, he burned the chariot of the sun, he drove out of Jerusalem false prophets, diviners, and wonder-workers, and indeed also soothsayers; and having slaughtered a great number of the temple priests, he burned them on the altars of the idols; and he overturned the altar of the calves in Bethel, which Jeroboam had made. And since he was so pious and good, God postponed his wrath, and brought none of the things he had foretold. But when Josiah also died, Jehoahaz reigned, whom Pharaoh Necho captured and made a prisoner, crowning with the honor of the kingdom Jeconiah, again a second son of Josiah, during whose reign Nebuchadnezzar marched against Judea, who having ravaged the whole country he took Jerusalem, and having burned the divine temple, along with the sacred vessels he carried off Judah and Benjamin as captives to his own land. It is necessary to know, that the cruelty of the Babylonian also crushed and ill-treated the cities of the foreigners, those situated by the sea, I mean Gaza and Ascalon and others with them, and the Idumeans and Ammonites. For the word of prophecy also recalls this. Let all things utterly fail from the face of the earth, says the Lord;

let man and cattle fail, let the birds of the air and the fish of the sea fail, and the impious shall grow weak, and I will remove the lawless from the face of the earth, says the Lord. As their country was to be completely desolate, and was on the verge of being destroyed with all its inhabitants, in these things he makes the word of his foretelling hyperbolic. For we do not say, if we are of sound mind, that the God of all unleashes his wrath also on irrational animals and swimming and flying creatures; but rather he persuades his hearers to understand this, that there will be no sparing of anything at all; but just as when a ship is sunk along with its sailors, no remnant is left behind; so, he says, when Judea is captured, there will be nothing saved, not man, not beast, not bird, not swimming creature. But since it was very likely that there were some in it living lawfully, practicing a noble and admirable way of life, so that he might not seem to be unleashing his wrath upon all simply and indiscriminately, destroying the just with the unjust, and cor-

rupting the pious with the profane and impious, for this reason he makes it clear against whom the things from wrath would go. For he said that And the impious shall grow weak and I will remove the lawless from the face of the earth.

And they will grow weak, falling under the hand of enemies, and are removed either by dying and becoming the work of the sword, or by being carried off as captives and serving their captors. But if someone should choose to cleverly reinterpret man and cattle and the rest into morals and manners, he will understand men as those living according to the flesh, and having an earthly mind, and fixed upon temporary things, to whom also the divine word has addressed: "I said, you are gods and all sons of the Most High, but you die like men. For the life of the saints is no longer human, but rather more divine and spiritual; if indeed it is true that though they walk in the flesh, they do not live according to the flesh, as it is written; but rather have their citizenship in heaven; and cattle, in turn, those accustomed to live in great ignorance, and dull of mind, about whom he says through the voice of David, "Man, being in honor, did not understand; he is compared to the senseless cattle and is like them; and he further commands, saying, "Do not be like the horse and the mule, which have no understanding. And birds we shall reckon to be those having an exalted and, as it were, lofty mind, and who have practiced carrying their intellect on high, and refuse to be drawn down by humble things. Such, in a way, is the boaster, and one completely entangled in the crimes of God-hated arrogance.

You will take fish also for the most irrational multitude; for the species of fish are most voiceless; such also are the many, who, as if poured around by some sea of life's turmoil, and feeding on the salty and bitter pleasure of the things in it, are kept for the nets of death, having destruction as the end of their life. These, therefore, will fail, God sending punishment upon them, and having chosen at last to punish them as those treading a wanton and dissolute life, and not refraining from provoking him. And I will stretch out my hand upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and I will remove from this place the names of the Baalim, and the names of the priests, and with the priests those who worship on the roofs the host of heaven, and those who swear by their king, and those who those turning away from the Lord and those not seeking the Lord, and those not holding fast to the Lord. He thus clarifies what was obscurely said, and clearly states that the

things from wrath will happen against the tribe of Judah and against Jerusalem. For he says that his own hand will be stretched out against her, as if seizing and striking, and subjecting them to what is imminently expected, those who are about to ravage and carry them away from the land that bore them, entangled in the snares of slavery.

And he lays bare the charges, and says that the names of Baal will be taken from their midst, and the names of the priests will be gone along with them. And by this he signifies that the multitude of venerated objects among them was great, and the manner of their error was varied. But that they will be consumed by war, and the nations of the Jews will come to such a lack of men that there will perhaps be none to name Baal, or able to sit in the precincts of the idols, he has cleverly indicated, by saying that the names of their idols, and indeed of the priests, will be removed. And he says "names" instead of "memorials," or "glories. For thus also the most wise Solomon interprets it, saying "A good name is to be chosen, rather than great riches. And along with the priests and the names of the Baalim, he says that those who worship on the rooftops will be utterly destroyed; and these would be those who are accustomed to worship the moon and the bear and the rest of the host of heaven. And I will likewise remove, he says, both those who swear by their king and those who turn away from the Lord. For it was a custom for some of those who had gone astray to make heaven an object of their oath, and to let their tongue loose upon it; and, as it were, most ambitiously to cry out, By the king and master, the sun.

For those who have chosen to do this, it is necessary also to depart fiercely from the love of God, although the law has clearly stated, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve, and by his name you shall swear. And so the prophet Jeremiah once bore witness to those of Israel concerning the observance of the command through Moses, and said to God, deflecting the wrath against them, "They say, 'As the Lord lives.'" But those not seeking the Lord, nor indeed practicing to hold fast to him, would reasonably be understood as those living a worthless and unseemly life, and who have honored a polity outside the law. For the God of all is sought by us not so much spatially, but, I think, in actuality, through true knowledge, and that which has in itself what is irreproachable, through faith and gentleness, and through zeal and eagerness for everything whatsoever that is holily admired and pleasing to him. But it is necessary to know that these things were

accomplished also by the one who was reigning in Jerusalem, I mean Josiah, in whose time the word of the prophecy also came. For he himself also tore down altars and precincts and handmade things; he slaughtered the priests, the false prophets, the diviners.

But the Prophet seems not to be declaring things present at all, nor making his words about things already done, but rather to be foretelling that these things will be at certain times, which indeed were also accomplished through Nebuchadnezzar, who acted not for the glory of God; for how or from where, since he even burned the divine temple? But rather destroying and burning along with the idols those who worshiped them. Be reverent before the face of the Lord God, because the day of the Lord is near, for the Lord has prepared his sacrifice, he has consecrated his called ones. He usefully intertwines exhortation with the threats, and having terrified them with fears, he urges them toward what is better, bidding them to be circumspect; for this, I think, is what "to be reverent" is: the God of all, and to hasten to set right the paths of life, and without delay to turn toward what is dear and pleasing to him. And he says that such people must be seen before the face of the Lord, according to what was said by the voice of Isaiah, "Wash yourselves, be clean, remove the wickednesses from your souls before my eyes; cease "from your wickednesses. For it is not at all the same thing to remove wickedness from human eyes and from before the face of God, but the difference in the matters is very great.

For sometimes a man who is wicked and not good in his ways, puts on the appearance of piety and fabricates a name for goodness, although in truth he is not this; and indeed Christ says, "Beware of those who come "to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous "wolves. Such a one is pious in the eyes of men, but not at all in the sight of God; but he who is truly without malice before the face of God not only puts on outward goodness and the appearance of being good, but rather has an unprofaned heart, and is indeed seen as such. For Solomon somewhere said, "For the ways of a man are before the eyes of God, "and He looks upon all his paths. He calls the time of the capture the day of the Lord, which he also says is near, not allowing the more careless to perhaps consider and think among themselves that the postponement of the things foretold will be long, and that they will outrun the suffering, having reached the end of their own lives. For it was the custom of the Jews in the prophecies of the most gloomy things to think and say such

things. And indeed God somewhere said to the blessed prophet Ezekiel, "Son of man, behold the provoking house of Israel, "saying, they say: The vision that 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 the word and will do it, says the Lord Adonai. This is what he says now, as I think, affirming that the day of the Lord has drawn near and that his sacrifice is being prepared, and his called ones are being consecrated. And he calls the slaughter of the impious, which will be done according to his will, a sacrifice; and the called ones, the Chaldeans, whom he says he also consecrates, not as having become holy, but rather as having been appointed and called by God to burn Judea, and with all mercy removed, to destroy those in it. The sacred scripture says something like this elsewhere. For the Persians and Medes and those who fought with Cyrus were called against Nineveh. And the God of all said about them, "They are consecrated, and I am bringing them; giants are coming "to fulfill my wrath, rejoicing and at the same time insolent. Therefore, consecration in these cases would not signify a putting away of wickedness, nor indeed a participation in the Holy Spirit, but rather that some have been predestined and assigned, as it were, to the fulfillment of some such deed. And it shall be in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's house, and all that are clothed with foreign apparel;

and I will punish all those openly at the gates in that day, who fill the house of the Lord their God with impiety and deceit. These are the three things through which cities and countries, kingdoms and the orders of authorities under it, and the renowned priesthood, might be well. And if these things are in good order, according to what is fitting for each, the affairs under them would also be well, and the subject people is saved. But if indeed they should choose to honor the perverted path, and should indeed hasten along it, everything will at once go toward what is unseemly, and it is all but drunk with destruction. For just as when a pain occurs in the head of the body, it is necessary for the rest of the members to feel with it and be sick with it; so also when the leaders have turned to what is base and are sick with an inclination toward what is worse, it is necessary that those who are yoked under them are somehow destroyed along with them. For the subject people is somehow wont to follow and be carried along by the opinions of those

who have been allotted to rule. In the day, therefore, he says, of the sacrifice pleasing to God, that is, in the time in which there would be of the most terrible things the slaughter of those who have sinned, upon the very first things, which are pre-eminent in glory and set before others, will the things of wrath proceed.

And these are: the house of the king; and the neighbor right next to those held in glory and splendor; and third among them, the one more honored by God than the others, that of the sacred ministers; and they too are rulers, and leaders of the peoples, according to the order of the priesthood. And He accuses them exceedingly, as wearing foreign garments, that is, as having come to such a point of godlessness, and having chosen to despise the ordinances given of old through Moses, so as not even to keep the very vestment of the priesthood, when the occasion called them to perform the sacred rites. As, therefore, those who were from Aaron were consumed by fire, and the charge and accusation against them was that they offered strange fire on the altar; in the same way, I think, these also, about whom the discourse was, are called to account, because having neglected the seemliness proper to them, they were not arrayed in a sacred manner according to what seemed good to the lawgiver, but being clothed in foreign garments, they dared to perform the sacred rites. And this is also proof of the utmost contempt and that the law was considered of no account among them. Then how was one to think that the observance of the law would be a concern to the others, if their leaders had no regard for it? Therefore He says, I will take vengeance openly upon the gatehouses; and what He means to declare is something like this.

When Israel sinned many times, and did not yield to the words of the prophets, He called them to repentance, correcting them like a father with external sorrows, and sometimes even touching their bodies; for example, I say, He struck the fruits in the field with blight, or at other times sent the locust and the grasshopper, or heaped up the caterpillar, or what is called mildew; and He has afflicted them "with blasting and with jaundice," according to the prophet's voice. Bringing these things upon them from time to time, He struck them, as it were, secretly; but now, He says, I will take vengeance openly upon the gatehouses, that is, I will not bring the things of wrath secretly, it will not be the locust and mildew against you, not a bodily sickness; but the naked, gleaming sword of the enemies, threatening destruction

to those who have been impious toward me, and cruelly destroying in the very gatehouses of the temple those who fill the house of their God with impiety and deceit. What then is the impiety? And what is the deceit? Another prophet will make it clear to us, saying about Jerusalem, "Her leaders judged for gifts, and her prophets divined for silver; and indeed the wise Isaiah somewhere addresses her and says, "Your rulers are disobedient, companions of thieves, loving gifts, seeking reward, not judging for orphans, and not attending to the judgment of the widow. Therefore, the ministers of the divine altars must take heed, lest they somehow fall into such accusations.

For in a typical manner, those of old received the vestment proper to the sacred rites. But since the time of worship in spirit is at hand, let there be for each of those called to the ministry a splendid garment and a vestment, as it were, sacredly fitting: right and blameless faith, an evangelical life, a venerable and most lawful conduct, and an upright character, not overcome by shameful gains, a care that looks to virtue, and that considers what pleases God to be of all account. And it shall be in that day, says the Lord, a sound of a cry from the gate of those who slay, and a wailing from the second, and a great crash from the hills. He clearly describes the calamities of the war, and shows some falling and perishing and lamenting for themselves, so that, overcome by the magnitude of the evils to come, they might choose to turn to hasten to do what is better and more fitting, and thus finally be carried out of the wrath. For the Creator is good, and does not desire "the death of him who dies, as that he should turn from his wicked way, and live," according to the voice of the prophet Ezekiel. Therefore, at that time, he says, from one gate of those who pierce, that is, of those who slaughter those who fall in their way, there will be a terrible and grim outcry.

For somehow, in cities that are being captured, the enemies, bursting in, raise a terrible cry, breaking down those within them into fear, and as if headlong sharpening one another to cruelty. But from the other gate, he says, there will be wailing and tears, as the captured are pushed against each other, and each one hastens to leap out of the city as if from a sunken ship. And he says there will also be a great crashing from the hills, perhaps calling the so-called upper city in Jerusalem "hills," that is, naming Zion, or indicating something else. For somehow, in the raids of wars, the inhabitants always flee to the tops of the mountains, thinking that the difficulty of the places will be an obstacle to their enemies and will check the assaults of their

pursuers. And so our Lord Jesus Christ once proclaimed to the peoples of the Jews, "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Therefore, when God strikes, and demands justice from those who have chosen to despise what they have sinned, nothing will help the sufferers, not a city with the finest towers, not unshakable circuits of walls, not the heights of mountains and the wildness of rocks, not untrodden, difficult terrain; but only repentance saves, pleading with the Judge, and calming His anger, and into the gentleness befitting Him calling the Creator, who is by nature readily good. And it is better to avoid offending Him with all one's might;

but since human nature always inclines to evil, and "in many things we all stumble," having nothing steadfast at all toward virtue, let us at least strive to correct our own intentions by returning to what is better, and by repentance call to gentleness the Master of all, who is good by nature, as I just said. Wail, you who inhabit the one cut down, for all the people of Canaan have become alike, all those who are lifted up by silver have been utterly destroyed. That the sword will spare none of the Babylonians, but will utterly destroy those throughout all Judea, he signifies through these things. And he has commanded those left behind in Jerusalem, who were strong enough to escape, to lament greatly for Judea as destroyed, and for the city renowned among them that has been cut down; because all the people in it competed with the ways of the Canaanites, and chose to emulate their ways, and were thus so equal to them in all things as to perhaps even surpass and leave them behind. But the Canaanites were foreigners, God-hated and sinful and idolaters, and among those most slandered for all the most outlandish things. And so, in the sacred writings, someone is reproached, hearing, "Seed of Canaan, and not of Judah.

And that their wealth is useless, a rotten and easily-broken support, he explains again, affirming that those who are lifted up by silver will be destroyed, that is, those who are accustomed to being proud of their wealth and possessions, and who raise a haughty brow for this very reason. For since, being overcome by shameful gains, and gaping for this, "the house of their God," as He himself says, "they filled with impiety and deceit," for this reason, wealth is rightly exposed as inert and useless, and knowing how to save no one. "A good name is therefore to be chosen rather than great riches," according to what is written; "for treasures will not profit the lawless, but

righteousness will deliver from death," and "Truly a small portion with the fear of God is better than great revenues with injustice. And it shall be on that day, I will search Jerusalem with a lamp, and I will execute vengeance on the men who are contemptuous of their own watch-posts, who say in their hearts: 'The Lord will not do good, nor will he do evil.' Whatever the enemies, using unrestrained madness against the captured, were about to do, God applies this to his own person, not as though he himself were the worker of such monstrous things, but rather as justly permitting the effects of wrath to come upon the impious. For what Solomon said enigmatically in Proverbs is true: "For not unjustly are nets spread for the winged;

for they who partake of murder treasure up evils for themselves. For when it is possible to be far from both punishment and justice, having chosen virtue over evil things, they themselves sharpen wrath against themselves, and sending their own souls to a self-invited destruction, they would be caught by those who know how to judge rightly. Therefore Jerusalem is searched with a lamp. For the Jews suffered something like this from the Romans, which they happened to suffer when Jerusalem was captured by Vespasian and Titus; for as Josephus relates, who lamented the sufferings of the Jews with ten thousand mouths, after the slaughters in the wars and the innumerable multitude of those who perished throughout the city, searching with a lamp for those who had fled into the caves and sewers and bringing them to light, they slaughtered them cruelly and savagely. And he says that he will take vengeance on them as having despised their ordinances, that is, either the laws appointed for each of the things to be done, which they transgressed and were impious, considering their observance to be nothing; or, specifically, he calls the customs of the priests ordinances. For very great according to the law was the care for their vestments and sacred forms and also for the sacrifices. For they did not bring the victims to the altar in one single way. And one might learn the difference in these things by encountering the writings of Moses.

But they had no regard for the ordinances, because of having reached such a point of nonsense and chilling thoughts, as perhaps even to suppose and to dare to say that the God of all takes no account of any of our affairs; and so to disregard earthly matters as neither to praise the good and give them rewards worthy of their uprightness, nor to be sharpened against sinners and bring upon them punishments equal to their unholy deeds. This, I

think, is the meaning of 'The Lord will not do good, nor will he do evil.' Therefore, what is being rumored is a lack of providence and nothing else. And the dogma is so shameful and hateful, that it did not even please the wise men of the Greeks. For they called the introducer of such things an atheist; this was Epicurus, one of those renowned among them for wisdom. Therefore it is possible to say that "The ways of a man are before the eyes of God, and he looks upon all his paths. And he deems the workers of virtue worthy of rewards, but he makes the sinner exceedingly hated, and repays each according to his work, as it is written.

Therefore, we must make our paths straight, and make the way that is pleasing to God, the Master of all, thus living lawfully and truly pursuing the most excellent life, in order to have the Master of all be gracious and well-disposed, and not to allow him to be embittered against us, by refusing what is evil and hastening to correct by repentance the faults of slumber and sloth. And their wealth will be for plunder, and their houses for destruction; and they will build houses and not dwell in them, and they will plant vineyards and not drink their wine. Perhaps even now it will be said by us at the right time, "Treasures will not profit the lawless. For wealth is always a runaway, and it has no stability; rather it intoxicates and inclines toward apostasy, and has unsteady feet. And indeed to wish to be proud on its account is utterly foolish. For it will least of all deliver those under divine wrath, nor would it free anyone from accusations when God decrees punishment, and what is fitting for sinners bringing punishment. What then is wealth? It serves the flesh alone and is a servant of unholy and abominable pleasure, and a father of arrogance, and a root and genesis of pride, and it procures the possession of fleeting glories, which pass by their possessors like shadows. For it is true that, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.

That the pursuit of wealth, therefore, is entirely unprofitable for the impious, he teaches by saying that their power will be for plunder by the Chaldeans. For they are those about whom it might be said, and very fittingly, what is sung in the Psalms, "Behold, the man who did not make God his helper, but hoped in the abundance of his wealth, and was strengthened in his vanity. And if they have also built for themselves lavishly adorned houses, they would not be their own, for they will be burned down; and if, in addition to this, they have become cultivators of vineyards, they themselves will not drink. How so? For they will be gone as captives, leaving their homes

behind and deprived of everything that knows how to bring joy. And God made this clear through the voice of Jeremiah, saying to one of those who had reigned in Samaria, "You have built for yourself a well-proportioned house, airy upper rooms with latticed windows and panelled with cedar and painted with vermilion. Will you reign, because you are provoked in Ahab your father? They will not eat and they will not drink. It was better for you to do judgment and good justice. Therefore, we ought to desire none of the things on earth, but to cast as far away as possible the delighting in temporary things and the pursuit of fleeting wealth which, in a time of wrath, can profit its possessors in no way;

but to make our boast the life in Christ, and the glories of an exceptional way of life, and to consider nothing better than intimacy with God, and to cry out and say, "O Lord God of hosts, blessed is the man who hopes in You; and in addition to these things, that "One day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I have chosen to be an outcast in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tents of sinners. Because the great day of the Lord is near, near and coming very swiftly; the voice of the day of the Lord is appointed bitter and hard, mighty; that day is a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of ruin and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and cry against the fortified cities and against the high corners. He cuts off again the hope of those who are sometimes disposed to think the words will run to a long postponement. For he shows the punishment to be, as it were, at the door, and the disaster from the war running at their heels. He calls the time in which such things will be, the day of the Lord. And indeed he also named it swift, as coming without any delay, and to be seen before long; and he says its voice is hard and most powerful, hinting, I suppose, at the war-cry of the enemies;

a day, he says, of wrath and tribulation, of desolation and ruin, of darkness and gloom. For what of such things will not happen to those who have come to such a point of misery, as to be in the very terrors of death, and to lie in the worst of evils? And when enemies have captured a city, what will not happen to the captives? Or what excess of outrage will not be practiced? Are not young boys destroyed, and young girls cast down dead, like plants uprooted before their time? Does not despondency, like some night and darkness, blacken the heart of the captured, so that they are at a loss for counsel and thought; all but overshadowing the mind of each with mist and

clouds, not even allowing them to think where on earth they are. Then how is this doubtful? And that the attack of the enemies will be unbearable both for populous cities trained in tactics, and indeed for others, which might be girded with surrounding walls, he has indicated by adding that it will be of a trumpet and A day of clamor is the day of the Lord against the fortified cities and against the high corners. For, as I said, He calls fortified those that are populous, and have a very great fighting class; and high corners, those that are walled.

For the corners always somehow rise up in the circuits of the walls, and stand as towers, higher than the others. 'It is a fearful thing, therefore, to fall into the hands of the living God,' according to what is written. For no one at all will be set against Him; for He Himself is the Lord of hosts. And I will distress men, and they shall walk as blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; and I will pour out their blood as dust, and their flesh as dung. and their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath, because in the fire of his zeal all the earth shall be consumed, for he will make a final end and a haste upon all who dwell on the earth. The meaning of the preceding is very clear, and would require, as I think, no word for clarification. Nevertheless, we will speak summarily. For He threatens them with things beyond all evil, and darkness in their mind;

and He immediately relates the cause, adding, 'Because they have sinned against the Lord.' It is as if He said, 'Having acted insolently toward their brothers, they have also unguardedly acted impiously against the Master of all Himself and would be caught rising up against the divine glory.' If it is indeed entirely discordant and unholy to deprive Him of His own honors, and, as it were, to drive Him from the thrones of divinity, and to enthrone for themselves creation and the forms of irrational beasts. For some attached their worship to calves; others to a certain Astarte and Baal-peor; others to the moon and stars. For this reason, then, He threatens to bring upon them the calamities of war, both a final end and a haste. And the 'final end' would signify the utter destruction of the land of the Jews; while 'haste' signifies that the things foretold would happen, as it were, with speed and without delay. And the word 'haste' often indicates in the sacred writings also an assault of tumults. It is therefore a very terrible thing to sin against brothers; but if indeed the transgressions of some should proceed to such a point of depravity as to grieve even the ineffable nature itself, no means will avert the

consequences of wrath. It is therefore fitting that one should lament the God-hated heretics, who sharpen their tongue against the Son of God, and say that He is created, and indeed in lesser things than those in which the Father is.

And they themselves fashion an idol, as it were, according to what seems good to them, and command that this be worshipped. For if the Son has fallen away entirely from being God by nature, and is a created being, yet is worshipped both by us and by the holy angels, how are we not clearly worshipping creation, just like the children of the Greeks, who fashioned an idol in the form of the sun, or of some other created thing, out of senselessness and vanity of reasonings? Be gathered and be bound together, O undisciplined nation, before you become as a flower that passes away by day, before the wrath of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you. Having shown very well the savagery of the war and the magnitude of the coming calamity, he opportunely turns his discourse again to the need to call them to repentance, at a time when it was easy to persuade them, since they were presumably afraid. For when the mind has at times been hardened and has inclined very much toward the more shameful and abominable things, we do not easily accept even choosing to repent, but fear often compels us to it, even unwillingly. He calls them, therefore, to intimacy with Himself. For just as we say that they fell away and became alienated, having worshipped idols and given their mind to their own passions;

so again we shall understand it as going back, as it were, and taking hold of intimacy with God, choosing to worship Him alone, and to follow His ordinances. And He calls the race of Israel an undisciplined nation, as also dishonoring the ancient commandment itself, and impiously rejecting the law that trains and is able to bring forth every kind of goodness. But He threatens again, that if they are not bound to Him, in the ways we have just mentioned, they will differ in nothing from the flowers in the fields, which are both rotten and quick to wither, and they will surely fall under those things that come from wrath. Therefore, "As long as we have time, let us do good to all. As long as the Master, being long-suffering as God, grants it, let us repent, let us offer supplications, let us cry out with tears, "Do not remember the sins of my youth and my ignorance," let us join ourselves through sanctification and sobriety; for thus we will be sheltered in the day of wrath, and we will wash away the stain from our transgressions before the day of the

Lord's anger comes upon us. For the Judge will surely come from heaven at the appointed times, and will repay each according to his work. Seek the Lord, all you humble of the earth, work judgment, and seek righteousness, seek meekness, and answer for them, so that you may be sheltered in the day of the Lord's wrath.

In what way indeed they might be bound to Him, though being an abominable and uninstructed nation, He clearly indicates. For He commands to seek the Lord, to work judgment and righteousness and to answer for them. God, therefore, is sought by us through choosing to thirst to do what seems good to Him, with all laziness set aside; and we will work judgment, carrying out His divine law, and most unweariedly practicing virtue; and we will gain again the glory of righteousness, being very well crowned with boasts from good works, and treading the truly glorious and blameless path of piety toward God and love toward brothers; "For love is the fulfillment of the law," as it is written. But I think one must add to what I said, the "answer for them," that is, to also speak to others and to admonish brothers; for in this way and not otherwise will we be perfect for virtue. So also our Lord Jesus Christ said that the one most approved in deed and word will be called great in the kingdom of heaven; but least, the one who has practiced teaching and is sufficient for this, but is not yet willing to do what he thinks is right, and commands some to practice it. Does he not somewhere also pronounce woe upon the teachers of the Jews? saying thus, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders;

but you yourselves," he says, "will not so much as touch them with the tip of your finger. Therefore, the proof of the most perfect piety is to both practice virtue and to teach others the things through which they might become illustrious. And that the labor for this is not without reward, the disciple of Christ will make clear, saying, "That he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. But if anyone should think that "answer for them" indicates that it is proper to make a study of them, let him understand it in this way too. For the law of Moses also commanded concerning the oracles of God, that "you shall talk of them when you sit down, and when you walk in the marketplace, when you lie down and when you rise up. And David also sings, "And I will meditate on your statutes always. Because Gaza shall be plundered, and Ashkelon

to destruction, and Ashdod shall be cast out at noonday, and Ekron shall be uprooted. The word again manages something and clearly foretells things that will happen in due time for the encouragement and comfort of those from Israel. And what is this, I shall say.

When Jerusalem was sacked, and all of Judea had been seized by Nebuchadnezzar, the neighboring cities of the foreigners rejoiced over those who had suffered and mocked the vanquished, and they sacrificed to their own gods, as though they had destroyed a race hateful to all; and they dared to say that their trust in God had been proven useless by their circumstances, and they thought that the aid from above was also stronger and better than that of became the hand of the Babylonians. But if anyone from Judea, having left his home and fled his native land during the time of war, arrived among his neighbors expecting to be saved, this one was in a worse state, having encountered men more savage than the Babylonians, those who ought to have shown pity. Therefore, the wretches were insolent against the glory of God, and met those who had fared miserably with harshness and inflexibility, refusing to share their pain; but rather, also savagely burdening the captives with their own coarseness. What then? After this, the people of Israel returned in due course from captivity, when Cyrus reluctantly permitted it, and having come to Jerusalem they were rebuilding the city's wall, and they also rebuilt the divine temple, and were now at last somehow in hope of prospering, with God as their champion.

But when they learned that these things were being done, the Gazans and the Ashkelonites, and indeed the Azotians, and those from the city called Ekron, the Moabites and Idumeans and Ammonites, and certain other nations besides these, were consumed by the flame of envy, and wished to hinder them from enclosing the city with the wall, and so, having gathered together, they campaigned against those who had been recalled from captivity. And the battle was joined in the valley of Jehoshaphat; and they fell and were destroyed, as God strengthened Israel. And they took the cities of the nations by force, so as to reduce them to complete desolation, and to make them pens for flocks. He now recalls this history, as it contains a promise, first of the return from captivity, then of future glory and of victory over all. For he says that Gaza will be plundered, that Ashkelon will go to destruction, and that Azotus will be cast out at noonday; "at noonday" meaning openly and not in the manner of robbers, but clearly and by the law of war;

and that Ekron will be uprooted. And he makes the threat very cleverly in relation to the meaning of the name; for Ekron is interpreted as "uprooting." This very thing he says it will suffer, as if having in its name the indication of the calamity that would be brought upon it. Woe to the inhabitants of the sea coast, settlers from Crete; the word of the Lord is against you, Canaan, land of foreigners.

Having threatened sufficiently, and having foretold what was about to happen to the inhabitants of Palestine—I mean the Gazans and the Ashkelonites, along with the Azotians and those from Ekron—he weaves a similar discourse also against the Phoenician cities, and especially those among them that are situated by the sea. For this reason he says, "Woe to the inhabitants of the sea coast. And since many of the cities in Palestine also dwell by the sea, distinguishing as it were the ones being indicated, he now calls them "settlers from Crete," so that from this we might understand the inhabitants of Phoenicia, whom, as I said, he names settlers from Crete for the following reason. Cretans and Libyans are separated from one another, with the sea lying between them, by very small distances. For as the common account has it, when the wind blows, sometimes the scents of the plants from Crete dart across and kill the wild beasts in Libya, I mean both reptiles and the tribes of venomous creatures. So then, Libyans and Cretans were ranked as one nation. From there, having at various times sent out a colony, they inhabited and built the cities in Phoenicia, just as, of course, the Cappadocians at various times did for the cities of Palestine. And indeed God says somewhere through the voice of Amos, "Are you not as sons of the Ethiopians to me, O sons of Israel? says the Lord.

Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt, and the foreigners from Cappadocia, and the Syrians from a pit. And he calls the Palestinians "foreigners," but the Phoenicians "Syrians," whom he also claims to have brought up from a pit, calling Libya, I think, a pit, because the country is perhaps somewhere both hollow and low-lying. For the sea beside it widens into bays, almost as if it were retreating behind the mainland, and penetrating into the very southernmost regions. But it should be known that instead of "From a pit," the other interpreters have named Cyrene, because the Phoenicians are more clearly shown to be colonists of the Libyans; for Cyrene is a most notable city of Libya. Therefore, he says, the word of the Lord is upon you, O sojourners of the Cretans, that is, Libyans; and he says

"sojourners" instead of "colonists" and "migrants. And again he calls them Canaan. For all who inhabited the cities of Phoenicia were Canaanites, even if they were from the beginning colonists of the Cretans. But it should be known that again the other interpreters, instead of "sojourners of the Cretans," have published, "The word of the Lord is upon you, a nation destroyed. But since it was necessary to follow again the writing of the Seventy, we have brought forward what is from history, which tradition brings to us, and which the word of the prophet has also sealed as true.

And I will destroy you from your dwelling, and Crete shall be a pasture for flocks and a fold for sheep. Behold, again he speaks to them as settlers, and discourses to them as migrants, and has testified to the truth of the history; for he says he will destroy them from their dwelling, that is, from the land in which they have both sojourned and settled; he says that their cities will come to such a state of desolation as to become a pasture and a fold for flocks. And again he calls Phoenicia, or those in Phoenicia, "Crete," as being from Crete, which borders on and is a neighbor of the Libyans. And in ancient times they were one, and the races were mixed with one another in blood and customs and laws. And the seacoast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; upon them they shall pasture in the houses of Ashkelon, in the evening they shall lie down from the presence of the sons of Judah, because the Lord their God has visited them, and has turned back their captivity. I have already said before, that all the nations, inflamed with envy, were gathered together, and were marching against Jerusalem after the time of the captivity, and indeed, when war broke out in the valley of Jehoshaphat, those who impiously plotted against the redeemed were defeated and have fallen.

Therefore, having conquered, those of Israel grazed upon the fields of the foreigners as if they were deserted, and used the desolate cities of the Philistines, that is, of the Palestinians, as enclosures, because all in them had been utterly destroyed. Therefore, he says, the seacoast, that is, the cities of the Palestinians by the sea, which were once populous, the fearsome and hard to conquer, shall be a pasture for flocks for the remnant of the house of Judah. For those who were saved from captivity and scarcely left over, they themselves have conquered, they themselves also will lie down in the houses of Ashkelon in the evening. For towards evening the shepherds shut the herds of livestock up in the enclosures. What then is such great power? Or

how will this be, which is beyond both faith and all reason? Because, he says, the Lord their God has visited them and has turned back their captivity. It is as if he were to say: He has ceased His anger against them, He has forgiven them their offenses and arms Himself alongside those of Israel, as of old, and He grants the victory over their adversaries, and this, effortlessly. Therefore, whenever God turns away from us as we sin, we will lie under the feet of our enemies, and there is no one to save or to defend.

But if He should again watch over those who strive for virtue and wish to live according to the law, we shall be superior to every war, and we shall very easily prevail over our adversaries, and He himself will give full assurance, saying about every righteous person: "Because "he has hoped in Me, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because "he has known My name. He will cry to Me, and I will hear "him; I am with him in affliction; I will rescue him and "I will glorify him. With length of days I will satisfy him, and "I will show him My salvation. I have heard the reproaches of Moab and the buffetings of the sons of Ammon, with which they reproached my people and magnified themselves against my borders. For this reason, as I live, says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, For Moab shall be as Sodom, and the sons of Ammon as Gomorrah, and Damascus abandoned, as a heap of the threshing floor and made to disappear forever; and the remnants of my people shall plunder them, and the remnants of my nation shall inherit them. When Jerusalem was sacked, and those of Israel had fared miserably, the neighboring nations, as I said, mocked them, and they thought that the capture of Judea was the work of their own falsely-named gods, since the hand that had always from the beginning helped them was completely overturned and gone, perhaps, to nothing—I mean, of course, that of the all-ruling God.

For it is not at all unlikely that some should arrive at this foolishness, as having been deceived, having served wood and stones, and having been ignorant of the God who is by nature and in truth. Therefore, he says, I have heard the reproaches of the Moabites and the buffetings of the sons of Ammon. For I think that he who strikes the suffering with reproaches, and opens a unbridled mouth against them, will differ in no way from one who strikes them, perhaps with a rod or a stone, belching out and saying things by which it was likely that some would be embittered to despondency and grief, and he makes the assault of the calamity more burdensome. But since they were also convicted of speaking rashly against the divine and ineffable

glory itself, for this reason, he says, having endured the justice of the Sodomites, they will go to destruction, and perhaps making the sufferings of Gomorrah seem small by their own calamities, and late and with difficulty they will know through the events themselves the power of the one who punishes. Damascus, indeed, the illustrious and conspicuous metropolis of the Phoenicians, in which are the palaces, will be a heap of straw, having no ear of grain, of which there is no account, but its end is for burning, that is, for scattering. For the gusts of winds scatter the heaps of chaff everywhere;

and in the same manner, the forces of the captors scatter everywhere those in the captured cities, falling upon them like the most violent winds. But that the accomplishment of such evils will at the right times be not for another, but for the very people who have suffered and been reproached, he implies, saying, The remnants of my people shall plunder them and the remnants of my nation shall inherit them. For, as I have already said, he calls the remnants of the nation those who were saved from captivity, who have prevailed over the nations, and having captured the cities of the foreigners, have reduced them to complete desolation. Therefore, when the God of all economically disciplines the Church, either by bringing on tribulations, or by allowing persecutions to take place, when enemies attack her, either Greeks perhaps, or unholy heretics, let no one smile scornfully, but rather let him await the end of the entire struggle. For those who laugh broadly at times, and all but reproach Christ, as not defending his own, that is, as they think, being too weak for this, will suffer the passions of the Sodomites, and will be food for fire, and in addition to this, they will find those whom they considered to be defeated to be victorious. This is for them in return for their insolence, because they reproached and magnified themselves against the Lord Almighty. The Lord will be manifest against them, and will destroy all the gods of the nations of the earth.

This, he says, is their portion and this their lot. For they have behaved insolently even against the ineffable glory itself, the wretches speaking rashly and uttering reviling words, and they all but rose up against the One who is beyond all things, using a terrible and unbridled audacity for this. But since they attributed the glory for being able to do all things to their own gods, the Lord will be manifest against them, that is, he will show them his own power, by destroying all their gods. For their temples have been destroyed and have fallen by the hand of Israel, and the handmade idols have become

the work of fire everywhere and in every nation of the captured. Where then of the gods the power? Or how could they save others, who are not even able to defend themselves? Or rather, what is deaf and senseless matter anyway? "The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands," and if it is not offensive to say, or rather, it shall be said, "What profit is a carved image, that they have carved it, a molten image they have cast, a false vision," according to the voice of the prophet? and as the divine David says, "May all who make them become like them, and all who trust in them. And each one from his own place will worship him, all the islands of the nations.

We say that the Lord was revealed upon them, as one who has destroyed all their gods, long ago through those from Israel who vigorously burned along with the cities of the foreigners both the statues in the sanctuaries and the altars in them. But at the time of the Incarnation of the Only-begotten, one might see this having happened more truly, when the Word, being God, became like us and was revealed; and so the divine disciples said that they had touched with their hands and seen with their eyes the very one who is from the beginning, whom they have heard. For he who as God is beyond being seen became manifest, and David somewhere psalms, "God will come openly, our God, and he will not be silent. But since he became manifest "and was seen upon earth," as it is written, "and lived among men," then the abominable and profane herds of idols perished; and the power of the devil has been completely destroyed, and from now on each of those brought to the knowledge of the truth through faith in Christ offers worship through him and with him to God the Father from his own place, and God is no longer known only throughout Judea, but also the lands and cities of the nations, even if they are separated from Judea by an intervening sea, no less do they approach Christ, they offer prayers, they lift up doxologies, they honor him with unceasing praises. For long ago "his name was great in Israel;

but now it has become most known to those everywhere, and earth and sea are full of his glory. And this, then, was that which is said, "As I live, says the Lord, surely all the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord. So then, he says, each will worship from his own place. For the law, prefiguring the beauty of the Church, erected for those from Israel that ancient tabernacle; as a type of which that famous temple was also raised in Jerusalem. And the divine Moses, or rather God through him, commanded the ancients that those from all the land of the Jews who wished to worship should go up

to Jerusalem, and so to sacrifice and worship God, and death was the penalty for those who sacrificed outside the temple. But since the time of the shadow has passed, the things in types have ceased, and we have now come to know that the divine is not in a place, nor indeed does "the Most High dwell in temples made with hands," but rather he fills the heavens and the earth and the things below; for this reason, believing him to be everywhere and in all things, wherever each one happens to be, there he makes his worship, as having near the God who says, "I am a God at hand, says the Lord, and not a God far off.

But it should be known that sometimes the sacred writing calls the churches islands, as if lying in the sea in this world, and being poured around by the bitter waters of the tribulations in it, and all but being struck by the most violent waves of persecutions, yet unshakeably established and holding up high, and not being submerged by the afflictions. For the churches are unshaken through Christ, "and the gates of Hades will not prevail against them. Therefore, if someone should wish to understand "islands of the nations" as the churches from the nations, he will not depart from a fitting purpose; as being washed about by the billows of temptations, but having their stability in Christ, to whom be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. OF THE SAME AUTHOR, ON THE SAME PROPHET, BOOK TWO. And you, Ethiopians, are the slain of my sword. He remembers every people, that is, nation, that warred against Israel and prattled against the divine glory. He proceeds therefore from the Idumeans and Ammonites to the Ethiopians, or those situated to the east and south, and inhabiting the neighboring land of the Persians; that is, the Egyptians, as being adjacent and neighbors to those of Israel; and the land of the Egyptians is also a part of Ethiopia; and indeed, it is the custom of the sacred writings to call the rivers of the Egyptians the rivers of Ethiopia.

For they themselves also drink from the Geon, concerning which the scripture says, "This is it which compasses the whole land of Ethiopia. You Ethiopians therefore shall also be the slain of my sword. And he calls the sword of the Jews his own, as he himself brings it against those who have acted unholily both against his glory, as I said, and indeed against Israel. But since the divinely inspired scripture also knows of spiritual Ethiopians, let us say something about them as well, not departing from the meaning of the things set forth. Somewhere the blessed David, singing as if to our Lord Jesus

Christ, said, "You "broke the heads of the dragons on the water. You crushed the "head of the dragon, you gave him as food to the Ethiopian "peoples. And also elsewhere, "The Ethiopians will fall "down before him, and his enemies will lick the dust. And somewhere the bride prefigured in the Song of Songs confesses to be both black and beautiful. Therefore, Ethiopians should be understood as those having, as it were, a dark and unilluminated mind, those not yet enlightened, and not having the divine light. But those who fall down before Christ, just like the bride, are made brilliant by him, for they have cried out in prayer, "And let the brightness of the Lord our God be upon us; but those who have an uncleanness that is hard to wash away, and have remained in their blackness, will indeed feast upon the heads of the dragon;

for the apostate dragon is their food; and they will be subject to the sword. And I think the power of the saying is most fitting for the unclean spirits, which Christ has wounded, having cast them out of their tyranny over us, and destroying with them the father of darkness, the inventor of all sin, the one who darkens "the minds of "the unbelievers, so that the light of the Gospel of the "glory of Christ might not shine. And this, I think, is what the wise Isaiah also said to us: "And it will be in "that day, God will bring his holy, great, and strong "sword upon the dragon, the crooked serpent, upon the "dragon, the fleeing serpent, and he will destroy the dragon. And I will stretch out my hand against the north and destroy the Assyrian, and I will make Nineveh a desolation, waterless as a desert. and flocks shall feed in the midst of it, and all the beasts of the earth, and chameleons and hedgehogs shall lodge in its carved ceilings, and beasts shall cry out in its breaches and ravens in its gateways. I will lay hold, he says, of the lands and cities to the east and north, and with the others I will destroy the Assyrians and the desolate cities, and I will add to them the renowned Nineveh, the metropolis of the Chaldeans. It will be waterless, like impassable and uninhabited lands. And it is likely again that the saying compares the multitude of inhabitants to waters;

for this is a custom of the sacred writings. And indeed, concerning the attack of the Assyrians, which they made against Jerusalem, another of the holy prophets foretold, saying, "Behold, "waters are coming from the north, and will become a flooding "torrent. Therefore, when he says that Nineveh will be waterless, I would say that he means it will be empty of its inhabit-

ants; but that flocks will feed in the midst of it he asserts, setting this I think as a sign of its complete desolation and of no one dwelling in it; for things of the fields do not grow in a city. But if indeed grasses should perchance grow even in a city, what is happening is a sort of clear admission that it is completely bereft of men. And he adds a not moderate number of other signs. For he says that all the beasts of the earth will lodge in it, and that chameleons and hedgehogs will lie down in its coffered ceilings; and indeed also in the burrows, that is, either in pits, or even in caves, the wild beasts will cry out, and ravens will lodge in its gateways. It is doubtful to no one of sound mind that neither would hedgehogs lodge in houses, nor indeed would beasts make their lairs in the middle of a city, nor would night-ravens frequent the gateways, unless there were the greatest possible leisure, very pleasing to those of such a nature.

For somehow beasts, and indeed the other things of which we speak, do not like to lodge with men; how could they? but rather wherever there might be a great desolation, and the way of life is completely at leisure, and the breadth of the desolation all but guarantees safety, and removes it from all fear. But if it is necessary to say something more about these things, let us secure our own hearts, and with all our strength let us refuse to offend God in any way at all, so that we may not become a dwelling place for wicked and savage beasts, I mean of the unclean spirits, with all virtue having been removed from us. And this I think is what was spoken very well and wisely through the voice of Jeremiah to Jerusalem: "You shall be chastised with toil and scourge, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from you, lest I make you an impassable land, which shall not be inhabited. For when our God removes virtue, abominable and unholy passions will by all means rush into the mind and heart, and will dwell there like certain beasts, and the wild multitude of unclean spirits will also rush in with them. Because her stature is a cedar. This is the scornful city, that dwells in hope, that says in her heart, "I am, and there is none after me. How has she become a desolation, a pasture for beasts; everyone who passes through her will hiss and shake his hands.

As always choosing to be proud, and as arrogant and boastful, Nineveh is portrayed. And this was true, as she raised a most haughty brow against every nation and every power, and considered the strength of others to be of little worth at all. And the prophet Habakkuk also testified to this, saying of the king of the Assyrians, that "And he will revel among kings, and tyrants are

his playthings, and he will mock every fortress. That the metropolis of the Chaldeans, then, was exceedingly haughty, and lifted up on high, and greatly tending toward insolence, he again makes clear, likening her to the stature of a cedar, and calling her scornful. And you may learn that this was said rightly and accurately from the words of the Rabshakeh; who, when he had come into Judea, and then attacked those on the wall, prattled on about the highest glory. For he said, "Thus says the king: Let not Hezekiah deceive you with words, which will not be able to deliver you, and let not Hezekiah say to you that God will deliver you. and a little later, "Have the gods of the nations, each one, delivered his own land from the hand of the king of the Assyrians? This, then, is the scornful city, that dwells and says, "I am, and there is none after me.

Since, then, she loves to make such shameful and accursed arrogance a matter of glorious boasting, for this reason she will finally descend to such a state of misery, that it will be necessary to say of her, How have you become a desolation, a pasture for beasts; and the "how" would not be of one asking and wishing to learn, but rather of one marveling at the change beyond hope. For great and unexpected evils are not without wonder, and they are wont somehow to astound those who see them, or those who have learned of them. Thus also will everyone hiss at and will move his hands, striking them against each other, as I suppose, and applauding out of amazement, and sending forth a sound from his mouth, one with a hiss and rather indistinct. And through these things he depicts for us very well, as it were, one who is dumbfounded at unexpected calamities. "God therefore opposes the proud; and I say that the command is wise and worthy of acceptance, "Do not exalt yourself, lest you fall," and again, "He who makes his house high seeks destruction. For just as buildings raised to a great height and beyond measure are somehow more prone to shaking, and are afflicted with the greatest suspicion of collapsing upon themselves; so also the soul of a man, swelling up to arrogance with the vanity of his thoughts, is unsound and easily overturned and quick to fall.

But if indeed the matter were to be done against God, then at that point there is no support left. O the glorious and redeemed city, the dove. He immediately proceeds to the remembrance of the Jews, I mean of Jerusalem, which, since the Assyrians captured it, has paid the penalty. And the rest of the nations have also been punished for mocking the glory of God, and he

grieves, as it were, for her who suffered things beyond hope, and for the incurable calamity he does not ascribe the causes to anyone else, but says that she herself has been her own solicitor. He laments therefore and says, O the glorious and redeemed city, the dove. For why, he says, have you become altogether most dishonored, pitiable and captive, you who were so brilliant and illustrious, who ruled over every nation, and conquered without toil those who resisted, ever harsh and hard to encounter for those wishing to lead out against you, fully equipped according to the law of war; you who were redeemed from the bondage of the Egyptians by many signs and wonders and who loosened your neck from their unbearable oppression; for whose sake rivers were changed into blood, and hail and darkness ravaged the land of the Egyptians, with whom the sea also took up arms, drowning the pursuers, and countless other memorable things happened besides these? O city, the dove, that is, the most beautiful. For the divinely-inspired scripture somehow always takes the bird as a symbol for beauty;

just as, for example, the bridegroom wished to dignify the bride depicted in the Song with the name of the dove, saying, "Arise, come, my neighbor, my beautiful one, my dove. And Jerusalem was exceedingly beautiful, because it was illumined by the divine law, and was seen to be distinguished by the glories of the priesthood, and to practice righteousness, and to worship the God who is by nature, and to perform the services to him. And this is a spiritual beauty. But you might also understand Jerusalem to have been called a dove in another way. For it is always the custom for the bird, even if someone should carry it very far away from its beloved nest, and then give it the opportunity to fly, to run back home again and be brought back to its own. which indeed we will find happened in the case of Jerusalem itself. For having piety from its forefathers, it went down to Egypt; but departing, as it were, from the worship of its fathers, it worshipped idols there; but it was called through Moses, and flew away, in a certain manner, from the error in Egypt, returning back to God. But what, he says, is the reason that the redeemed city was captured at all, and came under others again? She did not listen to a voice. For she heard God on Mount Sinai saying, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord.

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. But disregarding what was commanded, she foolishly slid into

polytheistic error. Therefore, she did not listen to a voice, namely, the one that came to her on Mount Sinai; or rather, we shall take 'voice' to mean 'admonition'. She did not receive instruction. For treating with insolence the law that was a pedagogue and brought her to righteousness, she turned to "teachings, the commandments of men," and following her own opinions, outside has departed from the straight path, and has remained ignorant and without a share in the divine teachings. She has not trusted in the Lord. For when war was afflicting, and the contest was at hand, and dangers were hanging over, it was necessary for her to love and imitate the piety of her ancestors, and to trust in the one God who saves, she "called upon Egypt," according to what is written, "and they went to the Assyrians," and hired Syrians, that is, Arabians, almost dishonoring the divine power. And she has not drawn near to her God. We draw near to God through all reasonableness, and having chosen to do what is pleasing to him. and we draw near in another way, believing him alone to be by nature and in truth God and king of the universe and creator, and accepting no other at all besides him.

Her rulers within her are like roaring lions. He enumerates the accusations, and brings forward the reasons for which he has been rightly moved and inclined to anger, so that he might then appear to be punishing in justice the impious who have sunk to this point of wickedness, so that the matter has become somehow unbearable even for God himself. Therefore, he says, her rulers were like lions. And what do they do? When hunger whets them, and calls them to a desire for food, they run strongly around mountains and valleys, roaring terribly and discordantly; and if they should see anything suitable for food, as if thundering, they bring about such fear that it seems to be paralyzed, and as if bound by fetters, to await the devourer. And some of the leaders in Israel were doing this, threatening at times to inflict the death prescribed by the law for transgressors even on those who had done nothing wrong, if they did not choose to do what was pleasing and dear to them, and they accuse others who yield, that is, those who are stepping away from their own possessions for the judges themselves. For he records such evils of theirs also through another prophet, saying; and this is Micah; "They became "those who devise troubles and work evil on their beds, "and with the daylight they accomplished them, because they did not "lift their hands to God.

And they coveted fields, "and they plundered orphans, and oppressed houses, and "they plundered a man and his house, a man and his "inheritance. And in like manner do the inventors of heresies roar against those who have chosen to live in simple faith, and opening a mouth hateful to God, they almost devour those who know nothing, making them more ignorant, and instilling in them cold and perverted thoughts, and so telling them myths, and persuading them to think what is supposed by them to be right, so that those caught in their snares seem already to have perhaps died, and to differ little from senseless stones, to whom one might cry out, and very fittingly, "Awake, you who are sleeping, and arise from the dead, "and Christ will shine on you. But, as the blessed David says, "God will break their teeth in their "mouth, the Lord has shattered the molars of the lions. Her judges are like wolves of Arabia, they did not leave anything over for the morning. They say that the wolves in Arabia go beyond every beast in ferocity, and are exceedingly sick with insatiability for food, and are so swift in running as to easily escape every pursuer. For he said somewhere through another prophet concerning the horses from Babylon, "swifter than the "wolves of Arabia.

He therefore takes for the present the greediness of the wolves as a type of the judges, as if with whole mouth and insatiable teeth consuming those being judged, by demanding very many things and things beyond their means for the perversion of justice, and so that what is pleasing to the divine law might be impiously bent to what is pleasing to certain others. But it were better for them to understand that, as the writer of Proverbs says, "For one who receives gifts in his bosom, his ways do not prosper. "For gifts blind the eyes of the wise and ruin "just words," according to the it is written. For what at all is the excess from bribery? And how will shameful little gain profit those who love it? Rather, what loss would it not work for them? For blessed Paul is true in saying, "But those who want to be rich fall into temp- "tation and a snare and many foolish and "harmful desires, which plunge men into ruin "and destruction. "A good name is therefore to be chosen rather than great "riches," and the saying is truly very wise and precise. Her prophets are spirit-bearing men, despisers. It is well said "her" prophets here, because they have not become God's, speaking perilously the things "from their own heart and not from the mouth of the Lord," according to what is written. But the saying speaks ironically, calling them spirit-bearers;

not as if they had truly been partakers of the Holy Spirit, but as daring to feign the business of prophecy, and not hesitating to say that they are full of the Holy Spirit. Wishing therefore to be, he says, both prophets and spirit-bearers, and thus fashioning the august name around their own heads, they have become so contemptuous as not even to know what moderation is, but also to destroy others to whom they spoke things from the heart, and this, the wretches, for some small and most worthless gains, and as the prophet Ezekiel says, "for a handful of barley and "a piece of bread. And to this they have slid into madness, so as to say that their own counsels are those of the ineffable glory, and to insist that the words bubbling forth from their own opinion are divine oracles. And so He said of them through the voice of Jeremiah, "I did not send the "prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, "yet they prophesied; and when the prophet himself cried out clearly and said, "O Sovereign Lord, behold, "their prophets prophesy to them and say, 'You shall not see "the sword, and there shall be no famine among you, for I will give truth and "peace on the land and in this place;" God of all all but cried out in response, saying, "The prophets prophesy lies "in My name; I did not send "them, and I did not command them, and I did not speak to "them;

for they prophesy to you false visions and divinations and omens "and the preferences of their own heart. "If they are prophets, and if the word of the Lord is in them, "let them meet with Me. What is the chaff to the wheat? So "are my words, says the Lord. Are not my words like a "burning fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock? For the word from God reaches to the depth of the mind, and all but breaks the heart of the hearers; but cold and weak is the word from human counsel, such as was that of the unholy false prophets. Her priests profane the holy things and do violence to the law. Nor has the chosen race itself been found blameless, that is, the one from the tribe of Levi; for he says that they too profane the holy things and do violence to the law. For it is written, "For the lips of a priest will guard judgment, and they will seek "the law from his mouth. But as the Master of all says somewhere again, "The priests did not say, 'Where is "the Lord?" For not wishing to make the law clear to those who do not know it, nor indeed hastening to lead the people under their hand to what is pleasing to God, this, I think, is what it means to do violence to the law. And their offenses do not stop here; for he also says that they profane the holy things.

For the law through Moses has much observance concerning sacrifices and offerings, both when each should be offered and in what manner it must be completed; but they, as was likely, offered the sacrifices, but carelessly and negligently, not deigning to observe the proper time or the prescribed forms, but perhaps not even purified, nor indeed arrayed in their proper vestments and performing the sacred rites in an orderly manner, but dishonoring as something useless the so venerable and admirable liturgy. Therefore it must be guarded by those of the to the ministers of the Church, not to profane the holy things; and the manner of profanation is not one, but varied and many. For it is necessary to be purified in both soul and body, and to shake off every form of loathsome pleasure, and rather to be adorned with zeal for good works, remembering the words of the inspired Paul "Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out "the desire of the flesh. But the Lord is righteous in her midst, and He will not do wrong; morning by morning He will give His judgment, and not unto victory, injustice. The righteous is somehow always incompatible with the unrighteous, and the pure would not go together with the profane. "For what "communion can light have with darkness? For such things are in conflict, and one might see them as far removed from friendship with one another.

Since, therefore, God who rules over all has loved righteousness and has not known injustice, how were the utterly wicked crimes of the Jews to prevail always, that is, to be carried through to the end, without being checked completely? And it seems somehow to be a kind of injustice, not to subject the sinner to penalties, and not to demand justice of one who has chosen to live wantonly and unholily, who has cared nothing for the laws, but has so inclined to injustice as to consider nothing better, and to make a brilliant boast of things for which it was fitting to be seen blushing. Since, therefore, the Lord is righteous in her midst and will not do wrong; for He would not tolerate those accustomed to do wrong; morning by morning He will execute His judgment, that is, at dawn and openly and as in the day at last, no longer holding back the things that come from His wrath, but bringing them into the open, and making them manifest, and, as it were, placing in sight the things that were foretold. For he will not allow injustice to run on to victory. And "unto victory" signifies unto complete victory, that is, to the uttermost. For when the impious have been punished, the way of injustice will certainly cease; for it no longer has those who practice it. It is necessary,

therefore, for those who are truly sound of mind to consider that the Master loves justice, and would not tolerate those who sin unrestrainedly.

But if one should turn to repentance, and shed a tear over his own sins, he will meet with a most gentle one, and will ask for amnesty, and will escape the snares and the necessity of being punished. But if one should be unyielding, and have a mind difficult to change towards choosing what is more fitting, he will sit in his own failings, or rather he will be destroyed at last, and will be under the master's movement, because He does not tolerate sinners forever. In corruption I have torn down the proud, their corners have vanished; I will make their ways desolate altogether, so that no one passes through; their cities have failed, because there is no one and no inhabitant. For since, as I said, the priests were profaning the holy things, and some were acting impiously even against the law itself, "but the Lord is "righteous in her midst; morning by morning He will execute His judgment. And what is this? He tore down the proud in corruption, that is, He delivered the arrogant and insolent to destruction. For are they not arrogant, who are accustomed to fight against God, and who, as it were, set their own will against the ordinances given through Moses; and who have cared very little for the divine laws, but turn aside to what is excessively unbridled and say to the Lord, "Depart from me, I do not want to know Your ways"?

Then how could one doubt, if he is poor in spirit and humble in heart, according to what is written, that the one who is bright and well-reined and looking much to obedience is the one whom He deems worthy of His oversight? And indeed, through one of the holy prophets the God of all said, "And upon whom will I "look, but upon him who is humble and quiet and "who trembles at My words? Therefore, the arrogant race was torn down to destruction, and their corners also vanished. And by corners I think the walls are now meant, and the enclosures of the cities. For the corners are somehow always high, having very prominent towers. It is therefore perhaps as if he were to say again, The cities among them will be bereft of walls. And in addition to these things, he threatened to make his ways desolate, clearly those of Israel, so that no one would pass through at all. And it seems to me that he wishes to indicate something of this sort: the law which he commanded through Moses, that if the feast of tabernacles were celebrated at the proper times, they were to go up to Jerusalem from all the land of the Jews, and fulfill the customary rites there.

Therefore, when the cities were shaken, those in them perished, then we say that the ways were made desolate, as no one was any longer coming through them, and especially for the purpose of fulfilling the feast appointed for them, as they had formerly done, speeding along. For the companies of the Jews have fallen into such misery that there are no feast-goers, nor can those who have barely been saved and have survived the war be in good spirits. And so the prophet Jeremiah made this matter a part of his laments, saying, "The ways of Zion mourn because there are none who come to the feast. But that the word is true, the text before us will again make clear to us; for it immediately adds, "The cities have failed, because there is no one and no inhabitant. "It is therefore a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. For when we provoke him by choosing to transgress, and this without restraint, then indeed, and very justly, being as it were entangled in the accusations of arrogance, we are dragged down to destruction, and we will be naked of the garment from above, and we will find our heart in ourselves as easily captured and unvalled, and in addition to these things, we will not find the ways of righteousness; but one who has chosen to follow the Lord's will, and who submits to him the tender neck of his soul, would easily turn away from such evils.

I said, "Surely you will fear me and receive instruction, and you will not be destroyed from her sight, all that I have executed upon her. That they would again be caught pouring out the things of wrath upon their own heads, he tries to teach. For He has often admonished, having commanded that it is necessary to live in the fear of God, and that it is fitting to receive instruction, that is, clearly, the instruction through the law and the prophets. For it was in this way, and not otherwise, that they could shake off wrath and ward off what had happened. But since Israel was unbending, hard, and intractable, he has fallen away from instruction, that is, he has become outside of being wise, and has been destroyed as if from her sight, although it was necessary to always linger among good instructions and to be ready for anything whatever that is pleasing to God. For in this way, he says, it was possible to turn aside all the things that I have executed upon her. Therefore, when we cast out the divine fear from our own mind, when we refuse instruction and consider being wise of little or no account at all, then we will surely suffer those things which would befit those who are accustomed to show contempt; then God will also take vengeance, and will demand an ac-

count for the acts of unholiness. It is necessary, then, to remember someone saying that "The fear of the Lord makes life.

"The fear of the Lord is glory and a boast. And it is also "pure," that is, purifying, "enduring forever and ever," according to the voice of the psalmist. Prepare, arise early, all their gleaning has been destroyed. For since you did not receive, he says, instruction from me, but have rejected and hated both living in fear and in equity, prepare yourself for flight and to suffer now the things which it was possible to escape, if you had been a lover of virtue and wise. And indeed he commanded to rise early, showing that the time of the calamity was at the gates, and as it were coming tomorrow, and that it would certainly be present at the beginning of dawn. And this was to cut off the hope of postponement, and not allowing them to think that there will be some truce and delay and that a long time will pass in between, perhaps passing on the things of wrath to their descendants. Therefore, as for a necessary matter, prepare yourself and rise early for flight. For you will go as a captive to your enemies, and having left the land that bore you, you will be miserable among others. Then the God of all says to the Prophet, all but scowling at those who have been captured: all the gleaning has been destroyed of them. What this might also mean, we will say as we can.

The tyrants of the Babylonians have sacked Samaria and other cities of Judea besides, first Pul, then after him Shalmaneser, and third Sennacherib. And just as if having harvested a vineyard, they returned again to their own land, leaving Israel with very few remnants, and as it were having left them only a gleaning. We say a gleaning is the small clusters of grapes, consisting of a few berries, which, being hidden in the leaves, often escape the eye of the one gathering. And another of the holy prophets says something like this: "Woe is me, my soul, for I have become as one gathering stubble in the harvest, and as a gleaning in the vintage, there being no cluster to eat the first-ripe fruit. Therefore they indeed harvested, but Nebuchadnezzar, having arrived after them, destroyed even the gleaning itself, and having gleaned the small remnant of Israel, he returned home, and continued boasting greatly. And so the prophet Jeremiah lamented captured Jerusalem, saying of those who had laid it waste, "Let all their wickedness come before thy face; and glean them as they have gleaned me; and again, "Behold, O Lord, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat the fruit of their womb? The cook has made a gleaning.

Whenever, therefore, we provoke God, then deprived of all help and stripped of mercy, we will be given over to our enemies, and no remnant of virtue or goodness will remain in us, as Satan gleans all that is good in us, and as it were gathering up a gleanings, perhaps even the very desires in the mind that lead it to choose to practice virtue. Therefore wait for me, says the Lord, until the day of my resurrection for a testimony. For since, having disregarded the divine commandments, they have been given over to their enemies, and have fallen into the hand of him who destroyed even the gleanings itself, he commands them now to wait and to endure, suffering their servitude with strength, until he should be roused to help them, which help he, through the holy prophets, almost testified to and clearly foretold, that it would be in due season. Therefore, "the day of resurrection for a testimony" signifies the time of help, which he testified beforehand would surely come. And this is the historical account; but we say that the contemplation of the preceding things has turned out to be a declaration of the mystery concerning Christ, and that it intends to make clear the time of redemption, that which is universal and most general, that is, the one through Christ.

For long ago, when the seventy years were completed, the God of all was raised up for the help of those who had suffered those things, but in the last times of the age the Only-begotten became man, not only to deliver Israel, but so that, leading away all the nations from slavery under the devil, he might declare them free, and release them from corruption and filth and sin, and above all else from worshipping creation rather than the creator. And since he became man, "He endured the cross, despising the shame," so that by his own blood he might acquire for God the Father both those still living, and those whom "death had already swallowed up," according to what is written. "For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. Reasonably, therefore, was it said to the ancients, Therefore wait for me, says the Lord, until the day of my resurrection for a testimony. and Christ's coming back to life is like a testimony that death has been abolished, with whom we ourselves have also been raised, justified through faith, and escaping together with death the mother of death, sin. Because my judgment is for the gatherings of nations, to receive kings, to pour out upon them all the wrath of my anger; because in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed.

To those of the Chaldeans He threatens the nations with devastation, that which came about through Cyrus and all who were his fellow soldiers and invaded with him, overrunning the cities of the Babylonians and having a most dreadful assault against all. Therefore, He says, My judgment will be for the assembly of nations, so as to receive kings; it is clear that He means those named; to punish through them also the assemblies of nations, which were very much defeated by their hand and strength, and enduring every kind of cruelty; for I will pour out upon them, He says, all the anger of My wrath. For it is true that God does not punish great and excessive transgressions with moderate movements; but for whatever transgressions one might be caught, He always brings punishments of equal weight. And that the affairs of the Chaldeans were about to be almost utterly burned, He made clear by saying, For in the fire of My jealousy all the earth shall be consumed. And what kind of jealousy, or over whom at all, the prophet Zechariah will clarify by saying, "Thus says the Lord Almighty: I have been jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, and with great anger I am angry against the nations that are at ease; for whereas I was but a little angry, they furthered the disaster. Thus indeed we will approach the preceding things historically; but they might also be understood otherwise, with the contemplations transferred to the mystery of Christ.

For He said, through what has already been read before, Therefore wait for Me, says the Lord, for the day of My resurrection as a testimony; because My judgment is for the assemblies of nations, to receive kings, to pour out upon them all the anger of My wrath. For Christ rose again, having despoiled Hades, since it was not possible, being Life by nature, for Him to be held by death, according to what is written. Indeed, He did not leave under the hands of the devil those who were accepting faith in Him; but He makes a holy and God-befitting judgment upon the assemblies of nations, that is, the herds of demons, and those very ones who once held power and reigned over the lost, as it were receiving and shutting them up, and casting them into the lowest abyss, that is, into Hades, and pouring out all His wrath upon them, and almost consuming them with fire, by His ineffable and divine power, moved by great jealousy. For He Himself was angry a little, because of the transgression in Adam; "but they furthered the disaster," at once turning all under heaven away from God, and stifling the mind of those under their hand with the wages of sin. Therefore the Word of God was jealous for the

spiritual Zion, that is, the Church. For He delivered her, and He Himself "presented her to Himself," as the blessed Paul writes, "not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but rather holy and blameless.

For then I will turn to the peoples a language for its generation, that all may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him under one yoke. From the ends of the rivers of Ethiopia they will bring sacrifices to Me. He says, that when that of the Babylonians has been ravaged, and the arrogant have been cast down in destruction, the nations will recognize the power of God that shakes them. And those who once laughed at Israel falling and perishing, when they see him going home brilliantly, and returning again to the holy city, while those who formerly ravaged him have utterly perished, then they will change their tongue and will henceforth dedicate it to praises for God, although they formerly shook their heads, thinking and saying that Judea was captured, because the tyrant of the Babylonians perhaps prevailed over the one helping them, that is, God. When therefore they see the turn of events to the opposite, then they will convert their tongues according to their generations, that is, according to tribes and races, to doxologies to God; and they would choose, I think, to serve under one yoke, and to offer sacrifices, even if they were situated far away in the position of their countries, and inhabited the lands of the Ethiopians. And let these things, for now, be said again concerning the letter; but we say that the has come to pass A word concerning the times of the visitation, and he sets forth a clear sign of the change of tongues.

for it is written in the Acts of the holy Apostles, that during the days of the holy Pentecost they were all gathered together "in one place, and behold, there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting, and behold, there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and it sat upon each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. At that time, therefore, he says, I will change the tongue for the peoples. For they all heard them speaking "in his own language," "Parthians and Medes and Elamites," and the other nations. But observe the careful wording. For he said he would change the tongue for its generation, that is, remaining thus with those who once spoke until the end of their life, or generation. For the sign came to them, on whom the sacred writing also said the tongues rested; for this reason he says that I will change

the tongue for its generation. For this thing has not happened again to those after them. For what reason, let the wise Paul teach us. For he said that "Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers. For it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet for all that they will not believe.

In what way, then, is it profitable, that the tongue be changed for its generation, he himself again clarifies for us, saying That all may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him under one yoke, from the ends of the rivers of Ethiopia they shall bring sacrifices to me. For since they saw the Apostles speaking with other tongues, holding the strange event in no small wonder, they have believed in Christ, and many and innumerable of those at that time called upon the name of the one who is by nature and truly God; they submitted their neck to the evangelical decrees; they have served Christ. And they offer sacrifices from the ends of the rivers of Ethiopia. And the race of the Ethiopians extends from east to west, and they drink from the Gihon; "For it is the one that encompasses the whole land of Ethiopia. And so the word finally arrives at the truth of the prophecy. For not only in the land of the Romans has the Gospel been preached, but it also now goes about among the barbarian nations. And indeed there are churches everywhere, shepherds and teachers, guides and mystagogues and divine altars, and the lamb is sacrificed spiritually by the holy ministers both among Indians and Ethiopians. And this was what was clearly spoken through the voice of another prophet, "For I am a great King, says the Lord;

and because my name has been glorified among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name and a pure offering. In that day you shall not be ashamed of all your practices in which you acted impiously against me; for then I will take away from you the vileness of your arrogance, and you shall no longer presume to boast upon my holy mountain. The God of all speaks again to two persons at the same time. But it is necessary, I think, to apply a subtle mind to what is being said, for thus we will find the contemplation within them unconfused. Therefore he promises an amnesty for transgressions, and the forgiveness of past offenses to those of Israel, affirming and saying that they would no longer be ashamed because of their practices and the impieties formerly committed against God; but he threatens, as it were, the Babylonian and says that he would no longer be proud, having ravaged the holy city dedicated to him, that is, Zion, which he also calls a

mountain. For after the return, I mean from the captivity, Jerusalem remained unravaged, and henceforth inexperienced still of the inhumanity of the Babylonians. That at the time of the visitation an amnesty and forgiveness has come to all who have believed, no one would doubt. For we have been justified "not because of works of righteousness "which we have done, but according to his great mercy. And we have been delivered from shame;

for he who honored faith said somewhere to us, "Do not fear, because you were put to shame; "nor be confounded, because you were reproached. For he has restored us to confidence, who for our sake was among the dead, and for our sake is in heaven, in the sight of the Father. For Christ ascended as a forerunner for us, "now to appear in the presence of God. Therefore he has removed the accusations of all, and has delivered believers from the shame and disgrace of their offenses. And it has been said by him to Satan, who long held sway, That I will take away from you the vileness of your insolence, and you shall no more boast upon my holy mountain. For he will no longer despise those on earth, as being very sick with weakness, nor will he insult the sanctified, easily shaking them to what seems good to him. For the old things have passed away, and nature has passed over into a newness of things, Christ reconstituting them for this, making what was sick quite strong, strengthening for piety what was susceptible to sins, and making firm what was shaken. Therefore the vileness of insolence, that is, of the devil, has been removed, and he will no longer think great things against the holy mountain, that is, the spiritual Zion, "which is the church of the living God. For it has been founded on the "rock; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail "against it.

And the prophet Isaiah also called the Church a mountain for us, saying, "That in the last "days the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, and the house of God "on the tops of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the "hills, and all the nations shall come to it, and many nations "shall go and say, Come, let us go up to "the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob, and "he will declare to us his way, and we will walk in "it. And I will leave in you a meek and humble people, and the remnant of Israel shall be in awe of the name of the Lord, and they shall not do injustice, nor shall they speak vain things, and a deceitful tongue shall not be found in their mouth. He speaks again to Zion, that is, the holy city, I mean Jerusalem, in which he also promises that a most meek and humble people will be left. For

the Synagogue of the Jews acted insolently toward the Savior of all, Christ, and was revealed as the slayer of the Lord, and it pays the penalties for this, but not all of it has perished; for the remnant has been kept and the remainder has been saved. For no small number of them have believed.

And these were the meek, not staking themselves out for the angers against Christ, just as indeed those who then brought him to Pilate, crying out and saying, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him; and adding to this, "If you do not kill this man, you are not "a friend of Caesar. For what could be more harsh than such things, or what more savage in anger? They who, having drawn even the righteous blood upon their own heads, said without concern, "His blood be on us and "on our children. Meek then is the people, that has not partaken of their savagery; and humble again, in that it is subject to Christ, and has submitted the necks of its mind to the yokes under him, and has obeyed most gladly out of love him who says, "Come to me, all you who labor and "are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke "upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and "humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Therefore, they are conformed in this also to Christ, who for our sakes became poor, and not only that but also disregarded God-befitting glory and natural preeminence, in order to undergo the measure of servitude according to the economy. Therefore, those who are instructed by his laws are humble-minded according to him. These also will be in awe of the name of the Lord.

For they have become of the very of the most God-contemplative, and before all others, the divine disciples, who have also been set as a light of the world. But the God-loving and good, he says, will renounce injustice and idle speech; for they will not speak vain things; and a tongue that is not true; for this is the deceitful one. But this is a spiritual adornment, and like a crown very distinguished indeed for the boasts that come from virtues. For where there is gentleness and humility, and indeed a longing for justice, and a tongue that has unlearned idle talk, and is least of all given to sinful speech, but is rather upright and a worker of truth, there, surely, has virtue appeared bright and most perfect. Such would be fitting for those in Christ; because the beauty of piety is not seen in law, but rather flashes forth as in the power of evangelical instruction. Because they themselves will pasture and lie down, and there will be no one to make them afraid. For of old the flocks of the Jews were tended inactively by the scribes and Pharisees. for they had been

appointed by the law to lead the peoples, because they had been honored with the dignities of the priesthood. therefore, they were indeed shepherds, but hirelings nonetheless, and as if set over the livestock of others, they saw the wolf coming, and left the sheep, according to the voice of the Savior.

But that they were very unsparing of the rational livestock and abandoned them to wild beasts, they would be caught, or rather having become wolves themselves, one could easily perceive from the things spoken through the voice of the prophets. For one said, as from the person of God, "O shepherds, "who scatter and destroy the sheep of their pasture," and another again "Thus says the Lord Lord, O "shepherds of Israel, do the shepherds feed themselves? Do not "the shepherds feed the sheep? behold, you eat the milk "and clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the fat one, "and you do not feed my sheep. The weak you have not "strengthened, and the broken you have not bound up, and the "wandering you have not brought back, and the lost you have not "sought, and the strong you have worn down with toil; and "my sheep were scattered because there were no shepherds, and "they became food for all the beasts of the field and "for the birds of the sky; and he says somewhere to the shepherds themselves "Feed the sheep for slaughter, which "their possessors slaughtered, and did not repent; and those "who sold them said, Blessed be the Lord, for we have become "rich. Therefore the shepherds were destroying the flocks of the rational livestock, not needing wild beasts, but rather themselves imitating the ways of wild beasts.

But when at last Christ shone forth, the good shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep, we have been pastured in gardens, and have been fed among the lilies, according to what is written; and we have lain down in pens; for we have been sheltered in churches and holy temples, with no one terrifying and snatching us away, no wolf leaping upon us, no lion trampling us, no thief digging through, no one coming upon us any longer, "to steal and kill and destroy. but we continue rather in safety and security, and in participation of every good thing, having him as our overseer, the Savior of all, I mean Christ. And this God the Father made clear to us through the voice of Ezekiel, saying "Thus "says the Lord, I will save my sheep, and I will judge "between ram and ram, and I will raise up over them "one shepherd, my servant David, and he will be their "shepherd. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, proclaim, O daughter of Jerusalem, be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord has taken away your inquit-

ies, he has redeemed you from the hand of your enemies; the Lord will reign in your midst, you will not see evil any more. Insofar as it pertains to the historical account, it clearly promises peace to them after the return from Babylon, when their ancient accusations were forgotten, God promises both to be with them and to defend them;

but insofar as it pertains to the innermost meaning, both to rejoice greatly, and to be exceedingly glad, and indeed also with all He has commanded the heart to rejoice necessarily, since its sins have been taken away, that is, through Christ. For the spiritual and holy Zion has been justified, that is, the Church, or the holy multitude of those who have believed, in Christ indeed and alone, and we have been saved through Him and from Him, escaping the harm of the invisible enemies, and having in our midst Him who has appeared in a form like ours, the king and God of all, that is, the Word from God the Father; through whom we have no longer seen evils, that is, we have been delivered from everything that has the power to do evil. For he is the weapon of good pleasure, the peace, the wall, the bestower of incorruption, the giver of crowns, the one who drives out the war of the spiritual Assyrians, and lightens the plots of the demons; the one who gives us "to tread "upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the "enemy," through whom we have stepped on the asp and the basilisk, and we trample on the lion and the dragon; through whom we have come to have good hopes of incorruption and life, of adoption and of glory; through whom we shall no longer see evils. In that time the Lord will say to Jerusalem, "Be of good courage, Zion, let not your hands be slack.

The Lord your God is in you; the Mighty One will save you. He will bring joy upon you, and He will renew you in His love, and He will rejoice over you with delight as on a day of festival; and I will gather your broken ones. Clear, then, is the proclamation that we must be of good courage; and He who promised is true; and we have heard this from Christ Himself speaking, as if renewing the ancient oracle, or rather, placing before our eyes what had been promised. For He said, "In the world you will have tribulation; but "be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. For when He was "in "our midst," then we no longer had slack hands, nor paralyzed knees; but we have rather been turned to works and labors for good accomplishments and of which it is said and is the "glorious fruit; then we have also taken courage, because Christ in us, being all-powerful as God, rescues and saves those who believe

in Him; for He has dwelt in our hearts through the Spirit, and He has brought upon us this spiritual, that is, and precious joy. For what else could it be to partake of the Holy Spirit, than delight and joy and every kind of gladness?

When, therefore, He brought upon us gladness through the Spirit, then He also renewed us in His love, that is, at the time of His advent in the flesh, when "one died for all," truthfully saying, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone "lay down his life for his friends. And since He laid down His life, and was among the dead for our sake, being life by nature, He lived again, reforming the nature of man to newness of life, and reforging it to its original state. "For if anyone," he says, "is in Christ, he is a new creation. For God the Father was pleased, in Him "to sum up all things," according to what is written. But that which is summed up is in a way taken up again and, as it were, brought back to its original state. And since He renewed us, then Christ also rejoiced over us, as with delight, and as on a day of festival; for how could the divine not be gladdened by our affairs, when we have been delivered from sin, and have become superior to death and corruption, and are in participation of the Spirit and of sanctification. Then He also gathered the broken ones. For as the wise Paul writes, "Christ came into the world to save sinners; and He Himself somewhere says, "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to "repentance.

Therefore, Christ gathered those whom Satan, having crushed through sin, had rendered slack, and who knew not how to walk uprightly, nor to go on the paths of righteousness; but though he crushed them, Christ bound them up. For He has healed the sick, and "He Himself takes "away our infirmities," according to what is written. Woe, who has received reproach against her? That of the Savior the cross raised for the life and incorruptibility of the world, we who have chosen to think rightly will affirm to be the boast of the Church; and the most wise Paul himself confesses, having written thus: "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of Christ, "by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Yet he himself said again that the cross has become "a stumbling block to Jews "and foolishness to Gentiles. For the wretched ones laugh broadly, being completely ignorant of the power of the mystery; but they will not be outside of justice; how could they be? Nor indeed will they laugh back at Christ, that is, at the churches; but in due time they will be food for untamed fire, and the work of

a long and unquenchable flame. For some among the Greeks have arrived at such a point of madness and foolishness of mind as to sharpen a licentious tongue against the divine and evangelical proclamation, and to leave behind their denunciation written in books;

so that not only might their sins go before them to judgment, but might even follow them when they are dead, on account of having left behind their sin as if it were a living thing. He therefore deems wretched, and very rightly so, those who have received reproach against the holy Church, to whom the 'Woe' would indeed very fittingly apply. Behold, I am doing in you for your sake in that time, says the Lord, and I will save her that was oppressed, and her that was cast off I will receive, and I will make them a praise and renowned in all the earth. And they shall be ashamed in that time, when I shall do well by you, and in the time when I shall receive you. Again the discourse has turned to the person of Zion, and it promises the things wonderfully accomplished through Christ, concerning both the flocks from the Gentiles and the rejected Israel. For he says, "in you for your sake I will do [it]. For since some were carried away by greed into drunkenness, while others were ignorant of the God who became man for the salvation of all, the Creator of all lavishes his mercy on both, and for our sake has worked wonders in us. For she who was oppressed has been saved, that is, the multitude of the deceived, once afflicted, and brought to such a point of misery by the oppressing Satan as to lose all vital moisture; for a wandering mind is dead;

and she who was cast off, the Synagogue of the Jews, will also be received. For she had behaved insolently toward Christ; for this reason she was justly sent away, and had slipped from hope, and was estranged from intimacy with Christ; yet she too has been shown mercy; for she will be called to repentance and to purification through faith in the last times of the age. They will therefore be a boast and renowned and as far as possible from shame. And who are they, but that by all means the two peoples are no longer divided, and holding incompatible opinions with one another, and parted into different beliefs concerning God, as they were of old; but rather tightly bound by the unity that is through the Spirit to one mind and one faith. For it is written that "Of the multitude of believers, "the heart and soul were one. And Christ also created "the two peoples into one new man, "making peace, and reconciling both in one "Spirit," as it is written. If, then, they become objects of emulation, then he says the enemies will surely be put to shame,

being astonished at the greatness of the glory given, and the unshakeable nature of their prosperity, and the steadfastness of their hope. And one might see the promise to be true already from the events themselves. For the Church of Christ has been glorified, and being full of splendid boasts is admired by all. Yet he also defines the time in which such things will happen;

for he says, "in the time when I receive you. For the things that come after faith do not come before faith, but rather would reasonably be understood to come after it. We have been called, therefore, in the times of the economy in the flesh of the Only-Begotten. For then, indeed, then the fulfillment of the promise came to pass in truth. Because I will make you renowned and a boast among all the peoples of the earth, when I turn back your captivity of you before you, says the Lord. He recapitulates in a way the purpose of the God-befitting munificence, and in what things the believers will surely be, through these He clearly shows us. For He says they will be renowned, and within splendid boasts, and in better things than every nation. And again He adds at what times such things will be, everywhere mindful of the economy in the flesh of the Only-Begotten, when, as I just said, the manifestation of every good thing, and whatever of the things marveled at, has come forth to us. For then, then He paradoxically delivered those acting under the devil's hand and yoked to the passions of the flesh; then He freed them from polytheistic error and transferred them to the truth; then He delivered them from the bonds of death, giving Himself as a ransom for us, and acquiring for God the Father the world under heaven.

For we have been called through Him, and we have been enriched with access and intimacy in the Spirit through Him, I mean Christ, through whom and with whom to God the Father be the glory, with the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages, Amen.

HAGGAI

The purpose of the prophecy of Haggai having come about for certain other reasons we might observe, and not for the reasons one might suppose the words of the others came to be. For the divine Hosea and indeed those who follow, up to Zephaniah, foretold what would happen to the Jews at various times, and as the times of the captivity were all but upon them, they tried to frighten Israel, naming up and down the phalanxes of the enemies, the destructions of cities, the burnings, the plunderings, and usefully foretelling the devastation of the whole land to those who had chosen to be contemptu-

ous. For they thought that even if they did not choose to fulfill what is pleasing to God from a good disposition, and to be engaged in efforts for the better, they would at least be such as to shudder at the magnitude of the disaster. But Haggai, as the times of the captivity were already completed, and Israel had been brought back to the holy city from the land of the Persians and Medes, makes his speeches, for such reasons. For Cyrus released them from captivity, and together with the sacred vessels he commanded them to go home, and to build again the divine temple, the one in Jerusalem, and in addition to this also to wall the city itself, if they chose.

When this had happened, and the temple was in its first foundations, certain men in Samaria, Belemus and those with him, being envious, wrote against those from Israel, feigning goodwill toward the rulers of the Babylonians, saying that Jerusalem had become warlike and hard to encounter, and unbearable even to the kings of the Persians. Then they persuaded them to order the Jews to be quiet, and neither to raise the temple any longer, nor indeed to apply themselves to the diligent work on the city. After a short time had passed, Darius succeeded to the kingdom, and it was the second year of his reign. And when some of the Jews in Babylon fell down and besought him to finally permit them to raise the divine temple, Darius ordered, and wrote to those administering the governments throughout all Phoenicia, not to hinder the Jews if they chose to rebuild the temple; but even to lavish upon them a supply of money, and to allow the cedars in Lebanon to be brought down by them unhindered, so that, lacking nothing for their need, the things for the honor and glory of the God who rules over all might finally be easily completed. But since the history has been told subtly and clearly in the first book of Ezra, I think it superfluous to speak slenderly of these things for the present.

Therefore, since it was now possible for those of Israel to labor, and to build the divine temple, and to offer sacrifices and prayers, and to live according to the customs of the law, those of Israel were neglectful, each one setting his own affairs in order, and having turned completely to what was pleasant and dear to themselves, and holding the things for the glory of God in very little account, they were afflicted again, as God struck them, not with war, but rather with famines and barrenness and destruction of cattle. For He wished to make them better, not by subjecting them to punishments equal to their offenses, but at once pitying them as weary, and again correct-

ing them out of love. This, in brief, is the occasion of the prophecy of Haggai. The word is mixed, and with the things done and spoken historically, the mystical and innermost and fitting contemplation for spiritual people is infused. In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, saying. I said before, that the laziness regarding the temple had a good excuse for those of Israel, their authority having been taken away, and those in Samaria being very envious of this, and having made a great denunciation of Jerusalem before those directing the Persian powers.

But when Darius was now in his second year in the kingdom, and then he had given them unimpeded and free authority for their love of work, and commanded them to do what seemed good, and to hold to holy endeavors, and had also assigned resources of money, their laziness no longer had a good excuse, but seemed beyond all reason, and the pretext was utterly implausible. Therefore the word comes by the hand of Haggai; and "by the hand" you will understand as "by the administration of," that is, by one ministering the words from God, and carrying out the service of prophecy. He also usefully points out the very times in which Darius commanded such things, cutting off beforehand, as I said, the foolish pretexts of those of Israel for choosing to be lazy again. Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, of the tribe of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jozadak, the high priest, saying, Thus says the Lord Almighty: This people says, The time has not come to build the house of the Lord. Shealtiel was the son of Jeconiah, being of the tribe and blood of David. Therefore, while this man was exercising the royal rule in Jerusalem over Judah, the city was sacked, and all Israel went away captive, Nebuchadnezzar at that time burning down the divine temple itself, and Jeconiah himself was taken, and was a captive along with the others. And Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel.

Therefore, when Israel returned to Jerusalem, since he was indeed of the blood of the tribe that had obtained the kingdom, he reigned over Judah. But Joshua, being of the tribe and blood of Levi, and as from the root of Aaron, held the honor that was pre-eminent and select from the others, and was high priest. For thus the law named him who was appointed to lead the sacred orders, saying that those in the cities of refuge should not be released from their flight, but wherever each one might be, to remain there, "until the high priest dies," that is, the chief priest. Therefore the word came to

both, I mean the king and the one who presided over the sacred orders. For it was fitting for them to announce to all the others what was prophesied. Not to those ignorant, I think, of the peoples' excuses did the God of all command to report it, but as if smiling at those who fall back into laziness at an inopportune time, and at those who had immoderately neglected the very things of which they ought to have taken earnest care. For it was better to consider that, if the things of God were of more urgent account to them, they would certainly, being maintained in well-being by His forbearance and grace, have lived in prosperity and wealth, and had the necessities of life in abundance.

Therefore, as it were, somehow he bears witness through the voice of the Prophet, how impiously Israel had neglected those things which were most useful for it and looked to the glory of God. For concealing, as they think among themselves, their accusations with specious pretexts, they say that the time has not yet come to rebuild the temple of the Lord; but the time for being willing to do rightly is always present, and for the good and upright to fulfill the things that tend to the glory of God, is always in their power. And if indeed that which hinders and seems to stand in the way should somehow be removed, then truly the postponement is very grievous, and the accusations are henceforth of sloth and of extreme indolence, whatever arguments might be made about this. And this, I think, is what is said through the voice of David, "Incline not my heart to words of wickedness, to make excuses in sins. And the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the Prophet, saying, Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies waste? A second oracle from God to Haggai, condemning Israel with a clear reproof, and showing that they placed things for their own rest and luxury above the glory of God.

For is it, he says, that the time has not yet come when the God of all should be honored by the raising of the temple, but your own affairs have reached such a point of timeliness and glory, that you live luxuriously in richly furnished homes, and take pride in paneled courts? Then does it not seem burdensome and unbearable to you, to see the temple so dishonorably outraged, overturned and in a most unseemly state, and almost crying out against the impiety of the Babylonians and those ancient conflagrations? And yet how is it not better to see it in good condition and in its former state? For thus it would be possible hereafter both to sacrifice to God, and to

make prayers for whatever you might choose. And paneled houses, he says, are those whose doorposts, that is, the posts of the doors, might be hollowed out with iron, with carpenters, I suppose, carving them around, and engraving intricate designs from their own skill. This is a sign of those who are already living in luxury, and are henceforth taking pride in their wealth. For such ambitious construction of houses beyond what is necessary would be a very clear proof of an abundance of possessions. It is truly terrible, then, and has the sin without excuse, if we should put the things of God in second place and after human things. And now thus says the Lord Almighty: Set your hearts on your ways. You have sown much, and brought in little;

you ate, but not to fullness; you drank, but not to drunkenness; you clothed yourselves, but were not warmed in them; and he that earns wages has earned them for a bag with holes. Having been sparing, as I said, of the more urgent things, those of Israel, and having neglected the things pertaining to the glory of God, turned to concerns for themselves, raising up luxuriously furnished houses; then saying ignorantly, "The time has not come to build the house of the Lord. For since it was necessary for them to contribute to the construction of the divine temple, and then they were unwilling to do this, for this reason, alleging a lack of money, they said that it was necessary first to gather it, and as it were, to first rub off their poverty, by farming for the time being, or by trading, or by gathering herds of cattle, or by practicing some other such thing. But it was better to be of good courage in God, who finds ways even out of impossible situations, and has the power to enrich and to bless those who farm, and who discovers the paths of holy provisions. But since, lacking pious reasonings, they have fallen away from favor from above, having in no way acted rightly, for this reason he necessarily says, Set your hearts on your ways.

which is like as if he said, Consider carefully what paths of life you have walked, or what things for the sake of love of gain having undertaken it, you acted according to your wish. you sowed much and brought in little. But it was better, with God blessing, to sow little, but to gather in much. But since that which was necessary was absent, the labors were many, but the fruits very few. You ate, and not to fullness. This is a terrible thing, and holds the proof of both the utmost want and misery, if the things sown are many, but the fruits so few, that for those who have toiled the penalty of famine is attached, and their food falls short of satiety. You drank, and not to drunken-

ness. For the vineyard was not rich in grapes. And the trees, though having very fine branches, were sick along with the crops. You clothed yourselves and were not warmed in them, a plague perhaps having fallen upon the flocks of sheep, so that even those who possessed many were in want of clothing. But also he who gathered wages, gathered them into a bag with holes. And through these things he indicates those who have a commercial practice, who in a way collect the wages of commerce, always adding extra charges to each of the things bought, and making their purses fat with the increases in prices. But not even for these was there benefit, he says, from their love of gain.

For falling, perhaps, into unexpected losses and shipwrecks, they seemed to differ in no way from those who put money into a bag with holes. It is better, therefore, and wise to seek to be blessed by the God who offers all things to us. And this would easily come to those who have chosen to mind His things, and have preferred the things for His glory over their own. Thus somewhere the Savior Himself has also said to us "Do not be anxious "for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put "on. But seek rather the kingdom of God and "His righteousness, and all these things shall be added "to you. Since I think the story contains its own narrative sufficiently, come, let us apply our mind to spiritual contemplations and consider this: that what happened to the Jews might be a type, and a very clear one, of the universal and most general economy which came to be through Christ. For they were in Babylon, weighed down by the yoke of involuntary servitude, and paying the penalty for their sins; and for this reason they were placed and acted under the hands of their enemies, but they were redeemed at times when God took pity, and they were brought back home again, and inhabited the holy land, with Zerubbabel and Joshua leading and presiding.

And Darius, although still attached to the worship of idols, is seen to have commanded that the divine temple should be rebuilt, also providing timber from Lebanon and resources of money; but they were still lazy and slow concerning the need to fulfill what was pleasing to God. And they were also found making excuses, saying, The time has not come to build the house of the Lord. And the whole earth was also subject to the deceiving and tyrannizing Satan, and it was captive, ensnared for this through sin, and by not knowing the God who is by nature and truly, and the Creator of all. But God in Christ delivered it, having broken the bonds of servitude. For through

Him we have been guided, and leaving our sojourns among enemies, and having abandoned the polytheistic error like some foreign land, we have run up to Zion, that is, the spiritual one, that is to say, the Church. For observe how Christ is prefigured for us in Joshua and Zerubbabel. For, as I said, Zerubbabel was from the tribe of Judah. And from it also has sprung our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore He has also reigned over Israel. For thus somewhere he says through the voice of David "But I "was appointed king by Him on Zion His holy "mountain, declaring the Lord's decree. And Joshua indeed was from the tribe and blood of Levi, and was also named high priest;

and Christ has also become our high priest, ministering Himself on our behalf, as a spotless sacrifice, as a true lamb, offering Himself to God the Father for a fragrant aroma. And somehow he will confirm the one upon this for those choosing to speak with lean words, also the clarification of the names themselves, that is, the interpretation. For Zerubbabel signifies a flow transferred; and Salathiel, a Turning Away of God. And Christ said somewhere, "Behold, I turn upon them as a river of peace, and as a torrent flooding the glory of the nations. For He is confessedly himself the torrent of delight, and, as it were, the flow of peace. But he has turned to us, and is all but transferred, having left Israel. And he has gone, as I said, to those called from the nations, very well bestowing an abundant outpouring of good things from above and spiritual things. And Jesus again signifies "Iao salvation," and indeed Josedec "Iao righteousness; and Iao is the God of all. And Christ has become for us both salvation and righteousness from God the Father. For in him we have been saved, having fled the net of death, and we have been justified through faith, having shaken off the sin that tyrannized over us. Therefore; for I will bring the discourse back again to the beginning; we shall contemplate him as king in Zerubbabel, and as high priest indeed in Jesus.

But let the eager learner see again the Jews' relapse into sloth concerning choosing to labor for the things for the establishment of the divine temple, that is, of the Church of Christ; and let him observe in addition to these things also the eagerness of the nations, and their being very greatly stirred up to a love of labor. For Darius, as I said, had commanded the temple to be raised, and the things for the glory of the God who rules over all to be fulfilled; but they were slothful and most unwilling to work, and preferring their own things to the things pleasing to God, and very greatly inclined to-

ward more earthly things. for it says they were building wainscoted houses. Therefore, the divine David says concerning the nations, "You have heard the desire of the poor, O Lord; your ear has attended to the preparation of their heart. For those from the nations were more ready to believe, but those from Israel were very slothful. And you might see what I am saying also in the evangelical writings, that is, the parables. For the servants inviting to the supper were running, gathering people to the wedding feast; but they did not wish to come, but made "excuses in sins. For one said, "I have bought a field; and another, "I have married a wife; and others went to their business.

Therefore those in the roads were called and ran in to the wedding feast, those found by the hedges, and truly the first have become last, and the last first. Thus also Christ spoke through the voice of David concerning both those of the blood of Israel and the nations: "A people whom I did not know has served me; at the hearing of the ear they obeyed me. Alien sons lied to me; alien sons have grown old and have limped from their paths. Thus says the Lord Almighty: Set your hearts on your ways. Go up to the mountain and cut timber and build the house, and I will be pleased in it and will be glorified, said the Lord. You looked for much, and it became little; and it was brought into the house and I blew it away. He makes a frequent reminder, knowing that the matter contributes to the benefit of the hearers. Thus also the divine Paul writes to some, "To write the same things is not tedious for me, but for you it is safe. Consider therefore, he says, your own ways, which you have now made. And what these are, he immediately makes clear: You looked for much and it became little, and it was brought into the house and I blew it away. For they have missed their hope, I mean, the one in choosing to till the earth. For having spent long sweats, they barely gathered little. But they have been deprived of these things too;

for they have been blown away, that is, they have become others', and are by no means for them, but have rather been spent by those accustomed to be greedy. Therefore, then, their effort and toil was in vain, because they were not more willing to accomplish what was pleasing to the Master, and they made their care for the baser and more earthly things more important than the love of labor for better things. Did he then leave Israel unadmonished, not has he shown to the erring the way of correction? And indeed we shall immediately observe this very thing happening. For he said, "Go up to the mountain and cut wood and build the house, and I will be glorified in it

again, and I will be well pleased," that is, I will both accept and praise the efforts and zeal of those who have labored for this. It is, therefore, good and pleasing to God to hasten to fulfill whatever things might appear useful and necessary for the establishment of the Church and for its building. And we shall do this, and very prudently, gathering, as it were, the most necessary material, and cutting wood, as from a forest, the spiritual insights in the divinely-inspired scripture; by which one might make the glory or understanding concerning God secure and well-founded, and show that the manner of the economy in the flesh is well-ordered and excellently made;

and in addition to this, he will bring to an accurate knowledge of spiritual craftsmanship, and of the gentleness understood in character and manners. Through these things, we say, the house of God is built and the establishment of the Church is accomplished. And I will say in addition to this, that each of us might be understood as a temple and a house of God. For Christ has dwelt in us through the Spirit; and we are temples of the living God, according to the scriptures. Therefore, let each of us build his own heart through right faith, let him have as a foundation Christ himself, the Savior of all, who is truly precious; and let him add to these other material, I mean obedience, and compliance in everything whatsoever, courage, patience, self-control. For being thus joined together "through every joint of the supply," "we shall grow into a holy temple and into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. But those who are slow to faith, or even having believed, are yet somehow sluggish towards turning away from passions and sin and worldly love of pleasure, for this very reason have all but cried out, "The time has not come to build the house of the Lord; for this reason they also fall into shortages of heavenly goods, and into spiritual barrenness, their mind wasting away within them, like some piece of land, so as to have neither grain, that is, strength, nor indeed wine, which is a symbol of gladness.

For it is written that "bread strengthens a man's heart, and wine gladdens a man's heart. Therefore thus says the Lord Almighty: Because my house is desolate, while you each run to your own house, for this reason the heaven will withhold dew, and the earth will hold back its produce from you. And I will bring a sword upon the land and upon the mountains and upon the grain and upon the wine and upon the oil and upon all that the earth brings forth, and upon men and upon cattle and upon all the labors of their hands. He does not permit those who are utterly negligent of divine things to put

their own affairs in a better state, and to place earthly things before those that are for his glory; but rather he persuades them to consider that if the incomparably superior things are not well-ordered, then the lesser things, in which they wish to be, could never be well-ordered. For this reason he says, "Because my house is desolate, while you each run to your own house," for this reason this and that will happen, by which the things in the fields would immediately be destroyed, heaven no longer sending down dew, the earth checking its own strength, and indeed a sword, or wrath, being brought upon them, with crops and vines and olive trees withering together, and in addition to this, men and cattle being devoured.

Therefore, for those who are slow to fulfill the things for the glory of God, and those things by which his house would be seen to be established, that is the Church, there would be neither spiritual dew, that is, the comfort from heaven that enriches souls and hearts; nor indeed fruitfulness from the earth, that is, the achievements through the body; no grain, no wine, no use of oil. For they will be entirely and in every way powerless, and far from being gladdened, and they could in no way be enriched by the spiritual oil of gladness, and they will remain altogether without a taste of and without a share in the blessing through Christ; and in addition to these things they will be subjected to the sword, and they will endure a completely unrewarded labor, even if some manner of equity were practiced for them. For no one is crowned, "unless he competes according to the rules," as it is written. Therefore, let us consider zeal for better things to be especially important and among the most venerable of things; and let our own affairs be considered of less account, and let them come after things for the glory of God. And not only hearths, and possessions, and things for empty glory, but indeed also kindred, and brothers, and fathers. For thus Christ also says somewhere, "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;

and he who does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. And Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, of the tribe of Judah, and Joshua the son of Jozadak, the high priest, and all the remnant of the people heard the voice of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him to them; and the people feared the presence of the Lord. That He does not make His threats in vain, and that fear is not an unprofitable thing for those accustomed to be idle, one might easily perceive

from this. For behold, behold, as soon as they heard the divine words, they turn immediately to diligence, and henceforth they obey those appointed to lead, I mean both Zerubbabel and Joshua, and they treat the prophet's words with the greatest possible reverence, and they are moved by his mission, although previously they had considered the matter worthy of very few words. Therefore it is true and is seen through the events themselves that "Whom the Lord loves, He disciplines; and He scourges every son whom He receives. For the fear of being punished sometimes changes the mind for the better; and the onset of gloomy things shifts us into the fear of God; and what is in the book of Proverbs is true, that "He who fears the Lord, this man is healthy," and again, "The fear of the Lord is life for a man.

and likewise Wisdom, "The fear of the Lord is glory and a boast; and "The fear of the Lord will delight the heart, and will give, in addition to these, gladness and joy and length of days. But see how gently God strikes us, and as would be fitting for Him. For He does not immediately bring the things of wrath upon human bodies, but rather He terrifies with external and small fears, and by losses of foodstuffs He refashions them for the better and for choosing henceforth to work at His things. And Haggai the messenger of the Lord said to the people, I am with you, says the Lord. See philanthropy immediately accompanying the changes for the better. For the God of all in a way changes along with those who have chosen to repent, and He promises to be with them, and what could be equal to this? For with God being present, all harm will depart from us, and good things will certainly enter, and the ways of prosperity will immediately appear established, and whatever is most pleasant will happen. But if the sacred Scripture calls Haggai the messenger of the Lord, let no one suppose that he is an angel by nature, but was born as we are, a man from a woman; for to think thus is utterly senseless. But we shall rather suppose, if we are of sound mind and an intellect that sees what is true, that he was called and named a messenger from the act of announcing a message.

Since nothing prevents us from falling into another absurdity, confessing that those who announced to Job the things that happened in the fields from the horsemen are also angels by nature, and indeed also that his children died when the house collapsed. And the Word of God is also called "Messenger of great counsel. For He announced to us the will of God the Father. Therefore, a messenger is from the act of announcing a message, and not at

all, if the title should happen to be said of men, from being by nature not what we are. And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel of the tribe of Judah and the spirit of Jesus the son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the remnant of all the people, and they went in and did the works in the house of the Lord Almighty their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month. The children of Israel feared the presence of the Lord. But consider again for me, how they had not previously proceeded to choose to do the things pleasing to God, unless He was with them, and stirred up their spirit. We shall know then from this, that even if one should choose to voluntarily do good;

and even if he should happen to be in such readiness, yet he will accomplish nothing at all, unless God is with him and rousing him to courage, and sharpening him for patient endurance, and cutting off the sloth that hinders industriousness. Therefore the divine Paul also says concerning those entrusted with the divine preaching that "I labored more abundantly than all of them; but he added with all wisdom, "Yet not "I, but the grace of God which was with me. And indeed the Savior Himself says to the holy apostles, "Without me," He says, "you can do nothing. For He is our desire and our readiness for anything good whatsoever, He is our strength, and when He is with us we will prosper, building ourselves up "into a holy temple, into a dwelling place of God "in the Spirit; but when He departs and withdraws, how could anyone doubt that we will accomplish nothing, being overcome by sloth and cowardice, and shaking off the labor as unprofitable? But see those who formerly fell under wrath on account of much disobedience, at last running into the house of the Lord and working, with Zerubbabel and Jesus the high priest being with them. And this affair would again be a type of the calling of Israel which will take place in the last times of the age; who were indeed disobedient in the beginning, and for this reason they have remained fruitless, without dew and grain and wine and indeed also oil; and they have also fallen by the sword.

But since they at last feared the presence of the Lord, and were put to shame by the words of the holy prophets, they will have the God of all with them, and their spirit will be stirred up, and they themselves will also work on the things for the temple of the Lord, that is, the Church. And these things are in Christ; for He is prefigured, as it were, in Zerubbabel and Jesus; for He is at once king as God, and again high priest as man, and mediator

between God and men; for the priest mediates. And the phrase, On the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, was necessarily added, clearly showing the quick-turning of the mind of those of Israel. For the word came to them by the hand of Haggai in the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, but they rushed into the labors on the temple on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month; so that the days in between for delay, that is, for deliberation, were twenty-three in number.

In the second year of Darius the king, in the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the Lord spoke by the hand of Haggai the Prophet, saying, Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, of the tribe of Judah, and to Jesus the son of Jozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, saying, Who is there among you that saw this house in its former glory? And how do you see it now, as though it were nothing in your sight? They were entering the house of God and taking charge of the works on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month; then immediately on the twenty-first day of the following seventh month, the word of God came to the blessed Prophet Haggai. What then shall we reckon upon this, and what is the reason, it is necessary to say. Having begun to endure hardship, and having taken up the cares for the divine temple, having now completed the twenty-seventh day at this, they were found to be fainthearted, and perhaps whispering that very thing either among themselves, or to one another, that they were laboring in vain; and even if it should happen that the temple be rebuilt, it will in no way be like the first one. For the one was exceedingly splendid and constructed with an ambitious hand, beautiful with gold and silver offerings; but the other was unadorned and lacking all ornament and deprived of the ambition that comes from wealth.

For that first one, those who had reigned at various times in Jerusalem, still boasting in their wealth, lavishly adorned, and before all others, Solomon; but they were commanded to build the other, having barely recovered, and still dripping with the sweat of captivity, and having absolutely nothing in their homes. Swimming in such reasonings and being distressed, they worked, but having become unenthusiastic and sluggish, they were again found out. For this reason God strengthens the weak, and brings a most useful question to them, if indeed there is anyone among them who has seen the former temple in its first glory. But they were very few and aged. For the temple had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and Israel was in

captivity, and was released only after seventy years had passed. Therefore, it was hard to find and a very old man who was alive before the destruction, and had lived in captivity, and returned again to Jerusalem. For this reason he says, "Who will be the man among you who saw this house in its former glory, then will see the future and new one as not existing at all? And indeed, there is a rebuke in the question, as though they did not think that even if they themselves were very poor and in want of money, yet God would not be weak, but he himself would again suffice, I say, to make his own temple all-praised and glorious.

"And now be strong, Zerubbabel," says the Lord, "and be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and let all the people of the land be strong," says the Lord, "and work, because I am with you," says the Lord Almighty, "and my word which I covenanted with you when you came out of the land of Egypt, and my spirit stands in your midst. Take courage. He does not allow them to be shaken by despondency, nor indeed to be overcome by fears leading to sluggishness; but rather he widens them to diligence, and produces in them a vigorous zeal; and at the same time he trains them for faith, and shows them to be steadfast, having said that they must take courage, and that which is beyond these things and truly most desirable, he promises to be with them; and in what manner, he added, saying, "My spirit stands in your midst. Take courage. No one with a good mind and a sound understanding would doubt that to those who labor generally for the building of the divine temple, that is, the Church, he bestows both strength and gives courage, because he will be with them through the Holy Spirit, and will accomplish all things for them through which they might be able to show their own life to be splendid and of good repute.

Thus also our Lord Jesus Christ, to the holy apostles who were about to build the Church and to gather the believers into a holy temple, necessarily said, "Behold, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the age. That he was about to be with them again through the Spirit, he himself will clarify again, at one time saying, "I will not leave you orphans; I am coming to you; and at another time making the manner of his arrival clear, by saying again, "It is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you. Therefore he is with those who build his house, but he departs again and completely withdraws from those who shake it. And these would be, again, those who in Beelzebul

say, "Jesus be anathema," and who pervert all that is right, and pour the poison of destruction into the souls of the more simple. "Because thus says the Lord Almighty: Yet once more, I will shake the heaven and the earth and the sea and the dry land, and I will shake all the nations, and the elect of all the nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory," says the Lord Almighty; "mine is the silver and mine is the gold," says the Lord Almighty.

He brings the discourse back to the the church from the gentiles, and to the times of the coming of our Savior. Then indeed he promises to shake both heaven itself and the earth, and also the sea, and in addition to these, all the nations. For he said, "Yet once I will shake. This seems to imply some such meaning, at least according to what seems right to me myself. Therefore, when he planned to free Israel, which had worshiped idols and been brought up in the customs and laws of the Egyptians, and wanted to transfer it to the knowledge of the truth, he is seen having all but shaken all things: the waters having been turned into blood, the heaven sending down hail, the sea being parted and its waves being solidified in the form of walls, heaven dripping manna. And the psalmist implies something of this sort, saying, "O God, when you went forth before your people, when you passed through the wilderness, the earth shook, for the heavens also dropped. And we say that the earth was shaken at that time, not by enduring its usual tremor, but as the exodus of the sons of Israel became a sign and escaped the notice of no one on the earth. He says that a certain shaking of this kind will happen again at the time of our Savior's coming, as no one will be ignorant of the achievements through it.

For heaven knew the mystery, and Paul is a witness to this, saying, "That now to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. And likewise the whole earth also knew, and the sea, that is, the islands. For who at all is seen to be deprived of this knowledge? What sea, what nation, what portion under heaven? The gospel "has been preached to all the nations," according to the Savior's voice. So then, he says, "Yet once I will shake the heaven and the earth, and then the chosen of all the nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory. For very many, from every nation, and illustrious and chosen, have become believers, and have been gathered into the house of God as in the order of splendid offerings, and through this attach-

ing glory to him, rendering it renowned and celebrated, and having been glorified by Christ. For they have learned both to pray and to say, "And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us," and again, "We are blessed by the Lord, who made heaven and earth. And that God does not need inanimate matter, but intelligible comeliness, he implies by saying, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the Lord Almighty.

For it is as if he were to say, "Do not consider the temple inglorious because it may happen to lack gold and silver and the splendor from wealth. I have not needed such things; whence? For all the silver is mine and the gold is mine, says the Lord Almighty; but I seek rather genuine worshipers, with the splendor of such I will gild my temple. For just as, when he was putting Israel away from the sacrifices according to the law, he necessarily said, "I will not accept calves from your house, nor goats from your flocks; for all the beasts of the field are mine, cattle on the mountains, and oxen; so also here, rejecting adornment from matter, but seeking rather the intelligible, he says, "The silver is mine and the gold is mine," that is, "I have received in full and am filled, and I have needed none of these things; but let him rather come who has right faith, who is distinguished by the boasts of virtue, who is resplendent with love for me, the pure in heart, the poor in spirit, the compassionate and good. For being so gathered into my temple, that is, the Church, they will render it renowned and conspicuous. Because great will be the glory of this house, the latter more than the former, says the Lord Almighty, and in this place I will give peace, says the Lord Almighty, and peace of soul for a possession to everyone who builds to raise up this temple.

For according to the at the time of the coming of our Savior, the divine temple was shown to be incomparably more glorious, and so better than the former and superior, by as much as one might think the worship in Christ and according to the Gospel differs from the worship according to the law, and the truth from the things in shadows. And besides; for I shall think it necessary to say that other thing usefully; there was one temple of old, and only in Jerusalem, and there was one nation from Israel performing the sacrifices in it. But since the Only-begotten, being God, became "Lord and has appeared to us," according to the scriptures, the world under heaven has now been filled with holy houses and innumerable worshipers, who honor the God of all with spiritual sacrifices and intellectual fragrances. And this, I think, is what was proclaimed beforehand through the voice of the prophet

Malachi, as from the person of God: "For I am a great king, says the Lord, and my name is glorified among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure sacrifice. Therefore, the saying is true, that the glory of the latter temple, that is, of the Church, will be greater.

But that to those who have taken care to build it, Christ will be given as a kind of gift from the Father and a present from heaven, he who is the peace of all, through whom "we have access in one Spirit to the Father," he will make clear by saying that I will give peace in this place and peace of soul for the preservation of everyone who builds to raise up this temple; for Christ himself also said somewhere, "My peace I give to you, my peace I leave with you. And how this thing benefits those who have loved, Paul will teach again, writing: "The peace of Christ, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your bodies; and the wise Isaiah also pleaded somewhere, saying, "Lord our God, give us peace, for you have given all things to us; so that for those who have once been deemed worthy to receive the peace of Christ, it is possible easily to save their own soul and to direct the mind toward the achievement of virtue. Therefore, he says that peace will be given to everyone who builds. For whether one builds a church, and is appointed as an initiator into the mysteries over the house of God; or whether he benefits his own soul, presenting himself as a living and spiritual stone "for a holy temple, for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit," such a one will in every way and entirely gain the ability to save his own soul easily.

On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Haggai the Prophet, saying: Thus says the Lord Almighty: Ask the priests concerning the law, saying: If a man carries holy flesh in the hem of his garment, and the hem of his garment touches bread or cooked food or wine or oil or any food, will it become holy? And the priests answered and said, No. And Haggai said, If one who is defiled by a dead body touches any of these things, will it be defiled? And the priests answered and said, It will be defiled. And Haggai answered and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, says the Lord, and so are all the works of their hands, and whoever draws near there will be defiled. This is another oracle through the Prophet to Israel, and we say it came about for such a reason. For in the second year of the reign of Darius, in the seventh month, when God was reproaching those who had been redeemed from captivity, and accusing them of hesitation, I mean concerning the need to work

on the temple, they had scarcely run to it, and were then laying claim to the sweats of industry. Then God praised them for having done this, and promised to be with them, and to bless them, and commanded them to be of good courage, as the Spirit was standing in their midst;

but they were no less hesitant and reluctant to work, and when scarcely two months had perhaps passed, they relapsed into idleness, and were again caught being terribly distressed. for toward the works of commerce terribly and strangely having turned away, and being incontinent towards avarice, they admitted listlessness, as if it were not permitted for them as in ample leisure to be occupied with the cares of commerce; then bringing sacrifices, they said the matter would suffice for them for it to be necessary to be sanctified, even if by chance the divine temple had not yet been built. The Prophet, therefore, is commanded to wound them with clever reproofs and to teach that even if they should choose to fulfill vows and sacrifices, but being slothful were found to be so concerning the need to complete the house of God, it will not be for their benefit, but rather for both wrath and judgment, this not wishing to sacrifice oxen at the proper time and to approach the divine altar; and he makes clear in addition to these things, that on account of the commercial enterprises set before them, mingling with wicked and foreign men, and certainly also with idolaters, they are utterly defiled. But the question is exceedingly legal and indeed difficult to interpret; however, as is possible, I will make it clear, presenting what is meant through what words I am able. Therefore the Prophet asks the priests for a law;

for it is written, "That the lips of a priest will guard judgment, and they will seek the law "from his mouth; and what is the question? If a man carries holy flesh in the corner of his garment and the corner of his garment should touch bread or cooked food or wine or oil or any food, will it be sanctified? And the priests answered and said, No. And holy flesh, he says, is that taken from an animal offered for sacred service to God; but he wishes to teach them this: the priests, when at times performing the sacrifices according to the law, touched, also through their garments, the flesh that was about to be burned as incense. Therefore, he says, if a sacred garment, sanctified perhaps by holy flesh, should touch some other thing, that has not been offered to God, will that also be holy? The priests denied this according to the law. Therefore, let us proceed from the example to what is more true: Will the one who offers a sacrifice, if he should provoke God in other ways, be sancti-

fied by it? By no means, but rather he is condemned, as not yet having been cleansed, but having offered a sacrifice. And that the word is true, hear what the lawgiver says in Leviticus: "And "the flesh that touches any unclean thing, shall not be eaten; it shall be "burned with fire.

Every clean person shall eat the flesh, but the "soul who eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of "salvation, which is for the Lord, and his uncleanness is upon "him, that soul shall perish from his people. And "the soul who touches any unclean thing, either from "the uncleanness of a man or of unclean four-footed animals "or of any unclean abomination, and eats of the "flesh of the sacrifice of salvation which is for the Lord, that soul shall perish "from its people. You see how useless, but rather even a cause of wrath and death, it is to offer sacrifices with unwashed hands. Just as, therefore, the garments of the priests, although having been sanctified through the flesh of the sacrifice, would not sanctify anything touching them; so, he says, the act of sacrificing to God would not make holy those who have chosen to grieve Him in another way, and who wish to be idle concerning what is pleasing to God. And that, as I said, on account of commerce and the profits from it, mingling with profane men, they themselves will also certainly be in participation of their abomination, he makes clear through the other question; for he said again, If one who is defiled by a dead body should touch any of these things, will it be defiled? And the priests answered and said, It will be defiled. For the law through Moses has commanded those who are consecrated not to touch a dead body, nor indeed to approach dead men.

And at any rate he said it is necessary for the priests not to be defiled, except only for a father and mother and brothers, but for the one who presides over and is pre-eminent in the sacred orders, not even for these at all. But what was commanded was a riddle; for the law is a shadow; for a dead person would again be a type of dead works and worldly uncleanness. But I think it is necessary for those who have practiced a sacred and all-holy life, of dead works to be separated and to love to stand aloof from worldly corruption. But if it happened at that time that one who had visited the dead touched some one of the others, or a man perhaps, or even food, this was altogether according to the law in a state of pollution. The Prophet therefore asks, if when someone has touched a dead body, and then, having remained unwashed, should happen to touch something else, whether he defiles it in every way and altogether. And when they said, 'He will defile it'; God then

adds: So is this people, and so is this nation before me, says the Lord, and so are all the works of their hands, says the Lord, and whoever approaches there, will be defiled. For since he touches dead works, he says, not only is he himself defiled, but he has come to such a point of worthlessness, as to be fit to be able, and that very vigorously, to defile others.

Therefore, one must take care of good works, and let us be zealous to fulfill that which is most truly dear to God, and let us thus sacrifice spiritually. For then He will accept it, and not for condemnation the prayer, but we will have it rather for benefit and blessing; and let us shake off dead desires, and as it were lifeless pleasures and worldly impurity. For God will be with those who are thus cleansed and sanctified. Because of their morning gains they will be pained because of their wickedness, and you hated those who reprove in the gates. They say that neither the Hebrew edition, nor indeed the other interpreters, either say or know these things; however, the meaning appears to be consistent with what has gone before. For since, as I said, they were excessively obsessed with love of gain and greed; and this proved to be a pretext for their laziness, although they had been commanded to build the divine temple; He therefore necessarily accuses them for these things. And He calls them 'morning gains' because for no other reason did they make their early morning journeys and efforts, except for this alone, I mean, for the sake of desiring gains. And He says that they will be pained on account of these things, since their desired goal does not come to fulfillment for them.

For when God does not direct, and does not smooth the path of what must be done by us, a man's zeal for anything is surely altogether in vain and unprofitable. For it is written that, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it. Therefore, having preferred the gains as it were at dawn and in the morning to raising the divine temple, and putting the baser things before the better, they were found to be afflicted with another terrible thing in addition to this. For they hated those who reprove in the gates. And you will understand 'in the gates' as 'clearly'. But why did they hate them? For to those once overcome by evil pleasures, and who have slid unrestrainedly into choosing to do what is not lawful, those who have the strength to correct them would not be pleasant, but rather burdensome and hated; and what of such things would they not be accounted? A completely terrible sickness of the mind, therefore, is to be inclined to wicked things, and to abhor those who know how to help, and to be sick most pleasantly with what has

happened, even if what is occurring is seen to be one of the exceedingly outrageous things. But it is better and wise to repel generally the harms that pour into the soul and mind.

But if it should happen that one suffers something, to seek physicians with all speed, and to love those who reprove, and to prostrate oneself as it were before God, saying "Heal me, O Lord, and I will be healed; save me, and I will be saved; for you are my praise. And now, set your hearts from this day and forward, before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord, what you were like, when you put into a bin of barley twenty satas, and there were ten satas of barley; and you went into the winepress to draw out fifty measures, and there were twenty? I struck you with blight and with mildew and with hail all the works of your hands, and you did not turn to me, says the Lord. From necessary reasonings He persuades them that they have acted rightly, having chosen to build the divine temple, and they are better than long ago, having undertaken the zeal for this. For consider, he says, and remember who you were, that is, how and in what manner you were disposed, before you placed a stone upon a stone in the temple of the Lord.

For then, he says, what was gathered with difficulty by long toils from the fields and the threshing floor, twenty satas of barley—and I think the saton is a measure—you would store in a bin—and this could be understood as a type of storehouse for produce—and it would become ten satas of barley, clearly with the moth consuming them perhaps and reducing the grain to dust out of divine wrath. And if indeed someone came to the winepress, intending to draw and pour out fifty measures, finding the measure unexpectedly reduced, he was then astonished. You were struck indeed, he says, with other plagues, with barrenness, with blight, with hail; and again you were stubborn. For you did not return to me, he says. What then shall we know from this? It is manifest that for those who are unwilling to build the house of the Lord, that is the Church, or who are excessively lazy in making their own souls a temple of God, even the good things already acquired will vanish into nothing, and there will surely be harm from unclean spirits, and barrenness and hail, that is, unbearable visitations of temptations shaking down every sort of evil, and things from divine wrath will happen. Set your hearts now from this day and onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, and from the day the temple of the Lord was founded;

set in your hearts, if it will be known on the threshing floor, and the vine and the fig and the pomegranate and the olive trees that do not bear fruit, from this day I will bless. Having well convinced them through what we have just said, that for those choosing to neglect the divine temple a very great assault of troubles has occurred, he says they will be fully assured by him who knows how to cheer, that they will have prosperity as the fruit of their zeal for the things that please him, and as a reward for their goodness toward his house, they will be broadened in every good thing. And he promises that he will especially supply them with fruitfulness from the fields, so that the matter comes close to disbelief, and the heaps from the threshing floor appear beyond all expectation, and of the trees growing in the gardens, the vine is seen as rich in clusters, and the fig, and the pomegranate, and simply that the seasonal produce will have blossomed richly for them, and indeed also the olive yielding its own fruit to them in unexpected abundance, on account of being blessed by God. For just as for those who choose to neglect building the Church, that is to present themselves as a holy temple to Christ, everything collapses for the worse; and indeed it is seen to happen that they are in temptations and spiritual barrenness;

so also is the opposite true, that for those willing to build and who have honored the toil of goodness, it will be given by God to be seen in every good thing, and to be enriched with spiritual fruitfulness, and to have the innermost garden, as it were, blooming with various boasts of virtues, and almost laden with ripe fruits, so as to be able henceforth to cry out with boldness what is in the Song of Songs, "Let my kinsman come down into his garden, and eat the fruit of his choice trees. For the sprouts of virtues are like food for God, and the grace of spiritual fruitfulness. And the word of the Lord came a second time to Haggai the Prophet on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying, Say to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel of the tribe of Judah, saying, Yet once I will shake the heaven and the earth and the sea and the dry land, and I will overthrow the thrones of kings, and I will destroy the power of the kings of the nations, and I will overthrow chariots and riders, and their horses and riders shall come up, each one by the sword against his brother. The prophetic word for us always proceeds somehow from the particular, and from the matters at hand it makes an excursion to the universal and most general things. for if it somewhere makes mention of the redemption of some, it often departs to the one through of Christ.

The prophetic word now hints at something of this kind to us; for these things have necessarily been added to what has already been said, subtly introducing the proclamation of the mystery concerning Christ as if still in riddles and shadows. For the Prophet is sent to Zerubbabel of the tribe of Judah, to say that the heaven and the earth and indeed the sea and the dry land will be shaken, and the thrones of kings will be cast down. And the most wise Paul, applying himself to the contemplations of the preceding matters, says that word "will be shaken" means that there will be a removal of the things that are shaken, "so that the things that are not shaken may remain. But these things had to be accomplished through Christ, for in him all things are new and "the old things have passed away," things drunken and shaken, and new things have come to be through him, that is, things that are firm and established and abiding. See, therefore, the economy of the word; for having promised them an admirable fruitfulness, and having said he would provide all things for cheerfulness and delight in abundance, he immediately introduced the time of true fruitfulness, that is, the lavish provision of the spiritual and heavenly blessing. For "I shook," he says, "the things under heaven when I led Israel out of the land of Egypt;

but I will shake them yet again," that is, "I will do something notable and famous again for those throughout the whole world, as if shaking all things. And I will cast down the thrones of kings, and I will destroy all their power, and I will cast out, as it were, certain horsemen charging over all under heaven with greed against all, but I will raise up other horsemen, that is, warriors, drawing a sword against family and brothers. Through these things he seems to hint to us of the wicked and opposing powers cast down through the strength of our Savior, the principalities and authorities which he triumphed over on his own cross, and having cast out the greed against all, he came to the aid of the wronged, that is, us. And indeed the holy and blameless virgin, while still conceiving Christ, since she bore a mind full of the Holy Spirit, proclaimed beforehand such things, saying: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. And after other things again: "And holy is his name, and his mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear him. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever. Therefore the mighty have been brought down, and they have fallen from their own thrones. Yet the accomplishments of our Savior's coming do not end here; but a swarm of horsemen has been raised up, men who are fighters and experienced in war and know how to command, and who generally lead out against the perversities of the devil. These would be, in turn, the divine disciples, who have intellectually drawn the sword of the Spirit; that is, the word of initiation, which is living and active and very sharp. They went forth against every person and against family and against brothers, not inflicting deadly blows, but rather destroying the ignorance in them, and, as it were, making them dead to the world, and preparing them to be dead to sins, so that they might live to God, having loved the glorious and blameless life, that is, the life of the Gospel. But that for the sake of love for Christ sons were destined to be set against fathers, and indeed daughters against mothers, and brothers against brothers, how can one doubt? When the Savior says clearly: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come 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 person's enemies will be those of his own household. Enemies, therefore, insofar as they are of a different mind; friends and not for long, as in one accord of faith and as in unity of the Spirit and of the love that is in Christ. In that day, says the Lord Almighty, I will take you, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, my servant, says the Lord, and I will make you as a seal, because I have chosen you, says the Lord Almighty. This word is not truly to Zerubbabel, but it came to be rather as to our Lord Jesus Christ, as being very well depicted in Zerubbabel; because he is both from the tribe of Judah, and indeed also a king, and a leader of those redeemed from captivity, and as it were an overseer of those building the house of the Lord. you, therefore, He says, taking you my servant; that is, the one who appeared in the form of a servant, yet by nature free; at that time, in which I would choose to cast down the mighty from their thrones and to cast out principalities, I will make you as a seal. For the Son is the seal of God the Father, having His whole and pure likeness, and in His own beauty flashing forth the nature of the One who begot Him. And in Him God seals us also into His own like-

ness; if indeed being formed into Christ, we gain the image that is toward God.

The Son is therefore the exact seal of God the Father, and He has chosen Him, that is, made Him chosen and elect. And indeed He confessed Him at the streams of the Jordan, saying "This is My Son "the beloved, in whom I am well pleased, hear Him. For God the Father was pleased to restore all things, and to bring them back to the beginning, and as the divine Paul writes, "to sum up all things in heaven and on "earth" in Christ, through whom and with whom to God the Father be glory with the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

ZECHARIAH

Book 1

In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah son of Berechiah, son of Iddo the Prophet, saying. The blessed Zechariah prophesies in Jerusalem, I think at the same times as Zephaniah. For after the return from captivity, Israel no longer dwelt divided and in parts in both Judea and Samaria, but all were gathered together into one city, that is, Jerusalem, and throughout all Judea, with Zerubbabel from the tribe of Judah reigning over them, and indeed with Joshua the son of Jozadak, the great priest, preeminent in the priesthood. And he weaves the word of prophecy very artfully. For since most of those from Judea, that is Samaria, who were carried off into captivity, returned there, knowing all the things that had been dared by the Babylonians against Jerusalem from time to time; and in addition not being ignorant of, the things at which God was grieved;

But those born in the land of the Persians and Medes, neither knew what or of what sort Jerusalem was, nor did they know Judea, nor indeed the things brought upon their fathers from the divine wrath, nor for what reasons at all they had paid such harsh penalties, except perhaps from neglected accounts, necessarily the God of all appoints the blessed Zechariah to them who had been redeemed and were quite young as a kind of tutor and governor, being of sacred blood, that is, from the tribe of Levi, and being from his father Berechiah according to the flesh, but being called according to the spirit also son of Iddo the Prophet. For he had been nurtured, as is likely, in his ways, and of the same he has become an imitator of virtuous deeds. What then is the message of his prophecy, and through what narratives does it

come, how would it not be right to say in due measure? For he imposes the penalty under which they are upon those who have been redeemed, since they have not moderately neglected the divine commandment and are accustomed to disregard the things decreed through the all-wise Moses; and terrifying them not moderately, he persuades them to change toward the need to choose rather to be well-esteemed through ready obedience and submission to everything whatsoever. He adds that if some are not good and well-reined, and yielding to the divine laws, they themselves will also suffer things more burdensome than what happened to their fathers.

And broadening, as it were, the words of instruction, he tries to teach what the practices of the fathers were of old, and for what things divine wrath came upon them, and in what way they were destroyed, and indeed how they were redeemed, and having shaken off the yoke of captivity, were brought back to Judea; and he adds to this that, just as I said just now, they will suffer worse things if they are zealous to follow in the footsteps of their fathers' godlessness. He remembers everywhere the redemption through Christ that will be in due time, and he describes for us the mystery concerning him in many ways. It is necessary, therefore, for those wanting to investigate each of the parts of the prophecy, not to consider the things in it a tautology and a superfluous narrative of what has already happened; but rather to remember that for those who have returned from captivity to Judea, the narrative of what has already happened is most necessary. For he was correcting those who knew what they had already suffered, bringing it to their remembrance; but for those quite young, and not knowing the things of old, he was providing security, so that they might not be caught in the same evils, loving a profane and most lawless life. The Lord was angry with your fathers with great anger.

Do you understand how he strikes terror with his narratives, and by setting forth for explanation to the very young the things that happened to those before them, he frightens them toward what is better, threatening, as it were, that being subjected to equal or even more grievous evils, they will lament bitterly, if they do not choose prudently to reject the ways of those men, but to deem what is pleasing to God worthy of all care and account. And he says that God, who has power over all things, was angered with a great anger, not leaving the statement unproven as to its truth, but showing from what they have already experienced and suffered, that he is not one

who speaks falsely. For it would be an indication of no ordinary indignation to have permitted the Babylonians to ravage all of Judea, and with it Samaria, and to burn down the holy places themselves, and to raze Jerusalem; and to make the chosen Israel an exile, serving pitifully and wretchedly in a foreign land, and enduring unbearable hardship, no longer taking part in sacrifices, not entering within the sacred court, not bringing thanks offerings according to the law, or tithes, or firstfruits; but being prevented, as by necessity and fear, even from having to celebrate its customary and dearest feasts. Therefore the Lord was angry with their fathers with a great anger. And one might exclaim such things also to the Jewish peoples, if one chose to initiate them into the mystery of Christ.

For since they killed the prophets, and "crucified the very Lord of glory," they have been captured and sacked. And the famous temple itself was shaken down, and what was said through the voice of Hosea has now been fulfilled upon them: "For the children of Israel shall sit for many "days, there being no king and no ruler, there being no sacrifice and no "altar, nor priesthood, nor manifestations. And that they are captives, and for the time being under the hand of the devil, having offended God, and cast off, and having become outside of all mercy from above, how could anyone doubt? But if indeed they should be redeemed in due time, having accepted the faith, and acknowledging Christ as both God and king and Lord, then indeed, and very much so Reasonably, one might make a wise exhortation to them, saying these things at the opportune time: The Lord was very angry with your fathers. And you shall say to them, Thus says the Lord Almighty: Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord Almighty, and do not be like your fathers, whom the prophets before them reproached, saying, Thus says the Lord: Turn from your evil ways and from your evil practices, and they did not pay attention to hear me, says the Lord.

For, as I said, having been called back from captivity and returning to Judea, they became slothful concerning what seemed good to God, and for the time being they did not resort to idols, nor indeed did they accept the ancient error; yet in other ways they were found to be provoking. For as it is written in Ezra, they also mingled with foreign women and, bringing in those from the neighboring nations, became fathers of foreign children, even though the law forbade this practice to them as improper. They were also negligent in celebrating feasts and fulfilling sacrifices, and indeed they

were found to be unenthusiastic about the need to rebuild the divine temple. Therefore, just as it is written in Haggai, he struck them with blight and with mildew and with hail in all the works of their hands. And they put twenty sata of barley into a bin, and it became ten, and again they would go in to draw fifty measures, and it became twenty. He promises them, therefore, that if they should choose to change for the better, and to return to him, by choosing to do what seems good and pleasing to him, then he himself will also return to them, that is, he will refrain from his anger against them, and will return to mercy, and will deem them worthy of forbearance and compassion again.

He certainly declares that choosing to emulate those who came before them is a cause of destruction, to whom was given the greatest possible exhortation and encouragement from him through the holy prophets, calling for them to turn away from their shameful practices, but the matter was rendered very unprofitable indeed by those who turned to disobedience. Ridiculous, then, are those who follow the ignorances of their fathers, and always put forward ancestral custom as an irrefutable defense, even if they are censured for the worst evils. This is a custom especially of the worshipers of idols. For when called to the knowledge of the truth, they everywhere remember the deceit of their fathers, and embracing their ignorance as if it were a paternal inheritance, they remain blind. And I think that even if someone were to advise those of the circumcision to unlearn the more shameful things and to choose to honor what is beneficial, they too take refuge in the custom of their fathers. It is useful, therefore, to proclaim to those who are wandering: Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord Almighty, and moreover to this: Do not be like your fathers, who were wandering, that is, and remained in ignorance to the very end. Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, will they live forever? But receive my words and my statutes, which I command in my spirit to my servants the prophets, which overtook your fathers.

And they answered and said, Just as the Lord Almighty has determined to do according to your ways and according to your practices, so he has done to you. Before Judea was captured, and Jerusalem itself, some, putting on the name of prophecy for themselves like a mask, spoke to the ancients things "from their own heart," as it is written, "and not from the mouth of the Lord. These, speaking falsely, used to say that the holy city would never be

captured by enemies, nor would Israel ever be an easy conquest for those wishing to ravage it; but it would have firmly-established prosperity, and would lie in unshaken luxuries, with God defending it, and always honoring and loving the chosen one race. But they said such things, as I just said, the wretched ones speaking falsely, and making Israel, who was indolent, even more supine, although it was necessary to persuade them to appease God, and casting as far away as possible the things at which he was grieved, to choose to turn towards what seemed good to him. But for them, the word of truth was of little account, and being overcome by small and most paltry gains, they have deceived Israel.

And so the prophet Jeremiah strongly accused them, saying thus, "O Sovereign Lord, behold their prophets "prophesy and say, 'You shall not see the sword, and "famine shall not be among you, for I will give truth and peace "upon the land and in this place;" But God said to this, "The prophets prophesy lies in my name; "I did not send them, nor did I command them, nor did I "speak to them, for they prophesy to you "false visions and divinations and omens and the choices of their own heart. And indeed, elsewhere he says again, "I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; nor did I "speak to them, yet they prophesied. Therefore, as I said, Israel has been deceived, foolishly carried away by the deceptions of the false seers. But they would never have been captured by enemies, nor have experienced such a bitter and burdensome slavery, had they given their mind to the prophets from God, who both foretold that such things would happen to them, and said expressly, that they would certainly be brought to the test of evil, since they had chosen not to do the things pleasing to God. For this reason he calls to remembrance both the unholy false prophets and those who were deceived, and says, "Where are your fathers? And the prophets, will they live forever?

It is as if he were to say, Your fathers have perished, and this miserably, in captivity, and with them the false-speaking and deceiving ones, who made a trade of the name and reality of prophecy. But if they were still living, perhaps they would have made you better by constantly lamenting over what had happened, and by making no small outcry against the false prophets who were among them. But they, as the wage of both indolence and disobedience, have had the fate of perishing along with those who deceived them; but you, receive the words of the holy prophets, and hold in high esteem the oracles given through them. For they have spoken also to those before you, that the

Lord has set himself to do it, meaning clearly the captivity and the miseries that would happen in it. And they refuted them, saying openly, that "according to your ways and according to your deeds, so has he done to you. For the God of all does not punish in vain, nor indeed does the divine and unerring and most just judgment render its verdict on anything unexamined; but after being exceedingly longsuffering, then indeed it weighs out for the sinners what is most fitting for them.

It is a wise thing, then, to be tractable, and what will deliver us from all evil is to follow the divine laws, and to honor the predictions of the saints, and to deem the voices of the Spirit worthy of faith, understanding that in every way and entirely what has been foretold will come to pass, to be transformed for the better and to turn to repentance. For in this way we will put away the things that come from wrath, and we shall meet with a gentle Master; for he justifies the ungodly, and releases from punishment those who through ignorance or weakness have fallen into sin. On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the Prophet, saying, "I saw in the night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse, and he was standing between the two shady mountains, and behind him were red and dappled and piebald and white horses. And I said, "What are these, Lord? And the angel who was speaking in me said to me, "I will show you what these are. And the man who was standing between the mountains answered and said to me, "These are they whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth.

And they answered the angel of the Lord to the one standing between the mountains, and they said, "We have gone through all the earth, and behold, all the earth is inhabited and is at rest. In part and at various times, God would reveal the visions to the holy prophets. For we do not say that the grace of the divine vision and the revelation of things to come was supplied to them always and frequently and completely without interruption; but rather at various times, those fitting for each matter, and according to what seemed good to the one revealing the hidden things. and sometimes this, sometimes that, they were instructed in many and various ways. For sometimes they received simple knowledge, with the Holy Spirit speaking within them; and sometimes, in addition to this, they were also in the very visions of the things being done, with God at different times in different ways shap-

ing for them and enigmatically revealing mysteries. For the blessed Isaiah says he has seen "the Lord of sabaoth sitting on a throne, high and lifted up," with the Seraphim standing around him and praising him in turn. And the divine Ezekiel says he has seen a throne upon a firmament, with the Seraphim underneath. And he said that he saw the one sitting on the throne as of a double nature, such that the parts below the loins were clearly seen in the form of fire, and the parts above in the appearance of electrum.

And deep and long would be the account on each point, if one should choose to investigate the reasons why the visions from God to them became multifaceted. Thus therefore the blessed Zechariah also, having clearly defined the time and days and month, says he has seen the Lord in a form like ours. for "behold a man," he says, "riding on a red horse. and through this he signifies one who is, as it were, experienced in war and knowledgeable in tactics. For to sit on a horse, and that a red one and having a color as if from blood, I think, for my part, signifies some such thing. For the God of all things fights against those who oppose him, and like a warrior arms himself against the disobedient and arrogant who raise the neck of their mind against him. And those of the blood of Israel did this, and very rashly, both those inhabiting Judea and Jerusalem itself, and also those holding the country of the Samaritans, that is, the ten tribes. For they turned to polytheism, and offering worship to handmade things, they would cry out to the golden calves, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt," and in addition to this, having completely disregarded the ordinances of the law, they rashly turned to what seemed pleasing to each. For this reason, therefore, the God of all things, as if on horseback against them, as in a form like ours, enigmatically appears.

And he stood between the two shady mountains. And I think by shady mountains he means that of Judea, that is, Zion, and also that of Samaria. For God said somewhere concerning them, "Woe to those who despise Zion and to those who trust in the mountain of Samaria. And both are shady on account of being crowded with an innumerable multitude of inhabitants, perhaps, and imitating a dense and abundant forest. And behind the one riding the red horse, other horses were also coming, and not of one appearance, for they were red, and also dappled and speckled and white. And they also signify kings, or nations that are warlike and most pugnacious, and not content to possess only their own land, but scattering as it were over all the

earth, and eager to bring under themselves all that is under heaven, such as the kings of the Babylonians became, first Pul, who took the tribes beyond the Jordan. then after him Shalmaneser, who sacked Samaria, and third Sen-nacherib, who savagely laid waste the remnant of Samaria, and also burned many of the cities of Judea. fourth Nebuchadnezzar, who also took Jerusalem itself, and carried Israel away into captivity. But that the horses were seen in various forms perhaps signifies the difference in each one's mind; and the different color in them, one might accept as an enigma of the thought of each, and very rightly so Reasonably. The Prophet, then, was perplexed and asks for a revelation;

and he learns that these are they whom the Lord has sent forth to patrol all the earth, and those who were sent say this themselves, affirming that they have patrolled the whole [earth], and that it is indeed at rest, unable to oppose their acts of greed, and enduring the yoke under them, unwillingly indeed, but necessarily. And the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord, how long will you not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, which you have overlooked this seventieth year? When the sent horses, that is, both nations and kings, had patrolled the whole earth, and then clearly stated that it is inhabited and at peace and endures the yoke necessarily imposed upon it, the blessed angel immediately turns to supplications on behalf of Jerusalem and Judah, who had perhaps been appointed by God to guide the nation of the Jews. And we shall find that also when they had fled from the land of the Egyptians, the frantic Pharaoh terrified them with dreadful fears, armed for the law of war, then while attempting to pursue, the angel of the Lord, it says, stood between them, "and they did not come near one another all night. But also the law itself was spoken through angels, as Paul, the expert in the law, said. And the power of the evangelical parable suggests something of this sort.

For Christ said somewhere concerning the Synagogue of the Jews, showing enigmatically what was about to happen to it, "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his field. And since it was fruitless, he wished to cut it down, and indeed he ordered this to be done, saying to the vinedresser, "Cut it down; why does it even make the ground useless? But he says to this, "Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure; and if it bears fruit in the future; but if not, you shall cut it down. For what else does the person of the vinedresser suggest to us in these things, except that of the

presiding angel, who was commanded, as I said, to guide it? Therefore, since God had set the time of the captivity at the seventieth year, while the time had not yet come to an end, it was necessary to be silent, so that he might not seem to oppose the Master's commands. But when the time was already completed, he makes his supplications, and with the suspicion of giving offense having been, as it were, removed from the midst, and knowing that the Master is true, he asks to learn whether the things from wrath have been completed for the sinners according to what was formerly decreed for the seventieth year; that is, whether there will be another postponement because of added sins, and the things of their misery be extended for them yet longer.

For this reason he says, "How long will you not have mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, which have been overlooked now for this seventieth year? There is, therefore, a good and undoubted hope for those who worship God, that if they should happen to offend out of weakness, yet they have with God those who supplicate on their behalf, not only men, but also the holy angels themselves, who render God gracious and mild, assuaging his wrath with their own purity, and, as it were, appeasing the displeased Judge. But then, an angel made the supplications on behalf of the Synagogue of the Jews; but we, who have believed and have now been sanctified in the Spirit, "have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. And as the divine Paul writes, "God set him forth as a propitiation through faith," delivering from sins those who approach him. And the Lord Almighty answered the angel who was speaking in me with good words and comforting words. And the angel who was speaking in me said to me, "Cry out, saying, 'Thus says the Lord Almighty: I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, and I am very angry with the nations that are attacking together, because I was indeed I was angry a little, but they helped for evil.

It is true to say that according to the voice of the psalmist, "The Lord is compassionate and merciful," and the very experience of things would cry out, that this is so and not otherwise. But see how He immediately accepts the supplications for those who have acted wretchedly, and have been crushed in a foreign land, and have endured the yoke of captivity, and He almost anticipates the request of the one entreating, and immediately answers

with good words and comforting words; and by comforting he means those things able to restore and console the afflicted. For during the whole time of their captivity, having perhaps spoken no good word, nor having deemed them worthy of any of the customary consolations, He begins to speak kindly, and lays the foundation of His gentleness toward them. Therefore, out of exceeding joy, the divine angel commanded the Prophet to cry out henceforth and to minister to all the things from God. For He says He is zealous for Jerusalem with a great zeal, not putting the zeal in her, as when she was formerly carried away to strange worships, but on her behalf against those who had sacked her, with whom He says He is angry, not as with a simple and measured emotion, perhaps, but as with an unrestrained and unstoppable wrath. For I, He says, was disciplining my people, and I did not wish them to suffer anything beyond measure;

but they dreadfully and unbridledly brought on the savagery of their own mind, omitting nothing that led to cruelty and inhumanity. This I think is the meaning of "I was angry a little, but they helped for evil. For God of all disciplines sinners out of love, and bringing upon us commensurate torments, or labors, He drives us toward the better. But those who have been taken for this purpose, sometimes leap upon those being disciplined like wild beasts. But God is angry with them with a great anger. For He, as a father, wished to correct with torments; but they, as with all sails and shaking every rope, were borne with unstoppable impulses against the weary. When the Church suffered this, the persecutors were ignorant that they will pay the price for their savagery against her, and will be required to give a bitter account by the presiding God. Therefore thus says the Lord: I will return to Jerusalem with compassion, and my house shall be rebuilt in it, says the Lord Almighty, and a measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem yet. He has shown that having suffered the turning away of Him who is mighty to save, she has slipped into this state of wretchedness and hardship, but she will be again, without a struggle and very easily, in the state she was in before, when the one who was provoked has been turned to gentleness; clearly, that is, God who is mighty in all things;

and He almost returns to her, by deeming her worthy again of mercy and love, and by forgiving her offenses without remembering them. For He promises to raise up the house, and to make Jerusalem very long. For the temple had been burned, and the very walls of the city had been torn down,

so that it seemed altogether small and constricted, and had few inhabitants. But, as I just said, He promises to restore her to her former state, which indeed was also accomplished, when Cyrus released them from captivity, and Darius also commanded the temple itself to be rebuilt, and allowed the city itself to be fortified with walls. But we see that God, sometimes training the faith of the saints and the love of those devoted to Him, at times allows the Church to be persecuted. But after she has suffered a little, He immediately raises her up, and builds her walls again with assistance, and with grace from above He crowns His own house. And each of those who have chosen to be pious is both a city and a house of God. And he is often tested, when both carnal pleasure and worldly care provoke him to depravity, so that the soul of the one who suffers seems to have been burned down and to be left destitute of walls, that is, of safety.

but when God takes pity, and is turned to gentleness by the prayers of the saints, is built again "into a holy temple, into a dwelling-place of God in the Spirit," and indeed with all uncleanness driven away, it is walled anew by God, and becomes the city of the great king, that is, Christ. And the angel who spoke in me said to me, Cry out, saying, Thus says the Lord Almighty: My cities shall yet be poured out with good things, and the Lord will yet have mercy on Zion and will yet choose Jerusalem. As the time of the captivity was prolonged, the cities of Judea, and no less also those of the Samaritans, were completely desolate. For houses were burned and, so to speak, crying out against the cruelty of the Babylonians, and the very forms of the cities were destroyed and completely overturned. With very few people inhabiting them, it was not possible to see a man who was prominent or otherwise distinguished, nor any who were in comfort, but all were dejected, weighed down by famine and poverty. An end to all these things is promised. For he says, cities will be poured out with good things, that is, they will be in their ancient prosperities, and with an abundance of good things laid before them, they will change their appearance, and will run up again in the things they prayed for. For the Lord will yet have mercy on Zion and will yet choose Jerusalem.

But observe how skillfully the word of the prophecy proceeds for us. For he does not promise to have mercy on her completely, nor indeed to choose her for all time; but he says, Yet, as if promising a measured time of gentleness. For after this she was to be caught in even worse evils, condemned for

her drunken outrages against Christ. Therefore the word Yet, so to speak, measures out the time of gentleness, holding a hidden threat of the things that would happen to her at the times of the coming of our Savior. And I lifted up my eyes and saw, and behold, four horns. And I said to the angel who spoke in me, What are these, Lord? And he said to me, These are the horns that scattered Judah and Israel. And the Lord showed me four craftsmen. And I said, What are these coming to do? And he said to me, These are the horns that scattered Judah and broke Israel, and no one of them raised his head; and these have entered to sharpen them with their hands, the four horns, the nations that lift up a horn against the land of the Lord to scatter it. The prophet comes to another vision, and not after a long time, so that he might not be instructed about the future by word alone, but also, by being amidst visions of the events themselves, he might know subtly and accurately the things signified.

What, then, is the meaning of the vision, I shall try to explain as best I can. The horn in the divinely-inspired scripture is always taken on the one hand as an image and type of strength, that is, of a kingdom; but it very often also signifies arrogance, as when the blessed David said to some, "I said to the transgressors, Do not transgress, and to the sinners, Do not lift up the horn; do not lift up your horn on high, nor speak unrighteousness against God. And he also sings somewhere about Christ, "His horn will be exalted in glory," that is, his kingdom, and the strength and authority to rule over all things. Therefore the Prophet sees four horns, that is, four nations, both harsh and very strong, able to easily gore both cities and countries. And some say these are the kingdom of the Assyrians, and besides this, that of the Babylonians, and thirdly, that of the Macedonians. For Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, being from Macedonia, ravaged Judea. And to these they also add that of the Romans, which after the cross of the Savior, took Jerusalem by force. But since the divine angel, interpreting the vision for the Prophet, said about the horns that these are the horns which scattered Judah and crushed Israel, I think it necessary now to leave those aside and come rather to the nations that have crushed Israel. Therefore, there have been four powers, through which this we shall find that Judea suffered.

For Phul was the first, as I said, to capture the tribes beyond the streams of the Jordan; then after him Shalmaneser, and third Sennacherib, and last after them Nebuchadnezzar. Therefore, it might be more appropriately un-

derstood of them, that these are the four horns that scattered Judah and Israel. Then, as God showed and revealed the vision to the Prophet, four craftsmen are seen. He asked again, where they were going and for what purpose; then the angel speaking in him says that the four horns that had crushed and scattered Judah and Israel came to sharpen them. What then shall we say is again signified by this? For were those who had already ravaged Israel incited against them, and did God make fiercer those who had been brought against them in anger? And yet He is seen crying out and saying, "I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, "and with great wrath I am angry with the nations that joined in the attack, "because while I was but a little angry, they helped "for evil. How then does He who was angry a little and in measure, and who vents his jealousy on the ravagers because they have committed deeds beyond reason against the captives, command the horns to be sharpened against them? Therefore, they are sharpened, but not against Israel, but against themselves. For they rose up against one another, and the Persians and Medes made war on the Assyrians and Babylonians when Cyrus was king, as has already been said before.

Therefore, if the horns had not been sharpened, and the power of the Babylonians had not been destroyed, Israel would not have been freed from slavery, would not have been released from bonds and from unbearable misery. The four craftsmen, then, who sharpen the horns in their hands, that is, of those who have them, or rather of those who rule; so that we may understand them as the kings of the Persians; might be understood as angels, commanded to carry out very well what seemed good to God. This, then, was the capture of the Babylonians, and their falling under the hand of the Persians and Medes, concerning whom the Lord God of all says somewhere else, "They are sanctified, and I bring them: "giants are coming to fulfill my wrath, rejoicing at the same time "and insolent. And I lifted up my eyes and saw, and behold a man, and in his hand was a measuring line. And I said to him, Where are you going? And he said to me, To measure Jerusalem, to see how great is its width and how great its length. And behold, the angel who was speaking in me stood still, and another angel went out to meet him, and said to him, Run and speak to that young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as a fruitful land because of the multitude of men and cattle in the midst of her;

and I will be to her, says the Lord, a wall of fire round about, and I will be for a glory in the midst of her. That the horns were not sharpened against Israel, but rather against those who had captured and ravaged both Jerusalem and indeed Judea, the neighboring vision would show, and very easily. For the Prophet again lifts up his eyes, and not at all those of the body; for such visions are invisible to the eyes of the flesh; but rather the inner and spiritual ones, it is clear that they are those in the heart and mind. Then he says that he saw someone in the form of a man, holding a measuring line, and he asked again for what purpose he was going, and what his intention was. And when he said, To measure Jerusalem, to see how great its width is and how great its length, another angel again commanded another angel to go and report to him that Jerusalem would be inhabited as a fruitful land because of the multitude of men and cattle that are in the midst of it. For since Jerusalem was desolate, and the divine temple itself had been burned down, and the houses and cities throughout all Judea had been overturned, the hope that it could ever revive again was somehow taken away.

But God shows that when the horns were sharpened, that is, the nations, that is, of the kingdoms, and they having organized war against each other, Israel will be let go, and will dwell again in an enlarged Jerusalem, fortified by divine power, and, as it were, girt about by an invincible flame with benevolence from on high. Therefore the angel runs to measure Jerusalem, and, as it were, to mark it out as wide and very long. And these things, historically; but I would say that the vision might reasonably be understood also of Christ's Church itself. For Satan had tyrannized over all who were on the earth, and we had become captives, subjected to his yokes. But the grace of the Savior crushed his horn, and shattered his arrogance. For he has triumphed over the principalities and powers of the world-ruler and the opposing forces. And he rescued us, and freed us from his bonds; he raised up for us the Church, the truly holy and renowned city, the wide and very long one, which we have inhabited fruitfully, both men and beasts, that is, those who are already rational, and those who have not yet come to this measure, but are about to and are being initiated; and we have inhabited a city, which Christ Himself walls, consuming those who oppose with ineffable powers, and filling it with his own glory, and standing, as it were, in the midst of those who inhabit it;

for he promised, saying, "Behold, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the age. Of this holy city the prophet Isaiah also made mention somewhere, saying, "Your eyes shall see Jerusalem, a rich city, tents that shall not be shaken, neither shall the stakes of its tent be moved, nor shall its cords be broken," and to it he says, "Enlarge the place of your tent and of your curtains; fix, spare not, stretch forth yet to the right and to the left. For the Church of Christ is enlarged, and is extended to an immense measure, always receiving the countless ones who worship him. Oh, oh, flee from the land of the north, says the Lord, for from the four winds of heaven I will gather you, says the Lord; be saved to Zion, you who inhabit the daughter of Babylon. He frowns, as it were, upon those who suffered captivity, as they endure an unbearable hardship, and indeed he commands them henceforth to separate themselves from the country of the Chaldeans, since it is now possible for them to do this, with no one hindering, and He Himself gathering from every place those who had been scattered by the assault of the war. He calls the country of the Chaldeans the daughter of Babylon and the land of the north. For the metropolises are placed in the rank of mothers to the others, which would act under them. And the country of the Chaldeans is somehow more northerly and situated toward the east.

And let these things be said by us again, as concerning matters from history. But the discourse passes over to spiritual contemplation, and the person of the Savior is now somehow introduced, grieving in a way, and all but weeping for those upon the earth, because all had submitted to the worship of the tyrant Satan, and had endured a slavery so harsh as to be seen weighed down by his desires. He urges them, therefore, to flee as from the land of the north, that is, as from the chilled country, so that through this we may understand obliquely a certain disposition and worldly condition of character, which if anyone should have, and be seen inhabiting it, he would not be fervent in spirit, nor would he have dwelling in himself the fiery word of God. For the blessed David somewhere sings to God, "Your word is exceedingly refined, and your servant has loved it. And he himself said somewhere to the blessed prophet Jeremiah, "Are not my words like a burning fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces? Therefore, he who does not have the fervent and fiery word of God would be chilled and dead. For the love of many will grow cold because lawlessness will be multiplied, as

the blessed Paul also said. And the daughter of Babylon will be called sin, and very reasonably, if it is true that Babylon is interpreted as confusion;

and sinning would be the work, not of a stable and steadfast mind, but rather of one that is confused, and as it were somehow intoxicated by inclinations towards wickedness. Therefore, one must depart from such things and, as from a foreign land of a cold and dead disposition of the mind, move to Zion, that is, to the truth, so that we may understand the Church of Christ, in which, having been born, we shall see what is pleasing to God, and we shall contemplate the doctrines concerning the holy and consubstantial Trinity, and we shall find Christ himself gathering us in every way, and binding us together spiritually into unanimity. For he said somewhere concerning us, that "And other "sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must "bring, and there shall be one flock, and one shepherd. For thus says the Lord Almighty: After glory has he sent me to the nations that have plundered you, for he that touches you is as he that touches the apple of his eye. That Christ both defended and redeemed the peoples of old, no one would doubt, if indeed he had a mind that loved accuracy. For if he was the rock that gave drink to the thirsty Israel in the desert, and he is the one through whom are all things from God the Father, how is it possible to doubt that through him also every redemption at its proper time, and every manner of assistance was accomplished?

However, in this we say that he addresses those who have been justified by faith and sanctified in the Spirit, and signifies the manner of his incarnation. For he says that he was sent after glory. And he would in no way speak falsely. For if God the Word, who exists in the form of God the Father and is from him and in him, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," as it is written, yet came down even to the form of a servant, and humbled himself, becoming as we are, how has he not come after the dignity that is most fitting for him? What then is the reason for his needing to suffer this temporary dishonor? For he came to plunder those who had pillaged and subjected to their own yokes those on the earth, that is, us, whom the wicked and opposing powers were relentlessly despoiling. And now they are plundered, as our Savior of all, Christ, gathers us through faith to himself, and makes his own worshipers those who were burdened by their covetousness, and extends to us such security, that he who wishes to harm us, is all but touching his own pupil; for the outcome of things is always somehow turned to the complete op-

posite. To those who persecute the Church it might be said in each case what is in the Psalms: "He has dug a pit, and has dug it out, and he shall fall into the "ditch which he has made.

His mischief shall return upon "his own head, and his iniquity shall come down upon his own "pate. He who plots against the souls of those who have believed in me, he says, will therefore touch himself. This, in fact, he also says through the voice of the psalmist: "Touch not my "anointed ones, and do my prophets no "harm. For if we are the "body of Christ, and members in "particular," how could he abandon his own body to the lovers of sin? Or how will it be permitted to fill the members of Christ with evil? Or rather, how would they not pay the ultimate penalty, those who unholy plot against those who have become his? For behold, I bring my hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to those who served them: and you shall know that the Lord Almighty has sent me. For Christ laid hold of the world-rulers of this age, and with an unbearable hand he crushed the heads of the murderous dragon, and has given us "to tread on serpents "and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. And those who were once terrible and most difficult, and whose attack was hard to meet, have become spoils for those who had been enslaved to them.

For we who were formerly tyrannized by sins have been justified in Christ, and have now at last arrived at this point of spiritual strength, so as to be able to excel through every virtue, and the one in and to Christ to live a righteous, evangelical life, then to be filled with the gifts "from him, and to receive authority over unclean spirits, and to rebuke unholy demons, with Christ subduing and crushing under the feet of the saints both Satan himself and the evil powers under him. And in another way one might plunder those who once held sway. For when we overcome our own passions, and consider it of the utmost importance to overcome worldly and carnal pleasures, and every misplaced and foul desire, then we have conquered those who once held sway. and if we see ourselves having become so in these things, then indeed then we shall know also through experience itself, that the Word, being God, was sent with flesh into this world by God the Father, and came after glory for no other reason, than to bind up that which was broken, and to strengthen that which was weak, to raise up that which was cast down, to render strong that which was feeble, to heal that which was sick, that he

might save that which was lost. Rejoice and be glad, daughter of Zion, for behold, I am coming and will dwell in your midst, says the Lord.

And many nations will flee to the Lord on that day, and they will be his people, and will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. And the Lord will inherit Judah, his portion in the holy land, and he will yet choose Jerusalem. And from this you may learn that the presence of the Savior on earth will be the occasion for the highest joy. For he has commanded the spiritual Zion to rejoice and be glad, "which is the Church of the living God," that is, the most holy multitude of those saved through faith. and he promised that he would come and would be altogether in her midst. For the divine John says to us, "He was in the world," and the Word, being God, did not remove himself from his own creatures, but it was he who gave life to those that partake of life, and held all things together for well-being and life; but "the world did not know him; for it worshipped creation rather than him. But he became with us when, having taken on our likeness, he was born of the holy virgin; then also "He was seen on earth and conversed with men; and the divine David will testify, saying, "God shall come manifestly, our God, and shall not keep silence; then he also became a refuge for the nations. For no longer was the race of Israel alone instructed by that ancient commandment;

but rather the world under heaven was gilded with the evangelical proclamations, and in every nation and in every country "his name has become great. For he was the "expectation of the nations," according to the voice of the prophet, and to him "every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. For they have run together to him through faith, and with him they have dwelt in the holy and spiritual Zion, those from the ends of the earth, and they have known clearly, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For the Father sent to us his Son from heaven, a Savior and a redeemer, so that believing in him, we might marvel at the Father in him and seeing as an exact image of the one who begot him the one who is from him by nature, we might perceive the archetype. Then indeed then Judah also became the inheritance of Christ, that is, everyone who confesses and glorifies him; for Judah is interpreted as confession;

for as Paul says, "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 that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not from men, but from God. Therefore, as many of us as have been enriched with circumcision in the spirit through Christ, have become his inheritance upon the holy land, that we may conceive of the city above, the spiritual Jerusalem, "whose craftsman and maker is God," making her beloved and elect. for he says he will yet choose Jerusalem. And it is not unlikely again, if one should choose, to think that Jerusalem is now named the Church, which the divine David also calls the city of God, saying "As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God. Let all flesh be reverent before the face of the Lord, because he has been raised up from his holy clouds. This is a beautiful and beneficial exclamation, and a good summons for those who wish to be well-pleasing, whether it comes from Christ himself, or as from the person of the Prophet. But that must be considered. For since those who would not believe in him would in every way and altogether perish, he commanded them to be reverent.

Christ himself also proclaimed this to those from Israel who did not accept faith in him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. and again, "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 this reason Christ has been called "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. For just as it is admittedly good and salvific to crown him with faith, so it is a cause of destruction not to revere him who for our sake became as one of us, and for no other reason than to save what was lost, to turn back what was wandering, to give life to what was corrupted, to enlighten what was in darkness, to declare clean of offenses what was liable to sins, to make healthy and strong what was weak.

And we will understand that he was raised up from his holy clouds again, as having come from the ancient quiet and silence to the motion of care for us, having indeed been born from the seed of the holy Abraham, Jesse, and David, and of those genealogized with them, whom he also calls clouds, because the mind of the saints is borne on high, and they reject things on earth and a base mindset, seeking rather the things above and in the heavens, and indeed, in the manner of clouds, watering others with intelligible rains. But that it is not unlikely to understand the resurrection in this sense, I mean,

the movement of the ineffable nature to care, the Savior himself will again confirm, saying thus through the voice of the psalmist, "From the affliction of the poor and from the groaning of the needy, now I will arise, says the Lord. Therefore, he has been raised up, that is, he has now been moved to help those on earth who have fared miserably. And he is the release of all, and the end of the ancient curse, and the beginning of all good, and the giver of hope for the age to come. And the Lord showed me Jesus the high priest standing before the face of the angel of the Lord, and the devil stood at his right hand to oppose him. And he said to the devil, "May the Lord rebuke you, devil, and may the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you;

is this not a brand plucked from the fire? The narrative is a vision, but it has a historical account, entering enigmatically, and prefigured again as in an image of Jesus. But it should be known that the Prophet speaks about those things in the visions that have come to pass, and in no way tells idle tales, nor does he come after the results and pile up a crowd of superfluous narratives for us; but, as I said at the beginning, what he has seen before the events, these things he makes it his business to report, making Israel wise and secure, so that it might not fall into the same offenses and be captured a second time, knowing that it was saved with toil, and that the redemption and grace for them became a care even for the angels in heaven. He said, therefore, that he saw the angel standing, and before his face also Jesus the son of Jozadak, the high priest; and the angel stood as an image and type of Christ; but the priest might be understood as in place of all the people; for he is so taken in the divine in the scriptures. And so God said somewhere to Moses, "And I, "behold, have taken the Levites instead of all the sons of Israel, "they are a gift given to me; our discourse then does not depart from a fitting aim, in accepting the priest in place of all the people.

For since Israel had come from the presence of God, having worshipped idols, and dishonored the law itself given through Moses, then after the just wrath against him was fulfilled, he has been shown mercy by God, and is called again into his sight. And this, I think, is enigmatically the standing of the priest before the face of the angel of the Lord. For in wrath he turns away and removes his eyes from those accustomed to be contemptuous; but in pitying he looks upon and visits them. And so the divine psalmist prayed, saying, "Turn not thy "face from me, and turn not away in wrath from thy "servant. And again, "Look upon me and have mercy on "me. But the God

who is by nature good and merciful was freeing Israel from sin; but Satan, who had cast him into it, stood again opposing and resisting him, and still accusing, and, as far as was possible for him to say what he thought, not permitting him to be pitied, as one being in transgressions, and held by the charges of impiety, and having nothing on his right. For he stood, it says, at his right hand, in a way paralyzing the right things; for he wars not with our left-hand deeds, but with those on the right and praiseworthy. The blessed David invoked this to happen to one of those who had been impious towards Christ, saying thus, "And let the devil "stand at his right hand.

Satan therefore opposed, but was rebuked by the voice of an angel; for he heard him say, The Lord rebuke thee, O devil, and the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. For observe how he showed him at once to be fighting against God, and unholily opposing the decrees from above. For when God was pitying and already absolving Israel from transgression, and receiving and making Jerusalem in some way elect, he does not cease accusing, and dares to condemn those who have been shown mercy. Therefore he rebukes his insatiable wrath, saying, Is not this as a brand plucked out of the fire? This is as if he might say, Israel has admittedly transgressed, and is seen to be entangled in your fault-findings. But he has paid no small penalty, he has endured the calamities, and was plucked out with difficulty, like a half-burnt firebrand from the fire; for he has not yet shaken off the dust of the damage from the captivity; just now and with difficulty has he escaped the flame of incurable misery. Cease then accusing those who have been shown mercy. "For it is God who justifies, who is he that condemns? And Jesus was clothed in filthy garments, and stood before the face of the angel. And he answered and said to those standing before him, saying, Take the filthy garments from him. And he said to him, Behold, I have taken away your iniquities. And clothe him with a full-length robe, and place a clean turban on his head.

And they put garments on him, and they placed a clean turban on his head. Since the one chosen to serve as priest was accepted once for all in the person of all the people, it is sufficient, I think, to say this much, that the filthy garments would be a not incongruous symbol of the impurity of the people. For as if clothed in their own sins, and having the stain of impiety hard to wash off, they continued in captivity, subjected to punishments, and paying the penalty for the unholy things transgressed by them. But since God had mercy, he commanded that they be freed from sin, be liberated

from the filthy things, and in a way be re clothed with justifying grace. And he grants them an end to their toil and a release from what has happened. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there will certainly follow the need to be freed from the things brought upon them on account of it. Therefore, in the person of God, the blessed angel commanded those standing and ministering to him to remove from them the defiled garment, and indeed he says, Behold, I have taken away your iniquities. Then he said it was necessary that a long robe and a clean tiara be given to him for his head, so that by this we may understand how the glory of the priesthood always somehow coincides with the conditions of the peoples.

For the purity of those under their charge is a boast for the priests, and they hold the renown of the priesthood in splendid boasts when the people are well-pleasing, and go blamelessly to what seems good to God, and submit the tender neck of their mind to His decrees; on this account one sees God as benevolent and friendly toward him. But an accusation and a reproach of those yoked under them is slothfulness and unthinkingly rushing into transgression. For just as when the people were in sin, the priest's garments were also somehow filthy; so if he were seen to be well-pleasing again, the state of the priesthood will be pure and transparent, and in great confidence before God. And so the divine Paul, having ministered the gospel of Christ to the gentiles, and seeing them pleasing in their progress toward the better, and having firm faith in him, writes saying, "I swear by your boasting, brothers, which I have in Christ Jesus," and again, "My joy and my crown. And the angel of the Lord stood by and testified to Jesus, saying, Thus says the Lord Almighty: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charges, then you also shall judge my house, and if you will also keep my court, then I will give you access among these who stand here. As a type, indeed, of our Savior of all, Christ, we have accepted Jesus the high priest; for Aaron also was appointed for this in the beginning;

but in the present matters we say that what was spoken to him, the son of Jozadak, was "Thus says the Lord Almighty: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charges, then you also shall judge my house," and what follows these things. For such things would not have been said to Christ; for he himself is the way, he himself is the righteous ordinances of God the Father, he himself judged his house, ruling over it as a son. For the divine "Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house; but Christ as a son over his house; whose

house we are. Therefore let such things have been said to the son of Jozadak, but no longer to Christ. But God promised to the priesthood according to the law that it would still prevail even after the times of the captivity, so that those serving as priests would rule over Israel, and manage the holy tabernacle. For since the captivity had occurred, and the holy things had been burned, and sacrifice was no longer offered, some thought that the things of Moses would be completely gone toward ruin, and that the law would no longer be practiced, although the time was not yet present in which it was necessary for the Only-Begotten to be revealed incarnate;

for this reason God, persuading them that Israel would again be subject to the ancient customs, and would be under the hand of the priests, just as before the captivity, necessarily says, that if Jesus became a genuine keeper of the law, he himself would again judge his house, and he will be established in his former glory, with holy angels ministering with him. For we do not say, I suppose, that the old law was destitute of rational powers. For even if the things in the law were in types and shadows, yet they were performed for the glory of God. This, I think, is what is shown by "I will give you access among these who stand here," that is, angels all but ministering as priests and serving with him. But see how everywhere the holy scripture says that the holy angels are standing, indicating by the word "standing" that they do not sink down into sloth, but that they have a mind that is, as it were, always upright and not tolerating weakness, and standing with God. So also in Ezekiel we will find it written concerning the Cherubim, that "their legs were straight. For the mind of man is bent, and very easily, and is prone to wish to be sick with sloth. But the holy multitude of the spirits above stands, as it were. For this reason also it was said by God to Zion, "Stand "yourself, Zion.

And somewhere the blessed David also offered up thanksgiving odes, saying thus, "He set my feet upon a rock. For by the word "standing" the Spirit-bearer signified the unwavering and firm character of the mind in these matters. Hear now, Joshua the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, for they are men who are portents, for behold, I am bringing my servant the Branch? for the stone that I have given before Joshua, upon this one stone are seven eyes. Through the things just said by us, it was promised to Joshua, or rather, what is truer, to the priesthood according to the law, that he would judge his house, and still rule over peoples, and bring to completion the types of the worship according to the law. But consider for me

also the economy, and the exceeding skill of the divine counsels. The things in the law were about to be transferred, and not in the distant future, to the true worship, and the unloveliness of the types to be refashioned into a desirable and spiritual way of life. The husbandmen who killed the Lord were about to be driven from the vineyard, and the field to be given to others, that is, to the holy apostles and evangelists, who were to make it fruitful and flourishing, deeming it worthy of the most urgent care; "A righteous king was about to reign, and rulers to rule with judgment," according to the voice of the prophet;

another high priest was about to arise, not according to the order of Aaron, but according to the order of Melchizedek, "a minister of the holy things, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For our Lord Jesus Christ entered into the holy of holies "not through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, having found eternal redemption," and "by one offering he has perfected for all time, according to conscience, those who are being sanctified. Therefore, so that God might not appear false of speech and a teller of idle tales, by promising to the priesthood according to the law that he would always and forever watch over and judge his house, he makes necessary the prediction of the mystery concerning Christ and that the things in the law will cease, and he himself will judge his own house through his own offspring, that is, the Son. For this reason he all but testifies to Joshua himself and his companions and those sitting before him, so that we may understand the Levites and priests. For when the high priest was ministering, the Levitical order stood by; but the elders and priests, as being still better and more sacred than they according to the law, were also honored with a seat in the council. Yet he calls them portent-gazers, that is, always seeking to see signs and desiring wonders. For by nature the nation of the Jews is somehow always like this.

And indeed, when Christ, "having made a whip of cords, drove them all out of the temple, saying, "Take these things away from here; do not make my Father's house a house of trade," they came up saying, "What sign do you show us for doing these things? "And who gave you this authority? And we shall find others also coming up and saying to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you. Therefore, since they are men who are portent-gazers, he says, let them learn along with you the things that are to come, and the all-powerful accomplisher of the signs they are always asking for. And who is

this? behold, I am bringing my servant the Branch. Now the Only-begotten was revealed as God by nature and from God the Father, and being this, he is free, but he emptied himself, according to the scriptures, descending to what he was not, and has been called a servant, on account of his humanity, although he is Lord of all as God. But even so he was the Branch, that is, the Sun of Righteousness. For he arose and shone upon us who were living as in darkness, and all but stupefied by worldly pleasures as if in night and sleep, and with the eye of the mind darkened, he roused us to sobriety, and made us bright by his own grace. Therefore also the wise one charges us Paul, declaring this very thing, "The night is far gone, the day is at hand.

Let us therefore cast off "the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light, "that we may walk becomingly as in the day. and again, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ "will shine on you. Therefore he proclaims beforehand the splendid achievements of our Savior's advent. He calls him a servant, because he arrived in the form of a servant; and Dayspring, because he is the true light, dawn and day, and the bright morning star, rising in the mind, and brightening hearts. In addition to this he also names him a stone, and indeed says that it was given before the face of Jesus, and he strongly affirms that he has seven eyes. For it was especially necessary for the priesthood according to the law, for which we have set Jesus as a type, to have, as it were, before its face and before its eyes always the chosen stone, the cornerstone, the precious one, for the foundations of Zion, the pearl of great price, that is, Christ, who watches over all things with many eyes. For the number seven is always somehow indicative of that which is perfect. Indeed, the barren woman is said to have borne seven. And that the divine and ineffable nature of the Son watches over all things with countless eyes and oversees our affairs, no one would doubt;

"For the word of God is living and active, and "sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the "division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of "marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and "no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked "and exposed to his eyes," as it is written. Behold, I am digging a pit, says the Lord Almighty, and I will search out all the iniquity of that land in one day. He has shown our Lord Jesus Christ to be both light and dayspring, and that he will shine like the dawn on those in darkness and in the shadow of death, that is, on those who have gone astray. But it was necessary also to proclaim beforehand the end of

the economy, that is, the death for us all, which he willingly endured, delivering his own body to the cross, at which the nation of the Jews also stumbled, and was cast out from intimacy with him. For since the wretched ones did not understand the mystery of the economy with the flesh, they became deicides; for this reason and quite rightly they were lost to hope, and the wicked perished wickedly, caught in terrible and inescapable calamities. Therefore, he compares the cross of the Savior to a pit. For those who shed the Lord's blood have fallen as if into a pit, having dared to deliver the author of life to the cross.

But if the Father himself should be said to have dug the pit, let no one be scandalized; let him rather consider how the saying is somehow filled with economy. For this is like that which was said wisely and truly through Christ, "For judgment I "came into this world, that those who do not see may "see, and those who see may become blind. And yet, how is it not true to say that he did not come for this reason, that some might become blind; but the depravity of those who do not understand has, as it were, slandered the manner of the best economy. For they did not wish to see, although it was possible for them to share in the divine light. Thus you will understand it here also. For the Father sent the Son, "that the world might be saved "through him. But because of the folly of those who did not understand, he who was sent became a pit and a snare to those who crucified him; and perhaps he who sent him is also thought to have dug the pit. Therefore he says, I will dig the pit and I will search out all the iniquity of that land in one day; He says, "I will search out," instead of "I will seek and I will examine minutely. For they killed the holy prophets, and they attacked savagely the servants who were sent from time to time. For some they insulted, some they stoned, and some they killed. But God was still long-suffering;

for those who suffered were servants and fellow-servants with those who killed them. Since indeed they rushed to this with unbridled impulses, and seeing much into impiety, and they have acted outrageously against the Son Himself, and have slipped into the pit of the cross, He did not leave their sin still unfelt. For He sought out and subjected the impious to punishments, decreeing the destruction of the whole land of the Jews in one day, on which they said, when they brought Him to Pilate, "His blood be on us and on our children. For even if the things from divine wrath did not immediately come to pass; even if they were not required to pay the penalty without delay,

nevertheless the just sentence from God has come upon them, pouring out destruction, as I said, upon the land of the Jews. And so, the Savior was being led away to the cross, and women followed, mourning and weeping; then what did He say, turning to them? "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For they are handed over to destruction and slaughter, and what was said through the voice of Isaiah has happened to them: "Your land is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence strangers devour your land, and it is desolate, overthrown by strangers. In that day, says the Lord Almighty, you shall call, each one his neighbor, under his vine and under his fig tree.

That indeed they will be in every evil, their sin being felt, those who were brought down as into a pit for having crucified Christ, he has clearly foretold. But that for those who believe and have loved Him the matter will not be unprofitable, but rather will lead to gladness and holy delights, he usefully prophesies. And the just Simeon will also bear witness to these things. For when he saw the divine infant and took Him in his arms, he prophesied, saying, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against. For those who poured the righteous blood upon their own heads have fallen, as though cast down and lying on the ground, and being under the feet of the devil; but those from the Gentiles were set upright. And Christ Himself somewhere proclaims beforehand to the holy disciples the passion on the cross; but when He saw that they were dejected, He comforted them, saying, "A woman has sorrow when she is in labor, because her hour has come; but when she has delivered the child, she rejoices with joy, because a man has been born into the world. And you indeed have sorrow, but later you will see Me and your heart will rejoice.

Thus also, having been raised from the dead, He addressed the women weeping in the garden with 'Rejoice.' And it would be fitting for each of those who love Him, concerning both the cross and the resurrection, to say, "You have turned my mourning into joy for me; you have torn off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness. For how has not mourning departed, and "every tear from every face" been wiped away, according to the prophet's voice, since Christ was raised and destroyed the power of death? For He was life by nature, as God, even if He appeared in the flesh. Therefore, 'in that day,' he says, that is, at that time in which He would come back to life from the dead, those who crucified Him having been cast into the pit, 'you shall

call, each one his neighbor, under his vine and under his fig tree.' And if one should wish to accept such a meaning as simple and obvious, he will affirm that the things named are symbols of spiritual delights. But I say it is not implausible to say in addition to this that he seems to call the Church a fig tree and a vine, which the divine psalmist also mentions, speaking enigmatically to the bridegroom from above and from heaven, that is, Christ: "Your wife as a fruitful vine in the inner parts of your house. And He Himself somewhere said, "The vines are in blossom, they give forth fragrance, the fig tree has produced its unripe figs.

For as the churches had already begun in the world to be fragrant through faith in Him, he said the vines are in blossom, and indeed the unripe figs are appearing; and these might be understood as those who have just believed, the not yet ripe and a sweet multitude, becoming so little by little, and going toward this by improvements for the better. For having matured, and having ascended "to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," we shall be like sweet fruits to God, just as clinging to the Church as to a mother. Therefore, with the churches being understood through the fig tree and the vine, we shall be under them, and in them we shall lodge, hurriedly saying to one another that prophetic word: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will announce to us his way, and we will walk in it. And if it should happen that we attain this, we will deem worthy of all praise those who have called us to this, saying again that word: "I was glad when they said to me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. For the matter would rightly be considered the fruit of the highest delight for us. Therefore we shall say again according to the holy psalmist: "One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after:

that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to visit his holy temple."

Book 2

And the angel that spoke in me returned, and awakened me, as a man that is awakened out of his sleep, and he said to me, What do you see? And I said, I have seen, and behold a candlestick all of gold, and its lamp upon it, and seven lamps upon it, and seven pipes to the lamps that were upon it, and two olive trees upon it, one on the right of its lamp, and one on the left. The word 'returned' here we will not understand as from a place; for that is ut-

terly foolish; but we will consider it rather as the transition from the vision at hand to another one immediately neighboring, which is clearly a spiritual one. But since there is need of pure sobriety and of something beyond the human mind, especially in these matters, God instilled a subtle wakefulness in the Prophet, through the mediation of the angel who also spoke in him, so that he seemed to be roused from sleep. For such, somehow, is the state of the mind within us, and it is much less than that which exists in the holy angels, so that one might say that their state is wakefulness, but ours is as if in a sleep. But since the divine angel saw that his mind and understanding were brought to this point, so as to be able to comprehend the vision subtly, he inquired, saying what he thought the things shown might be.

But the Prophet again made a most unerring narration of the vision, saying he had seen a lampstand, entirely of gold throughout; upon it its lamp, and indeed seven lamps, and pipes of equal number to them, and two olive trees, one on the right of the lamp, and the other lying on the left. And the more manifest rendering of the things shown would be none other than this; but I for my part say that those who apply their minds to the innermost things must try very well to examine more carefully the things being declared, and to connect these things also skillfully with what has already been said. Therefore the God of all said that he will both dig a pit and feel for all the iniquity of that land in one day, and he urged others also to call one another under a vine and under a fig tree. But we, making the scope of the prophecy clear, were saying that for those who have chosen to disobey, and who ignorantly dishonor the salvation through Christ, a pit of sorts has been dug, bringing them down to destruction, namely the drunken violence at the cross, and the charges of the murder of Christ. For the wretched ones have perished, having killed the Lord unholily; "but to those who have loved his appearing" there was both delight and luxury, and what of such things was there not? For they have become as if under a fig tree and a vine in the churches.

But behold, the Prophet has also seen the power of the mystery in another way. For we say that the golden lampstand is again the Church, as honored in the world, as most transparent in virtues, as lifted up very high by the dogmas of true knowledge of God, upon which is the lamp, that is, Christ, concerning whom God the Father says "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 burns as a torch. This lamp which illumines all under heaven, God the Father has placed on the lampstand, "that all who enter may see the light," "and it gives light to all in the house. And the seven lamps, having no light of their own, but one brought in and from without, and nourished by the supplies of oil. And they also signify the holy apostles, and indeed the evangelists, and the teachers of the churches from time to time, receiving indeed like lamps into their mind and heart the illumination from Christ, and having it nourished by the additional supplies of the Spirit, sending forth the light to those in the house, and with the lamp illuminating the faithful. But observe that the seven lamps had funnels, through which the oil was poured into them, but the lamp has no funnel. For what reason? For the Son is the true light, not from without, nor brought in, nor indeed having received from another the ability to give light;

but He himself is by nature the light; but in the saints it is by participation and from him. And the wise John will confirm this, saying "For from his fullness we have all received. And the Son, being the true light, named as the light of the world those who have come to be in participation of his brightness; for he said to the holy apostles "You are the light of the world. But the two olive trees, one placed on the right and one on the left of the lamp, signify the two peoples, standing, as it were, in a circle around Christ. for they have been honored as having received mercy by such a position. And the one group was from the cultivated olive tree, that is, from the Synagogue of the Jews; but the other sprang from the wild olive tree, that is, from the multitude of the Gentiles, but having been grafted into the cultivated olive tree they have become partakers of the richness of the root, according to the voice of the blessed Paul. But see how on the lampstand are together with the lamp both the lamps and the two olive trees. For Christ is with us in the Church, and the multitude of the faithful who have received mercy is illumined by the light from him, and is also lit by the lamps, which have the light by participation and from him.

But it should be known that also in the construction of the holy tabernacle, there was placed in the holy of holies a golden lampstand having seven lamps. And God commanded Aaron, saying that "the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand from the one side. for the illumination through the lamps is not given to those behind it, but to those who have been brought near as if into the presence of Christ through faith. And so the

Jews, being as it were behind him and at his back, have their mind darkened; but those from the Gentiles who have believed have the lamps before their face, for the illumination through the saints has become for them free and completely unhindered. And one lamp was also lit in the first tabernacle; the matter signifying for us that the legal observance came after the evangelical instruction. For see how for those in the first tabernacle only one lamp was lit, but for those who had entered into the holy of holies seven lamps and the lamp sent forth as it were a most abundant radiance. And I asked and said to the angel who was speaking in me, saying, What are these, Lord? And the angel who was speaking in me answered and said to me, saying, Do you not know what these are? And I said, No, Lord. And the angel answered and said to me, saying:

This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by great power, nor by might, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty. For you might also learn from this that the mind of the intelligible powers is both better and more holy than our own thought, and surpasses our condition with incomparable preeminence. "For the angel returned," as the Prophet says, "and awakened him, in the way a man is awakened from his sleep. For if one were to choose to compare the measure of human thought to the mind that is in the powers above, he would find it inferior by as much as our inert phantasms in sleep might be considered to fall short of the thought of those who are awake. The Prophet, therefore, has been awakened to sobriety, but even in this state and being exceedingly sharp, he is no less slow in being able, I mean, to understand the things shown. For this reason, and very fittingly, he both asks and demands to learn from the angel who is making him wise. But he, almost astounded that he did not understand, asks if he truly does not know. And when he had plainly confessed his ignorance and was not ashamed of his difficulty in learning, he then makes clear the riddle from the vision, and, as if from a clear and visible image, he interprets the purpose hidden within it. For this, he says, is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying:

Not by great power, nor by might, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty. It is as if the meaning of the vision and the purpose of the things shown might say: It all but cries out the things from God to Zerubbabel and declares with a voice that all these things that are seen will come to fulfillment in due time, being accomplished not by human power, nor indeed by

fleshly might, but as by the power of the Holy Spirit, and as from divine as-
sents. For the Only-Begotten became man like us; yet he did not make war
in a fleshly way in order to raise up the Church for the world like a lamp-
stand. Not by moving perceptible weapons and battle-phalanxes did he
present the two peoples to himself, or place the intelligible lamps upon the
lampstand, but by the might of his own Spirit he has ordained in the
churches "first Apostles, second prophets and evangelists," and all the other
company of the saints, filling them with divine gifts, and richly nourishing
them with the outpouring of the Spirit. Therefore, the things from Christ
were not by great power, nor by fleshly might, but as by the power of the
Spirit: Satan was despoiled, and with him fell also the hordes of the opposing
powers, and both those from Israel and those who had long served the cre-
ation rather than the creator were called to the knowledge of God through
faith.

And the lamps were also revealed in the churches, that is, the saints, shin-
ing together with the light, I mean Christ. For they have become, as indeed
the most wise Paul writes, "lights in the world, holding fast the word of life.
And that he saved the world under heaven not by a human hand, but by his
own powers as God, Emmanuel testified, saying also through the voice of
Hosea. For it is thus: "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. And the
word was very well directed to Zerubbabel, who was of the tribe of Judah,
and at that time administered the thrones of the kingdom in Jerusalem. For
lest, when such splendid and admirable achievements were announced to
him beforehand, he should think that wars and battles would be waged in
due time, he necessarily removes him from such unsound and human
thoughts, and instead has commanded him to be disposed to the fact that
the work is befitting of God, and the power of Christ who accomplishes such
things is not human. And we remember that we said that Zerubbabel him-
self, as being from the tribe of Judah and a king, prefigured in himself
Christ, with Jesus son of Jozadak being joined, so that in the same person he
might be understood as both king and the high priest Emmanuel.

Who art thou, O great mountain, before the face of Zerubbabel to set
aright? And I will bring forth the stone of the inheritance, the equality of
grace its grace. The present subject is indeed very difficult to grasp; nonethe-

less we will say what seems to be best and correct. The saying, therefore, seems almost to rebuke the great mountain, that is, satan who rises up and opposes Christ with the power of his own depravity, which indeed was also described for us enigmatically again in what was said above. For the Prophet said he had seen "Jesus the great high priest standing "before the face of the angel of the Lord, and the devil standing "at his right hand to oppose him. For as much as it was possible and within his power, he has warred against and terribly risen up against the economies of the Savior, who was calling all under heaven to salvation, one would not doubt this, having considered that first he approached Him when he was fasting in the desert, and seeing Him saving those under heaven, he wanted to make Him his own worshipper, by showing Him "all the kingdoms "of the world," and saying that all would be His, if indeed He should choose to fall down and worship him. Then, in addition to this, even from the very choir of the holy apostles he seized the traitor disciple, persuading him to become an instrument of the wickedness of the Jews.

The saying therefore rebukes him and says, Who art thou, O great mountain before the face of Zerubbabel to set aright? But the "Who art thou" is to be understood not as of one wishing to learn who then he is and from whence; for being God He would not be ignorant; but as of one belittling and deeming him of no account, even if the mountain were great and difficult to oppose, and lying in the way as an obstacle to Christ who wishes to set such things aright, of whom Zerubbabel is also a type, as we have already said. For although the apostate dragon has an incomparable depravity, he has been trampled by Christ without toil or sweat. For He was God by nature, the one who conquers all. Either, then, we will approach what has been said in this manner, or in another way, if you please. For we said that the things pertaining to life will not be set aright for the world by human power. And the lampstand will be set up, holding the lamp, that is, Christ, and the lamps will also shine, and indeed also at the right and at the left of the lamp the two olive trees will surely be set up, signifying the two peoples. Then, as if someone were inquiring and saying, Who then are you, who promises to set such great things aright without any war and effortlessly? God the Father is understood to add, saying:

I am the great mountain before the face of Zerubbabel to set aright, that is, I am the nature that surpasses all things, the one that with God-befitting

heights rushes to the glory beyond all, the one who in due season will suffice for the setting aright of the things that have been promised, and before the face of Zerubbabel. For Christ was not ignorant of His own Father, but made Him a co-worker, as it were, of His own right-doings, saying "Of "myself I do nothing, but the Father who sent me, dwelling in me, "He does the works. For He worked as through the Son's own power, through whom also in the beginnings He brought all things into being and is rightly marveled at. And we remember that in the most wise Daniel, God the Father is again named for us as a mountain, from which also "a stone was cut without hands, which "also ground to powder the gold, the silver, the bronze, the "iron," and this was also a type of Christ. For having been begotten of God the Father ineffably and beyond understanding, the Son crushed all the kingdoms, so that dominion might henceforth be ascribed to Him. "For to Him every knee shall bow, and every "tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the "glory of God the Father. Therefore, as a cornerstone and choice stone cut from the mountain of God the Father, the Son has become our inheritance.

For we have been called to adoption as sons through Him, and we have become heirs of the living God, gaining equality of grace for grace. And what is this? For grace was given to Israel, the that ancient and famous one. For they were redeemed from Egypt in the flesh, they shook off the slavery imposed on them through greed, they were brought across through the midst of the sea, they ate the manna in the desert, they crossed rivers on foot; for thus they crossed the Jordan; they were brought into the land of promise. This, then, is the first grace. But in equality and likeness to that ancient grace, another grace has been given to us by Christ, who became for us a stone, as a foundation, that is, a cornerstone, and again an inheritance, for through him we have become heirs of God. How then is the second grace in equality with the first? For what was done for them in the flesh, that is, perceptibly, this Christ has accomplished for us spiritually and intellectually. He delivered us from diabolical slavery, as from clay and brick-making, he freed us from the passions in the world and from carnal impurities, he led us across as through a sea. For we have passed by the surge of the present life, and the bitterness of its cares, we have eaten the bread from heaven; the word is mystical;

we have crossed the Jordan, we have received the circumcision in the Spirit, we have inherited the city above, the truly holy land, which Christ him-

self mentioned, saying, "Blessed "are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. And I think that the most wise evangelist John wished to make this very thing clear, when he said of Christ, "For "from his fullness we have all received, and "grace in place of grace; for the law was given through Moses, "grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. For Moses became the minister and mediator of that ancient grace; but Christ is the giver of the second, which has a likeness to that one; for they were types in relation to the truth, that is, travailing with the beauty of the truth; but better and superior, inas-much as the intelligible would rightly surpass the perceptible. And Paul will testify in writing, that "Jesus has become the guarantor of a better "covenant. And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands shall complete it, and you shall know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. Behold, again he describes for us the intelligible things in perceptible matters, and he sets forth as a type of the things wonderfully accomplished by Christ the things achieved by the hand of Zerubbabel at that time.

For when Babylon was captured by the Persians and Cyrus, those of Israel were released from the bonds of slavery, and indeed they returned to Jerusalem, while Darius was now governing the rule of the Chaldeans, or rather the kingdom, God urged those who had returned to immediately rebuild the divine temple, while Zerubbabel was reigning, and Joshua, son of Joza-dak, the great priest, was serving as priest. And they took up the work, and indeed the work was at the first laying of the foundations; and the walls were now being raised high, then in the meantime, with some preventing it and the envy of the neighboring nations becoming an obstacle, there was a certain suspension and a postponement of the efforts on the works. But when God again granted them the ability to succeed, the temple was with difficulty completed, while Joshua was serving as priest, and Zerubbabel was presiding and reigning. But with these things the historical account is concluded. But since Zerubbabel from the tribe of Judah has been taken by us as a type of Christ, come now, let us say how and in what manner he himself began to build the house of the Lord; and how he completed it again intellectually and spiritually. For in the beginning he established a house, as it were, and a dwelling place befitting God for himself and for the Father, the Synagogue of the Jews.

For so he named it, saying through the all-wise Moses, "If there is a prophet among you of the Lord, I will make myself known to him in a vision, "and I will speak to him in a dream, not so "as my servant Moses, he is faithful in all my house; "with him I will speak mouth to mouth, in appearance and not "through riddles. Therefore, the house has been founded, as it were, through Christ; but it was torn down in the meantime. and so the prophet Jeremiah lamented it as having fallen and been shaken, saying, "The house of Israel has fallen, there is no one who will raise it "up; for since they have behaved insolently toward Christ, it has fallen for this reason, and there was no longer anyone to raise it up; but it has been raised up through Christ, and has been transformed for the better, with the Gentiles having been brought into it, and the Church having been revealed in the world, "which is the house of the living God," of whose beauty the Lord and God of all has become a lover. For that the temple raised up in the last times, that is, the Church, is incomparably better than the first, he has fully assured us, saying through the voice of Haggai the prophet, "Who "is there among you that saw this house in its "former glory? And how do you see it "now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?

and after other things, "For the latter glory of this house shall be greater "than the former, says the Lord Almighty. But that it is senseless to understand such things historically, no one would doubt, having considered how the latter glory of the divine temple could be understood as superior to the first, if indeed the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar burned and plundered that one; and the one raised after that one, after the time of the captivity, the Romans burned no less, laying waste along with it Jerusalem itself, and the entire land of the Jews. Therefore the historical interpretation is not sufficient for the truth; but the final glory is better and superior to the first, with the Church having been taken "for a "holy temple, for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. For we are built "upon the foundation of the apostles "and prophets," "'by every joint with which it is supplied, according to the "working of each member,' being fitted together" and composed, and somehow coming together with one another as by a unity of faith and love through the Spirit into a holy temple. For we are living stones. And so the divine Paul called the multitude of believers, at one time "God's field," and at another time, again, God's building; and "as a wise master "builder" he laid a "foundation; and this is Jesus the Christ;

on whom indeed we all are supported, through whom we also stand, and are called temples, having him dwelling and abiding in our mind and heart through the Spirit. For who has despised the day of small things? And they shall rejoice, and shall see the tin stone in the hand of Zerubbabel; these seven are the eyes of the Lord, that look upon all the earth. The vision is not about things that will be immediate, but rather about things to be brought to completion, as in the times of the coming of the Savior of us all, Christ, which happened in the last times of the present age; but not at all after many years from the prophecy before us, that is, from the building of the temple raised by the hand of Zerubbabel. If anyone then, he says, should despise the small and few days in between, and should consider the delay short, not growing weary because of this, he will be completely and in every way full of all joy. For he will rejoice and will see the tin stone in the hand of Zerubbabel. And he called Christ the tin stone. And if anyone should wish to learn the reason, I would straightway say what seems right to some, and is supposed by us ourselves to be correct. For some say that tin has its composition from both bronze and lead; and for this reason it has neither been completely freed from being hard, nor has it refused to also be soft;

and we too, in some such manner, compose Emmanuel from both the unbreakable divinity, and from the, as it were, passible humanity. And it must be known that they say that even the adamant stone is easily shattered by lead, although it does not suffer this from any other material. We say therefore, that although being exceedingly good and Christ is all-powerful, and having no harshness as God, he shatters Satan like a diamond, concerning whom it is written, "His heart is hardened like a stone, and it stands like an unhammered anvil. Moreover, it seems to others that tin, or simply lead, is necessarily used for the purification by fire of other material, and for those who are accustomed to working with silver this substance is both useful and necessary. And so God says somewhere through the voice of Jeremiah, again revealing this very thing enigmatically, "The bellows failed from the fire, the lead failed; in vain the silversmith refines, for their wickednesses were not melted. Therefore, he compares Christ to tin, that is, to lead, as one who melts away filth, as one who removes impurities, as one who purifies spiritually. If, then, anyone should make light, he says, of the intrusion of the intervening times, and should consider as nothing the short days in between, he will rejoice and will see the tin stone in the hand of Zerubbabel. And

what is this 'in the hand of Zerubbabel'? The divinely inspired scripture accepts 'hand' as both power and authority.

In the power, then, or in the authority of Zerubbabel, that is, Christ, he will see the tin stone. For Zerubbabel, as I said, being from the tribe of Judah, has reigned over Israel. And in the same way, our Lord Jesus Christ also sprang from the blood and tribe of Judah according to the flesh, and he too has reigned over Israel, not in our manner, that is, having a kingdom that is measurable and limited by time, but as true God and extending into endless ages. And the blessed Gabriel will testify, saying to the holy virgin about him, that she will bear a son, and she will call his name Jesus. And adding that "The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will reign over the house of Israel forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. In the hand of Zerubbabel, therefore, that is, as in the power and authority of Zerubbabel, the tin stone will be seen at the proper times. And immediately the word of the prophecy adds to these things: These seven are the eyes of the Lord which look upon all the earth. And who might these be, again? For he has either called the seven lamps, which he saw with the lamp-stand, the eyes of the Lord, so that we might understand the saints, through whom the whole earth is illuminated, and having been deemed worthy of visitation from God, it appears;

or we will say, I think, that it signifies that the God and Father of all would not neglect his own creations; but as if surveying all things with many sleepless eyes, he will grant to those on the earth the tin stone, that is Christ, through whom has come to us also the manner of visitation, that is, of over-seeing. "For the dayspring from on high has visited us," according to what is written. And if we are "the body of Christ and members in part," I think it is not at all unlikely to say that the holy mystagogues have been placed in the rank of eyes, as pre-eminent and superior to the others, and for this reason, I think, also named 'overseers' (episkopoi). And through them our Lord Jesus Christ watches over those who believe in him. Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ might be understood as a tin stone in another way. For tin joins together what has been divided, having a cohesive nature. And Christ has done something of this sort for us, if it is true that he "creates the two peoples into one new man, making peace, and reconciling both in one body," into the unity through the Spirit. Whence also he has been named the cornerstone, binding the two peoples into unity, as I said. He has also joined to angels

those on earth; and also us to God the Father through himself, having torn down the sin lying between and long walling us off.

And I answered and said to him, 'What are these two olive trees, which are on the right of the lampstand and on its left?' And I asked again a second time, and I said to him, What are the two olive branches, which are in the hands of the two golden spouts that pour out and bring up the golden funnels? and he said to me, Do you not know what these are? And I said, No, Lord. And he said, These are the two sons of fatness who stand by the Lord of all the earth. The mind of the saints is exceedingly fond of learning. Therefore, the Prophet passes over nothing of the things shown in the vision, but is very fond of asking questions, and inquires subtly about each thing, as to what it might mean. It was necessary, therefore, for one of such a mind, that it should be made clear to him through the voice of the Prophet of what the standing of the olive trees to the right and to the left of the lampstand would be a symbol. For this reason he investigates curiously and deems it worthy to learn. But see how he adds a second question, and indeed also somehow refashions the manner of the question into something precise. For at first he named two olive trees; but directing the eye of his mind somewhat more subtly to the things seen, he no longer named them olive trees, but rather branches of olive trees.

Therefore, to him asking skillfully, the blessed angel then reveals, and says, These are the two sons of fatness who stand by the Lord of all the earth. And as sons of fatness, he surely meant the two peoples, both Israel and the one from the Gentiles, as ones brought into spiritual fatness. For this reason he says they are placed in the spouts of the lamps, as rejoicing and delighting in the oil from Christ, and being richly fattened by the grace of the Spirit. For we have received mercy, "being justified freely" through faith, and shown to be partakers of his divine nature, through partaking of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the establishment and standing of the two peoples is in oil and in lamps. For our calling is in light, and as in oil from God; if it is precise to say, that we have received mercy, being delivered from death and sin and having released our neck from the former slavery; and again we have been enlightened, by acknowledging the one and by nature God, and having departed from the darkness of polytheistic error. But what would be the reason for this observation, and what then has persuaded the blessed Prophet not to call them olive trees any longer, but rather branches of olive trees, come now, let

us examine. Therefore, the Synagogue of the Jews has been called a good olive tree, but the multitude of the Gentiles indeed a wild olive tree.

For thus the blessed Paul also makes mention of them, saying to those from the Gentiles who believed, "For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more will these, who are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree. Therefore, the Synagogue is a good olive tree, as I just said; and the flock of the Gentiles is a wild olive tree. For the one group, having the instruction through the law, were not without fruit; but the others were the habitats of wild wasps, having their mind full of demons and completely fruitless. However, neither the whole Synagogue of the Jews accepted the faith in Christ, nor indeed the whole multitude of the Gentiles. But as though plucked from each, many have received mercy, and have been called through faith to the enlightenment through the Spirit. Therefore, the ones plucked off might be reasonably understood as branches of olive trees, who have also received mercy through grace, and have come to be as in the light of the lampstand, that is, of Christ, and of the seven lamps shining together, that is, of the multitude of the saints. But see how the divine angel accepts the lampstand as an image and type of Emmanuel.

For with the branches being placed on his right and on his left, whom he also named the two sons of fatness, he says that they stand by the Lord of all the earth, with their standing by signifying very well in these things the spiritual affinity, and the readiness of mind for the necessity of being subject to and serving him. For thus Christ might be understood as having presented to himself the Church gathered together from two peoples. according to I think in this way the divine Moses was also adorned by the name of 'standing beside', when God said to him, "But you, stand here with me. For the instruction through the law is not to be rejected, at least by the all-knowing God. For what reason? For it tutors us toward Christ, and as in types and shadows it travails to bring forth for us the truth itself. And the Son himself will confirm this to us, saying to the unbelieving Jews, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for "he wrote about me. And I turned and lifted up my eyes and saw, and behold, a flying sickle. And he said to me, "What do you see? And I said, "I see a flying sickle, twenty cubits in length and ten cubits in width. And he said to me, "This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth;

for every thief shall be punished by it even to death, and every perjurer shall be punished by it even to death. And I will bring it out, says the Lord Almighty, and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of him who swears falsely by my name, and it will lodge in the midst of his house and will consume it with its timber and its stones. The phrase 'I turned' again in these verses, I think one would not take in a local sense but rather as in a change to another vision. For as the first was cut off, as it were, and the sight shifted to another contemplation, by the name of 'turning' it indicates what happened. Therefore he lifts the eyes of his mind on high, then he sees a sickle, in the manner of a bird, both lifted up and, as it were, darting over the whole earth. And indeed it was very broad and long. For its length was twenty cubits, and its width was half of that. But when he asked what this might be again, and said he did not know, this, he says, is the curse that goes forth over the face of the whole earth, inflicting with fitting punishments the perjurer and with him the thief. And as far as a clearer declaration is concerned, at least of the things shown, there is nothing difficult.

For a divine curse will in every way and altogether be distributed among the thieves and, in addition to these, those accustomed to swear falsely, and, as it were, with a sickle cutting down the insolent, it makes them fodder for houses and gives them as food for fire, and it will rush into the house of such a man, and will consume him again, and will utterly shake him. But I think it is necessary to inquire diligently, with a love of learning, into the reasons for which the present vision now in our hands, has been brought in with the others as necessary; for on what account, indeed, one of the more reasonable might say, when there are very many sins in life, and indeed when the people of Israel were at that time in various charges, does he say that the punishment by the sickle is suspended over thieves and false swearers alone, that is, that the curse goes forth, cutting down those who are caught and completely consuming them? Indeed, to such things we say, that God spoke the things useful for each occasion through the holy prophets, always in some way benefiting the present circumstances. It was therefore necessary especially for those at that time for this vision to be made clear; and we shall bring forward the reasons, showing that it was most timely. For since the people of Israel, having with difficulty left the land of the Chaldeans, and having thrown off the yoke of slavery, returned to Judea, and were in Jerusalem;

when it was necessary to abstain from those ancient sins, and by a return to what is better both to correct past deeds, and to gladden the Redeemer, having chosen to fulfill what is pleasing to him, they were no less what they were then, heedlessly transgressing what seemed good to the law. For though Moses denied that they ought to intermarry with foreign women, they themselves, caring little for what was decreed, were entangled with the daughters of the neighboring nations, and were fathers of foreign children, and they again rendered the holy city full of an unholy seed. And there were some even of the more prominent among them entangled in such offenses, and when this had indeed happened, he indeed lamented Ezra, having reached the divine house, made supplications on behalf of those who had acted impiously. Then what happened, we will learn from the things written by him. It goes like this: "And when Ezra was praying and confess- ing, weeping and prostrate before the temple, a very "great crowd was gathered to him from Jerusalem, "men and women and youths; for there was great weeping "among the multitude. And Jechonias, son of Jeiel, "of the sons of Israel, cried out and said to Ezra, We have sinned against the "Lord and God, and we have married foreign women "from the peoples of the land, and now there is hope over all Israel.

"In this let an oath be made by us to the Lord, to "cast out all our wives who are from foreigners "with their children, as it has been judged by you, and as many as "obey the law of the Lord. Arise and accomplish it; for the "matter is yours, and we are with you to act strongly. And "Ezra arose and made the chiefs of the priests and Levites "of all Israel swear to do according to these things, and they swore. Therefore, for those who had sworn to fulfill the things that seemed good to the law, it was somehow necessary to append the curse, which leaps harshly upon those accustomed to swear falsely, so that they might also become guardians of the things sworn. And since, while the divine temple was being built, there was a great collection of money, partly from what Darius granted, and partly from what the people had brought, it was then likely that some of those appointed to manage such things would misappropriate some of what had been brought for the glory of God; for this reason he says very well that the curse goes against thieves, so that they too, having become superior to shameful gains, might not touch the sacred funds, spending them for their own needs. This, then, is the occasion of the vision.

But I say that those accustomed to steal or swear falsely ought to fear the curse and the cutting of the sickle, understanding that in every way and in all circumstances God will bring to fulfillment the things decreed, and will spare neither thieves nor indeed the others. For he always makes them hated, those who despise his divine glory, and those who with insatiable mind desire things that in no way belong to them. And the angel that spoke in me went forth, and said to me, Lift up your eyes, and see what this is that goes forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is the measure that goes forth. And he said, This is their iniquity in all the land. And behold, a talent of lead was lifted up; and behold, a single woman was sitting in the midst of the measure. And he said, This is lawlessness; and he cast her into the midst of the measure, and he cast the stone of lead upon her mouth. I said previously, beginning the explanation regarding the Prophet, that after the return from Babylon, the things he had seen during the time of the captivity, these he usefully relates to the redeemed. For since he saw that they were exceedingly negligent in fulfilling the customary things, and were uncontrollably turning aside to what was pleasant and dear to themselves, while caring very little for the laws given through Moses;

for they were involved with foreign women, and some, now going completely beyond what was proper, were initiated into idols, and besides these things they did certain things that are not even right to mention; the Prophet makes the narration of the visions necessary, so that the redeemed might know, having with difficulty gained this benefit through so many supplications of men and of holy angels, that they are again provoking the God of all against themselves, by becoming entangled in the snares of their ancient offenses. He said, therefore, that the angel who spoke in me went forth. But where did he go forth? For where was he at all? Therefore, from the showing of the sickle to the present vision, I mean the one concerning the measure, this act of going forth happened. Indeed, the Prophet lifts his eyes on high, to whom, having practiced darting upwards, it would be fitting also to be able to gaze upon divine mysteries. So he asked, then, what the thing being shown was. And he said to him, this is the measure that goes forth. This is their iniquity in all the land. And what the measure is, it is necessary to consider. And indeed we say, that the Master of all is by nature good and loving-to-man; for he is patient with sinners, and he endures transgressors, awaiting each one's repentance;

but if someone should go on for a long time in sin, and come at last to the end of the patience allotted to him, then at last he will be subject to punishments, and he will have no excuse for such a long indifference, nor could anyone release him from the necessity of receiving punishments equal in measure, to what he has clearly done. And so Christ said somewhere to the people of the Jews, who were rushing with unbridled folly to every kind of wickedness, "You also "fill up the measure of your fathers. Therefore, the thing seen was a measure, showing in itself the filling up of the people's sin. And in the measure was set a woman, filling the type of lawlessness, and as it were filling up through herself the space, perhaps even overflowing, and peeping out with the excess. But behold, he says, a talent of lead being lifted up and he cast it into her mouth. And the vision fittingly portrays lawlessness for us in the form of a woman. For a woman is a type of pleasure, and also of weakness; and all lawlessness would be done in no other way, except through some pleasure luring to evil, with weakness of mind also contributing to this. For if the mind were firm in itself and manly, it would not choose to suffer the inclination towards evil things; but if it should be softened and bewitched by pleasure, it will suffer what is grievous.

Therefore, and very rightly, the woman is depicted as lawlessness. And the talent of lead that is lifted up, and indeed that stops her mouth, could be understood as none other, I think, than our Lord Jesus Christ, who was lifted up on the precious cross, and "bore our sins in his body "on the tree," and has triumphed over the record of debt that was against us; so that, as the divine Psalmist says, "All "lawlessness may stop her mouth. And He himself is also compared to lead; for lead, as I said, is used by silversmiths for the purification of things being smelted; and such in a way is also the power of Christ in us. For if he comes into the mind and heart, he certainly melts away all filth. But to some it seems that the lead was thrown into the mouth of lawlessness, as though God were stopping it up, and no longer permitting it to cry out against the sinners beyond measure; for in this way it is also bound by a measure, with God who has mercy on all, I think, measuring out the punishments for each one in accordance with the charges of their transgressions. And I lifted up my eyes and saw, and behold, two women coming forth, and wind was in their wings; and they had wings like the wings of a hoopoe, and they lifted up the measure between the earth and the heaven.

and I said to the angel who was speaking in me, Where are these carrying the measure? and he said to me, To build a house for it in the land of Babylon and to prepare it, and they will set it there upon its prepared place. What the pair of women might mean, or of what they might be a type, it is necessary, I think, to say before anything else. So then the God of all said to the prophet Ezekiel, "Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one "mother, and they committed fornication in Egypt, in their youth "they committed fornication, there their breasts were handled. And he added to these things, making clear what was announced, "And their names: "Samaria is Oholah, and Jerusalem is Oholibah. For in the beginning the Synagogue of the Jews was one; but during the time of the reign of Rehoboam, the ten tribes broke away from the others and dwelt in Samaria, there they have committed fornication on account of the golden calves, which Jeroboam son of Nebat had made. However, the other was not without blame, that is, Jerusalem, for she also has committed fornication in many ways; on the one hand, with some having worshipped idols and sacrificing to Baal, to Astarte, to the high places, to the sun and moon and other stars; on the other hand, towards who readily go to every impurity, and hold as nothing the things decreed through the all-wise Moses.

Therefore, the vision again likens the two synagogues of Israel to two women, who it says also had the wings of a hoopoe, in order that it might signify very well the unclean mind within them and their readiness for anything whatsoever that is out of place. For the hoopoe is not an insignificant bird, but it is fond of filth and dung-eating, and savagely rages against swarms of worms, and is accustomed always to make the utmost impurity a delicacy. And such in a way is the mind that is upon idolaters. For it does not go anywhere straight toward what is fitting; but is carried outside of what is likely, it does not know the divine law, but is full of all impurity, and considers every form of wickedness a delicacy. For this reason the account of the vision said that the wings of a hoopoe were fitted to the women, teaching that the same mind as that bird's was also in them. And they take up the measure filled with lawlessness. For each soul must be weighed down by its own burden, I mean, that of sin. And since the accusations of both are equal and sisterly, I mean of Samaria and of Jerusalem, for this reason also being weighed down in an equal manner by the measure and the lawlessness, with

a wind falling upon their wings, they are carried in a swift and unimpeded course toward the land of the foreigners, clearly that of the Babylonians.

For as the unclean spirit pushed them into sin, and weighed them down with lawlessness, they were carried off into captivity, and have fallen under the feet of their enemies. And since the blessed angel says that they carry off the measure to build a house for it in the land of Babylon, it is necessary for us to understand that, which is a sign of the children of Israel spending a long time among their enemies, that a house is also built for lawlessness, and as it were a certain foundation and a station is made for it among their enemies. Which has indeed also been accomplished. For hardly when the seventieth year was fulfilled for them, were they released from the bonds of captivity. And I turned and lifted up my eyes and saw, and behold, four chariots coming out from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of bronze. In the first chariot were red horses, and in the second chariot black horses, and in the third chariot white horses, and in the fourth chariot dappled, ash-grey horses. And I answered and said to the angel who was speaking in me, What are these, Lord? And the angel who was speaking in me answered and said, These are the four winds of heaven, they go forth to stand before the Lord of all the earth.

The one in which were the black horses went out to the north land, and the white went out after them, and the dappled went out to the south land, and the ash-grey went out and were looking to go and patrol the whole earth. And he said, Go and patrol the whole earth; and they patrolled the whole earth. And he cried out and spoke to me, saying, Behold, those who go out to the north land have set my wrath at rest in the north land. He had shown beforehand that, caught in their own snares, and bound with the chains of their own sins, according to what is written, they departed into a foreign land, and have dwelt among enemies, enduring the unaccustomed yoke of slavery. But it was necessary to also be mindful of the times of redemption, and indeed he makes the declaration, with other things interwoven. For the Prophet was taught in summary all the things that would happen to the nation in due time. Therefore the four chariots, those between the bronze mountains, we say are again the more prominent of the other kingdoms, those in the four climes, or rather winds, which have been shown forth under heaven at various times. And I think the two divisions of the inhabited world are called bronze mountains. For some divide the whole earth

into both Europe and Asia. And its parts are bronze, because of being fixed always and having an unshakeable nature and enduring no harm.

For somewhere the divine David also sings to the one of the Creator of all "You established the earth and it abides. These, then, the kingdoms from the four winds, stronger than the others, as we said, and having obtained much glory, went forth to stand beside the Lord of all the earth. And the standing beside reveals to us the manner of servitude; for they have served His commands, and if they have become strong and renowned, they have gained this also through Him. But if they have done anything, and have overcome regions or cities, it was with His assent that they again came to this point of strength; for if the prophet is true in saying that "There shall not be evil in a city, which the Lord has not done," and by evil in these cases we mean affliction; how could those have prevailed over nations or regions, unless He again dispensed the power to prevail according to His plan? But what kingdoms these are, it is now time to say. Therefore in the first chariot, he says, were red horses, prefiguring in themselves the cruelty of the kingdom of the Chaldeans. For redness would likely suggest to us the shedding of blood; for the Babylonians were extremely bloodthirsty; for they themselves took Judea and the cities in Samaria, with all mercy being cast aside. And in the second chariot were black horses. This seems to signify the kingdom of the Persians and Medes, I mean the one under Cyrus.

And he has assigned the color black to these, because, I think, they inflicted so very great and immeasurable a death upon the nations of the Chaldeans, and caused their whole land to be in mourning. The dark color would be a symbol of mourning and death. But he says that those in the third chariot were white, indicating perhaps the rule of the Greeks and Macedonians, or rather the kingdom of Alexander. And they are white, because the Greek nations are also delicate in their living, and for the most part in white robes; and because they are clear in their language, not having the as-it-were darkness of a barbarian tongue. And in the fourth chariot, he says, there were some dappled and ash-colored horses. But it should be known that the Hebrew version and some of the other interpreters have put 'strong' instead of 'ash-colored'. Nevertheless, we say that this is the Roman kingdom, which has always had in those who have reigned at various times a diversity with respect to intelligence and a certain depth of mind. For the most intelligent and, in addition to this, the most powerful, have been and

are those who direct the powers of the Roman rule. And they are placed last after the first ones, at least according to the times. Let us see also the going forth of each of the chariots, that is, kingdoms, to where it is directed and against whom it comes. For thus the interpretation of the thoughts would become very clear to us.

For the Prophet says there are four, but he mentions three, and has been silent about the going forth of the first. But I will remind you briefly, as I said. For in the first, he says the horses are red; but he begins from the second, and says, "That in which were the black horses went forth to the land of the north, and the white went forth after them, and the dappled went forth to the land of the south. But if he should add the ash-colored, he will not be mentioning four chariots; for we have granted that they are the same as the dappled, for in the fourth chariot he says there were "dappled ash-colored horses. Therefore he mentions three, having been silent about the first. What then is the reason of the whole economy, come let us speak to the more learned as far as is possible. We affirmed that the red ones were the bloodthirsty rule of the Chaldeans, which also removed all of Judea, and having burned the cities in it, carried Israel away into captivity. And we accepted that the black ones were the kingdom of the Persians and of Cyrus. And in the white ones was described that of Alexander and the Macedonians. And both of these campaigned against the land of the Chaldeans, and took it by force. For first Cyrus, then after him Alexander, who also captured Darius himself near the place called Issus; and this is a city of the Cilicians; having slain countless myriads of Persians.

They say, at any rate, that a great heap of bones was gathered of the of those who fell there; and an inscription has been engraved, having such a meaning: "At Issus, on the shores of the sea, by the Cilician wave, we, the fierce myriads of the Persians, lie, The work of Alexander of Macedon, we who then followed King Darius on his final path. For since it was likely that Israel would be no little grieved hearing about the kingdom of the Chaldeans, by which it had also been ravaged, for this reason, usefully, so that he might not seem to provoke to grief, and this out of season, the Prophet passes over the discourse about them. But what most gladdens them he explains brilliantly, I mean the things concerning the kingdom of Cyrus, and indeed of Alexander, who were all but sent to call to account the arrogance of the Chaldeans for their cruelty towards Israel. For this reason he ad-

ded, as from the person of God, "Behold, those who go out to the land of the north have given my spirit rest in the land of the north. For their country is somehow more northerly than that of the Chaldeans; and the God of all was wroth with the Babylonians. And this would be clear again, as he says plainly, "I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, and I am very angry with the nations that are at ease;

for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. But since the land of the Chaldeans paid the penalties, with Cyrus first, along with the Persians and Medes, ravaging it, and Alexander after him, for this reason he says, "those who go out to the land of the north have given my spirit rest in the land of the north. However, the Prophet, having kept silent about the attack of the Chaldeans for a good reason; for he has run past, as I said, the red horses; he no longer keeps silent about the Roman empire. For the dappled ones, he says, went out to the land of the south. But observe how artfully and as if in passing he renders the account. For after the cross of the Savior, Vespasian and his son Titus overran the land of the Jews, laying it all bare, and burning the holy city itself. But the Prophet cleverly says "They went out to the land of the south," for the land of the Jews is most southerly. But these same dappled and ash-grey ones were commanded to go to and fro in the earth, and indeed they have gone to and fro; for they have gained power over the world under heaven, and have become masters of all the earth, with God assenting and kindling a brilliant glory for this, for those who direct the Roman powers; for He knew beforehand, as God, the greatness of their future piety.

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Take from the captives, from their chief men and from their useful men and from those who have known her, and you shall enter on that day into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, who has come from Babylon, and you shall take silver and gold and make crowns, and you shall place it upon the head of Jesus the son of Jozadak the high priest, and you shall say to him, 'Thus says the Lord Almighty: Behold a man, the East is his name, and from beneath him he shall spring up, and he shall build the house of the Lord; and he shall receive virtue, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and there shall be a priest at his right hand, and a peaceful counsel shall be between them both. And the crown shall be for those who wait, and for her useful men, and for those who have known her, and for a grace of the son of Zephaniah, and for a psalm in

the house of the Lord. And those who are far from them shall come and build in the house of the Lord, and you shall know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you;

and it shall be, if you will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God." The word of God was to the blessed Prophet Zechariah, that is, through him to all concerning Zerubbabel, who was of the tribe of Judah, and was a leader of those from Israel, the ruling tribe calling him to this. And what were the things said about him by God, we shall of necessity recall beforehand. For he said, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands shall complete it. But there was with him founding the house and indeed also finishing it was Joshua, the son of Jozadak, the high priest. For this reason, the God of all commanded the divine Prophet to take the things from the captivity from its leaders and from its useful men and from those who had acknowledged it. But who these might be, and what things are from the captivity, I will relate as needed. For those of Israel were brought back from the land of the Babylonians, not in a disorderly or confused manner, but in good order and arrangement, according to clans and according to tribes, having appointed leaders, as it is written in Ezra. And when they finally arrived in Jerusalem, as God compelled them to raise up His temple, they established a treasury, so that a collection of money might be made for the construction of the works, and for the vestments of the priests, and for the sacrifices appointed to them according to the law.

And Josiah, son of Zephaniah, was appointed treasurer of the money. Therefore, the God of all commands that, from what was brought by the leaders of the captivity, which was also deposited with Josiah, he should take gold and silver, then, having made crowns, place them on the head of Joshua, the son of Jozadak, the high priest, and say to him concerning Zerubbabel: "Behold, a man whose name is Branch; but the Hebrew version has signified "branch" by the name of "shoot"; "and from beneath him he shall spring up," that is, from his own root he will cause many to grow. "And he shall receive virtue," that is, comeliness, or glory; for thus the other interpreters have rendered it. And he added to this, that both, Joshua and Zerubbabel, will sit upon the same throne, so that the kingship is common also to the one who has the priesthood in his hands, and that of the priest also belongs to the one who is king. And for both there will be one peaceful counsel, so that they are not seen to be of different minds in any way at all. Then

he commanded the crowns to become a splendid offering to God, brought into His house, so as to become a grace, or a boast, for those who brought them, I mean Josiah and the useful men of the captivity and its leaders;

and to be dedicated, not in vain, but so as to become an occasion for an ode for the singers of the temple and the sacred psalmists. For then, he says, even those who are far from them, that is, those from the other nations, will come and worship the Lord. And such things will come to pass, he says, if they should choose to be adorned with the ornament of obedience, and to hear the voice of the Lord God; and then, when the things foretold have finally come to pass, they will know clearly that the Prophet was sent to make clear the things from God; and not indeed rather, like some of those accustomed to speaking falsely, speaking things from his own heart, but rather truthful, and not a false messenger. This then is the most ready and at-hand interpretation of the historical accounts; but it shows that the matter is a mystery of Christ, and if it were investigated subtly, no one would doubt. For we affirmed at the beginning that in Zerubbabel and indeed also in Joshua, Christ is prefigured, both partially in each, and in both together, as one. For he is at the same time both king of Israel and the great "high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled.

But since those from the tribe of Judah administered the thrones of kingship, while those of Levi were appointed to the priesthood, and it was not possible to see both kingship and priesthood in one person, for this reason Christ is wisely figured through the two as one. Therefore, if God should say concerning Zerubbabel, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands shall complete it," you will understand it more historically of that man, but you will refer the power of the mystery spiritually to Christ. For he himself has become our foundation, and on him we are all being built up spiritually into a holy temple; he is our beginning and our end; for he presents us sanctified in spirit, a splendid and holy dwelling for himself and for the Father, sin having been entirely removed, and the of corruption; he is Jesus, as I said, the great high priest. and Jesus is interpreted Salvation of the people; for thus also the divine Gabriel said to the holy virgin "And behold, you will conceive in your womb "and bear a son, and you will call his name Jesus; for he "will save his people from their sins; but Jose-dech is understood as the Righteousness of God; for we have been justified in him through faith, and we have washed away the stain of our ancient faults.

he rescued us when we were captives and delivered us from spiritual slavery, and as if from a foreign and alien land of demonic deceit, he brought us back to the knowledge of God, and to the beautiful city of the saints, the truly holy Jerusalem, which is the Church. For this reason he is crowned by us with right and blameless faith, and with boasts in virtue, and with hymns of thanksgiving. And the crowns of that time were of gold and silver, and were made from corruptible material; but those woven and bound by us have nothing earthly, but are rather composed of the glory that befits God. For we offer up to him as gold the unerring contemplation of the doctrines concerning him; and as silver the spiritual brightness from good works. And in another way, the crown and glory of Christ is the salvation of those saved by him. And not one nation has been saved, as Israel was long ago through Moses, but henceforth the whole world under heaven; for this too was fitting for Christ. But observe how from the leaders of the captivity and from its useful men and from those who had experienced it, the things for the construction of the crowns are brought forward.

For the leaders of the peoples, who have been placed in such offices by God, and those who know the manner of our ancient captivity, who are useful to the redeemed as guides and teachers and are able to admonish and lead them well to a most lawful life, they themselves bring the gifts on behalf of all, fulfilling through themselves the weaknesses of the unable. And when the crowns were placed on the head of Jesus, it is said to him concerning Zerubbabel Behold a man, his name is the Branch, and from beneath him he will spring up. You have seen Jesus being crowned as priest, and see him again pre-eminent as in Zerubbabel and in royal glory; but understand that he is the Branch, that is, the shoot, concerning whom the divine Isaiah says "And "a rod shall come forth from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall spring up from the "root. And we have blossomed from beneath him. For Christ became the second root of humanity, that is, of those called through faith, and not like the first, I mean Adam, but in incomparably better ways; for we blossomed no longer for corruption and for death because of the curse, but for life and incorruption, having life as our root, that is, Christ. And just as he is "the vine, and we are the branches," attached to him through spiritual communion; so also he is the rod and the shoot, that is, the new growth and the branch;

and we have sprouted under him, have grown and blossomed unto incorruption, as I said, and life. He built the house of the Lord. And he is full of all virtue, that is, of the renown most fitting for God; "For his virtue covered the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise," as the prophet Habakkuk says. And the wise John also wrote somewhere that "And we have seen his glory, "glory as of the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and "truth. He has sat upon a throne; for he has reigned as God, and is a co-counsellor with his own Father and co-ruler of all things. And that Zerubbabel and Jesus, brought together as if into one, very well signify Christ, he showed by adding, as concerning Zerubbabel And the priest shall be at his right hand; that is, in honor and glory; and there shall be a peaceful counsel between them both. For he is the same, as indeed already I have said before, at once king and high priest, as through two being depicted as one, the Emmanuel. Yet the labor is not unrewarded for those who crown Christ, but the fruit-bearing will run for them into unending memory. And that the word is true, he confirms by adding: And the crown will be for those who wait and for her useful ones and for those who have known her and for the grace of the son of Sophonias and for a psalm in the house of the Lord.

For it will be for the grace of those who have dedicated the things brought forward, and they will become an occasion for doxologies. For the piety of the leaders becomes a path of love for God for others. And when Christ is crowned by us, then also the flock of the nations will run to the knowledge of him, and those who are far off on account of their wandering will be called through faith, and they will build in the house of God. But what will they build? Themselves, obviously, fitting themselves together with the saints, and joining in faith for union with those from Israel, Christ being the cornerstone and binding together into one mind through himself the things formerly divided. For he created "the two peoples into one new man, making peace, and reconciling all things in his body to the Father. When these things have come to pass, we shall vote for the truthfulness of the holy prophets, and we have known clearly that it was God in them who was speaking and revealing beforehand to us the mystery of Christ.

Book 3

And it came to pass in the fourth year of Darius the king, the word came of the Lord to Zechariah, on the fourth of the ninth month, which is Chisleu; and the king sent to Bethel Sarasar and Arbeser and his men to propitiate the

Lord, saying to the priests who were in the house of the Lord Almighty and to the prophets, saying, "Has the sanctification entered here in the fifth month, just as they have done now for a sufficient number of years? After the display of visions, other words came from God, with a short time having passed in between. For before the visions it is written that, "On the twenty-fourth day in the eleventh month; this is the month of Sabat; in the second year of Darius the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the son of Barachias, the son of Addo the Prophet, saying: but in the contemplations before us, another time after that is specified: For in the fourth year on the fourth day of the ninth month which is Chisleu; according to the Hebrew tongue, that is; the manner of the divine vision for the Prophet has changed. But what is the occasion, the narrative of the history will make very clear. For some would not understand the meaning of what is set forth otherwise than in this way. For who at all are Sarasar and Arbaser the king and the men with him, how is it not necessary to learn this before all else?

And what is the sanctification in the fifth month; and indeed the very manner of the question, to what it looks, and what might be the purpose of those asking. Now when Hoshea the son of Elah was king of the ten tribes in Samaria, and had greatly inclined to apostasy; for he had served idols; God was provoked against Israel. Then Shalmaneser king of the Assyrians campaigned against the country, and he took Samaria, and he deported Israel, and he prepared certain people from the country of the Chaldeans to inhabit the land, so that it might become Persian, as having its inhabitants from there thenceforth. You have the history in the fourth book of Kingdoms. For it is written thus: "In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea son of Elah began to reign in Samaria over Israel for nine years, and he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, yet not as the kings "Israel who were before him; against him came up Shalmaneser king of the Assyrians, and Hoshea became his "servant. And after other things again, "And Israel was carried away "from their land to the Assyrians unto this day. "And the king of the Assyrians brought from Babylon "men from Cuthah and from Avva and from Hamath and Sepharvaim, and they were settled in the cities of Samaria instead "of the sons of Israel, and they inherited Samaria and "dwelt in its cities.

These, then, who had taken the lot of the Samaritans, having inhabited the land and perhaps become fathers of children, also inclined to the cus-

toms of the Jews, having dreaded the attacks of the lions; from them came Sarasár and Arbeser, who was also named king, because he was then the leader of those who had been resettled in Samaria from Persia. And this about the men; but concerning the sanctification, come let us speak again what is fitting. Therefore, before Judaea was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, the blessed prophet Joel had proclaimed what was going to happen, and indeed he commanded the priests to mourn, and also the people under their charge, as Jerusalem was soon to be under the feet of enemies, and the divine temple itself was about to be burned down. And he spoke thus: "Gird yourselves and lament, "O priests; wail, you who minister at the altar; enter, "pass the night in sackcloth, you who minister to God, for "the sacrifice and the drink offering are withheld from the house of our God. "Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders, "all the inhabitants of the land, to the house of our God, and "cry earnestly to the Lord, 'Alas, alas for the day!" And this from the prophet; but in what manner the things foretold came to pass, I will clarify again, citing the sacred scripture itself. For it is written thus in the fourth book of Kings:

"And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the "nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, "Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, who stood before the "king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem, and he burned the "house of the Lord and the king's house and all the "houses of Jerusalem, and every great house the captain of the guard "burned. Then he appointed Gedaliah over the people of Israel who were left, whom, in the seventh month, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal seed, came upon and overpowered and killed; for it is written thus. Therefore, since it happened that in the fifth month and on the seventh day Jerusalem was captured, and the temple was burned down, and Gedaliah also died in addition in the seventh month, perhaps the remnant of the Jews, moved by the memory of the prophet's voice, established a custom for everyone from all the surrounding region in the fifth month and on the seventh day of the month to go up to Jerusalem, and to sanctify a fast, and to make lamentation as for a dead person and to wail for the temple lying in a certain manner, and for the burned city to pour a tear of afterthought. And they thought that this way of worship pleasing to God had been most wisely devised by them. But this was done while Israel was still un-

der the yoke of captivity, and when no care had been taken of the divine temple.

But when they returned, having left the land of the Persians and Medes, and dwelt in the holy city, and then rebuilt the divine temple, the custom seemed to them to be no longer practiced at the right time and in order. For it was necessary rather, after what had happened, to turn to gladness, and to celebrate feasts, and to send up songs of thanksgiving to the one who had called them to freedom. Therefore, being in doubt, those of whom the account speaks, Sarasár and Arbeser, send some men to ask both the priests and the prophets if the sanctification has come here in the fifth month, as they have done now for many years, that is, if those accustomed to mourn have assembled in Jerusalem, and if they themselves should accept the custom, as in a manner of the sanctification that had taken place, although the divine temple had also been raised and the ruin of the captivity. For they sanctified, as I said, a fast which they had done for many years. For while Israel was in captivity, they themselves also continued observing the time of mourning, and sanctifying the fast as I already said before. Therefore the question is from those who are in doubt, whether it is still necessary to fulfill the sanctification and the mourning, even after the raising of the temple; that is, to abstain henceforth, since the cause of the mourning has gone away. And the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying:

Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, saying: When you fasted or mourned in the fifth and in the seventh months, and behold for seventy years, did you fast a fast to me? And when you ate or drank, was it not you who were eating and you who were drinking? Are not these the words which the Lord spoke by the hand of the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous, and her cities round about her, and the hill country and the plain were inhabited? Some were asking, as I already said before, both the priests and the prophets about the so-called sanctification; then God answers, the priests and prophets having, as was likely, presented the supplications, and having earnestly sought to answer wisely those who chose to inquire about such things. Then what is the word from God? Both short and not long and having nothing convoluted; but, so to speak, bare and straightforward in the knowledge of what is beneficial. For what is the point, he says, if you have perchance fasted in the fifth and in the seventh months? Or what achievement of virtue is it at all, to wail ignorantly over

stones and wood that have been burned? And in what way would God be pleased with the things done by you, when, having done none of the necessary things for benefit, you think among yourselves that you are achieving the best things of all?

For if I have need of such a fast, and a womanly lamentation is worthy of praise, for what reason have you continued this for seventy years, he says, without having fasted? For while they were still living among the Babylonians, they did not perform a public fast, nor would they be found to have been zealous to carry out any other of the customary and routine things, that is, according to the law of Moses. Then how did I have mercy, he says, and deliver them from the hand of their rulers? Therefore I have no need of such a fast, just as surely, if you should choose, he says, to eat and drink, you are not gratifying me but rather yourselves in the matter. Therefore, for one who fasts in vain and for no useful purpose, the tear is also useless and the sweat is without reward. Are not these the words of the former prophets when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous, abounding in good things, and still boasting in her own unharmed cities, both those in the hill country and in the plain. For the prophet Joel said that it is fitting for both priests and peoples to mourn, and in addition to these things also to sanctify a fast. And the purpose of the exhortation was calling to repentance.

For he did not want to wait for the experience of what had happened, so that you would mourn the temple after it was burned, but so that before the experience, as I said, by propitiating God with wailings and lamentations, you might escape the evils. Therefore are not these the words of the former prophets, which you, being ignorant of, lament in vain, and shed the tear of ignorance over fallen stones, although it is necessary to correct the way of your own lives, and to walk the glorious and blameless path, having determined to perform well that which seems good to the law. And the word of the Lord came to Zechariah, saying: Thus says the Lord Almighty: Judge a just judgment, and show mercy and compassion each to his brother, and do not oppress the widow and the orphan and the sojourner and the poor, and let none of you remember the evil of his brother in your hearts. Having shown the mourning to be counterfeit, as useless and unprofitable, and having mocked their vain sweat, he henceforth directs them to that which is most conducive to benefit, and having made the path of the way of life that pleases him clear and plain, he makes white, as it were, the meaning of the law itself

and of the prophetic proclamations. For the lawgiver delights in a right and blameless judgment;

and he has honored, and very earnestly, both mercy and love for one another, and he deems worthy of praise love for orphans, and compassion for women burdened by widowhood; but he shakes off greed as profane, and any crushing that might happen against the weaker, and he wishes those who have chosen to think his thoughts to be kind and not bearing grudges. And Christ himself also said somewhere, "Forgive, and you will be forgiven; and indeed he also taught those praying to say, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For the merciful God forgives the offenses of those who forgive others, "but the ways of the resentful lead to death," according to what is written in the book of Proverbs. And that love is the fulfillment of all law, how could anyone doubt, when the divine Paul has written thus? And the aforementioned are the fruits of love, and the doer of these things is a precise keeper of the law. And they refused to pay attention, and they turned a stubborn back, and they made their ears heavy so as not to hear, and their heart they made disobedient so as not to hear my law and the words which the Lord Almighty sent by his Spirit through the former prophets; and there was great wrath from the Lord Almighty.

And it shall be, just as he spoke and they did not listen to him, so they will cry out and I will not listen to them, says the Lord Almighty, and I will cast them out among all the nations that they did not know, and the land will be made desolate behind them, with no one passing through or returning; and they made the choice land a desolation. And through these things he has fully shown that they have not ceased to provoke the Judge of all against themselves. For though it was possible for them to obey the words of the holy prophets and, casting as far away as possible their noble opposition to the will of the lawgiver, to choose a glorious and most lawful life and to walk the blameless path, they became hard and held the teacher in no esteem, and they have had an unbending and unyielding heart. For they in no way ceased outrageously insulting the divine words, and terribly and unholily rebuking their messengers, who administered the office of prophecy, even though they spoke in the Holy Spirit; and they had already slipped to such a point of savagery and unadmonishable nonsense as not to choose to

repent until the things foretold came to pass for them, and they have fallen under the things brought upon them by divine wrath.

But if God says in this that "I will cast them out among all the nations, and the land will be made desolate with no one passing through or returning," let us understand that such things were said again as in a prophetic foretelling; for they had been cast out among the Persians and Medes, and had already experienced captivity, and the land was deserted, and the best country of all was appointed, as the word says, for desolation, having no one passing through, that is, returning. For some were consumed by war; and others, burdened by the yoke of slavery, have run into captivity. Therefore, let us understand that these things too were said together with the others as in a foretelling. And that disobeying the divine words is harmful, or rather even a cause of destruction, one might see even from the things that happened to the ancients; and one would not need long arguments for proof, but the matter is clear to anyone, at least to one who once knows the good things that come from obedience. And the word of the Lord Almighty came to me, saying: Thus says the Lord Almighty: I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, and with a great wrath I am jealous for her.

Having sufficiently maligned the disobedience and stubbornness of the ancients from the very things that happened to them, and that he would be of all having shown them the cause of their evils, he transfers the discourse to the good things that come from gentleness, and from then on attempts to promise them seasons of prosperity, and to enrich them abundantly with wished-for goods, as having already paid the penalty for the things in which they unholily transgressed, and having been cleansed, as it were, of the accusations of their former wickedness by being punished by their enemies and enduring the yoke of slavery. And he cries out, as it were, against the cruelty of the Babylonians, who, going beyond all audacity, have done things to them that not even the divine wrath itself perhaps willed; for he said clearly, "I was a little angry, but they helped forward the affliction. Therefore I am jealous for Jerusalem, that is, I have taken up zeal on its behalf, and with great jealousy I was jealous for her. It is as if he were to say, It will happen to the Babylonians to suffer in return things more harsh than what they have done, and upon those who have thus destroyed, I will bring the effects of wrath. Christ has fulfilled this.

For, being grieved for us who had wretchedly perished, and, as it were, being jealous for the Church, which was indeed foreknown by him, but not yet revealed in the world, he crushed the hordes of demons, and cast out the master of their folly from its tyranny over us and subjected him to the movements of wrath, and henceforth declared the assembly of those who worship him free from that one's wickedness. Thus says the Lord: I will return to Zion, and I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth, and the mountain of the Lord Almighty holy. God indeed fills all things, and all things are full of his ineffable nature. Yet he is sometimes said to depart from those who have sinned, not being divided by spatial separations—for it is utterly foolish to think this way—but by no longer wishing to be near and to deem them worthy of forbearance and love. And we say that the very manner of his wrath is of this kind. Therefore Israel turned to false worship, and Jerusalem has played the harlot. And the God of all departed, as it were, and subjected them to the evils that come from turning away. But since he now takes pity, he says, "I will return," that is, I will cease from wrath, I will declare it worthy of my visitation, and I will make it my house again.

And just as, when he turned away, the holy mountain, that is, the temple in Jerusalem, no longer seemed revered by those who saw it burned; so indeed again, with God choosing to dwell in it, and it having been raised up, the reverence for it will rise again and be renewed, and Jerusalem will be true again, no longer as before offering its worship to gods not made by hands and to falsely named images, but serving the one God who is by nature and in truth with gentleness, by choosing henceforth to live according to the law, and with obedience in everything whatsoever. You might reasonably apply such words to the Word who for our sake became as we are, who, being in the form of the one who begot him and in equality in every way, "emptied himself, "taking the form of a slave,"" and became man, and "became "poor for our sake, so that we through his poverty might become rich. Therefore he who long ago justly turned away because of the transgression in Adam, and because "the "thought of man is set on evil "from his youth"" returned to us, as from his innate gentleness henceforth, and has dwelt in the Church, and has made the sanctified ones a city and a holy habitation. For he said somewhere concerning her—clearly meaning the Church—"Here I will

dwell, because I have chosen her. And the blessed David also sings, "Glorious things have been spoken of" you, O city of God.

The prophet Isaiah also revealed this to us, saying, "For in the last days "the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, and the house of God "on the tops of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the "hills, and all nations shall come to it. For the Church of Christ is conspicuous, and like one set on a mountain, it is known to all everywhere. And it is also called true, least of all in types and shadows worshipping; but having rather received the truth, who is Christ, and fulfilling the worship in spirit and in truth. Thus says the Lord Almighty: Old men and old women shall yet sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each having his staff in his hand from abundance of days; and the streets of the city shall be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets. The war having consumed the nation of the Jews, it necessarily happened that their cities became empty of their inhabitants, and one saw houses cast down and the beauty of the structures in them. But behold, he promises to grant them a much-desired and long peace, which, and very rightly, the sons of the Hellenes call nurse of youths. For it brings those who are born to maturity, and for those who are already young men it in a way smoothes the path to old age, with no one ravaging, no war crushing, no consuming battle.

One must suppose therefore, and very rightly, that in peacetime cities, even if they are wide and long, are rendered narrow and are overcome by the multitude of their inhabitants. The passage before us again travails with some such meaning for us. For it said that old men and old women will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, with a staff barely mitigating the feebleness of old age, and having a staff to guide their old age; and this is a praise of warless times and of deep peace, which brings, as I said, infants to maturity, and sends to old age those who are already counted among men, who run the whole course of their life without a fight. And if indeed young men were to dance in the city, and young girls to form choruses in the middle of the streets, this too would be clear proof that no bitter care hangs over them. For they would not have tolerated anyone playing, if it were a time of dejection. And Christ has become peace for us, who, having crushed every war, has rendered the Church full of the saints. And there are in it those gray-haired in mind, countless and excellent, to whom also the wise John writes, saying, "I have written to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning;

and like beardless boys and little girls is the more childlike multitude of those who have just believed, who with what are virtually spiritual leaps truly adorn the holy city, that is, the Church; to whom it would also be fitting to say, "Come, let us rejoice in the Lord, let us shout for joy to God our Savior. And if the elders should be said to lean on a staff, you will understand that Christ supports both small and great, the rod from Jesse, and the one named of power, which God the Father has sent to us from the Zion above, so that rejoicing in this we say, "Your rod and your staff, they have comforted me. Thus says the Lord Almighty: If it will be impossible in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be impossible in my sight? says the Lord Almighty. Great and extraordinary matters somehow tend to invite disbelief, and their course to completion is not without wonder. And so Sarah indeed laughs out of disbelief at the promise concerning Isaac, looking to her old age and contrasting the impossibility with the laws of humanity. Nevertheless she gave birth against hope, since God made the matter possible for her.

It was therefore very likely that those redeemed from captivity would be shaken with doubts and not be very confident that matters would advance for them to such prosperity, that Jerusalem would become full of the aged, and that choirs of boys and dances of girls would be seen in it, and that the good things of deep peace would come to be. For they were looking at walls thrown down, houses burned, and all the surrounding cities as habitats for wild beasts, on account of their being completely emptied of their inhabitants; and the fields, once all-bearing and flourishing full of thorns, having none of the ripe fruits, and the race of the rustics being utterly ruined. It was therefore, as I said, from this likely to disbelieve that the things promised would come to pass for them. For this very reason God does not allow them to be of two minds; but commands them to be of good courage and confirms it, saying, "If it shall be impossible in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, shall it also be impossible in my sight? says the Lord Almighty. For what is impossible among us, is quite easily achieved by the all-powerful God. For He is the Lord of hosts, fulfilling by His will even the most extraordinary things, and bringing to pass without delay what seems good to Him.

And somewhere God the Father said to the Jews, proclaiming beforehand the accomplishments from the coming of our Savior, "Behold, you despisers,

and look, and perish; "for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not "believe, if one declares it to you. For as far as human reasoning is concerned, beyond wonder and reason is the very mystery of the Incarnation; and no less so are the accomplishments that have resulted for us from it. For how is it not close to disbelief that the Word, born of God, was united to flesh, and came to be in the form of a servant, and endured the cross, and suffered insults and injuries, and the harms of the foolishness of the Jews? Or how would one not be utterly astonished at the outcome of the economy, where sin has been destroyed, death has been abolished and corruption driven away, and man, formerly a runaway, is now seen adorned with the grace of adoption? Therefore let Christ say concerning these very things, "If it shall be impossible in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, shall it also be impossible in my sight? For all things are smooth and passable for Him, and when He wishes to accomplish any of the necessary things, there would be, I think, nothing to oppose Him. Thus says the Lord Almighty:

"Behold, I am saving my people from the land of the east and from the land of the west, and I will bring them in and I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness. God did indeed save of old those of the blood of Israel who were scattered by the war, gathering them to Jerusalem, and dwelling among them, by means of raising the divine temple, and allowing them again to be reconciled through the sacrifices according to the law, and to complete their vows and fulfill their feasts. However, the saying that He saves His own people from east and west, would fittingly apply to Emmanuel, who called all under heaven, catching in His net through faith those from the ends of the earth, and having gathered every flock of nations into the truly holy and renowned city "which is the church of the living God," and the heavenly Jerusalem. And that He dwelt in the midst of her, how is it not true to say? For He became like us, and "dwelt among men" in the flesh. And this God proclaimed beforehand to us through another prophet, saying, "Be of good courage, Zion, let not "your hands be slack. The Lord your God is in you, "a mighty one will save you; he will bring joy upon you and will renew "you in his love. But He is also with us now;

for He has not left us orphans, but has sent to us the Paraclete in His place, and through Him is with those who love Him; and will fully assure us, saying, "Behold, I am with you all "the days, until the end of the age. We

have therefore become His people, we who were once not a people, and we who were worshippers of stones; abhorring the ancient and profane error; we have acknowledged Him as God, and this in truth and in righteousness. For not like the friends of the letter are we attached to types and shadows, but rather having received into our mind and heart the brightness of the evangelical proclamations, we fulfill the true worship, and holding fast to the righteousness that pleases Him, we fulfill the worship in spirit. "For God is Spirit," as the Son Himself says, "and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. Thus says the Lord Almighty: "Let your hands be strong, you who of those hearing in these days these words from the mouth of the prophets, from the day the house of the Lord Almighty was founded, and the temple from which it has been built. The God of all things often promises to those who love him things beyond hope, but he never speaks falsely, but by his own power and by certain ineffable operations he accomplishes in due season whatever he may wish, and very effortlessly.

It would be fitting for us, not being weak in faith, in every way and altogether to bear witness to him that he is able to accomplish all things easily; and to be courageous for works through which we shall be illustrious, and we shall gain the glorious crown of goodness; and to be persuaded by the words from him, and to be eager to make as guides those who may be at times for us the most unerring transmitters of the divine oracles. And our Lord Jesus Christ also promised through the holy prophets the good things from the incarnation, and insofar as it pertained to human thoughts, he did not place the account far from unbelief, as I said, narrating the greatness of the gifts. But in faith we have made acceptable the things beyond nature; and turning our mind to supernatural works, we have given the neck of our mind, in a way easy to handle and obedient, to the instructors of piety. And the fitting time for the provisions of good things and for the subjection from us ourselves is the manifestation of the Church. For see how the God of all things commanded even us to be strong and to fulfill works, and to be persuaded by the words of the prophets, from the day the house of the Lord Almighty was founded and the temple from which it has been built.

For before those days the wage of men shall not be for a benefit, and the wage of beasts does not exist, and to the one going out and to the one coming in there shall be no peace from the affliction; and I will send forth all men, each against his neighbor. The edition of the Hebrews does not render

the words as if for a future time, but posits the time that has passed. For it says "before those days the wage of men was not for a benefit and the wage of beasts did not exist"; and again "To the one going out and to the one coming in there was no peace," and instead of saying "And I will send forth all men," they have put "I have sent forth all men. And the account is also very plausible, but the truth in these things the power of the narratives will establish. For it wishes to signify something like this. For those from Israel had come from Babylon to the holy city. But there was no place of sanctification for them, since the former temple was demolished; there was no sacrifice and libation, since the altar was not standing. Then the God of all things urged them to make the most pressing care of these things so necessary for them, and to rebuild the temple, and to erect the divine altar in it, so that they might be able to perform very well the customary rites, and to appease the God of all things.

But they delayed in various ways, at one time feigning a lack of money, at another making excuses of the malevolence of those hindering the building. Then, offending God because of this, they were struck with frequent and successive plagues, I mean indeed by lack of fruit and by blight and by the attacks and raids of the neighboring nations. And the God of all things made their sloth an accusation against them, speaking thus through the voice of Haggai the prophet, "This people say, 'The time has not come to build the house of the Lord.' Is it time for you to dwell in paneled houses, while the house of the Lord has not been built? But since they had relapsed, as I said, out of sloth, they were frequently struck with shortages of necessities, and with wars with their neighbors. But when they had raised the temple, the things from wrath ceased, and all things were sufficient for them, and a great breadth of prosperity was at hand. For this reason it says, "That before those days," that is, before the temple was raised, "the wage of men was not for benefit and the wage of the beasts did not exist. For the farmers were without wages, and having gathered absolutely nothing, they departed from the fields along with the exhausted oxen. But there was no peace for those going out, or for those coming in.

And by those coming in and going out he sometimes means those going from city to city, or having a commercial trade, that is, also for the sake of other business. There was no peace for them either, since the neighboring nations, as I said, had raged against Israel, and each one looked upon the one

near by blood, or a brother, or a neighbor as one of his greatest enemies. It should be known that before the Only-Begotten became man, and the Church was revealed, there was no wage for man, nor indeed for beasts. For the more rational in this life and those having a reputation for understanding, who indeed might be considered men, had an unprofitable and useless zeal in words, neither writing anything necessary, nor indeed being able to understand or speak to others. Likewise also those who led a herd-like and bestial life remained without wages. For it was not possible to work anything praised by God. But there was no peace at all on earth, as the herd of demons was confounding all things, and rendering the earth full of turmoil, so that the affairs of all and indeed their minds were as in a shaking and a swell, and had no firmness. And now not according to the former days will I deal with the remnant of this people, says the Lord Almighty; but I will show peace;

the vine shall give its fruit, and the earth shall give its produce, and the heaven shall give its dew, and I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of my people. He transfers along with his wrath the things that result from it, and says that the punishments will flee away along with the times of transgressions. For with sin having ceased, or rather with Israel having already paid the penalties for it, he said that the misfortunes would cease, quite reasonably, and the assault of grievous things would be ineffective. For he has planned for them things not akin to the first, but whatever looks towards gentleness. This was an increase of peace, and an abundant supply of the most pleasant things for them, so that the vine was seen full of clusters, and the arable land, growing deep with crops, would repay the sweat of the farmers, with heaven obviously, as it were, running along with them, and fattening the fields, clearly, and the things in them with dews. For heaven and earth, and creation simply, will surely follow the nods of the Master. And these things are an inheritance for Israel, with God broadening their prosperity and delivering them from everything that is wont to cause grief. This saying would be fitting for the Savior of us all, Christ. For before the times of his coming we each walked according to what seemed good to him, living a bestial and most irrational life, and yoked to the deceptions of demons.

But when the Father had mercy on us who were all but sold, and cast down to the earth, and under the feet of enemies, he no longer dealt with us according to the former days. For he did not overlook us any longer being

taken advantage of, and acting under a cruel tyrant who was carrying us off to every one of the most shameful things; but rather he has given us the peace from heaven, that is Christ, who has also bestowed on us the supply of all spiritual fruitfulness. For we have been filled with grain and wine, and the true vine, that is Christ, has given us its fruit, which makes glad the heart of man, according to what is written. And he, being both the grain of wheat and the sacred sheaf, was revealed to us as the bread of life; and he made us most flourishing, fattening us with dews from heaven, clearly the spiritual ones and through the Spirit, of which the divine David also makes mention, saying, "As the dew of Hermon that comes down on the mountains of Zion. And these things are to us in the lot of an inheritance from God and a good portion, since indeed we have become Israel, that is, a mind seeing God, for we have seen the Father in the Son.

and it shall be that as you were a curse among the to the nations the house of Judah and the house of Israel, so I will save you and you shall be a blessing; be of good courage and let your hands be strong. The people of Israel, having become captives and entangled in the greed of their captors, have also been called accursed, with some saying, as is likely, "May I not become like Israel. But since the merciful God has saved them, and they are in their former good state, they have cast off along with their misfortunes also the appearance of being cursed. For they have been blessed, and have become no less enviable than they were of old, with God gladdening them with good things from above, and extending to them a share of all cheerfulness. And this very thing may be seen again to be true in our own case. For we were accursed, yoked to the herds of demons, and brought down to every form of wickedness through their perversity. But since we have known God, the creator of all, and have been known by Christ, then indeed we have been taught to sing over ourselves, "Blessed are we by the Lord, who made heaven and "earth.

Since, therefore, we have been called to this honor and glory, it is necessary to be diligent and to be manful against the passions, to make sin hateful, and to be seemly in the evangelical laws, so as to hasten to accomplish what is pleasing to Christ. For we have heard him crying out to us, Be of good courage and let your hands be strong, and we have received from Christ the need to be of good courage; for he has conquered the world for us, and has trodden on enemies, and showed his own temple to be stronger than

death, and has stopped the mouth of lawlessness, so that we too through him in these things. For he conquered, as I said, not so much for himself, but for us who were weak, accomplishing the good things that come from victory. For thus says the Lord Almighty: As I thought to do you harm when your fathers provoked me to wrath, says the Lord Almighty, and I did not relent, so I have arrayed myself and have thought in these days to do good to Jerusalem and the house of Judah; be of good courage. That nothing withstands the divine thoughts, or rather counsels, he allows us to understand again from these things. For whatever God should resolve and choose to fulfill, this will certainly come to pass and will proceed to the end that seems good to him. Thus somewhere he also says through the voice of Isaiah, revealing the all-powerful nature of his own being:

"And I said, All my counsel shall stand, and all that I have planned, I will do. Therefore, from what they happened to suffer when the divine wrath was brought upon them, from these very things it is possible to understand, and very clearly, that for them the path of cheerfulness is also widened, since he is willing and permits them to prosper, or rather, extending out of loving-kindness the need for them to be in every good thing. For just as, he says, nothing restrained him when he wished to harm you on account of your great sin, so also when he plans good things and wishes to pity those who have toiled sufficiently, there will be nothing to stand in the way. For I have set myself in array to do good to Jerusalem and the house of Judah. The word is very emphatic. For he did not say only that "I have planned" and "I have thought," perhaps, but "I have come to this point of judgment and of gentleness toward you, that I have even set myself in array. And this is a clear indication of intense deliberation. And he seals the promise as true by adding, "Be of good courage. So also does Christ make us secure, us who have been called through faith to the knowledge of the truth. For just as before the call, when we had slipped into every kind of wickedness, he gave us over to a debased mind, and afflicted us on account of uncleanness;

so also in these days he has both planned and set himself in array, as he himself says, to do good to the Church and the house of Judah, that is, us who confess him, and who honor him with praises as Master, as savior and redeemer; for Judah is interpreted as 'praise'. And the house of Judah may also be understood in another way as the Church. for it has been named the house of Christ, who "has sprung out of Judah," and so he is called also in the

divinely inspired Scripture. And indeed the patriarch Jacob thus mentions him, saying, "Judah, let your brothers praise you," and again, "From a shoot you went up, my son Judah. For Christ sprang up from the root of Jesse, and as if from a shoot of the holy virgin, "A glorious rod and a staff of magnificence," according to the prophet's voice. To us, therefore, will be said, "Take courage," and very rightly so. For the Father has crowned us with the weapon of goodwill through the salvation and grace which is through Christ. These are the words which you shall do: speak truth each to his neighbor, and judge a peaceful judgment in your gates, and let each one not devise the wickedness of his neighbor in your hearts, and do not love a false oath; because all these things I have hated, says the Lord Almighty.

God does not promise to bestow good things from His own gentleness on those who choose to disobey and are accustomed to turn away to a worthless manner of life, and certainly not to be disposed to do them good from then on; but rather to those who have loved to walk the path pleasing to Him and have chosen to live piously. For He has commanded that they should by no means be seen as speakers of falsehood, but rather that they should speak their words with accuracy, and to love uprightness in judgments, and to bring forth a verdict on each matter that is straight and irreproachable in every way and entirely, not being overcome by shameful bribes, not looking to sordid gains, and for the sake of money misrepresenting the grace of the just man; but looking only to what is pleasing to God; and also forgiving brothers, if they should stumble at all either in doing or in speaking, and in addition to these things, strongly rejecting perjury. For He declares that He has hated such evils. But observe how He commands to do nothing of the things in shadows or types. For indeed He does not command that one must sacrifice oxen nor yet honor with incense, but He wills that one practice a life that is, as it were, lean and well-wrought, and all but evangelical.

For since no small discourse has been made by us in these matters concerning the advent of our Savior, for this reason a commandment is also necessarily introduced which speaks the ordinances through Him. For if indeed it is fitting for us, following the divine words, to speak the truth, we shall certainly speak of the things of Christ; for Christ is the truth. For this reason also the most wise Peter commanded us to be most ready "for a defense to everyone" who asks us a reason concerning the hope that is in us. And indeed those who are accustomed to speak the things of Christ, and have Him al-

ways on their tongue, and have made Him the meditation of their mind and heart, would surely be righteous in every way, and distinguished in uprightness in all things whatsoever, peaceful and gentle and, in addition to this, forbearing, and not knowing how to swear falsely, but rather not even swearing at all. For they remember Him saying, "But let 'your word be 'Yes, yes,' and 'No, no'; for what is more than "these is from the evil one. And the word of the Lord Almighty came to me, saying, Thus says the Lord Almighty: The fast of the fourth month and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth shall be for the house of Judah for joy and for gladness and for good feasts, and you shall rejoice, and you shall love the truth and peace.

I think it necessary for the studious to narrate again beforehand the causes of the fasts spoken of here, and which is the fourth, and which the fifth, and those after them, the seventh and the tenth. For thus we shall opportunely bring to bear, and in order hereafter, the force of the things commanded. Therefore, after the holy city was captured, and the temple was burned down, and Israel was carried away captive along with the holy vessels, those who were saved and left behind in Judea considered the days on which such things happened to be ill-omened and hateful, and indeed running together in a crowd, they made a lamentation and a dirge, abstaining from food as in fasts. But what were the things that happened, and as in each of the of the days just now named by us, come, let us speak from the holy scriptures. So then the blessed Jeremiah said, "And it came to pass in the "ninth year of his reign; it is clear, of Zedekiah;

"in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebu- "chadnezzar king of Babylon came, and all his host "against Jerusalem, and they surrounded it with a palisade and "built a wall of four-foot stones around it, and "the city came into distress until the eleventh year of king "Zedekiah, in the fourth month on the ninth day of the month, "and the famine was severe in the city, and there was no bread "for the people of the land, and the city was broken up, and all the "men of war went out by night by the way of the "gate between the wall and the outwork, which "was by the king's garden. Then inserting in the middle the slaughter of Zedekiah's sons, and his own blinding, he said again, "In the fifth month, on the tenth day of the "month, Nebuzaradan the chief cook, who stood before "the face of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem, and "burned the house of the Lord and the

king's house, "and all the houses of the city and every great "house he burned with fire, and every wall of Jerusalem "round about the host of the Chaldeans that was with the "chief cook cast down. You hear how in the tenth year Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, then in the fourth month of the eleventh year he says the city was broken up, and indeed in the fifth month he insists that the temple itself and the whole city was burned down by the chief cook.

Therefore they made the fourth and the fifth and the tenth day unlucky days, transferring the months into days. But what of the seventh, it is necessary to speak of it again. For when the chief cook had taken Jerusalem, he appointed Gedaliah as governor for the remnant of the Jews in Jerusalem. Then having done this, he departed for Babylon. But when the survivors from the Jews learned that this had been so done, they ran together in Jerusalem, and were in hopes of still inhabiting the land. But in the seventh month, as it is written, Ishmael killed Gedaliah; and all the people were scattered then, and fled to the land of the Egyptians, and perished there. Therefore they made the seventh day hateful, and the month itself for this reason. This then is the reason for the fasts. But since it was fitting, when the things from wrath had ceased and Israel had been brought back to Jerusalem and the sad things had passed, not to fast any longer and lament, he commands that mourning be transformed into gladness, and to rejoice rather in what they have, having received it from God, that is, to hold in memory the things for which they were punished from time to time, for having sinned unguardedly and shamelessly slipped into every kind of transgression. And Christ has done this for us also. "For he has turned our mourning into joy, he has torn off the sackcloth and "girded us with gladness," according to the voice of the psalmist.

And we do not complain at all that, once not knowing God, and worshipping the creation rather than the creator, we have fallen under the feet of enemies and into a reprobate mind; but we rather give thanks for the things for which we have received mercy and been saved, and have been delivered from the hand of enemies, and inhabit the holy city, that is, the Church, and are deemed worthy henceforth to honor him with prayers and spiritual sacrifices, and we also love peace and truth, and we have been taught by the divinely-inspired scripture to count the matter a cause of the highest gladness. "For he himself is our peace; he himself, as I said, is the truth; and

through him we are in good hopes, and we ought to rejoice, all dejection being taken away. Thus says the Lord Almighty, There shall yet come many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities, and the inhabitants of five cities shall come together into one city, saying, Let us go to entreat the face of the Lord and to seek the face of the Lord of the Almighty, I will go also; and many peoples and many nations shall come to seek the face of the Lord Almighty in Jerusalem and to propitiate the face of the Lord.

As Christ transforms our mourning into joy and into a feast and into good gladness, and changes our lamentations into cheerfulness, no longer, he says, will the approach in faith and the intimacy with God through sanctification be for those called to salvation one by one; but the cities will then exhort one another to this, and all the nations will come in multitudes, with those who come second always crying out to those who have arrived first for this, 'I will go also.' For it is written that "Iron sharpens iron, and a man sharpens the face of another. For the zeal of some is always found to be a provocation to others to fulfill what is good. What then is the purpose for the cities or for the nations? To propitiate and to seek out the face of the Lord, that is, Christ, who is the exact image of God the Father, and "the character of His substance," as it is written, and "the radiance of His glory," concerning whom the divine David also says, "Make your face to shine upon your servant. For the image and the face, as I said, of God the Father has shone upon us; having Him benevolent and propitious, we shall also escape the harms from sin, being justified through faith, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His great mercy; for He is compassionate and good and forgives the offenses of those who approach Him;

seeking Him with a love of learning and by the need to fulfill the established customs, we shall by all means and in every way find Him, and through Him we are joined to God the Father, for He is our peace, according to the scriptures. Thus says the Lord Almighty: In those days, ten men from all the languages of the nations will take hold, they will take hold of the hem of a Jewish man, saying, 'We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.' In what way the approach of those seeking the face of the Lord will happen city by city and nation by nation, he makes clear again. For this will be, he says, in those days, that is, at that time, in which ten men would take hold of one Jew, saying, 'We will go with you.' Through the ten, therefore, you will understand the perfect number of those who approach;

for the number ten is somehow a symbol of perfection. That those from the nations, clinging to the holy apostles, attempted to walk the same path as they did, being justified through faith in Christ, he makes clear, saying also the figure, as if finely fashioned from an image of our own experience. For if small children should ever choose to follow their own fathers, taking hold of the hem and, as it were, being helped by their touch and hanging from their garments, they make their walk unerring and safe;

in the same way, I think, also those who have served creation rather than the Creator of all things, acknowledging as their genuine fathers the teachers of the evangelical doctrines, and being united through harmony of soul, they follow them, being still infants in their understanding, and they go on the same path, being revealed certainly as emulators of their way of life, and with constant progress toward the better, "ascending to a perfect man and to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. And for what reason do they follow? For they have been fully convinced that God is with them, that is, Emmanuel; for it is interpreted, 'God with us.' But that the call at that time will not be of those from the blood of Israel alone, but rather of all the nations throughout the whole world, he has indicated by saying that those who take hold of the hem will be from all the languages. But when were the nations called to the knowledge of truth, and when did they wish to seek the face of the Lord, and to propitiate it, and for the need to walk the same path as the holy apostles, unless when the Only-begotten came among us? who is the expectation of the nations; to whom also the divine David sings, "All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord; for through him the multitude of the nations has also been saved.

The burden of the word of the Lord in the land of Hadrach, and its resting place is Damascus; because the Lord watches over men and all the tribes of Israel; and Hamath in its borders. The subject before us is not harsh, but the very composition of the words is quite difficult to grasp; nevertheless, it will be spoken by us as is possible. Indeed, it is necessary to fittingly declare in advance the things about which we believe these words were spoken, for only in this way can the meaning of the prophecy be understood, and with difficulty. Therefore, when Israel was at times released and freed from the bonds of captivity, and they finally came into Judea, and attempted to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, then indeed the neighboring nations, both those inhabiting Samaria and those occupying the cities of Palestine and also of Phoeni-

cia, were consumed with envy, and at the same time they were afraid, lest their affairs should return to their original state, and the race expand to an innumerable multitude, and then, having such an impregnable and well-towered city, they might campaign against them again and, as before, raise an invincible hand against them, for this reason they wanted to hinder those wishing to build the wall, devising bitter deceits, and indeed also setting up raids against them. They came to such a point of malice and envy, that they also wrote to the one then reigning over the Persians the things contained in Ezra. And it reads thus:

"To King Artaxerxes, lord, your servants Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe and the rest of their council and the judges who are in Coele-Syria and Phoenicia. And now let it be known to the lord king that the Jews who have come up from you to us have come to Jerusalem, the rebellious and wicked city, they are building, and they are repairing its marketplaces and its walls and laying the foundations of a temple. If, therefore, this city is built and its walls are finished, they will not endure to pay tribute, but will even stand against kings, and since the work on the temple is proceeding, we think it well not to overlook such a thing. Therefore, since they immoderately mocked Israel when it had been captured and had suffered captivity, and when it had with difficulty been saved and released from its bonds they attacked it again no less, inflicting countless troubles upon it, plotting in many ways, and allowing them neither to raise the divine temple, nor indeed to wall the holy city, God was necessarily provoked against them, and he delivered them into the hands of Israel. For when the works were finished and the temple raised, having ravaged all their cities, they took under their hand those in them, and became masters of innumerable riches.

The burden, therefore, of the word of the Lord, it says, in the land of Hadrach and Damascus, that is, the word from God that is in our hands, will be against both the land of Hadrach and of Damascus, and indeed also of Hamath, which is in its borders, clearly of Damascus. The land of Hadrach is surely a country lying toward the east, whose neighbors are Hamath, which is now Epiphania, a little beyond Antioch, and Damascus, which is the metropolis of the Phoenicians and Palestinians; and the cities under them will clearly be subject to the metropolises. Why then is the burden against them? Because in them has occurred his rest, that is, of the God who rules all things. And he has rested because he has seen them punished. For he who

watches over all things would not have been silent, deeming the chosen race worthy of forbearance and visitation, that is, Israel. For the God of all watches over men, and observes the path of each, and upon those who do wrong he brings the things of wrath, but he rescues the wronged. And it is necessary to remember that also in the preceding sections, having introduced the account concerning the four chariots and the forms of the horses, he added again "Behold, those who go forth to the land of the north have quieted my spirit in the land of the north.

And the Master's wrath, which hates evil, is quieted, as it were, when those who have offended him have paid the penalty for their very great and unbridled sin. Tyre and Sidon, because they were very proud, and Tyre built strongholds for herself, and she treasured up silver like dust, and gathered gold like the mud of the streets. For this reason the Lord will inherit her, and will cast her power into the sea, and she will be consumed by fire. The account runs through the events that happened to the cities, against which he asserted "the burden of the Lord" had come. He begins with Tyre and Sidon, which were indeed especially honored above the others, excelling in strength and wealth, and in the manliness of their inhabitants, and having the others, as it were, under their hand, and set before their neighbors. Therefore, since, he says, Sidon and Tyre raise a high brow, and think themselves to be formidable and unbreakable, and have trusted in strongholds, that is, in surrounding walls, or in other things by which a city might be well off and be saved, and have been greatly proud of their wealth, for this very reason they will learn by experience itself that the Lord will inherit her. For when those from Israel had sacked her, that is, perhaps, Vespasian and Titus, he says that she will be inherited from God. For it was he himself who delivered her and placed her under the hand of those who had taken her.

For the Romans, subjecting the whole earth to their own scepters, were gentle and mild to those who yielded without a fight; but to those who wished to resist, they themselves were harsh and warlike. Therefore, he says that she will be burned down, her strongholds having been cast into the sea, and her wealth plundered, even if her gold was like dust and her silver like the mud of the streets. For the inhabitants of Tyre have become formidable and exceedingly avaricious merchants, and concerning this a broad and long account has been made in the writings of the prophet Ezekiel. Therefore, nothing will ever benefit those who offend God, those who mock the saints,

if indeed anything should happen to them, and who laugh broadly if God should test the faith of his own. For every stronghold of theirs will fail, that is, every enclosure and every means of safety; and wealth will be of no use at all, but will be sustenance for war and an even greater attraction for those accustomed to plunder. And one might see even now the children of the Hellenes being very proud of their worldly wisdom, and as it were on strongholds, on the deceptions from intricate syllogisms, and all but walling in their own error with the power of eloquence, and being exceedingly enriched with what is brilliant in speech [as silver], and what is precious in thought in the order of gold.

Yet even so, Christ has inherited them, for he has thrown down the strongholds, that is, the discoveries from deceit have fallen, and the gold and silver have been plundered. For indeed, those who from time to time have presided over the churches, eloquent and wise men, seizing for themselves the power of their eloquence, have made a sacred offering to God, contending with arguments for the faith, and making a very great and true denunciation of their deceit. Those from Israel have done something like this. For having borrowed from the Egyptians vessels of gold and silver and having despoiled those who had taken advantage of them, they brought these things in the desert to the all-holy God, when the holy tabernacle and the sacred vessels in it were being constructed. Therefore, those who administer the Church through worldly wisdom and through brightness of speech, both plunder the children of the Hellenes, and as it were, having become rich with their gold and silver out of very great gentleness, they make it an inheritance of God, speaking to others for his glory, and destroying their strongholds, but building up spiritually the holy the city, that is, the Church. Ashkelon shall see and shall be afraid, and Gaza and shall be in great pain, and Ekron, because she was shamed of her hope; and a king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited. And foreigners shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will destroy the pride of the Philistines.

When the assault of war and battle overruns a country, the cities within it are somehow more courageous and at times have good hopes; for they think that they will overcome their enemies either by the multitude of their inhabitants, or by the strength of their walls and their knowledge of tactics; but if it should happen that one among them is captured, which might be called the strongest, then indeed then all cower in fear, and cast off their

hope, I mean the hope of being able to escape, and mourn as if fallen. So then, when Tyre is captured, which is so distinguished and most mighty and boasts in its wealth, Ashkelon, he says, will be afraid, and Gaza will be in pain, and indeed Ekron too. These are cities of the Palestinians. And she will be in pain, because she was shamed of her hope. For they thought that the strength of the Tyrians would suffice to aid them. But since they have seen her laid low, for this reason they have finally lost their hope. And the leader of Gaza, he says, will be gone, having perished, clearly, and foreigners shall dwell in Ashdod, the natives having likely been consumed by the war. And he adds to this, that I will destroy the pride of the Philistines. And he usually calls the Philistines, that is the Palestinians, "allophuloi" (foreigners). But the statement might also apply, if one thinks so, to other nations that have wronged Israel, who were also neighbors and adjacent to the Jews.

But these things will be said by us again, with respect to the literal meaning. But it is necessary to know that when the Church, as I said, is at times persecuted by enemies, the enemies spring up terribly and grin, perhaps saying, "Aha, aha," as it is written. Nevertheless Christ defends her, and will shatter all their power, raising up His own temple, and bringing upon those who plot against her the things of unmixed wrath, and shaking the synagogues of the heresies like certain cities, and in addition to these, the unholy hordes of the idolaters. And I will take away their blood out of their mouth, and their abominations from between their teeth: and they also shall be left for our God, and they shall be as a chiliarch in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite. For these also devoured Israel, and like some wild beasts, had their mouths, so to speak, stained with blood. And since they were idolaters, and devoted to the worship of vain things, they always somehow had on their tongues, or rather between their teeth, the names of their own abominations, calling handmade things gods up and down, and saying to lifeless stones, according to the prophet, "You are my God," and "You begot me. But they have paid the fitting and sufficient penalty, having savagely transgressed against Israel. Nevertheless, they have not utterly perished, God having foretold their future conversion in Christ in due time.

Therefore, he says, I will take away their blood out of their mouth, that is, even if like some wild beasts they as it were gulped down Israel, yet a time will come when they will be clean and freed from the charge for these things; for they too will be justified by faith, and will wash away the defile-

ment from their ancient depravity. And I will also take away the names of their abominations from between their teeth. For they will no longer remember the falsely named gods, nor will they name them, and they themselves will be left for our God, just as Israel itself was; for its remnant has also been saved, although it had acted impiously against Emmanuel himself. And since the called multitude of the nations was spiritually joined to those who believed from the blood of Israel, Christ binding them into unity; "For He is "our peace, who made both one, and the middle "wall of the having broken down the barrier, and creating the two peoples into "one new man, making peace, and reconciling "both in one Spirit to the Father; for this reason he says that they will be as a chiliarch in Judah, that is, they will advance to this point of genuineness, in faith and gentleness, I say, so that even from them leaders of Judah will arise. And Ekron, that is, the foreigner, from the land of the Philistines, will be as the Jebusite, that is, again, as the very people inhabiting Jerusalem.

For Jerusalem was called Jebus in the beginning; therefore, the Jebusite is here understood as the Jerusalemite. And many chiliarchs, that is, leaders and rulers of peoples, have come from the gentiles, and now exist throughout the whole world. But you will understand "in Judah" to refer to those who are accustomed to praise, that is, us who have been called in faith, who are accustomed to crown Christ who has called us with unceasing doxologies. And I will encamp in my house as a garrison, so that none may pass through or return, and no more shall an oppressor come upon them, because now I have seen with my eyes. Behold, he clearly names Christ a garrison and a wall, through whom and in whom we have been fortified, clearly according to the good pleasure and will of God the Father. For the spiritual house and building of God, according to the voice of Paul, we are surely those who have believed, if it is true that he dwells in our hearts through the Spirit and lodges with those who love him. For he himself said through the voice of a prophet, "For I will dwell in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Christ is therefore the garrison raised up for the Church by the counsel of the Father, so that no longer, as of old, certain ones may pass through and return among us, causing confusion and trampling a way as if laid waste, and filling our hearts with all harm. For he said somewhere concerning those of Israel, who was the ancient vineyard of the beloved, that "I will take away its

hedge and it shall be for plunder, and I will break down its wall and it shall be for trampling. But for us who have known his epiphany, Emmanuel himself has been raised as a wall and a hedge, surrounding with ineffable power and scaring away from our minds the unclean demons, and not allowing us to be subjected to their feet. Therefore the prophet also says to him, "And you shall be called," he says, "the builder of hedges, and you will put an end to the paths between. For just as those who are accustomed to fence in vineyards that have been laid waste put an end to the paths through the middle, no longer allowing them to be trodden by the feet of those who cause confusion; so also our Lord Jesus Christ, having placed himself around us as an unbreakable wall and fencing us in with angelic powers, has prepared us to be beyond being trampled. And he added to this, that no more shall an oppressor come upon them.

For formerly we were easily captured and quite easily carried away, and went readily to anything whatsoever that was amiss, as Satan led and carried us, and drove us, so to speak, from these things to those. But Christ put a stop to this also. For the plunderer will not come against us; he will not cast us out as before, to do his will. For we have been fixed in Christ, and have our heart secure and established, no longer shaken toward what is not fitting; not departing into polytheism; not being driven out into error, but as it were having embarked on faith and love for God, so that rejoicing in this we say "And he set my feet upon a rock. And by saying, Because now I have seen with my eyes, he clearly showed that the time of the Savior's advent is a time of visitation. "For the dayspring from on high has visited us," and as David says, "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the earth," although formerly, on account of the sin in us, he did not deem us worthy of oversight, nor of mercy or love, nor of anything else of the sort at all, but as it were turned away; for this reason we were also troubled. and the blessed David will testify, saying, "When you turn away your face, they will be troubled, and to their dust they will return.

But since now, that is, at the time of his sojourn, he has seen with his own eyes, we have been saved and have received mercy, and what indeed of things beyond words and truly worthy of admiration have we not gained?

Book 4

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; proclaim, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, the king comes to you righteous and saving, he is meek and mounted

upon a beast of burden and a young colt. In these words he openly proclaims henceforth the manifestation of our Savior, so that nothing at all appears arduous. For he has necessarily commanded the spiritual Zion to rejoice, since indeed all our dejection has been taken away. For where is there still dejection, and for what reasons could we lament at all, when sin has been driven away, and death has been trampled, and human nature has been called to a free dignity, and crowned with the grace of adoption, and adorned with the gifts from above and from heaven? But observe that, announcing the coming of our Savior, he immediately calls Zion a daughter. He has therefore commanded her to rejoice very greatly indeed, and he urges Jerusalem to proclaim that her king will now be present and will be revealed in the flesh, righteous and saving. For Christ has justified us by faith, and he widens the path of salvation for those who come to him. And in addition to this he is also meek, not bringing legal severity, nor punishing with death those who transgress a commandment, but rather saving out of gentleness and raising up those who have slipped, and if anyone sins, he himself becomes an advocate with God the Father. And we have read that "the letter kills, but the spirit gives life.

For the letter is the punishing law, the shadow and the type; but the life-giving spirit is Christ, for in spirit and in truth we have been taught to worship through the evangelical instruction. But that he also rode upon a young colt and thus entered Jerusalem will not require a long argument for confirmation; for the divine evangelist, having written such things, is sufficient for our faith. For Christ sat on the colt, and its mother followed; and what was done was for us a sign of a most necessary matter. For Christ rested upon the new people, that is, the one called to the knowledge of truth, which was once idolatrous. For it was like a colt, not yet tamed, nor knowing how to walk correctly; for it had not been instructed by the divine law. But he who leads all to spiritual skill, set the colt before himself. But that in due time the Synagogue of the Jews will also follow, he has given us to understand through the donkey that followed, although in the time of the calling it was the elder; for it was called beforehand through Moses and the prophets. But since it stumbled against the saving king—for it did not accept the faith—for this reason it justly comes with difficulty after the colt, and has become the tail, that is, an attendant and behind those from the nations, and the

first has become last. But observe how he who knows the reins and hearts showed human nature carried away to extreme irrationality.

For both the Synagogue of the Jews and the multitude of the nations itself are compared to the very irrational donkey. For the ones, having served the creation rather than God the creator, and the others, dishonoring the law which was their instructor, have become devoid of good sense and mind, and having inclined towards every form of wickedness, "they were compared to mindless "beasts, and were made like them," according to the voice of the psalmist. And a donkey is in another way a symbol of uncleanness; for the animal is unholy, and has the condemnation from the law. Such are all those who go astray and are lovers of sin. And he shall destroy chariots from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be destroyed, and a multitude and peace from the nations, and he will rule the waters from sea to sea and the outlets of rivers of the earth. For the Only-Begotten, having become man, was about to bring under the feet of those who love him principalities and powers and the world-rulers of this darkness, that is, the abominable hordes of demons, and to subject to them every enemy visible and invisible, and to shatter all war, and to gladden them with the good things of peace, the prophetic word shows us enigmatically.

For from time to time the Babylonians went against Jerusalem, and indeed certain others of the neighboring nations, mounted on horses and in chariots, "and shooting with bows," as it is written, they thus subdued them and involved them in bitter toils. From what was accustomed to happen, then, it indicates the splendor of the accomplishments through Christ. For the savior, he says, the just and most gentle king, will indeed arrive, and not after a long time; yet not escorted by a great multitude of shield-bearers, not having ten thousand men who know tactics; but having practiced moderation in his character to such an extent, as to barely sit on a bare colt. Yet he will be so great in virtue, and will so benefit those who trust in him, as to remove chariots from Ephraim, and take away the horse from Jerusalem, and destroy the battle bow, and to spread deep peace from all the nations. And by Ephraim he means the ten tribes in Samaria, and by Jerusalem those who dwelt in it; these are Judah and Benjamin. Therefore the prophetic word brings to us a promise of security and peace. For the holy city, that is, the spiritual Zion, or Jerusalem, "which is the Church of the living God," would not, he says, become easily overrun by those wishing to do evil, and he who

saves it so extends his own kingdom, as to rule over all of Judea, from the sea to the rivers.

For these are the outlets of the earth, that is, the ends. And somewhere the divine David also sings, as if speaking about the vine of the Synagogue of the Jews: "She stretched out her branches to the sea, and her shoots to the rivers. For the country of the Jews is bounded by the sea to the south and the Indian sea, and by what is called the Middle of the rivers. But the kingdom of Christ is not within these borders; far from it; but the argument proceeds as from a particular example to the universal and most general. For he has reigned not only over Judea, but rather over all that is under heaven, and his authority extends from ends to ends. And you, in the blood of the covenant, have sent forth your prisoners from the pit that has no water. You shall sit in a stronghold, prisoners of the synagogue, and in return for one day of your sojourning I will repay to you double. The discourse now passes to the just and saving king himself, and indeed also gentle, that is, Christ; and it makes manifest the splendid and admirable accomplishments of his coming. For the only-begotten Word of God willingly emptied himself, becoming man;

and he endured the cross, despising the shame, and laid down his own life as a ransom for the life of all, and he acquired for God the Father that which is under heaven in the blood of an eternal covenant, of which the type was that which was sprinkled upon the ancients through the all-wise Moses. For, he says, Moses, taking the blood, "sprinkled both the book itself and all the people," saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has made with you." But those things were types, and a representation of the truth; but this at last is the truth, Christ, who purchased all of us in the blood of the covenant. For we have been redeemed, as his disciple says, "not with perishable things, silver or gold, "but with the precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, Christ. You therefore, he says, O most just and most gentle king, in the blood of the covenant your prisoners who have come to be; that is, those whom you have bound tight with bonds of love, and have clearly persuaded to submit to and be bound fast by your yokes the neck of their mind; you have sent forth, that is, you have brought out or led out or brought up from a pit that has no water; and we say that by this he means either hades, which has no life; for we shall take water as a type of life, for it is life-giving;

or we shall reckon as a pit, and very rightly, the deceit concerning the falsely named gods. For the thing is truly a pit, into which if anyone should slip at all, he will be deprived of the life in the age to come. That Christ, having died, has emptied hades, and opened the gates below to the spirits in prison, is clear to everyone. And the God of all said somewhere through the voice of Jeremiah concerning those of Israel, who had abandoned him, and had foolishly turned to idolatrous deceit: "The heaven was astonished at this, and shuddered much more exceedingly, says the Lord; because "my people have done two evil things, they have forsaken me, "a spring of living water, and have dug for themselves broken "cisterns which cannot hold water. For just as the right and unerring knowledge concerning God is life-giving and a spring of life; so might the toys of idolatry, and the error concerning it, be understood as waterless and as it were broken cisterns. Then he speaks to the prisoners themselves, and encourages them to good hopes, saying, You shall sit in a stronghold, O prisoners of the assembly. And a stronghold, as I think, he calls the Church, as being walled in Christ, and unshakably firm; and sitting he says is being as it were established in faith. For it is written concerning God, "Because you sit for eternity," that is, having an established and unshakable nature.

You shall be therefore in safety, he says, having what is firm in faith, O prisoners of my assembly; and these would be the holy multitude of those justified in Christ. And that they will not have their patience in all the best things without reward, and indeed also their reliance on love towards God, he signifies, saying, And for one day of your sojourning I will repay you double. And it is something like this that he wishes to say. For all the saints are sojourners and strangers on the earth, and the life in the body of every man is very short, and if one were to reckon it against the age to come, he would lament it as being altogether short, so as perhaps even to be compared to a single day. Therefore, for one day of your sojourning, he says, that is, for the short and compressed time of life in the body I will repay rewards twofold and in abundance. And Christ also said somewhere that, "A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, "and running over, will be poured into your lap. For we do not expect rewards of equal weight to what we may have done, but with much addition; for the giver is lavish. Because I have bent you, Judah, for myself as a bow, I have filled Ephraim.

In what manner indeed the flock from the gentiles will be called and will enter through faith, and how he who formerly lived in luxury, that is, Satan, will be afflicted, being driven out of the worshipers acquired by him through greed, he again makes clear in these things. Indeed he makes his discourse as if to the holy apostles, that is, the teachers from Israel, who also, traveling around the country of the gentiles, called and have drawn in a net those in it to the knowledge of truth. O therefore Judah, he says, I have bent you for myself as a bow, that is, through you I will shoot the adversaries; and you, O Ephraim, I have filled. And what this is, I will say again. For when those skilled in archery bring the string to the breast, and the iron of the bow close, then they are said to fill the bow, and thus they shoot something terrible and unavoidable and as it were leaping up and flying with irresistible impulses, the poison, that is, the arrow. Therefore, it is phrased in different ways. "I have made you a bow," he says, "O Judah, and I have filled you, O Ephraim. And Judah and Ephraim are the whole race of Israel.

Therefore, he has made, as it were, a bow of those from the Jews who believed before the others, and who had come to this resolve, to instruct the nations, and to drive away the herds of demons from those who had gone astray, and to strike down Satan and, in short, those who oppose the divine dogmas and fight against the initiations given through them. Thus somewhere the divine David also says to the Savior God of all things, "Your arrows are sharpened, O mighty one; peoples will fall under you, in the heart of the king's enemies. For "the arrows of the mighty one," that is, of Christ, strike the enemies of God and the Father in the heart and kidneys. And His arrows are again the mystagogues, and they strike those who have gone astray and do not know the God who is by nature and in truth, not to death, but bringing them to the love that is in Christ, so that they too might fall under him. such as the bride described in the Song of Songs, who says clearly, "For I am wounded by love. That the divine disciples became most mighty and strong, the most wise psalmist will confirm, saying about them in the Spirit, "Like arrows in the hand of a mighty one, so are the sons of those who have been cast out. For he calls those from Israel "cast out," as having fallen from divine grace because of their insolence toward Christ.

But the sons from them have become arrows, as sent from the hand of a mighty one. And Habakkuk also said somewhere, as to Emmanuel Himself again, concerning the holy apostles, "For your darts will go forth at the light

of the lightning of your weapons. And I will raise up your children, O Zion, against the children of the Greeks, and I will wield you like a warrior's sword. Behold, he clearly names the mystagogues from the Jews His own bow. For who are the children of Zion who rise up against the children of the Greeks, if not the divine disciples, and those who lead the churches from time to time, and who rightly divide the word of truth? For how could the spiritual Zion be understood as other than the Church? And they contend against the children of the Greeks, and they campaign against those who have gone astray, God having made them like a warrior's sword. Thus also the divine Paul is seen adorning the soldier understood to be in Christ. For he puts on him the breastplate of righteousness in Christ; and indeed also the helmet of salvation. Then he gives the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Using this sword, therefore, against the children of the Greeks, they shear off the deceit sprouting in them, and bringing upon them the sharpest word of God, which is living and active, they cut out the evil and unclean spirit, so that they might be able, henceforth, with a pure and free mind, and one delivered from the oppression of demons, to receive the word of true knowledge of God. And the Lord will be over them, and His dart will go forth like lightning. By these words he indicates that the Lord God will be with them, and will shield them, and will help destroy those who resist; for he says the Lord will be over them, meaning clearly those who have resolved to rise up against those who minister His gospel. And each dart, that is, a mystagogue or apostle; for he again likens them to an arrow or a dart, with God sending it; it will run like lightning, he says, clearly meaning shining brightly, and falling upon the eyes of all without effort. For the divine disciples have become so brilliant, and the heralds of the Savior's gospels, and those after them who led the peoples and presided over the churches, that no one could be ignorant of the brightness of the virtue within them. And the Savior Himself said this:

"No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or under a bed 'places it, but on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see 'the light.' And again elsewhere, 'Let your light so shine 'before men, that they may see your good 'works, and glorify your Father who is in 'heaven.' And the Lord almighty will sound the trumpet and will go forth in the storm of his threat. The Lord almighty will shield them; and they will consume them, and will

bury them with sling-stones, and they will drink their blood like wine, and will fill the bowls of the altar. and the Lord will save them in that day, his people as sheep. The word, as I said, clearly presents God, who rules over all, as a fellow shield-bearer and comrade-in-arms for them, both arrayed for battle in this way and chosen to contend alongside them, so that he seems to be already equipped for war, and, as one about to advance against enemies, to use his whole power and the strengths inherent in him. Indeed he says he campaigns, not against those netted through faith for justification, but against those who have impiously opposed the divine proclamation, whom Paul also pointed out to us, saying "For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. Therefore, he says, the Lord will sound the trumpet.

For Christ has spoken the evangelical proclamation, rushing into every place under heaven, for the mystery of Christ is audible to those everywhere. For Moses was weak of voice and slow of tongue; therefore he was scarcely heard in Judea alone; but the word from Christ is not at all like this. For it has cried out like a long and most melodious trumpet, sending forth a piercing sound into the ears of all. And he will go forth as in the storm of his threat, and so he will shield his own bodyguards, so that those who oppose him are consumed as if by fire, and all but buried by them, as they strike them nobly with slings. And they will drink their blood, that is, like beasts leaping upon them they will easily prevail, and will render them dead. And they will offer bowls filled with the blood of the fallen, as a libation upon the altar. For the death of those who do not allow the deceived to be saved is a sweet aroma to God and an acceptable sacrifice; for if it is not right to pity the murderers of bodies, but rather for them to be subjected to judgments, suffering the same things, what could one say about those who have become destroyers and corruptors of souls?

These again would be the choice spirits of the Greeks, and those who hold to the glory of the wisdom in the world, who name gods and goddesses above and below, and persuade people to worship the creation rather than the creator, and assign to each of the elements the glory due to God. These have deceived the world under heaven, and not only during the time of their life in the body; but also for the times that followed. For countless multitudes at various times have perished, overcome by their false speech, and paying attention to frigid and old wives' tales. Such men, then, have finally been

destroyed. For the profanation of their writing is gone, the myths are ineffectual, and their blood has, as it were, been drunk up, and being struck down by the doctrines of truth as if by stones from a sling, they are buried, and the destruction of their garrulity has become, as I said, a sweet aroma to God. And the Lord has saved his people as sheep. For since he himself is the maker of all things, those who were formerly deceived might reasonably be called his people; except that Christ has saved them as a flock driven away by robbers, by casting out the false shepherds, and placing the human race under his own hand. For he is the good shepherd, who has laid down his life for the sheep. For holy stones are rolled upon his land.

For if there is anything good of his and if anything beautiful from him, grain for the young men and fragrant wine for the maidens. For we say that the saints at various times in the churches, who would become mystagogues and teachers, are named the holy stones rolled in the land of God. For they have become conformed to the choice, cornerstone, and precious stone, which was laid by God the Father for the foundations of Zion; and if the foundation is a stone, those who are joined and fitted together and rise up into a holy temple for God are fittingly called stones according to it. Moreover, he says they are rolled very well, signifying by this, I think, a certain nimbleness and quickness toward anything holy. For the round, that is, spherical stones, are somehow better than hesitation, and more ready for motion than others, if someone should choose to move them; and the mind of the saints is very easily led to what pleases God. Since the stones are thus for us, it would be fitting for us to be disposed firmly as well. Because if anything is good of him and if anything is beautiful from him, it is clear that it is from God who distributes all things to us for godliness and life. And what are these? Grain for young men, and fragrant wine for virgins.

For to those who act manfully and with a youthful spirit have inclined toward what pleases him, and have chosen to fulfill what is good, even greater strength will be given by him, understood as in grain. For bread strengthens a man's heart. Indeed, to those who are already purified, and have an undefiled mind, who might also reasonably be compared to venerable and holy virgins, spiritual wine will be given, that is, the clear and unadulterated knowledge of God, which gladdens a man's heart. Therefore, young men and virgins, according to the words just given by us, will reasonably be called to a broad and abundant participation in the good things from above, and

indeed they will hear God saying, "Eat and drink, and be intoxicated, my friends. For such people are near God; and not by spatial relations; for it is nonsense to think or say this; but by a disposition of mind that is most valiant, and by the desire for everything that is best and the love for him. For just as wickedness displaces us and, as it were, carries us far away, so virtue brings us near to God, causing that which separates and comes between us to be removed from our midst, I mean, sin. Ask for rain from the Lord in season, early and late.

For just as there would be no grain in the fields without toil, nor a vineyard rich in clusters and good wine, so also in us there would be no spiritual fruitfulness, unless God sends down like rain into the mind and heart his oracles. the revelation, and knowledge, as it were, instilling in us both the ancient and new scripture, that is, of the Law and of the Gospel; for such would be the early and late rains. And that the knowledge and spiritual contemplation of the law is not without benefit, but rather tutors us through type and shadow to the mystery of Christ, the Savior himself will confirm when he says to the Jewish crowds, "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you, Moses, in whom you have hoped. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me. And somewhere he also spoke about the scribes and Pharisees, as being called from the instruction of the law to something better, that is, to the Gospel: "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.

Therefore, asking from God both legal and evangelical knowledge, and having presented ourselves as worthy to receive it, we shall certainly receive it, and we will fill the inner treasures of the mind, collecting the old and the new, and filling the mind with the greatest possible spiritual fruitfulness. The Lord made lightnings, and will give them winter rain, to each one grass in the field. because the speakers have spoken troubles, and the diviners false visions and they spoke false dreams, they gave vain comfort; for this reason they were dried up as having no rain, and were afflicted like sheep? because there was no healing. The present text is in labor with some hidden meaning, which I think it is necessary to explain clearly beforehand, for they would understand thus the lovers of learning. For his discourse was about the saints, whom he also called holy stones, and he said that wheat was most fitting for them, as for those growing into men, that is, young men, and in-

deed also fragrant wine, on account of their being virgins, that is, pure and undefiled. "For those of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires," as the divine Paul says. He has commanded to ask for them also both early and latter rain;

then, with the mention of the erring being inserted, he gives as it were the reason in these things, why they have neither wheat nor indeed wine, nor are they watered by the spiritual rains, so that from this they have no fodder in the field. And the discourse is composed as if about perceptible things; yet the spiritual contemplation in them is exceedingly subtle and has much purity. For he says that while God makes visions, that is, lightnings, and pours down the winter rain on the earth, which is also useful, and indeed also gives fodder to each, of the beasts in the fields, clearly, those who make pronouncements have led them astray, that is, the false-speakers and false-narrators and those who speak divinations from their own heart; these have spoken toils, that is, not things for the repose of those who believe them, but things through which it was necessary to grow weary, offending God and being overlooked; and the diviners also offered false dreams, sounding in them, clearly, what was pleasing to them, and fattening them with good hopes, but speaking nothing true; but carrying them off into deceit and error, and least of all showing them the giver and provider of spiritual things; but rather persuading them to ask for prosperity from the falsely-named gods. For this reason, he says, They were dried up because they had no rain, and they were afflicted like sheep. For there was no fodder, there was no healing.

For there was not among them the one who binds up the broken, who raises up the crushed, who restores the afflicted. One must pay attention, then, not to those who pronounce vain things, to the false-speakers and buffoons and dreamers; but rather to God, who makes the light of true knowledge of God flash into our mind, and who pours down spiritual rains, the consolations through the Holy Spirit, I say, and who makes fodder spring up for those in the field, that is again, who as it were pastures us in the most flourishing grass, the blameless knowledge of the God-inspired scripture. "For man, being in honor, did not understand; he was compared to the senseless beasts and was made like them; but if he should somehow take into his mind the knowledge of the divine oracles, and partake of spiritual nourishment, then indeed, then, having cast off sluggishness, he will be in honor

again, governed by sound reasoning, and having recovered the mind that is proper to a man. My anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I will visit the lambs. In these words, as I suppose, he calls shepherds the false prophets and false diviners, and the teachers of deceit, who have become a destruction and a snare to some who, having sinned against the true glory of God, have assigned the honor and worship due to him to creation, "and they worshipped the works of their own hands," as it is written.

It is not unreasonable also to join with the false diviners the famous orators of the Greeks, who, being excessively conceited in their eloquence, have led astray those who adhered to them, and like certain not good shepherds have pastured them on thorns and into the great worthlessness of rotten thoughts; for what among them is profitable for the knowledge of truth? Against these also would be the things from divine wrath, and very righteously; for they destroyed not only their own souls, but in addition to this also those of others. For they have led them astray, as I said, by the boastfulness of their diction, all but gilding over the lie and expending the use of speech on deceptions. Yet he visits the lambs, having compassion on them, clearly, and transferring them from deceit to the knowledge of the truth, and moving from being deceived into a straight path. For just as it was fitting for those who had wronged them to inflict the punishment appropriate to the wrongs; so again the philanthropic judgment for those who had suffered would in no way be deprived of God-befitting gentleness and a just vote. For it was necessary, it was necessary for the wronged to be saved, as God forgets wrongs and frees from punishment those who were subjected to their greed perhaps even unwillingly.

And the Lord God the almighty will visit his flock the house of Judah, and will set them as his comely horse in war, and from him he looked, and from him he appointed, and from him the bow in wrath, and from him every one that drives out will come forth in it. and they will be as warriors treading clay in the roads in war, and they will be drawn up for battle, because the Lord is with them. In what way He will bring upon the shepherds the things from wrath, but will visit and save the lambs, He makes clear. For having appointed from the Jews the mystagogues of the world, the holy apostles and evangelists, He contended through them against the wise men of the Greeks, and delivered the lambs from their babbling and, having freed them from the snares of deceit, transferred them to the true and

blameless knowledge of God. He will visit, therefore, it says, His flock, the house of Judah. And He will make it like a comely and most warlike horse, upon which, so to speak, being spiritually carried, He will wage war against the tongue of the Greeks, as I said, and will write down the uncomeliness and uselessness of the wisdom within them. For that in the dispersions of the Greeks the divine disciples became like certain horses, so to speak, neighing against their babbling and God-hated deceit, how could anyone doubt?

Christ saying concerning the blessed Paul to Ananias, "Go, for this man is a chosen vessel for me to bear my name before Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel. And Habakkuk also said somewhere as to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself that, "You will mount upon your horses and your riding is salvation. Therefore, He will set him, it says, "as a comely horse in war and from him He looked. Just as if one might say, As God He looked upon those fit for the ministry of the evangelical proclamations, and truly He made the chosen ones from Judah, and from him He appointed; for He chose them to be servants and ministers of His own will, and as it were mediators and deacons of the grace from Himself. And there is, it says, also from him, that is clearly from Judah, the bow drawn in wrath against the opponents. And from him again will come forth also he that drives out in it. And by "he that drives out," as I think, he means the one who plunders and takes captive. And the divine disciples also did this, seizing those from the Greeks, and bringing them to the great king, I mean Christ, so that they might be under Him, and choose to think His thoughts, having late and with difficulty shaken off the yoke of the devil's greed.

And the divine disciples thus prevailed over the wise among the Greeks, so that it now seemed as if they were trampling on clay scattered in the cross-roads. For the Lord was with them, who does "great and unsearchable things, glorious and wonderful, of which there is no number. And Christ also somewhere declared to those who believed in Him, "Behold I have given you to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. But it must be known that we, weaving a spiritual interpretation, say such things; but to the Jews the matter does not seem to be so, but they receive it rather historically, and say that after the times of the captivity Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes made war on them, having gathered a very great assembly of fighters from the land of the Greeks and indeed being puffed up by the auxiliary forces from them; but as they themselves say, Israel conquered, and

carried off the better glory from his wickedness. for then it has happened that even those from the Maccabees who were martyred have bound on the crown of good repute. And they adduce, as proof of what seems right to them, the things just now said by us, and moreover the things a little later, which are as follows:

"For I have bent you, Judah, for myself as a bow, I have filled Ephraim, and I will raise up your children, O Zion, against the children of the Greeks, and I will wield you like the sword of a warrior, and the Lord shall be over them, and His arrow shall go forth like lightning, and the Lord Almighty shall sound the trumpet, and shall go forth in the storm of His threat. The Lord Almighty will defend them. And the riders of horses shall be ashamed, and I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will cause them to dwell, because I have loved them. Again, those who agree with the Jewish narratives say that when the battle against the Greeks was joined, their horsemen perished, but those of the blood of Israel prevailed, so that they inhabited the country, that is, Judea, free from all fear, and with no one at all being taken away, that is, having become a captive. But we, striving to make the interpretation of the thoughts consistent with and a sister to the former, say that the shamed horse riders are none other than those who presided over the Greek dogmas, and who were accustomed to contend for the God-hated deceit, and with them being shattered, Judah has prevailed, and the house of Joseph has been saved.

And through these are signified the blood and race of Israel, that is, the multitude of those justified in Christ and bearing the Jew in mind and heart, and having received circumcision in the spirit, and having a mind that sees God; for so is Israel interpreted. And since they have been loved by God, for this reason they have also been made to dwell, that is, they have had a firm permanence in all the best things. For it is written that "The Lord makes the solitary to dwell in a house. And the divine Isaiah also said somewhere concerning the one who practices the exceptional life, "He who walks in righteousness, speaking a straight path, hating lawlessness and injustice, and keeping his hands from gifts, making his ears heavy that he may not hear a judgment of blood, shutting his eyes that he may not see injustice, this one shall dwell in a high cave of a strong rock. And it is not implausible to say that the Church, that is, the mansions above, has been given as a house by God to the saints; and indeed the blessed David deems the matter worthy of

all wonder, thus saying to the Savior and God of all, "Blessed are all who dwell in your house, they will praise you forever and ever. and again, "For one day in your courts is better than thousands; I have chosen to be an outcast in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tents of sinners.

And it shall be in the manner that I did not turn them away, because I am the Lord their God, and I will hearken to them, and they shall be as warriors of Ephraim. With the wise men among the Greeks, who were also named horsemen, having been put to shame, he promises to strengthen and cause to dwell those who have received mercy, adding "Because I have loved them. And what they will gain from being loved by God, he explains again. For just as, he says, I did not turn them away. For I did not completely overlook them, but I visited them when they were in danger, because I am the Lord their God; for not "the God of the Jews only," but also of the gentiles, as the Creator and Lord of all. For this reason, he says, I will also hearken to them, that is, I will make their supplications acceptable. and they shall be as warriors of Ephraim. This is similar to if he should say again, Those who were once, because of weakness of mind and heart, as it were paralyzed and lying down, will now be brought into such spiritual strength as to seem to be ranked as equals with those from Ephraim who were well-pleasing, that is, with the apostles and evangelists from the Jews.

For such men have become spiritual warriors, contending against enemies, striking down opponents, and conquering principalities, and powers and lordships, and the things spiritual hosts of wickedness, and conquering without a fight those who opposed the divine proclamations. And from the multitude of the Gentiles there have also been men called through faith to the knowledge of Christ, holy men and spirit-bearers, and as warriors of Ephraim; for they have become imitators, as far as possible, of the way of life of the apostles, and tracing their virtue, they themselves also have acted manfully against the enemies of truth and passions and sin. And their heart shall rejoice as with wine, and their children shall see it and be glad, and their heart shall rejoice in the Lord. The mind of those who have drunk wine is always somehow careless, and a despiser of care. For it does not admit that which is accustomed to cause grief, but is released, as it were, and scorns all anxiety. If therefore they should become, he says, as warriors of Ephraim, then indeed they shall receive gladness for themselves, and as brilliant and renowned men they will be made glad by the hope of good things to come,

and they will have imitators of their excellent way of life, namely, the sons born of them, spiritual sons, that is. Such also was the divine Paul, writing and saying to those called through him, "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. Therefore the children who will be from them shall see and be glad. For having come into contemplation of Christ, and having learned the power of the mystery, and been enlightened by the gifts of the Spirit, they will act rightly, and they will receive gladness in Christ the Savior Himself, and will make Him the joy and delight and exultation of soul and heart. And this would be a clear proof of choosing to live in a manner pleasing to God. For those who assign the inclination of their own mind to the affairs of the world, and have inclined toward baser things, rejoice in them, and make this their gladness, and are joyful in the pleasures of the flesh, and being accustomed to revel in the other luxuries of the present life, they consider the things of God to be of almost no account at all; but those who seek Him with their whole heart, and are enriched by contemplations of Him, and open wide the eye of their mind, will receive gladness in Him alone. I will signal to them and I will gather them, because I will redeem them, and they shall be multiplied as they were many; and I will sow them among the peoples, and those far away will remember Me, and they will raise their children and return.

He again remembers the flock of the Jews, and indeed He also promises to collect them who have been scattered, and to gather them from every land into Judea, so that absolutely no one is left behind. And in what manner the gathering will be, He indicates again. For they say that beekeepers make certain signs, either by whistling, or being accustomed to do certain other things, and so they collect the swarms of bees that have departed from the hives. And something of this kind has been said also through the voice of Isaiah, "And it shall be, he says, in that day that the Lord will whistle for the flies that are in the part of the river of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of the Assyrians. But others say, also in times of war, if it should happen that the combatants are scattered somehow, either pursuing or being pursued, a certain sign is raised on high by the generals, and looking to it, they are gathered together and come back to the same place. And something of this kind is also suggested by that which is found in the prophet Isaiah, "And it shall be as a mast upon a mountain, and as a standard bearer upon a hill.

Therefore from that which naturally occurs He takes the likeness. For I will signal to them, He says, and I will gather them.

For a great and glorious sign has been raised among us, the cross of the Savior, through which we have also become acceptable to God the Father, and indeed we have also been redeemed, and we who have believed have run forth into an innumerable multitude. But since He has added that and I will sow them among the peoples and those far from them will come and will remember me, again we say that, and not from of the purpose; for the word has much probability; for the divine disciples and the heralds of the divine gospels were scattered as it were among many nations and in every country and city, and prepared those who had become furthest from God on account of the intervening sin and error to remember Him, and to take into their mind the Savior and Creator of all, although they had long attached their worship to creation, and for that very reason had departed from intimacy with God. And so the divine Paul addressed those called through him to the knowledge of Christ, saying, "But now you who were once "far off have become near. They shall come, therefore, remembering God. And the blessed prophet Jeremiah hints at something of this sort to us, saying as to Israel, "You who are "far off, remember the Lord, and let Jerusalem come up "upon your heart.

And if indeed they remember God according to nature at all, then indeed they will advance to this spiritual strength, so as to become fathers of children, and to nourish their own children with words of piety, and to be proud of this very thing. And somewhere the divine Paul also writes to those nourished by him and who have ascended to a perfect man, and have come to the measure of the stature of that in Christ, at one time, "My joy and my crown," and at another time again, "I protest by your boasting, brethren, which I have "in Christ Jesus. "For the crown of old men are the children "of children, according to what is written; and the boast of children are their "fathers. And I will bring them back from the land of Egypt and I will gather them from the Assyrians, and I will bring them into Gilead and into Lebanon, and not one of them shall be left behind. When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Judaea by force, and the divine temple was burned, and Jerusalem itself, then all Israel suffered miserably. For some were carried away as captives to the Assyrians and Medes; but others, having escaped their cruelty and having been able to flee, and fearing and shrinking from being captured in the

same way, went as deserters to the Egyptians, and submitted to the yoke of servitude under them, an unwilling one, to be sure, but imposed by necessity.

Therefore, since he promised to gather them from everywhere, he also mentions the places to which they were carried away; some, having become captives, as I said, others being driven by unbearable fears to things contrary to their will. But since it is proper for those who are especially lovers of contemplation and spiritual to lay claim to the spiritual interpretation, we say that He promises to draw them out of the country, or rather the hand, of the invisible enemies, and to free them from every fear; and while they are captives, and as it were subject to others, to all but reshape them into freedom. Or also in another way he says that they will be delivered from darkness and confusion. For Egypt is interpreted as Darkness, and Babylon as Confusion. And the text often makes no distinction, reckoning Assyrians and Babylonians as one nation, because they were under one scepter, and one kingdom was established over them. Therefore, having been redeemed from the hand of the oppressors, he promises to bring them into Gilead; and this is the most fertile and fruitful portion of the land of the Jews; and also into Lebanon, and this is a great mountain, rich in timber, lying on the borders of the land of the Jews and Phoenicians. And through both of these, I suppose, that thing is signified.

For our Lord Jesus Christ, having delivered us as from Egypt and from the Assyrians, that is, from the oppression of those who took us captive—and these are wicked and unclean demons—has brought us into the Church, as into a land rich in timber and very fertile, in which the fruit of those who are well-pleasing is very abundant, and the heads of the saints are not easily numbered, and are lifted up on high through virtue, and have blossomed as in the rank of cedars, and concerning them could be said, and very appropriately, that through the voice of David to the God of all: "The cedars of Lebanon, which you planted." of God for the admirable Paul also clearly names those who have been justified in faith "a field. And they shall pass through a narrow sea, and shall strike the waves in the sea, and all the depths of the rivers shall be dried up, and all the insolence of the Assyrians shall be taken away, and the scepter of Egypt shall be removed, and I will strengthen them in the Lord their God, and in His name they shall boast, says the Lord. The promise of assistance to those who believe in Christ is made by way of a likeness to the things gifted to those of old. For just as Israel was brought across

the Red Sea, having overcome the waves in it; "for the waters were solidified as a wall," as God miraculously accomplished the deed;

and just as they crossed the Jordan on foot; so, he says, those called through Moses to the knowledge of Christ, and who have been saved anew by the initiations of the holy apostles, will pass through the tempest of this present life as if it were a certain sea wildly surging with waves, and having been removed from worldly turmoil, they will serve at their leisure the God who is God by nature. And they will also cross temptations, like certain flooding rivers, so that greatly rejoicing in this very thing they say, "If it had not been that the Lord was with us, let Israel now say, if it had not been that the Lord was with us, when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their wrath was kindled against us, then the water would have overwhelmed us, a torrent would have passed over our soul, then our soul would have passed through the irresistible water. And just as, he says, Israel, having become captive, and carried away to the Assyrians and the Medes, escaped their insolence or greed; for it was brought back again to Judea, and just as it shook off the greed of the Egyptians, who were always attached to them and accustomed to making war on them;

in the same way, he says, those redeemed through Christ will be stronger than their enemies, both visible and invisible, of course, who almost forced them into unwilling servitude, and held them as captives with bonds of their own foolishness. But they will be stronger than these as well, and they will escape the insolence and greed from them, with God strengthening them, in whom they will also boast. For we think great things in Christ, and we have made Him our strength, and we have taken courage in Him and have all the hopes of our own life. "For not an ambassador, not an angel, but the Lord Himself saved us. And as the blessed psalmist says, "Our God is a refuge and strength, a helper in the troubles that have found us exceedingly. Open your doors, O Lebanon, and let the fire devour your cedars. Let the pine tree howl, because the cedar has fallen, because the great nobles have been greatly afflicted; howl, you oaks of Bashan, because the dense forest has been cut down. He transfers, therefore, the declaration of what is being said to another path of thoughts.

And having made a very sufficient narrative concerning the calling of the Gentiles in Christ through faith, he clearly narrates in advance the future disobedience toward Him on the part of those of Israel, at the time of the

Incarnation, of course, and that for this reason both the temple itself and indeed also Jerusalem must be burned, and that the cities of Israel themselves must also be captured, and perish together with those who dwell in them. And these things were done by the hand of the Romans, when Vespasian and Titus were generals at the time. And it is superfluous, as it seems, to relate in detail each of the things that happened to the cities or peoples of the Jews, on account of their insolence toward Christ; it being possible for those who wish to encounter the writings of Josephus, to learn clearly in detail whatever they might choose. He transfers the discourse, then, to those of the blood of Israel. And he likens Judea to Lebanon; for what reason? For Lebanon is a mountain with good wood and is covered with extensive forests.

And the country of the Jews is also most populous, and has a multitude of inhabitants beyond number, and like cedars or the tallest pines, those more conspicuous than others, I mean both the priests and those of the tribe of Judah who were kings from time to time, who, having also been exalted by the boasts of their rule, were well-known to those throughout the whole land, and held their glory lifted high. But since they acted impiously against Christ; for they took away "the key of "knowledge, and neither entered themselves, nor allowed those who were entering "to enter," and finally they crucified him, although they knew that he is the heir; for this reason they have justly been utterly destroyed along with their houses and cities and dearest ones. Therefore, enigmatically, as I said, he calls Judea Lebanon; and he likens those in it to the tallest trees, as being exalted above the others and far surpassing them. That it was destined to be captured easily, and, as a city without gates, to receive the pouring in of the Roman army, and to be consumed in this way, as if a forest with a flame brought upon it, he indicates, saying, Open your doors, O Lebanon, and let fire devour your cedars; let the pine wail, because the cedar has fallen. And the word has indeed been made by metaphor. For having named Lebanon, that is, having likened the country of the Jews to a mountain, he necessarily likens those in it to pine and oak.

That the word is about men, is easy to see; for he said immediately that greatly the great ones have suffered. And what manner of suffering might be understood, he showed by saying in one place, that let the pine wail because the cedar has fallen. For as the Roman hand ravaged the cities in Judea, it happened daily that the illustrious ones in them were captured. And those

who had not yet suffered this, lamented the captured, and received the lamentation upon themselves, and were disheartened and terrified, as being about to suffer it themselves very soon indeed. This, I think, is what Let the pine wail, because the cedar has fallen signifies; indeed, he perhaps specifically calls the oaks of Bashan those in Jerusalem. For Bashan is a place in Judea, fertile and most fruitful, and it raises very tall trees. And since those in Jerusalem were better than the others, I mean the priests and the leaders of the peoples, he called them oaks of Bashan, who indeed have also lamented rightly, because of the tearing down of the kindred forest. For they learned that the multitude throughout the whole land, like a forest, has been consumed and, as it were, cut down by the axes of the enemies' savage attacks. And the kindred forest, which he says was torn down, you will understand to be no less than the multitude in Jerusalem itself; for they perished by both famine and war; while the oaks of Bashan, that is, the leaders, wailed for them.

A voice of shepherds wailing, because their majesty has suffered; a voice of lions roaring, because the pride of the Jordan has suffered. In these things, as I just said, he makes the declaration more manifest. For he no longer names pine or oak, but unveiled he signifies the teachers of the Jewish orders, whom he says lament, and as it were, raise their voices, bewailing that their majesty has suffered. For they have become pitiful and cast down, wretched and most dishonored, although formerly they had a more conspicuous glory. But since the shepherds through Christ were revealed, that is, the divine disciples, the majesty of the false shepherds has rightly suffered. For the Master of the flock accused them through the holy prophets, saying thus: "O shepherds who scatter and destroy the sheep "of their pasture. and again, "Because the shepherds became foolish "and did not seek the Lord; for this reason the whole pasture did not understand "and was scattered. And he promised to those who believe in him to reveal genuine shepherds, saying again thus: "And I will bring you to Zion, and I will give you "shepherds according to my heart, and they will shepherd you, "shepherding with knowledge. And who are these again? the divine disciples and the leaders of the churches from time to time, "rightly dividing the word of truth," and knowing how to bring the flocks under their hand to everything that contributes to spiritual benefit. Therefore the false shepherds have lamented, because their greatness has been afflicted;

and he signifies this also in another way, immediately adding: A voice of roaring lions, because the pride of the Jordan is ravaged. For roaring is properly the voice of wolves, which they would make, wailing on account of famine and starvation. But the divine scripture also accepts this for lions. Therefore, the leaders of the Jewish orders were detected as roaring lions, that is, hungering and wailing, on account of not having the fruit-offerings from the peoples, tithes, first-fruits, thank-offerings. For since they have fallen away from the flock, they no longer rejoiced in the fruits from it. But if someone should think that the scribes and Pharisees also roared against Christ as in the rank of lions; for they cried out against him, and they let loose voices out of envy and malice and unrestrained madness, calling him a Samaritan, calling him a drunkard and one born of fornication, and "Away, away, crucify him; he will think what is fitting even in this way. but even if they roared, they have been afflicted not moderately, and the pride of the Jordan has ceased. And what this is, I will say again. For the Jordan flows by Jericho, and very many lions are around it, roaring terribly and instilling an unbearable dread in the inhabitants. Such in their ways were the scribes and the Pharisees, roaring at the flocks, and terrifying the weaker ones with the fears from their authority. But the fear of the lions has been ravaged. And he says this is the pride of the Jordan.

And "phryagma" (pride/snorting) is the sound of horses and mules sent through the nostrils and coming out with a wild snort; but it is also taken for being high-minded. For indeed the divine David said concerning those who had acted insolently toward Christ, "Why did the nations rage, and the peoples plot in vain? Therefore, when he says "the pride of the Jordan," you will understand the mindset, and not entirely of the river, but of the lions around it; for sometimes things in places are signified by the places themselves. Thus says the Lord Almighty: Shepherd the sheep for the slaughter, which those who acquired them slaughtered and did not repent, and those who sold them said, "Blessed be the Lord, for we have become rich," and their shepherds did not suffer for them. The word is to them, the lamenting shepherds, and those roaring in the rank of lions, to whom he still permits to shepherd the sheep of slaughter, although they were exceedingly neglectful, so as not even to feel a little pain, so to speak, for those being sold and slaughtered. For just as the more unreasonable of shepherds, looking only to things for their own pleasure, caring very little for the master of the flock,

slaughter some fearlessly, imitating the attacks of wild beasts, and sell others, feeling, as I said, no pain at all, but exulting in the most extraordinary gains, and being overcome by such shameful love of profit;

in the same way, I think, the leaders of the Jewish peoples might also be caught, having shown no mercy for the flocks under them, and making their own wealth grow, and widening their purses as if with an insatiable hand. And indeed the Savior, reproving such men, said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: judgment and mercy and faith. For being so pedantic, so as even to rebuke down to the most trivial things those not bringing the tithes according to the law, they took absolutely no account of the weightier matters, that is, of the ordinances that were most necessary and profitable. And that they were not good shepherds, but rather looking only to profits, he will make clear, speaking also through the voice of Ezekiel: "O shepherds of Israel, do not do the shepherds feed themselves? Do not the "shepherds feed the sheep? Behold, you eat the milk "and clothe yourselves with the wool and you slaughter the fatling "and you feed on my sheep. Therefore, he says, you feed on the sheep of slaughter, that is, either those about to die by the hand of the Romans; or those that you yourselves slaughter, although holding the rank of shepherds. For the time is not yet at hand, in which they will come to slaughter.

For after the advent of the Savior, the multitude of the Jews was destroyed by the swords of the Romans, although God had been exceedingly long-suffering towards them. And that the people under their hand became the possession of the shepherds, he showed by saying, Those who possessed them slaughtered them and did not repent. For just as they made their own possession the spiritual vineyard, which was the master's, I mean Israel, or the man of Judah, the new plant, the beloved; so also they as good as took possession of the flocks, reaping the fruits from them, and always in some way making their possession from them in abundance, but abandoning them to those willing to plunder. Therefore, those who possessed them slaughtered them; and those who sold them said, Blessed be the Lord, for we have become rich. And these could also be understood as judges, who traffic in correctness in judgments, and all but bid farewell to the law through Moses, although it says clearly, "You shall not show partiality in judgment, for the judgment "is God's. For it was sweet and dear to them to sell the judgment on each matter

to those who were willing. And this will be clear to us again through the voice of the saints. For one of the holy prophets said concerning Jerusalem, "Her leaders judge for a bribe; but the divine Habakkuk as good as cried out to God, saying, "How "long, O Lord, shall I cry, and you will not hear?

I will cry out "to you, 'Violence!' and you will not save? Why have you shown me "troubles and caused me to look upon toils, misery and impiety? "Judgment is against me, and the judge takes bribes. For "this reason the law is scattered, and judgment is not brought to a conclusion, "because the wicked oppresses the righteous; for "this reason judgment will go forth perverted. Therefore, those who gather wealth from unjust gains, and perverting what is just, and selling, as it were, the judgments on each matter, would be the judges, as I just said. They also say, Blessed be the Lord, for we have become rich; but saying this most senselessly and most irrationally they would rightly be convicted. For they pretend to give thanks, as if God grants them to collect from injustices, and to grow rich from blood. But it were better to say that, having esteemed judging rightly: Blessed be the Lord, for we have been shown to be glorious and genuine guardians of the divine ordinances, bringing forth a right verdict on each matter. Therefore, fair speech is deceit and a blemish, if the things in which God would be pleased are not done by us. Therefore I will no longer spare the inhabitants of the land, says the Lord; and behold, I am delivering the men, each into the hands of his neighbor and into the hands of his king, and they shall smite the land, and I will not deliver them from their hand.

And I will feed the sheep of slaughter in the land of Canaan. He threatens the flocks with destruction together with exile and the disasters of war, because although it was possible for them to run under the hand of the chief shepherd of all, I mean Christ, and to be under him, they have instead ignorantly attached themselves to those who both slaughter and sell them. For the Only-begotten Word of God became man, and indeed he spoke clearly, pointing out both their awkwardness and the genuineness of the economy for us, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life "for the sheep; but the hireling and "he who is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees "the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; "and the wolf snatches them and scatters them; because he is a hireling, "and does not care about the sheep. I am "the the good shepherd. But the wretched Jews, although it was necessary to cry out against the hired shepherds, have not done

this, but the good shepherd, who lays down his own soul as a ransom for the life of all, they have grieved in countless ways, stoning, reviling, and finally, opening a boundless mouth against him. For they have cried out together with their own teachers, saying to Pilate, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him," and they have even drawn the righteous blood upon their own heads. For they said again, "His blood be on us and on our children.

For this reason, therefore, he says, I will no longer spare the inhabitants of the land. For they are no longer deemed worthy of sparing from God; but rather each has been given into the hands of his neighbor and into the hands of a king, that is, his ruler. For they crucified Emmanuel, and have become slayers of the Lord, and full of all unholiness. Nevertheless, God called them to repentance, and did not immediately inflict the things of wrath. But when the thirtieth year had already passed, after the cross of the Savior, peace departed from the land of the Jews, and there were wars everywhere, city going against city, and those in each were divided into factions, and fighting one another, so that the things happening among themselves appeared an equal evil to those from the war. For the bravest of the Roman generals have taken possession of the land of the Jews, and burning cities with their men, they have subjected it to the yokes of slavery. But those who were able to escape have inhabited the lands of the nations, which can be seen even to this day. And I think this is what it means when it says, I will shepherd the sheep for slaughter into the land of Canaan, that is, into the country and land of the Canaanites. The Canaanites are the nations, among whom the sheep for slaughter are somehow still shepherded by God even to this day, that is, they seem to be shepherded.

For they observe some of the things according to the law, and one would not see them as having completely neglected their ancient customs. And indeed they circumcise the flesh, and keep the Sabbath, and consider certain other things besides these worthy of care and consideration. And this was, then, what was said by God through the voice of the prophet, "And I will be to them a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall enter. But the civil wars throughout all Judea, and indeed in Jerusalem, and the things in each city, he who chronicled the tragedies of the Jews has clearly written down; this was Josephus, an eloquent and wise man. And I will take for myself two rods: the one I called Beauty, and the other I called a Cord, and I will shepherd the sheep. In many ways for us in the divinely inspired scriptures

the rod is understood. For sometimes it signifies the kingdom, as when it is said to Christ, "A rod of uprightness is the rod of your kingdom; and sometimes strength, as in the saying, "The Lord will send forth the rod of power out of Zion; and you shall rule in the midst of your enemies; and sometimes it is taken for instruction and the pastoral science; indeed it has been said again through the voice of a prophet to the Son, "Shepherd your people with your rod, the flock of your inheritance.

But in the present context the rods signify for us methods of pastoral science, and a twofold form of instruction, according to what seems blameless. And the chief shepherd of all, "he who laid down his life for the sheep," that is, Christ, receives the rods, in order to shepherd his own sheep with them. For of old; that is, even before the times of the incarnation; being God and lawgiver, the Word from God the Father was tending Israel, using as it were one rod, the instruction according to the law. For he said somewhere through the voice of a prophet to him, "I shepherded you in the desert. But when he became man like us, he receives two rods. For he divides, as it were, his own worshippers, those clearly justified through faith, and sanctified in the Spirit, both by legal and evangelical decrees, not persuading to sacrifice oxen, nor indeed teaching to adhere to the offerings according to the law; but rather having commanded that the power of worship in the Spirit be made in the manner of a bloodless sacrifice. For the shadow has been transferred to the truth, and the things in types have been re-characterized into the refinement of the polity that is in Christ and of the Gospel. And the names for the staffs: for the one, Beauty, which is the new covenant, beautiful and admirable, of which the Son Himself spoke, "You are beautiful in your loveliness beyond the sons of men;

the other, indeed, was Cord, that is, a portion, so that we may understand the law, the cord set apart for God, which was accustomed to instruct. For it is written that, "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, and Jacob his people became the Lord's portion; Israel was the cord of his inheritance. With these two staffs, therefore, the great chief shepherd promises to tend his own sheep, and the word is true. For he gathered into one fold both those from Israel and indeed those from the Gentiles, setting before them for their delight both legal and evangelical instruction, and supplying a certain spiritual pasture for their partak-

ing, and richly fattening the souls of the saints. And I will cut off the three shepherds in one month, and my soul will be grieved with them, for their souls also roared against me. And I said, "I will not shepherd you; what is dying, let it die, and what is failing, let it fail, and let the rest devour, each one the flesh of his neighbor. For when the true and good shepherd had already been revealed, it was indeed very likely, or rather now also necessary, for the hirelings and false shepherds, that is, the teachers of the Jews according to the law, to be removed from the midst;

of whom some "slaughtered the sheep and did not repent," while others, "selling them, said, 'Blessed is the Lord, and we have become rich.'" Then why, one might say, does he call them three shepherds, and in what way are they cut off, as he says, in one month? Come, let us speak, setting forth what is from the holy scriptures for belief. I think, therefore, that he names three shepherds: those who served as priests according to the law, and those appointed as judges of the people, and in addition to these, the introducers of the letters, or the lawyers. For these, as it were, fed upon Israel. And those who had the glory of the priesthood were from the tribe of Levi alone, and concerning them Moses said, "The lips of a priest will guard judgment, and they will seek the law from his mouth; but those who were allotted the authority to judge, they too were chosen, yet they were appointed from every tribe; and in the same way, I think, the introducers of letters, that is, as I just said, the lawyers, always attended upon those appointed to judge, bringing the letters of the law for proof in each matter. That, therefore, as I said, the priests of the divine altars were from the tribe of Levi alone, would require no argument for proof.

But that the judges were also chosen from every tribe, as men learned in the law, the blessed Moses will confirm, saying in Deuteronomy to the sons of Israel, "You shall appoint for yourself judges and introducers of letters in all your cities which the Lord your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment; they shall not pervert judgment, they shall not show partiality, nor shall they take bribes; for bribes blind the eyes of the wise and subvert the words of the righteous. Moreover, Moses came to say such things and to command that they be fulfilled, following, admittedly, divine and secret commands, but not dishonoring the counsel of Jethro, who was also his father-in-law; for it is written that, "And it came to pass on the morrow that Moses sat down to judge the

people, and all the people stood by Moses from morning until evening; and when Jethro saw all that he was doing for the people, he says, 'What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you sit "alone, and all the people stand by you from morning until "evening?"' Then when Moses said that, for the sake of judging justly and lawfully, he chose to undertake this labor, Jethro said again, "Now therefore listen to me and "I will give you counsel, and God shall be with you.

Be "you for the people in things pertaining to God, and you shall bring their "words to God, and you shall testify to them the ordinances "of God and his law, and you shall show "them the ways in which they shall walk and the "works that they shall do. And for yourself look out from all "the people able men, God-fearing, just men, "hating arrogance, and you shall set them over "them. Then what does the sacred scripture say? "And Moses "listened to his father-in-law and did all that he said to him, "and Moses chose able men from all "Israel, and made them over them rulers of thousands and "rulers of hundreds and rulers of fifties and rulers of tens, and "they judged the people at all times; every difficult matter "they brought to Moses, but every light matter they judged "themselves. There were, then, three kinds of shepherds: priests and judges and those skilled in the legal writings, that is, the lawyers. And we will find our Lord Jesus Christ himself denouncing separately the Pharisees and scribes and lawyers. For he would say, "Woe to you, scribes "and Pharisees. And as he said these things, one of the lawyers approached him, saying, "Teacher, in saying these things you insult us "also. But he said, it says, "Woe to you lawyers also, "for you load people with burdens hard to bear, and "you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.

I know, therefore, that the kings who ruled from time to time in Jerusalem from the tribe of Judah also fulfilled the role of shepherds for the peoples under their hand. But since at the birth of Christ the line of kings had failed, that is, it had been cast out from the leadership; for at that time Judea was ruled by Herod, the son of Antipater, an Ascalonite, and Pontius Pilate; we have necessarily been silent about those from the tribe of Judah. For that they had failed at the birth of Christ, the scripture will confirm: "A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a "leader from his loins, until he comes for whom it is reserved, "and He shall be the expectation of the nations. Therefore, since the expectation of the nations had now arrived and been born, that is Christ, a ruler from Judah and a leader from his loins has neces-

sarily failed. Three shepherds, therefore, as I said, priests and judges and teachers of the law, who also remained in their own offices, that is, in their ranks and places, even up to the times of the visitation. These are also removed, and very justly, in one month. For since they killed the author of life, for this reason they are also cut off, and as it were in the month of new things, in which Emmanuel endured the slaughter for us.

For they remained administering Israel even after the cross of the Savior, while the God who rules over all was still being long-suffering and having pity on them, and calling them to repentance; but we say that they were removed, so to speak, according to the decree made by God for this purpose, at that time when, as I said, they handed over the Savior and redeemer of all to the cross. They were removed, therefore, in one month. And so much for the shepherds; but as for the flock, the judgment is this: I will not shepherd you, and this: that if they chose, they would devour and bite one another, and without any mercy would crush and consume. For since they were cast out of the divine fold, and were not deemed worthy of the mercy of the chief shepherd of all, they both devoured one another, and were given as a most ready prey to those who wished to plunder them. And he said, very fittingly, concerning the three shepherds who were also removed in one month, that my soul shall be weighed down over them, that is, I will bring a heavy judgment upon them, because their souls also roared against me. for being no different from wild beasts, they leaped upon very often to Christ, and finally they brought him to Pilate, saying "Away with him, away with him, crucify him."

And he remembers this also through the voice of Jeremiah, saying "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; she has uttered her voice against me, therefore I have hated her. And I will take my beautiful staff, and I will cast it away to break my covenant which I made with all the peoples; and it shall be broken in that day, and the Canaanites, the sheep that are kept, shall know that it is the word of the Lord. He calls the staff beautiful, meaning the instruction through the evangelical mystery, which is exceptional in its beauty, clearly, the spiritual beauty. But to say that he would both cast away and scatter it would likely signify not that he would send it away and disperse it, doing away with it, that is, destroying it as useless; far from it; but I would say

rather that we ought to understand the following. For those who are accustomed to watch over flocks, if they should see one of the sheep leap away from the flock, and get as far away as possible from the others, then they certainly cast the staff at it, and immediately drive it back to choose to flock with the others. The word of the prophecy, therefore, has observed the custom in the shepherds' skill.

For he says that the beautiful staff will be cast away, that is, it will be sent even to those who are furthest away, clearly, to the Gentiles, for they were the ones far off, but they have become near through faith. And he says that the staff will be cast away in such a way that it will be scattered throughout all the earth, that is, be distributed, and the word concerning Christ, that is, the evangelical preaching, seem as it were to be scattered everywhere. For he says it will be scattered in that day, that is, at that time in which Christ, having trampled the power of death, would live again, and say to the holy apostles "Go" and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. For then the word of our Savior went about all the earth under heaven; and it is accurate to say concerning the holy apostles that "Their sound went out into all the earth, "and their words to the ends of the world. And that the casting away and scattering over the earth, that is, the distribution in their own lands of the beautiful staff, which is the covenant that he no longer made with Israel alone but rather with all the nations, was not without profit for the Gentiles, we may observe, and very effortlessly, by understanding the word of the prophecy;

for he says, the Canaanites, the sheep that are kept, shall know that it is the word of the Lord. For he calls the Gentiles Canaanites. And these may be understood as the sheep that are kept. For they have been kept for Christ, for he himself is the expectation of the nations. And since the covenant with all was scattered also in their own lands, they have believed that he is the Word of the Lord. For we who are called from the Gentiles have been disposed through faith, that the Only-begotten Word of God, being God and having been begotten of God according to nature and existing, has himself through himself addressed to us the divine and evangelical laws. Therefore we have worshipped him, and we serve him, having put aside that ancient and inglorious deceit, and having been transferred from the opinion of many gods. And this, then, was what was sung to him through the voice of David "All

the nations you have made "will come and worship before you, O Lord. "For "at the name of Jesus Christ every knee should bow, of things in "heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue "should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of "God the Father. And I will say to them, If it is good in your sight, give me my wages, or refuse. And they weighed out my wages, thirty pieces of silver.

And the Lord said to me, Drop them into the furnace, and see if it is approved, in the way that I was approved for them. And they took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them into the house of the Lord, into the furnace. Through the evangelical decrees, that is, through the beautiful staff, that is to say, of the excellent instruction, we have been taught the mystery of the economy in the flesh of the Only-Begotten. For we have heard and have believed, that being God, as I said, the "Word" from God the Father, "became flesh and dwelt among us," and came down also in the form of a servant, and being in the form and in equality with the one who begot him, became "obedient unto death, even death on a cross; and "though he was rich, he became poor for our sakes, that we through his poverty might become rich. For he delivered us from the bonds of death, he freed us from sin, he made us sons of God; and what good thing has he not bestowed? And in addition to these things we have known that we were also bought with a price; "not with perishable things, with silver or gold; but with the precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, Christ," and so then we owe our own life to him.

For if "One died for all, then all died" in him, and we ought to live no longer for ourselves, according to the probable and right reason, but rather "for him who died for us and was raised. And for this reason he says, If it is good in your sight; it is clear that this means the mystery of the economy in the flesh; if you have been saved through him and have acted rightly, and have known me as Savior and redeemer, and the one who endured death for the life of all, give me my wages, having set them, that is, having determined them, or refuse. But those from the nations are grateful. For they set the wage, in no way equal, but somehow resembling what we have received from him. For just as he died for us, so we also have laid down our lives for sincerity and love toward him; and it would be fitting for the holy martyrs to say, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? For nothing has

overcome the courage of the saints. Therefore, the likeness of the things that have come to us from Christ is somehow shown, by the saying that thirty pieces of silver were given to him as a wage. For the traitor and truly most abominable and God-hated Judas, having taken thirty denarii, betrayed Christ to his murderers, and has sold the author of our salvation to the sinners.

But thirty pieces of silver were brought by the nations to him as a wage, which also are cast by God's command into the furnace, being very well tested, just as Christ himself was tested for us. For our faith will not be unexamined by the God who knows all things; nor indeed our life untested; but as the blessed Paul says, "the fire itself will test what sort of work each one has done. And it is also written concerning Christ that, "Suddenly the Lord whom you seek will come to his temple, and the angel of the covenant whom you desire; behold, he is coming, says the Lord Almighty. And who will endure the day of his coming? Or who will stand when he appears? For he enters like a refiner's fire and like the fuller's soap, and he will sit refining and purifying as silver and as gold. And the divine David also sings somewhere, as from the person of everyone who has believed in Christ and wishes to live according to the Gospel, "Test me, O Lord, and try me, test my reins and my heart by fire. But that the furnace is in the house of the Lord, the Prophet says. For the Church of Christ tests the character of each person and the genuineness of his love for Christ, and "having the discernment of spirits," it knows precisely who speaks in the Holy Spirit, calling Jesus Lord, and who indeed in Beelzebul, calling him accursed;

and who are "the true worshippers," and who, on the other hand, are "wolves" coming to us "in sheep's clothing. And I cast away the second staff, the rope, to scatter the covenant between Judah and between Israel. He said Christ would take two staffs, and so would pasture with them his own sheep, clearly meaning the holy multitude of those called through faith. and we said the beautiful staff was discipline, that is, the evangelical proclamation; but the other, that is, the cord, the commandment through Moses, as given to the cord assigned to God, that is, to Israel, for a help, according to the prophet's voice, "For he says he has given a law for a help. Therefore, that the multitude of the nations was to be instructed not only by the evangelical teachings, but also by the commandments given of old and through Moses—the shadow in the law clearly being transformed into truth—he makes

evident through what is set before us. For just as he said the beautiful staff was cast off and scattered—for the evangelical discipline was sown, as it were, in the lands of the Canaanites, being carried about, of course, by the holy apostles—so also the other staff, or discipline, that is, the cord, or the law, which was placed by God in the order of a covenant between Judah and between Israel, that is, of the entire race of Israel;

for by Judah he names the two tribes in Jerusalem, I mean Judah itself and Benjamin, but by Israel the other ten, who were settled in Samaria along with Jeroboam; so then the law has been given also to those from Canaan; for we are initiated, as I said, by both legal and evangelical ordinances. For this reason Christ also 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, until heaven and earth pass away, "not one jot or one tittle will pass from the Law "until all is accomplished. For he fulfills the law by teaching what is beyond the law, and not placing the one being instructed outside the law, as for instance in saying, "You have heard "that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders "will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is "angry with his brother without cause, will be liable to judgment. And again, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I "say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust, "has already committed adultery with her in his heart. For "You shall not murder" is perfected in refraining even from anger, which is the root and origin of murder.

And by not admitting desires at all, that is, by punishing pleasures, the practice of adultery is surely done away with, just as we say that when the roots are damaged, the shoots from them wither away with them, or rather, they would not spring up at all.

Book 5

And the Lord said to me, Take for yourself again the equipment of a shepherd of an unskilled one, because behold, I am raising up a shepherd over the land; he will not look after the one that is perishing, nor seek the one that is scattered, nor heal the one that is broken, nor guide the one that is whole, but he will devour the flesh of the choice ones and tear off their hoofs. When the good shepherd, wise and knowledgeable, that is, Christ, cast off and scattered the two staffs in the lands of the Canaanites, in the ways already previously explained; some have known that it is the Word of the Lord. For

they have believed, as I said, that although the Word who is from him and in him was ineffably begotten by God the Father, since he became as we are, and has been named chief shepherd of all, he set forth to them for initiation and for accurate knowledge of the mystery concerning himself, both the evangelic- al instruction and illumination, and indeed also the legal one. For we said that these were the two rods, by which Christ shepherds us "in good pasture and in a rich place" as it is written.

But the Jews, not understanding the mystery, and being ignorant of the good rod, that is, the evangelical proclamation, and in addition to these dishonoring the other rod, whose name is Cord, that is, the law through Moses, did not accept the faith, and are ignorant of the one foretold through the law and the prophets; and the Savior himself clearly said this to them: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you, Moses, in whom you have hoped. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? It is therefore in no way debatable that they have believed neither the writings of Moses, nor indeed the words of the Savior. But since they did not receive the knowledge of the truth, for this reason, as the most wise Paul says, "God will send them a strong delusion, so that they may believe the lie; and he says that the antichrist is the working of error, to whom the Jews, having attached themselves, will be condemned. And the Savior will confirm it, saying to them who have chosen to disobey, "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

That the Jews, therefore, were going to readily receive the son of lawlessness who had appeared in due time, "who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God," him who does not know how to shepherd correctly and skillfully, God commands the Prophet to prefigure, saying thus: Take for yourself again the equipment of a foolish shepherd. For the most gentle of shepherds, and those knowledgeable in the tasks at hand, have slender rods, so that if there should be an occasion for striking, the one being struck might not be shattered. But if someone should be one of those who does not know the business, and is situated as far as possible from the science of shepherding, he crushes them with the thickest clubs. And these, I think, are the pastoral implements of the foolish shepherd. But

since in due time the son of lawlessness, clothed in royal honor, was destined to appear to be shown in the rank of a shepherd to those on earth; yet deeming the people under his hand, or even those outside his hand, worthy of no mercy, for this reason he says: Behold, I am raising up a shepherd on the earth, who will not visit the perishing. It is as if he were saying: The one who has slipped into little faith, he would not strengthen with initiations;

the scattered he will not seek, that is, he says, the one that has wandered from the straight path, and is accustomed to leap away from the flock, he will not seek, that is, he would not convert it to what is better and right. The broken he will not heal. And one is broken, either being overcome by evil pleasure, and as it were not bearing the weight of the love of the flesh; or rather, having been carried away by the deceits of the unholy heretics, and not having a sound mind for the necessity of believing rightly. This again the good shepherd heals, but the foolish one no longer. He will not guide the sound one, but he will even devour the flesh of the chosen, and will dislocate their ankles. For the son of lawlessness will war against the saints, and unleashing his unrestrained anger upon them, he will all but cut up and devour their flesh like a wild beast. And he will dislocate their ankles, so that no one may be able to walk uprightly; for he will compel them to worship him, striking them with awe by his wonders. For he has "his coming in the activity of Satan," and in Beelzebul he will perform "wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect," and as the Savior says, "No flesh would have been saved," while his greed rages against all; "but for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short.

"For the Lord will slay him with the spirit, and will destroy him "with the manifestation of His coming. O you who shepherd vanities, and you who have abandoned the sheep, a sword upon his arm and upon his right eye; his arm shall be completely withered, and his right eye shall be completely blinded. The word having once been spoken concerning the worthless shepherd, he all but scowls, then, at the shepherds who are not good, and uses, in a way, a most general discourse, proclaiming in advance the things that will happen to those of such a mind. For observe how, as if they are already paying the penalties for their laziness, he perhaps even feels compassion because of his innate gentleness, and he accuses them, on the one hand, that they have become shepherds of vanities, that is, caretakers of temporary things, and so lazy as to rejoice over the sheep that have miserably perished. For

those who sold them said "Blessed is the Lord, and we have become rich; and they slaughtered them and felt nothing for them; for of the need to shepherd rightly there was no account at all among them. Such were the leaders of the Jews, shutting up the kingdom of heaven, as Christ says, and neither entering themselves, nor allowing others to enter; but traversing "the sea and the dry land, in order to "make one proselyte, and if he becomes one, making "him a son of Gehenna twofold more than yourselves. What then will happen to such evil shepherds?

A sword, he says, upon his arm and upon his right eye. And the arm is taken to signify both power and a type of spiritual energy. And indeed, even of the animals being slaughtered in the holy tabernacle, the arm was a choice part for the divine altar and a sacred offering to God; the law, I think, indicating through a riddle that one must dedicate one's own strength, both physical and spiritual, to God. But that the arm signifies power, one of the saints will confirm, having addressed the God of all: "By the greatness "of your arm let them be turned to stone. And the eye is taken as a type of the mind. Therefore, he who does not shepherd rightly will suffer the maiming of both arm and eye, that is, he will be destitute of spiritual strength. For he will not be able to accomplish any of the good things if God does not strengthen him; and he will be darkened in mind, being and being considered devoid of the divine light. For he will not be able to say with boldness, "For you will light my lamp, O Lord; my God, you will enlighten "my darkness. And it is the right arm that is cut with the sword, and indeed the eye that is blinded. For there is nothing right among the peoples of the Jews, no good deed, no strength in these things, nothing from the divine light for the mind and heart.

For as Paul says, "To this day, whenever "Moses is read, a veil lies upon their heart. And David also somewhere sings concerning them, "Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see. Therefore, all things among them are left-handed, whether you speak of conduct, or thought, or anything else believed to be present. For the removal of the left-handed things would, I know, benefit those who endure it; for the rejection of left-handedness would release them from every cause and blame. But the putting away of right-handed things would injure them not moderately; for it leads in every way to the most shameful and abominable things. But for the Jews, it would be fitting, and very likely, to be in a state of deprivation of right-handed

things; but for us who are in Christ, to be in a state of rejection of left-handedness, and to take pride in right-handed things. An oracle of the word of the Lord concerning Israel, says the Lord, who stretches out heaven, and lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him. Having made a very sufficient narrative concerning, I say, the good shepherd, that is Christ, and moreover concerning the worthless and most cruel shepherd who devours the sheep; and this we say is the antichrist; he usefully also mentions the persecutions that will be from time to time against Israel; and not of course, of the one according to the flesh, or rather of the spiritual;

and of the truly holy Jerusalem, "which is the church of the living God. For just as we say there is a spiritual Jew, the one having a circumcision in the heart, which is by the Spirit, and not at all the one in the flesh by the letter; so also one might say that Israel is understood, not at all as the one from the blood of Israel, but rather that one who has a mind seeing God. Such rather are all those who through faith in Christ have been called to sanctification, having known through him and in him God the Father. For this is the one sure and excellent way of seeing God. Therefore, the word is taken for the Israel just mentioned by us. And that the Creator of all is all-powerful, who makes for us the prediction concerning these things, he reveals, saying: Stretching out heaven, and founding the earth, and forming the spirit of man within him. For, he says, God who is all-powerful receives the oracle of the word against Israel, "stretching out the heaven like a curtain," according to the voice of the psalmist, and having made the earth so very firm, so as to have it unshaken always and forever, although founded upon the seas; for thus the divinely inspired scripture said. he himself who forms the spirit of man within him. And how could the creator and craftsman of such great things not accomplish what seems good to him without toil and very easily?

But the spirit of man is formed by God in him, not being called into the beginnings of existence, even though it came to be through him, but as if being transformed, from weakness to power, from cowardice to patience, and simply being changed spiritually from the more shameful things to the better. And the divine David also sings somewhere, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within my inward parts. And surely one would not say, if he had any sense, that he wishes to receive a heart or a spirit, as if not having one from the beginning; but he would rather suppose he is asking for a clean heart and a right spirit to be created in him. And this

is the transformation. And it is a custom for the holy prophets, if they are about to make a prediction of no contemptible matters, to try to show beforehand the God of all as all-powerful and most mighty, so that their word might in every way have certainty for faith, even if they should say something beyond hope, and which, as far as our thoughts are concerned, is beyond reason and disbelieved. Behold, I make Jerusalem like a threshold being shaken for all the peoples round about, and in Judea there shall be a siege against Jerusalem. And it shall be in that day that I will make Jerusalem a stone trodden down by all the nations;

every one who tramples it down will mockingly be mocked, and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered against it. In the things already announced, the war against Judea that was to be by the army of the Romans was clearly spoken of. And so he said, "A voice of wailing shepherds, because their greatness is laid waste; and after other things again, "For this reason I will no longer spare the inhabitants of the land, says the Lord; and behold, I am delivering the men, each into the hands of his neighbor and into the hands of his king. And they will cut down the land, and I will not deliver them out of their hand. But in the present matters, he clearly foretells the persecutions that have happened against the Church. For they have warred against those who have believed in Christ; for before all others, the leaders of the synagogue of the Jews, commanding the holy apostles not to speak in the name of Christ, flogging them also in the councils, arranging for them to be stoned, and what of the most unholy things were they not doing and saying?

But since the word concerning Christ had also gone out into the countries of the nations, and those in them had become hearers of the evangelical preachings, other persecutions again have happened through those who held power at various times and in various places who, of the profane and abominable idolatry eager to transform themselves and having become ministers of diabolical impiety, have killed the saints, calling them to the contests for martyrdom. And somehow the Church seemed to suffer easily, with no one defending her, and to resemble shaken and falling gateways, or even a stone trodden underfoot. For although the Savior of all is powerful and could easily quell every war, or rather, even remove it entirely from those who worship him, and make them superior to every temptation and to the overpowering hand of their enemies, he allowed them providentially to be made glorious through sufferings, so that having become conformed to him, they might be

glorified with him and reign with him. For if we suffer with him, "we shall also "reign with him," according to what is written, and if we are "partakers of the sufferings," so also shall we be of the glory. Behold, therefore, he says, I make Jerusalem like a shaken gateway. And if this should happen, and the encirclement, that is, the siege by all, were placed around her, and when she seemed to be like a stone trodden underfoot, then everyone who mocks is mocked.

And this has been done, as I just said, in the persecutions from time to time. For they attacked the saints, tormenting them in many ways, and perhaps the wretches even smiled upon them as they were dying. For they did not know, as is likely, the glory that comes from suffering, and that the labor would certainly lead to their everlasting joy. See, then, how he says it is not the work of the strength of the nations that the Church will be trodden underfoot, but of his own will allowing it, as I said, for his own worshippers to be perfected through sufferings. For behold, he says, I make Jerusalem like a shaken gateway for all the peoples round about. Similar to this, I think, is that which was very clearly spoken by the voice of the Savior to Pilate: "You would have no "authority against me at all, unless it had been given to you "from above. And the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, the Church, might reasonably say in turn to the persecuting world: You would have no authority against me at all, unless it had been given to you from above. On that day, says the Lord Almighty, I will strike every horse with bewilderment and its rider with madness; but upon the house of Judah I will open my eyes, and I will strike all the horses of the peoples with blindness.

That he will quell every war, and render the attacks of the persecutors ineffective, he gives us to understand by saying he will strike both horse and rider with bewilderment and madness and indeed with blindness. And I think that to suffer bewilderment is the same as to endure madness. For to be out of one's mind would be understood as bewilderment, and very reasonably so. When this has happened and has befallen the murderers, it will certainly be left for the saints to say concerning those who fought against them: "Our "enemies are foolish," and indeed: "Some in chariots and "some in horses, but we will be magnified in the name of the Lord our God. "They were entangled and fell, "but we have risen and stand upright. And in another way he who impiously attacks the forbearance of the saints might go mad, and he will endure an unexpected bewilderment, or rather, amazement, having

seen that they conquer in adversities, and are crowned when they fall, and even if they seem to be defeated, then indeed they prevail all the more; if indeed it is true, that in their very suffering they are seen as glorious, and with the greatness of their labors they have the accompanying grace from above. Then how would the blessed martyrs not astonish those who fought them, conquering even Satan himself, and rebuking wicked and unclean spirits; instilling great wonder at their inherent glory, sometimes even in those who had killed them?

Therefore, he promises to strike both rider and horse together, so that we may understand the phalanxes of the enemies, arrayed against the gentleness of the saints. But upon the house of Judah, he said he would open his eyes. and Judah in these things, the one from the root of Jesse and He names Christ as the one who appeared from the tribe of Judah; and his house, the Church, that is, the holy multitude of those justified in faith. But the opening of the eyes I think means this, that He will look very abundantly and as it were with a whole gaze; and this would be a clear sign of His benevolence towards them and indeed of His mercy and love. For it is written, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous. And upon whomsoever He might look, these He declares thrice-blessed in every way, if it is possible to say without falsehood, that He punishes the insolent and the sinner with turnings away, but He gladdens the pious and virtue-loving with His visitations. And so the divine David, making clear both the loss from the turning away and the gain from the visitation, at one time said, "Turn not thy face away from me, and do not "turn away in anger from thy servant; and at another time again, "Look upon me and have mercy on me. For wrath and the things that result from it will certainly follow the turnings away; but in His looking upon is the necessity of receiving mercy.

And all the chiliarchs of Judah shall say in their hearts, We shall find for ourselves those dwelling in Jerusalem in the Lord almighty, their God. We say that the chiliarchs of Judah are named the holy apostles, those who have been ordained as it were in the rank of generals by Christ, and have been appointed to lead Judah, that is, those called to confession and praise. For Judah is interpreted as praise. And these would be all those from the nations, to whom the divine psalmist also commands that they must glorify Emmanuel, saying in spirit, "Bless "our God, O nations, and make the voice of his praise to be heard. Judah, therefore, in these matters, are those called through faith

to praise and confession; and the chiliarchs are those set over them, the commanders and leaders, the divine disciples. So it is possible to see them, as to certain soldiers, crying out to the worshipers of the Savior and saying, "Stand therefore, having girded your loins "with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness," and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel "of peace, in all things taking up the shield of faith, "with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts "of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, "and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And that we must be seen as glorious and accomplishing a reputable life, the divine Paul also said, "Through the "weapons of righteousness on the right hand and on the left," and in addition to these things, he pointed out as it were the phalanxes of the adversaries, saying, "For the rest, be strong in "Christ and in the power of His might. For "our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the "principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of "this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the "heavenly places. The chiliarchs, therefore, and very fittingly, are the divine disciples, who, he says, will also say in their hearts, We shall find for ourselves those dwelling in Jerusalem in the Lord almighty, their God. For the divine disciples desired to see the truly holy Jerusalem, that is, the Church, filled with worshipers, and like some illustrious and famous city to be greatly dignified by a populous multitude of inhabitants. And so they proclaimed the faith, they evangelized Jesus, sealing their words with signs and wonders. Yet they did not persuade Israel; for it remained hard and unbending and like a horse that has thrown its rider. For this reason, then, they sought for themselves those who inhabit the holy city in the Lord almighty, their God, that is, in Christ, and indeed they turned to the nations, exclaiming to the peoples of the Jews, "It was necessary "that the word of God should be spoken first to you;

but since you thrust "it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal "life, behold, we turn to the nations, for thus "God has commanded" us. From there they sought the citizens of the Church, of which the divine David also makes mention, saying, "Glorious things have been spoken of you, O city of God. And having sought, they have become rich, and they have gathered a multitude beyond number, and indeed they say to the holy city, "Enlarge the place of your tent and of your curtains, fix them, do not spare,

lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes, spread out still to the right and to the left. And she rejoices in the multitude of those who dwell in her, and all but marveling at the assembly of her own children, she says, "But I was childless and a widow, who has borne me these? and where were these for me? In that day I will make the captains of Judah like a firebrand among wood and like a torch of fire in stubble, and they will devour all the peoples round about, on the right and on the left. By "captains of Judah," as I have already said before, he calls the holy apostles, or even simply all the leaders of the holy churches; and he said that the word from them, that is, the mystagogy, would so overpower the heart of the nations, that it would seem like a firebrand had fallen upon wood, and a torch into easily flammable stubble.

For "they will devour," he says, "all the peoples on the right and on the left round about," that is, wherever they might wish to go, in every way and by all means they will prevail there, calling them to understanding and, as with a divine and spiritual fire, warming those who have grown cold. The God of all said something like this also to the blessed prophet Jeremiah: "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth as fire, and this people as wood, and it will devour them," instead of "He will call to understanding those who have grown cold in sin, and will make them fervent again in spirit. For the heart of those who are astray has grown cold, and their mind is dead, worshipping "the creation rather than the creator" God, and offering veneration to wood and stones. But when they receive the divine word, they are made, as I said, fervent in spirit, ardent for righteousness; for we have been baptized, as the divine John says, "with the Holy Spirit and with fire," the spiritual fire, which is accustomed to consume, like some rubbish, the sin that dwells in our souls and to melt away the filth of the love of the flesh. Indeed, it was said to someone through the voice of Isaiah, "Because you have coals of fire, sit upon them, these will be a help to you;

and indeed he himself also says concerning himself, "And one of the Seraphim was sent to me, and in his hand he had a coal of fire, which he had taken with tongs from the altar, and he touched my mouth and said, 'Behold, this has touched your lips, and will take away your iniquities, and will cleanse your sins.'" saying that the coal is, in all likelihood, the divine and most holy Christ who melts away sin. Therefore the divine disciples have become like a firebrand among wood and like torches of fire in stubble, and have devoured the nations round about; yet not consuming them to destruc-

tion, but rather burning up the foul and profane dogmas of the falsely-named knowledge within them, and melting away the filth of the ancient deceit, and not allowing the mind of those who have once believed to grow cold any longer toward unprofitable and vain counsels, so that they leap up within themselves, saying to Christ the Savior of all, "Your word is exceedingly refined, and your servant has loved it. For that the word of God is fervent and very sharp would be clear from his saying to Jeremiah, "Are not my words like a burning fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock? For the all-powerful Word of God possesses, and very aptly, the ability to rekindle a mind grown cold in sin, and to easily unfold one that has, as it were, hardened and become compressed;

for it is "living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of of soul and spirit, of joints "and of marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intentions "of the heart; and it has been said somewhere also through the voice of prophets to the harsh and unyielding Jew, "Be circumcised to our God, "and take away the hardness of your hearts, O men "of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. "Rend "your hearts and not your garments. And Jerusalem shall yet dwell by itself, and the Lord will save the tents of Judah as from the beginning, so that the boast of the house of David and the pride of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not be magnified against Judah. He says that the Church will not always be in turmoil, nor indeed endure endless persecutions; but will be at rest at times, and will dwell by itself, that is, alone, with no one disturbing it, no one bringing affliction, no one inflicting terror, no one heaping up the despondencies from temptations; for the Lord will save the tents of Judah as from the beginning. For the Lord of all, clearly Christ, will thus defend His own churches, that is His own tents, as to bestow on them a care equal to that formerly granted to those of Israel who were redeemed from Egypt.

For the God of all brought Israel out of the house of bondage, and "from the iron "furnace," as it is written, and from unbearable greed, "with a mighty hand and with an outstretched "arm," when He also "drowned the pursuers in the Red "Sea; the deep covered them, and they sank like lead "in the mighty water; and the redeemed were brought across. A pillar of fire led them by night, showing the way, and a cloud also hung over them by day. Then they ate bread from heaven, escaped the bites of serpents in the wilderness, were stronger than their enemies, were brought across the Jordan, were

circumcised with stone knives, and entered the land of promise. These things Christ will grant to those who seek His tents, that is, the Church; thus He will also save them, having freed them from the bondage under the devil, I mean, and having delivered them from demonic greed, having brought them as if through a sea of the distractions and vain turmoil in this world, having set Himself up for them as a brilliant pillar and foundation, illuminating those in darkness, and like a cloud watering with intelligible dews; and having become for them also the bread of life, having rendered the bites of the intelligible serpents ineffective and inert, and having brought them across the Jordan, and showing them to be clean through circumcision by the Spirit, and bringing them also into the kingdom of heaven.

These things He will grant to His own worshippers, and He will save them in certain ways such as these, so that the boast of the house of David, that is, the leaders of the Jews, may not be magnified; nor indeed may there be pride, that is, occasions for pride, for the inhabitants of the perceptible and earthly Jerusalem against Judah. For they were haughty and looked down excessively on those who had believed in Christ, and against Immanuel Himself, putting forward high and low the things granted through Moses to the ancients, and alleging the mercy bestowed upon their fathers. And so at one time they were saying, "What sign then do you perform, that we may see and believe you? What do you do? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness," as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat; and at another time again, "We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he is from. Therefore, the God of all will work wonders for us too, even if not visibly, just as He certainly did then, but at least intelligibly, and thus He will save us who are in His own tents, so that the Jews, that is, their leaders, may not be haughty against us. For I think this is what the boast of the house of David signifies. And it shall be in that day that the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem;

and the one who is weak among them in that day shall be as the house of David, and the house of David shall be as the house of God, as the angel of the Lord before them. "With the shield of good will for us" God and Father has crowned us. For He has given us His own Son as a defender and champion, through whom we have also been saved, easily escaping every temptation; and being accustomed to triumph over the war from enemies and the brutishness of persecutors. But in the present matters something of this sort is

indeed indicated, though one might perceive the meaning to be overshadowed by much obscurity. For the God of all said that He would defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and not rather those who sojourn in it. And admittedly, Jerusalem in these passages is understood to be the Church of Christ. He sojourns in it who is not very secure, but is, as it were, shaken and easily carried away to what is not right, or is otherwise lazy in the love of learning; but he, on the other hand, dwells in it who is firm and established in the love that is for Christ, and always devoted to the benefits from the divine teachings, so as to be able to say in the words of David, "How sweet are your words to my throat, more than "honey and the honeycomb to my mouth.

He will defend, therefore, he says, the inhabitants, and the one who is weak among them in that day will be as the house of David. And we say that by the house of David in these passages is meant the most honored among the Jews. For from the tribe of Judah, from which came Jesse and David, they ruled from time to time in Jerusalem. But by the weak one from among the inhabitants of the holy city, the spiritual Jerusalem, which is the Church, he perhaps means the one who is still a catechumen, who has not yet been baptized, but is still sick, as it were, weighed down by the burden of sin, and has not been delivered from his old infirmities, that is, passions. But even being in this state, because he has only believed, and has departed from the shadow of the law, and has fully inclined to choose to fulfill the life in the spirit and the glories of the life in Christ, he will be, he says, as the house of David, that is, in no way inferior in understanding to the wise and most honored among the Jews. The most wise Paul also alludes to something of this sort, when speaking to the Jewish people. For he spoke thus: "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what "the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law, "they who show the work of the law written on their "hearts.

And again: "For circumcision indeed is of value, "if you practice the law; but if you are a transgressor of the law, your "circumcision has become uncircumcision. So, if a man who is uncircumcised "keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision "be counted as circumcision? Then he who is physically "uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and "circumcision but are a transgressor of the law. For no one is a Jew "who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and phys-

ical, "but a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by "the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man "but from God. Therefore, the one who has rejected circumcision in the flesh as obsolete, but has rather loved that which is in the spirit, and who bears about the inward Jew, "whose praise is not "from men, but from God," how is he not better and in no way inferior to the experts in the law and the most honored among the Jews, even if he happens to have a remnant of weakness, as not yet having been baptized? For by the sound part of his own heart, that is, by faith, he will in every way differ from the one who does not accept the faith.

But if one of those from the house of David, that is, of the illustrious and most honored among them, should accept the faith and, understanding very well the mystery of Christ, become His worshipper, this man will be both as the house of God and as an angel of the Lord before them. The Savior Himself is also found saying something of this sort; for He said that "Therefore every scribe who "has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master "of a house, who brings out of his treasure "new things and old. For the one who already has treasured up within himself the knowledge of the law, if he should also receive the knowledge of the gospel, will be rich in understanding, contemplating new things and old, just as from storehouses, setting before those who love learning; what sort of man the divine Paul was, at one time attempting to establish the word concerning Christ with legal proofs; at another, also with initiations beyond the law, in a way compelling his hearers to choose to be glorified in faith in him. For at one time he would say "Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But he who was of the slave woman was born according to the flesh, and he of the free woman through promise; which things are an allegory;

for these are the two covenants, one from Mount Sinai, which gives birth to slavery, which is Hagar; for Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother; and at another time, concerning the Son, "Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high. Do you understand, then, how with old and new teachings

at the same time he benefits the souls of those being initiated? Therefore, he says, the house of David shall be as the house of God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication: and they shall look upon me. My purpose, he says, will be to destroy all the nations that have fought against the holy city, that is, the Church; but to surround with grace and compassion the house of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that is, the citizens of the Church, and those numbered among those who ought to give praise;

and these would again be those who worship Christ, and who have chosen to follow the evangelical decrees, achieving a glorious and blameless life. For that the enemies of the truth were destined to fail in their cowardice in every way, the Savior himself will make clear, saying: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And by gates of Hades, he says, he means those who wish to persecute it, being like destructive and ruinous forces, and accustomed to bring down to the pit of Hades those attached to them. Therefore they will indeed grow weak, or rather they will even be destroyed, who have warred against her, and they will go to destruction. "For many indeed are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord will deliver them out of them all. and it is true that "All who desire to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted. But Christ renders the plots of those who conspire against them useless and ineffective, and even their attempts, who has given "us authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy," and encourages us, saying, "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. Therefore, those who from time to time rise up against the Church are removed, but upon those in it, that is, those who have believed, is poured out abundantly a spirit of grace and compassion.

For God the Father crowns us with good things from above, and fills us with spiritual gifts, so that raising the eye of our mind to him, we might have all our hope in him. For this, I think, is the meaning of "they shall look upon me. And being so disposed, we rejoice in ourselves, and then we say, glorifying God: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from corruption, who crowns you with mercy and compassion, who satisfies your desire with good

things. Because of those whom they have mocked, they shall make a lamentation for them, as for a beloved one, and they shall be in sorrow, as for a firstborn. The Hebrew version begins of the preceding chapter, the phrase "And they shall look upon me"; but it does not agree with the tradition and interpretation of the Seventy. For the Hebrews say, "They shall see," instead of "They shall look upon," and instead of "They have insulted," "Him whom they pierced. However, we do not say that either the Hebrews' or the Seventy's version misses the mark; for the Jews insulted Christ, and in addition to this, they also "pierced" him. For Pilate's soldiers pierced his side, as it is written. Therefore, we rightly apply this saying to the person of Christ.

But we say that this is what it means to declare, "They shall look on him whom they pierced," that is, whom they insulted, "and they shall mourn for him as for a beloved one, and they shall grieve with a grief as for a firstborn. For having nailed the divine temple to the wood, the crucifiers stood around, impiously mocking. For some were saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself. and others again, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. But when he had laid down his own life for us, and had preached to the spirits in Hades, and had come back to life, an earthquake having occurred, those who were watching by the monument were astonished, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God. And there was great repentance among many. But when the war of the Romans also fell upon them, their country being laid waste, and cities burned, and houses deserted, and Jerusalem itself being already besieged, and famine wasting them from within, some were with difficulty called to an awareness of their audacities against Christ, and they knew at last the causes of their suffering, and that their impieties against him had become the pretext for their suffering. Therefore, since they insulted him, "they shall mourn for him as for a beloved one, and they shall grieve with a grief as for a firstborn.

For indeed an unbearable tear is always shed by parents for a firstborn and beloved son lying dead, and beatings and lamentations that do not cease completely, but surely a long and, as it were, continuous grief, wasting the soul with certain sharp and unbearable assaults. And that the Jews were about to come to the experience of such evils, Christ foretold, rebuking the women weeping for him and saying, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. In that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be great, like the mourning for a pomegranate grove being

cut down in a plain, and the land will mourn, tribe by tribe; a tribe by itself, and their women by themselves; the tribe of the house of David by itself, and their women by themselves; the tribe of the house of Nathan by itself, and their women by themselves; the tribe of the house of Levi by itself, and their women by themselves; the tribe of Simeon by itself, and their women by themselves. All the tribes that are left, a tribe by itself, and their women by themselves. When all of Judea was being laid waste at times by the Roman army, and Jerusalem itself was being besieged, he says that the mourning among those in it will be such as a farmer would make for a pomegranate grove being cut down. For the plant is beautiful, and sends up many straight and very tall branches from the root.

And if indeed it is also adorned with its fruits, then especially it is held in great admiration. For the pomegranate is a lovely thing, excelling in natural beauty and hanging from the shoots, and having the appearance of its rind reddened by the seeds within. But it is a terrible and grievous thing, as I said, for the plant to be cut down together with its fruits. But one could see something like this happening to the Jews. For as far as the honors from the law were concerned, the prominent among them could rightly be compared to fruitful pomegranate trees; for those from the tribe of Judah, administering the thrones of the kingdom, were held among them as an inheritance of renown, and those from the tribe of Levi, very well crowned with the glories of the priesthood, were both splendid and famous; but what could I say judges and lawyers and those resplendent with other honors? But since they have behaved insolently toward Christ, they have been given to their enemies, with Vespasian and Titus ravaging their country, and Jerusalem being besieged, and everyone in it perishing from famine, everything was filled with lamentation and wailing. Josephus will also bear witness, for in composing the books of the **Jewish War**, he said somewhere concerning Jerusalem in these very words: "Wailings were everywhere throughout the city, and piercing shrieks, and commanded lamentation. And just as he called it Lebanon and a forest, saying, "Open your doors, O Lebanon, and let the fire devour your cedars.

Let the pine howl, because the cedar "has fallen, because the mighty are mightily distressed; howl, "you oaks of Bashan, because the dense "forest has been cut down; so also he calls it a pomegranate grove being cut down. And the divine John will also confirm the account, having addressed the people of

the Jews: "And now also the axe "is laid to the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not "produce good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire," "and is burned. Therefore, he says, the wailing in it will be so great, such as would be the wailing for a pomegranate grove, its fruit clearly having blossomed and being cut down unexpectedly. And the land shall mourn, tribe by tribe, and their women by themselves. And we do not say that the blessed Prophet means to indicate that the male part in each tribe stood separately, and the female part in turn separately, and they will make their wailing; for, as it seems, the matter is superfluous and ill-advised; but rather he teaches that each tribe with its women will have its own particular cause for lamentation. For this reason he says that the tribe of the house of David by itself and their women by themselves. And now let us speak, as we can, of the sorrow of each. For those from the tribe of David, that is, of Judah, falling from the kingdom, will lament uncontrollably, as being deprived of such conspicuous glory;

while those of Levi, being cast out from the honors of the priesthood, will make their wailing together with their wives. And those from the tribe of Nathan; now this was a prophet, and not entirely true; they will mourn again. For it was no longer possible for them to prophesy unjust things and to speak from their own heart, and to sell their own words to the foolish as if from God, and to collect shameful gains from it. And tradition has it, that the Jews received the judges appointed from time to time from the tribe of Simeon, as it had the most intelligent and law-learned men, and far superior to the others in choosing to live lawfully. For this reason he says that the tribe of Simeon will mourn by itself. And their lamentation is also a particular one. For they did not judge rightly, nor indeed, yielding to the divine laws, did they strive to accomplish what was pleasing to God, but were rather avaricious and most corruptible, and as the prophet says, "Her "judges are like wolves of Arabia. And it was somehow necessary for the other tribes to mourn with them, since they were being cast out from their most pleasant customs and places, and rather, with death itself hanging over their heads, as the sword of the enemy and famine itself arrived. In that day every place shall be opened in the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem both for removal and for sprinkling.

He runs over in his account the things that will happen again after this "to those "who have loved the appearance" of Christ. For those who have be-

come insolent through disobedience, he says, will be in sieges, and will lament over their own evils. But in the spiritual and holy Jerusalem in truth, and in the house of David, that is, the Church of Christ who appeared from the seed of David according to the flesh, every place will be opened, that is, a certain great spaciousness and as it were a relaxed way of life, most desired and most effortless. It must be known that the Hebrews again have rendered the saying differently. For instead of **Every place shall be opened**, that there will be a spring they themselves said was gushing forth. And it is very likely, and that the purpose of the interpretation of the Seventy tends toward this very thing, even if the manner of the pronunciation of the words were otherwise, so that the meaning might be something of this sort. For the disobedient and stubborn Jerusalem, the wicked and apostate one, "who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her," will pay penalties corresponding to her own audacious deeds; for she will be cut down like a pomegranate tree.

But for those who dwell in the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, the house of Judah, which is Christ's, every place will be opened, that is, in every place a fountain gushing forth the water of purification, clearly that of holy baptism, so that it is useful for believers both for removal and for sprinkling. And what is the removal? For the Jews, from the legal discipline to the life in Christ, from shadow to truth, from type and letter to spiritual worship; and for the Greeks there is a removal for those coming from unbelief to believing in Christ, from their former ignorance to a pure knowledge of the truly existing God, from darkness to illumination; and a common removal, fitting henceforth for everyone called through faith, both Jew and Greek; from minding the things of the flesh to choosing to live holily and purely, and to walk in the Spirit, according to the voice of the blessed Paul; from honoring the things in the world to loving the things beyond the world. And that by receiving the divine and holy baptism we are sprinkled with the blood of Christ for the cleansing of sin, how could anyone doubt? Therefore, the way for removal and for sprinkling for those in the house of Judah is the saving baptism, that is, every place being opened, or every fountain being widened and gushing forth the water of purification.

And it shall be in that day, says the Lord, I will destroy the names of the idols from the land, and there shall be no more remembrance of them; and I will remove the false prophets and the unclean spirit from the land. All things have changed for the better in Christ, and the things in him are a

new creation, having cast off the blemish of the ancient decay. And one might see that the word on this matter is accurate, if one wished, even from the facts themselves. For before the times of the visitation, when the Only-begotten had not yet become as we are, nor yet was illuminating all things with the divine light, there was still mist and darkness in the hearts of the nations. For they served idols, and had sunk into such ill counsel as to offer reverence to wood and stones, and to attach to unclean demons the honors due to God.

And these were the crimes of the folly of those who were led astray, but among Israel, who was both chosen and "the Lord's portion," according to what is written, and the "line of his inheritance," there was such a corruption of character and ways, that the Law was deemed of little account, though it had been given to them for assistance and was not incapable of instructing them on the necessity of living rightly, but they rather inclined to the necessity of foolishly being carried away with the errors of the nations and slipping into the superstitions of their neighbors. For they were attached, and very excessively, to the divinations of the false prophets. For the worshipers of idols, having settled in profane precincts, were both oracle-mongers and speakers of falsehoods; while others, having "The Lord lives" on their tongue, and pretending to be pious, and as it were concealing the wolf with a sheep's skin, these wretched ones put upon themselves the name of prophecy, and unholily seizing the glory for this, they would blurt out whatever they pleased, and said that the thoughts of their own heart were the divine will. Concerning those accustomed to dare such things, the prophet Jeremiah also said to the God who holds power over all things, "O Sovereign Lord, behold their prophets prophesy and say, 'You will not see a sword, and famine will not be among us, for I will give truth and peace upon the land and in the in this place.

And to these things God "The prophets, He says, prophesy lies in my "name. I did not send them, nor did I command them, nor "did I speak to them, because they prophesy to you false visions "and divinations and omens and the preferences of their own heart, they "prophesy to you" and again "I did not send the "prophets, and they ran; nor did I speak to them, "and they prophesied. For they were liars, as I said, and, overcome by shameful gains, they spoke to their hearers things "from their own heart, as it is written, and not "from the mouth of the Lord. Then, although the Jews ought to have

been indignant at these things, they did the opposite, making them venerable and striving to crown them with the highest honors. But when at last the Only-begotten Word of God appeared to us, the frigid and childish toys of idolatry were entirely gone and utterly destroyed, and along with it was taken away the outlandish and impious practice of the false prophets, who were filled with an evil and unclean spirit, and would be detected, and quite rightly, as suffering from a delusion that was sister and neighbor to that of the idol-worshippers. For the overseer of the impiety of both is one, that is, Satan.

Therefore, He says, I will remove from the earth the names of the idols and there will be no remembrance of them in that day, that is, at that time when the divine and heavenly light shall shine, and the spiritual morning star shall rise in the hearts of those who were deceived, according to what is written, and the day shall dawn, the old night and the things done in it having been driven away; so that, with the ancient impurity removed, the true and holy worshippers might at last appear, having taken up the boasts of a holy way of life and honoring the life in Christ. And it shall be, if a man prophesies any more, that his father and his mother who bore him will say to him, 'You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the Lord.' And his father and his mother who bore him shall bind him when he prophesies. So great, he says, will be the reverence for the divine among the people of that time, and they will so care for the utmost decency and an admirable life, that even parents themselves will be sharpened against their own children, if they should choose to emulate the liars, pretending to prophesy, and should utter something from their own hearts as if God had spoken.

For 'they will bind him,' he says, that is, they will tie him up as one out of his mind and mad, and without any delay, they will even sentence him to death, if he should make his disease on this point persistent and shameless. For it is enough for them for the necessity of determining the child's entire punishment that he has spoken lies in the name of the Lord. But consider how true the saying is, and what certainty for belief the prophecy holds. For who among us in the present time would tolerate someone prophesying? Or how would one not immediately consider such a person to be out of his mind, and how would one not make him hateful for being of such an opinion? And what father would leave a child unrebuked, if he were caught in

such terrible offenses? This, I think, would be a proof, and a very clear one, that we must firmly believe that the nature of our affairs has changed much for the better, with God refashioning it to what seems good to Him and to what is well, than before. And indeed, the things formerly honored and admirable to many are now hateful and accursed and not tolerable to the decent, and not lacking the need to be punished. And it shall be in that day that the prophets will be put to shame, each one from his vision when he prophesies, and they will put on a hairy cloak because of the lies they told.

And he will say, 'I am not a prophet, because a man begot me from my youth.' And I will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your hands?' And he will say, 'Those with which I was struck in the house of my beloved.' That the things once marveled at are considered by us worthy of penalty and justice, and from the meaning of the things set forth, it is easy to see. For, as I said, the false-speaking and deceiving ones prophesied in Israel, and were accustomed to lead astray "for a handful of barley and a piece of bread" according to what is written. Then when they dared such things, no one rebuked them, nor wished to restrain them as those who had chosen to be impious, but rather the wretched ones deemed it right to crown them with praises and the highest honors. For this reason they also went to the worse, as the disease was nourished in them, as it were, through the frivolity of those who admired them.

But in the present time he says they will be put to shame, clearly because their false prophecy is not accepted, but rather is rebuked, and from those who are accustomed to dare such things, penalties are exacted for their folly, so that having been convicted they might immediately abstain from evil, and put on a garment of hair for the lies they told, that is, to mourn for the evil and to lament over their transgression, repenting, because they had slipped into such ignorance of reasoning as to speak falsely against God, but blushing not at all to confess their sin and ask for forgiveness, saying clearly I am not a prophet, for a man begot me from my youth, that is, I have become the child of a man. But nature is very weak and quite easily led astray to what is not right, and somehow more ready for sins. Such would be the voices of those repenting. But if I should wish to ask him, he says, What is this matter of the wounds or stripes seen in your hands? he will answer again that I was struck with them in the house of my beloved, clearly his father and mother having bound his feet and exacted penalties for his rashness. For

the beloved house for each of us is that of our parents. See, therefore, how great a difference there is between the affairs of old and of now.

For the false prophets among them were admired, and were held in glory and good esteem, and doing these things they did not even repent; but in the present time, if some should ever choose to follow their madnesses, they are rebuked, they are put to shame, they are punished by the judgments of their parents, they repent as having sinned and they mourn and weep, they ask forgiveness, confessing the weakness of human nature and its proneness to slip into sin. For "the unclean spirit" has been "taken away from the earth," by the power and authority of our Savior Jesus Christ. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man who is his fellow, says the Lord Almighty, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will bring my hand upon the shepherds. God the Father has given his own Son for us, allowing him by his economy, although he was God and ineffably begotten from him according to nature, both to come in the form of a servant, and to become a man like us, and to endure a cross, that he might save the world and remove Satan from his ascendancy over all, and destroy profane idolatry, and abolish divinations, false prophecies and deceptions from the heart, and take away "the unclean spirit from the earth," and in addition to these things, that he might conquer the world under heaven, transferring the deluded to the knowledge of God, persuading them to choose a pious and seemly way of life, and to be seen honoring every form of virtue. Therefore for this cause he willingly endured death on the cross, although it was exceedingly ignominious, "despising the shame," as it also seemed good to God the Father. And the Son himself reveals something of this sort to us, saying, "Because I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him 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 it up on the last day. For as the divine Paul writes, "For this reason Christ died and lived, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

He therefore willingly laid down for our soul, and all but delivering Him up as a man by the proper will of God the Father, and, as it were, permitting, as I said, that with precious blood He purchase the life of all. And so the Savior replied to Pilate, who thought he had authority over Him, saying, "You would have no authority over Me at all, unless it had been given you from above. Having then foretold through the voice of the Prophet that there

would be a very great change of human affairs for the better when He suffered death in the flesh, He all but hastens the manifestation of the time when these things would be, and has commanded the mystery of the passion to be enacted, enjoining and saying to the sword itself, "Awake against my shepherd and against the man who is his fellow," says the Lord Almighty. And we say that 'sword' in these words signifies the temptation, as a type of a knife, or even the suffering itself brought upon Emmanuel by the madness of the Jews. For the righteous Simeon seems to have understood and even spoken thus, when the holy virgin brought Jesus at eight days old, "And a sword will pierce through your own soul also. For she was all but slain by a sword, seeing the one born of her, I mean according to the flesh, being crucified.

O sword, then, 'awake,' he says, 'against my shepherd,' that is, let the saving passion now be enacted, and let the time for the manifestation of good things come. For Christ has been set over us as chief shepherd, and under Him are all of us who have believed, yet not outside the hand of God the Father. For He rules over us in the Son, and through Him and in Him we have been saved and have received access. And so the Savior said, "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 will 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 the Father's hand. I and the Father are one. The Son, therefore, is the proper shepherd of God the Father, not pasturing another's flock, but rather His own and the Father's, not understood as one of the hireling shepherds, who used to slaughter the sheep, all mercy being removed, 'and selling them they said, "Blessed be the Lord, for we have become rich."' Moreover, the citizens, that is, the household and acquaintances of the good shepherd, are those appointed under him, and before all others the divine disciples, who, when the shepherd was struck, were scattered and fled.

For when the officers of the Jews arrived, and with them the traitor along with the cohort to seize Jesus, 'they all left him and fled.' For thus the evangelical text says. And that God the Father, by giving His own Son to death for us, is said to have struck Him in a way, by permitting Him to suffer at all, the Son Himself will confirm, speaking through the voice of the psalmist concerning those who committed impious acts against Him, clearly the Jews, "For they persecuted him whom you had struck, and they added to the pain

of my wounds. Add iniquity to their iniquity. He made His suffering voluntary, then, as I said, so that the achievements resulting from His suffering might be revealed. But that this matter would be a cause of destruction for those who crucified Him, and that the leaders of such a plan and of these undertakings would be subjected to evils from divine wrath—and these were the leaders of the peoples—He makes clear by saying, 'And I will bring my hand against the shepherds.' For "they have destroyed His vineyard," according to the voice of the prophet, "they have made His desirable portion into an impassable wilderness, it has become a desolation of destruction. Moreover, God brings His hand upon the shepherds, as if striking with the sword, and demanding penalties for their impiety, not only because they themselves behaved outrageously toward Christ, but because in addition to this they also became the beginning for others and a path of unrestrained madness.

For as the blessed evangelist Matthew says, when Pilate had set before the Jews both Christ and Barabbas, and had addressed them with, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you," "the chief priests and the elders persuaded the "crowds that they should ask for Barabbas, but that they should destroy "Jesus; and they further persuaded them to shout, "Crucify, "crucify him. Therefore, what was said through the voice of the prophet is true: "For the shepherds have become foolish, and have not sought the "Lord; therefore all their flock did not understand, and they were scattered. For just as the vigilance of good shepherds benefits the flock, so negligence corrupts it, and what is under their hand completely follows in the footsteps of the shepherds. And it shall be in that day, says the Lord, that two parts shall be utterly destroyed and shall fail, but the third shall be left in it; and I will bring the third part through fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and I will test them as gold is tested; he will call on my name, and I will listen to him, and I will say, This is my people, and he will say, The Lord is my God.

When the divine hand has been brought upon the unholy false shepherds, who have corrupted the Lord's vineyard, he says that not even those who most unwisely collaborated in their unholy schemes will be outside of punishment and judgment, that is, clearly, the peoples of the Jews and the common multitude under their hand. For they have been consumed by war, and the cities have been utterly destroyed along with their inhabitants, and the villages with their men, being burned in utter destruction, and the remnant

has barely been saved, understood as a third part of the whole multitude, for Israel has not been completely destroyed, since God has had mercy on account of the fathers. The blessed Isaiah himself also says this: "And if the Lord of Sabaoth had not "left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have been made "like Gomorrah. However, the third part, that is, the remnant, namely those who have believed from the blood of Israel, he says he will bring through fire, and refine them like silver and gold. For the life of the saints is not without hardship; and it is true that "All who desire to live godly in Christ "will be persecuted. And the divine disciples have appeared most tested, and all who became their co-workers at that time, and labored with them as they ministered the gospel of Christ to the nations.

For they were called to the trial of many afflictions and persecutions, and were, so to speak, refined, being tested through trials, so as to be able to say with confidence, "For you have tested us, O God; you have refined us as silver is refined. What then is the benefit from this? Or what will be the reward for those who have so labored and been tested? They have become members of the household of God, known and beloved. For they were reckoned as "a holy nation, a royal priesthood, "and a people for his own possession, that they might proclaim the excellencies "of him who called them out of darkness into his marvelous "light," who once were not a people, but have become a people. And once they used to hear, "When you stretch out your hands to me, "I will turn my eyes away from you; and if you multiply "your prayer, I will not listen to you; but now he says that he will call on my name and I will listen to him and I will say, This is my people. Therefore they have become the own inheritance of God the Father, and have been given to the Son; for he rules over all things together with the one who begot him; and they have the Creator and Master of all things as benevolent and gracious.

Book 6

Behold, the days of the Lord are coming, and your spoils will be divided in you, and I will gather all the nations to war against Jerusalem, and the city shall be captured and their houses will be plundered, and their women will be defiled, and half of the city will go forth into captivity. Declaring the revered and salvific passion on the cross, he said a little before "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, says "the Lord Almighty, strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. that the multitude of the Jews will be subjected to the most extreme punishments,

and quite reasonably; for the all-daring one has committed deicide. he taught, adding "And I will bring my hand upon the shepherds, and "it shall be in that day, says the Lord, that two parts "shall be destroyed and shall fail, but the third part I will bring through "fire, and I will try them as silver is tried, "and I will test them as gold is tested. In what manner such things might be understood, we have also spoken, not outside of what is reasonable, at least as far as is possible. And now the purpose of the present matters is turned towards Jerusalem, which acted impiously without restraint, and it signifies to us the manner of its capture. For behold, he says, the days of the Lord are coming, that is, which he himself brings by a just vote and a holy judgment.

For it is true what he also says through another prophet, "Shall there be evil in a city, which the Lord has not done. For nothing could happen of those things that are able to harm a whole city, which we say is not done without his permission, and his willingness to demand penalties for transgressions from those who rush to evil deeds with unrestrained impulses. Therefore he says the days are his, because they are brought on by his wrath. For they have no longer behaved insolently in a tolerable manner, having killed the prophets, and adding to these also the Son. And what will be in those days, he clarifies, saying And your spoils shall be divided in the midst of you, clearly with all the nations gathered together and plundering the houses, and dragging away women along with infants. For then indeed, he says, half of the city will go forth into captivity. For they say that the Romans, having taken the city, and having disregarded the shamelessness of those fighting against them, burned down both the temple itself and the houses of the city. But they spared those of the inhabitants of the upper city and the temple who fell at their feet. But see how he says the victors will arrive at such a point of audacity, that having plundered the houses, they would not immediately depart with the spoils, and make the division at leisure when they had arrived at their own tents;

but would do this in the captured city itself, which would not have happened at all if there was anyone helping those who had fared miserably and fighting against the plunderers. And he says the women will be defiled, unwillingly being dragged off to others and falling from the customs of modesty, and often in the sight of those to whom they were lawfully married. Such are the sufferings of war, and calamities fitting for those who have

once been captured and are entirely without help. But the remnant of my people shall not be utterly destroyed from the city. This, I think, is nothing other than what I just said, that there was some sparing of the inhabitants of the upper city, and a part of Jerusalem was saved. For the Roman generals checked the fury of the combatants, if indeed they saw any weeping and falling down and approaching without a fight. Either, therefore, he calls those in the saved part of the city the remnant of his people; or perhaps those who have believed in Christ the Savior of all, concerning whom he also says, that they would not be destroyed from the city. For they will always be citizens of the Church, even if they fall away from the earthly and destroyed Jerusalem, but they have the city above, about which the divine Paul also writes "But the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother" of us all.

And the blessed David also seems to hint at something of this kind, saying somewhere as follows "He that dwells in Jerusalem shall not be moved for ever. For if the Church is unshakable, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," according to the Savior's voice; for it has him as its foundation; it is in every way necessary that henceforth those be seen as superior to destruction inhabiting it, and accounted as the people of God, numbered with the true. And the Lord shall go forth and shall set his battle array against those nations, as his day of battle array in the day of war. and his feet shall stand in that day on the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall be split, half of it toward the east, and half of it toward the sea, a very great chasm; and half of the mountain shall incline toward the north, and half of it toward the south; and the valley of my mountains shall be blocked up, and the valley of the mountains shall be joined on to Asael, as it was blocked up in the days of the earthquake, in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. The word is composed as if about one of the most noble generals, sharpening for battle those who fight with him, and rousing the fighting force against the phalanxes of the enemy;

but it is understood as about God, who is, so to speak, present and fighting alongside the nations that are ravaging Judea, and who have sacked Jerusalem itself. We remember that even in the gospel parables he says something like this. For the king who was holding the wedding feast for his son, sent his servants to gather those who had been invited. But they, having impiously insulted and killed those who were calling them to the festival, finally laid hands on the son himself. Then what does the account of the parable

say? "But the king was enraged, and sending his armies "he destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Therefore, he says, it will be in the same way for those who in the day of battle-array nobly rise up against and destroy the enemy. This is a proof of the cessation of wrath and of the highest commotions, and of him inflicting a balanced justice on those who have acted insolently toward him. For they killed, as I said, the author of life. But since things beyond words and wonder would be fitting for the queenly nature of the universe to be able alone to accomplish, for this reason he says that his feet will stand, clearly those of Christ, in that day on the mount of Olives; and it will endure four cleavings, two, toward the dawn and toward the evening, that is, toward the sea; for it is the custom of the divinely-inspired scripture to call the place of the evening thus;

and the other two somehow inclining, one toward the north and the bear, and the other to the southern region. He said that the peaks themselves would also be broken down, so as to fill the valleys between, unexpectedly shaken down as far as Asael; this is a village lying, as the story goes, at the furthest extremities of the mountain. Moreover, he compares the severe earthquake here to the one that happened in the times of Uzziah, who is also Azariah. For when he was governing the thrones of the kingdom in Jerusalem, since he was also from the tribe of Judah, he unlawfully dared to take up the ministries of the priesthood, he was immediately made a leper, and with God then showing his anger at these things, the land of the Jews was terribly shaken, and Jerusalem itself, and indeed they also say that mount Zion endured such a convulsion that it was rent into two parts, and its peaks were cast down into the adjacent valleys. Through these things the Prophet seems to us to indicate the earthquake which the ministers of the evangelical proclamations say happened at the time of the precious cross. For the Prophet mentions what happened more broadly in these things; but our most wise Matthew, summarizing the narrative, says thus: "And Jesus, crying out again with a loud voice, "yielded up his spirit.

And behold, the veil of the temple "was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth was shaken, "and the rocks were split, and the tombs were opened, "and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. But since it is necessary to apply a plausible account to the events, it seems to signify that the rocks being broken down, and the valleys being blocked up [symbolize] both the hardening of the Jews, and the change for the better of

those who had served idols course. For those who worship the creation rather than the Creator have, as it were, a heart of stone, hard and unyielding, and like rocks that bear no fruit. But what did God say about them through the voice of Ezekiel? "And I will take away their heart of stone from their "flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh, that they "may know Me, that I am the Lord. Therefore, the hearts of those who had gone astray were rent, God opening them up, so that they might receive the word of the saving proclamation. and he indicates something of this kind through the voice of Jeremiah, saying, "Are not My "words like a burning fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer "that breaks a rock in pieces? "For the word of God is living and "active and sharper, and piercing even to the division "of soul and spirit.

Therefore, as I said, the tearing of the rocks would be a very clear sign of the change for the better of those who had gone astray. But the blocking up of the ravines, as I said, indicates the hardening of the Jews. For the divine Isaiah also said something of this kind: "And it shall be in that day that the Lord will block up "from the channel of the river to the brook of Egypt," that is, the mind of those throughout all Judea will be blocked up, "so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not hear, "nor understand. "For a veil lies upon their heart, "as it is written, at the reading of the old "covenant. And the shaking of the earth might signify, I suppose, the transition from one thing to another. And so the divine David cried out, saying, "You who are enthroned upon the Cherubim, let the earth be shaken. And we do not say at all that he exhorts the world under heaven to be shaken bodily and perceptibly; for that would be foolish, and bring us no benefit; rather, the Spirit-bearer intended this, that the earth should be changed from worshipping idols to knowing at last the God who is by nature and in truth, from thinking carnal things to desiring to live spiritually, and simply from earthly things to heavenly things.

And if indeed he says that the very tombs of the departed were opened, we say that death itself had to be seen as conquered, when Christ died in the flesh for us according to the economy, "that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. And the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with him. In that day there will be no light, and there will be cold and frost for one day, and that day will be known to the Lord, and it will be neither day nor night, and toward evening there will be light. Having spoken cursorily of the impious deeds of the Jews against the Savior of us all, Christ, and

of the capture of Judea and of Jerusalem itself, he now comes to the very end of the present age, and usefully relates the descent of Emmanuel from heaven. For he will descend with the holy angels in the glory of God the Father, in order "to judge the world in righteousness; for as the divine Paul writes, "For we must all "appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one "may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether "good or bad. He will come, then, he will come, he says, and all the saints with him, that is, the most pure multitude of his own angels, surely attending him as a bodyguard and bringing their ministerial presence.

For Emmanuel is Lord of all, and is glorified by all as God and co-ruler with the one who begot him. But if someone should say that the saints themselves will stand with him, having been caught up "in the "clouds to meet him in the air," after their resurrection from the dead, as seems right also to the most wise Paul, he would in no way miss the fitting quarry. For the divine Isaiah also said something of this sort concerning them: "There the harts "met and saw one another's faces; they passed by in "number, and not one of them was lost, another did not seek "for her mate, for the Lord commanded them, and his Spirit "gathered them. And somewhere the divine David also sings to us, the proclaiming beforehand the descent from heaven of the Savior of us all, Christ, "For the Lord will not cast off "his people, and his inheritance he will not for- "sake, until righteousness return to judgment, and they that "hold to it are all the upright in heart. For he calls Christ righteousness, and says that he will return to judgment. For having trampled on death, he was taken up, and ascended to the Father and God in heaven; but he will return at the appointed time for judgment, and with him all the upright in heart, that is, the saints, as I just said.

But that at the time of the consummation there will be a different state of the visible creation, and that it itself will be transformed for the better, being renewed through Christ, the Prophet will confirm, saying In that day there will be no light, but cold and frost for one day, and that day is known to the Lord. For now day and night are distinguished, and they have been allotted their times by the will of the maker, and the light of day dawns, then night follows. But when the Judge comes, who refashions all things according to his will, creation, as I said, will receive a different ordering; for there will no longer be light and cold and frost for one day. And by light he signifies the day, but by frost and cold the night, for the night-and-day period

has been reckoned as one day. It is as if he were to say, for instance: At that time, when having come from heaven, he remolds and refashions all things for the better, as Creator, there will not be light nor night, for one day. The blessed prophet Isaiah says something similar: "And the sun shall no longer 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.

And that at the appointed time the need for the elements themselves will cease, Christ himself will confirm, saying "Immediately after "the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and "the moon will not give its light. For Christ will suffice for us as an eternal light, and he himself will be a long and continuous day. And he says that day is known to the Lord. For only God the Father knows the day of the consummation. And the Son himself confirms this for us, saying "But concerning that day or that hour "no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the "Father alone. For in so far as he is understood as a man like us, he would not know the things in the Father; but in so far as he is God by nature, and has appeared from him, he surely knows the last day, even if he says he does not know it because of his humanity. And the Prophet, interpreting for us and making clearer what he said, adds to this: And it will be neither day nor night, but towards evening there will be light, that is, in the time of night there will be light again through Christ and it will illumine what is under heaven, with darkness being completely abolished, and no longer prevailing before the eyes of the saints. And it is indeed reasonable to think that creation itself is being reshaped for the better.

And reliably the disciple of the Savior, saying that the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements will be dissolved by burning, and the earth and the works in it will all be burned up, and that we expect new heavens and a new earth and his promises. Nevertheless, we shall also proceed to this from necessary reasonings. For if our state will certainly be in newness of life, we also need a new creation. For as the divine Paul writes, "creation itself will also at the appointed time be "set free from its bondage to decay into the freedom of the "glory of the children of God. In that day living water will go out from Jerusalem, half of it to the former sea, and half of it to the latter sea, and so it will be in summer and in spring. And the Lord will be king over all the earth. He explains again to us enigmatically, that the [gift] of the Holy An outpouring of

the Spirit will be distributed to the saints, especially at that time when they might be brought up to a holy and unending life, I mean, that which is in the age to come. For now, through faith in Christ, we have been enriched with the first-fruits of the Holy Spirit as a pledge;

but after the resurrection from the dead, with sin being completely destroyed, the divine Spirit will no longer be in us as a pledge and in measure; but abundantly and lavishly, as I said, we will then fully delight in the gifts that are through Christ. He therefore calls the Spirit living water, which he also says will come forth from the Jerusalem above. For since the God-inspired scripture said that the God of all dwells in the heavens, even though He is everywhere and has filled all things, for this reason it says that the life-giving Spirit will also come forth from heaven. That it is the custom of the sacred writings to compare the divine Spirit to waters, the Giver of this, that is, the Son, will Himself confirm it, saying, "He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his belly will flow rivers of living water.'" And interpreting this and making it clear, the divine evangelist says, "This he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive. For since the Spirit is life-giving, it is for this reason compared to water, which gives life to bodies, and very rightly so.

That the need to partake of the provision of the Holy Spirit will be richly available to those deemed worthy of the holy life, and to be filled, as it were, with life-giving waters, he implies by saying, that of the water expected to come forth from Jerusalem in due time, half of it will go towards the first sea, and half towards the last sea. And what is this? The divine scripture often compares the many nations of men and the multitude beyond number to seas and waters. Thus it says somewhere through one of the holy prophets, "For the whole earth was filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as much water covers the seas. And the divine Daniel also said somewhere, foreseeing the things that would happen in the last times to those throughout the whole world, "I, Daniel, was watching, and behold, the four winds of heaven were striving upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, different from one another. But making this same thing clearer, the blessed David sings, saying, "This is the great and wide sea, in which are creeping things innumerable, both small and great animals. There the ships go, this dragon which you have formed to play in it. For what dragon do we say is in the perceptible sea, formed to be played with by the God who rules over all?

It is therefore the custom of the sacred writings to compare both the whole world and sometimes a great multitude of people to seas.

That the grace of the Spirit will therefore be distributed by God in equal measure to those who have believed from Israel and to those from the Gentiles, he implies by saying concerning the life-giving water, that half of it will go out to the first sea, and the other half to the last sea. And he calls the first sea Israel; and the last, the multitude of those who believed after them, that is, the Gentiles. And we do not say at all that the Holy Spirit is divided, and will be incomplete in each because it is understood as half; far from it; but we shall rather suppose that the Prophet wishes to indicate this, that the distribution will be allotted to both these and those in equality of grace. For the half and half will be indicative of the equal-weighted honor and of the equality. That the grace is continuous, and the participation at all times, is easy to see, from his saying again, that it will be so both in summer and in spring. But it should be known that instead of "In spring," the Hebrew version says "In winter. Therefore, he says, it will be according to these things, and likewise the outpouring of the spiritual waters, in winter and in summer, that is, at all times. It makes no difference to say 'spring' instead of 'winter', according to the writing of the seventy;

for it is placed as participating in both winter and summer, so that if one were to assign it to the times of winter, one would not violate the probable, or even correct, reasoning. But if someone should wish to understand what is said about the spiritual water in another way, that half of it will go out to the first sea and half of it to the last sea, and in summer and in spring it will be so, he will admit some such interpretation of what is set forth. For he calls the 'first sea' that which is probably situated toward the dawn, I mean beyond the limits of the whole earth; and the 'last sea', that which is at the very extremities of the west; for he defines the east as, in a way, the face and beginning of the inhabited world. And I suppose he calls the hot and southern parts of the inhabited world 'summer', and again, the northern and cold parts 'spring'. For thus also the divine David, wishing to signify the four climes under heaven, cried out to God, 'Summer and spring you have made them,' and again, 'The north and the sea you have created.' Therefore, he says, the living water will go out in equality and with equally distributed grace both to the first sea and indeed also to the last sea, that is, to the east

and to the west, and in summer and in spring, that is again, to the south and to the north.

For the world under heaven will be filled with the gifts through Christ, and the gift will certainly remain with those who have received it. Then indeed, then, And the Lord will be king over all the earth. For we shall be under him alone, and he will rule over all things, when the world-rulers of this age have been completely brought to nothing, and every evil power has been triumphed over, and Satan himself and the evil powers with him have been cast out from their advantage over us. In that day the Lord will be one and his name one, encircling all the land and the wilderness from Gebal to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Ramah shall remain in its place, from the gate of Benjamin to the place of the first gate, and to the gate of the corners, and to the tower of Hananeel, to the king's winepresses; they shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more a curse, and Jerusalem shall dwell securely. The word of the holy prophets is always somehow obscure, and this, I think, is wisely arranged by God, so that holy things may not be set before dogs; nor indeed, cast carelessly before the feet of swine, the truly precious pearl be treated with contempt. But Christ in the Spirit reveals knowledge to the worthy, and makes the powers of the age to come manifest.

And for the most part, the hidden and spiritual things are prefigured in sensible things, and the visible things become, as it were, a body for the more invisible ones. He said, therefore, that in that day, that is, that time, when our affairs have been transformed into newness of life, and creation itself has been reconstituted for the better than before, the Lord will be one and his name one, encircling all the earth. For there was always and is and will be one Lord, the God of all things by nature and in truth, who brought into being things that once were not. But since the inventor of sin, that is, Satan, has deceived the world under heaven, we wretched ones have been carried astray into false and profane worship, and we continued in the world blind and foolish, calling our deceivers lords, and ignorantly applying the name of divinity to unclean demons. And we have been called to the knowledge of truth even in this world through Christ, but when the present age has passed away and already come to an end, then indeed, then, when all madness has been removed from us, and the enemies have already been placed under Christ's feet, there will finally be one Lord over all the earth, with no one seizing the glory of lordship over him. And in another way

Christ will be one Lord, when every earthly kingdom has become inactive, and to him indeed alone the of that which is under heaven ascribing dominion over all.

And the most wise Daniel said something of this sort. For recounting the manner of the visions, he says, "Just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain without hands, and it broke in pieces the clay, the iron, the bronze, the silver, and the gold. The great God has made known to the king what must happen after this, and the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy. Therefore He will be one and alone, and He will fill the holy city with His glory, that is, the spiritual Jerusalem, whose breadth and length he shows again as a type in the earthly Jerusalem, saying that it will be widened from Gebel to Remmon. and Gebel or Geba is a village and an inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin; and they say it lies in the more northern parts of Jerusalem. And Remmon, on the other hand, is a certain rock, in the southern desert. Therefore the breadth of Jerusalem is from Gebel to Remmon. And he defines the length also, saying thus: From the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hanameel to the king's wine presses. and the First Gate, and indeed the Corner Gate; thus were certain gates in Jerusalem named; and there was a tower in between called Hanameel, after which were immediately the king's wine presses; these are places marking the length of Jerusalem as in a type.

For just as the God of all commanded the blessed prophet Ezekiel to measure the house with a reed, darting here and there, indicating, that there are many mansions with the Father, and countless are the dwellings of the saints; so also here it seems to me that through visible places he describes for us the breadth and length of the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, the Church of Christ, to which also the divine Isaiah cried out, saying, "Enlarge the place of your tent and of your curtains, fix them, do not spare, lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes, still spread out to the right and to the left. Therefore the saints will inhabit the holy city, widened and extended to a fitting length, and there will be no more curse, he says, that is, in no way will it be alienated from God; for He will grant it a steadfast love; and they would no longer fall into offending God, since sin, as I said, has been utterly destroyed, along with the tempting satan. "For there shall be no lion there, nor any of the evil beasts shall go up on it, nor be found there. Therefore they will dwell in confidence. But since it is placed in between, "But Ramah shall

remain in its place," we say this again, interpreting the meanings of what has been said, as far as possible. Ramah is a small town, or a village, an inheritance for those of the tribe of Asher;

and there is another Ramah besides this for those of the tribe of Naphtali. And a holy Prophet also mentions either one of these, or another Ramah. For he said that "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and weeping and mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be comforted, because they are no more. We say such a thing was done in Bethlehem, when Herod had ordered the infants in it to be killed. Therefore he names Jerusalem Ramah, because of the great lamentation that occurred in it at its capture. For the prophet Jeremiah has introduced her, as it were, shedding tears and wailing for her own lost children. For he said that "She wept bitterly in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks. And what was the lament? "My virgins and my young men have gone into captivity; by sword and by famine you have slain, in the day of your wrath you have slaughtered, you have not spared. But if someone should wish the name to be applied to the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, the Church, and for it now to be called Ramah, we say that the argument is very correct. For many are those who weep in the churches, and have "godly sorrow, which produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret. And Christ Himself accepts such people thus saying "Blessed are those who mourn now, for "they shall be comforted. and again "Blessed are those who "weep now, for you will laugh.

Therefore, even if the Church were called Ramah through the voice of the Prophet, the word would in this way also carry plausibility. But he says it will remain in its place, that is, it will not be shaken. For it is established, as I said, and the Church of Christ is unshakable. And this will be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the peoples who have campaigned against Jerusalem; their flesh shall rot away while they are standing on their feet, and their eyes will rot out of their sockets, and their tongue will rot away in their mouth. "You will have tribulation in the world," Christ proclaimed to those who believed in him; but he makes them more courageous, usefully adding, "But take heart, I have overcome the "world. "For I have given you to tread upon snakes and "scorpions and upon all the power of the enemy. Who then are the scorpions and who are the snakes, if not clearly the foul and bloodthirsty ranks of the wicked demons, and of those who persecute the saints, who have also become ministers of the unrestrained madness of the

spirits in the world, which also roam about this whole universe, plotting against the saints in many ways, although they have been triumphed over through Christ, who nailed the record of debt against us to his own cross, so that he might deliver us from their greed?

Therefore, since he said that Jerusalem, which is the Church of the living God, would be inhabited with confidence, and it was indeed right to expect this to be accomplished with the enemies being destroyed, and those accustomed to persecuting her being overthrown, he makes the narration of these things also necessary for us. For this, he says, will be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the peoples who have campaigned against Jerusalem; their flesh shall rot away, and their eyes will rot out, with their tongue also wasting away. For this common death which is according to nature wastes away the flesh of all, and empties the eyes, and causes tongues to decay; but it would reasonably be a dreadful sign of the coming disaster for the flesh of those still living and standing to waste away, and their eyes to fall out, and their tongues to be punished. And he says that such things will very rightly happen to those who have practiced a God-hated and accursed life. For they will pay penalties, not only for the wrongs they have committed against the saints, but also for the love of the flesh which they have had in this world; which also became for them the cause of neither accepting the faith, nor choosing to live piously, and to love the glory of the life in Christ. For they became, as I said, uncontrollably inclined toward unnatural pleasures; and they have had unrestrained eyes, all but greedily pouring out desires for each of the things seen.

For they also sharpened their tongue against Christ, and have made unholy denunciation of the sacred doctrines of the Church. Reasonably, therefore, they have received their justice in their flesh and eyes and tongues. For just as the woman who drinks the water of conviction and has sworn a false oath was punished in her thigh, in which the sins of fornication would also occur; "For it says, her thigh will swell "and fall away; in the same way, I think, for those who persecute the holy city, the punishment is in the flesh and eyes and tongues; for for them the love of flesh, sensual pleasures, and besides these, the sins through the eyes, and the voices of an uninstructed tongue. And on that day there will be a great panic from the Lord upon them; and each will seize the hand of his neighbor, and his hand will be raised against the hand of his neighbor. And Judah will fight in Jerusalem,

and will gather the wealth of all the surrounding peoples, gold and silver and clothing in very great abundance. In these words he again calls the fear, that is, the astonishment, a panic.

Therefore, he says, at that time, when the enemies of the Church would look at one another, with such falling under terrible judgments, they will be struck down by terrors, and thus finally ceasing to dare to persecute the holy city, they will depart as fugitives, all but wringing their hands, and seeking help from one another in vain, they will be wretched and cast down and under the feet of the saints. But Judah, he says, that is, those justified through faith in Christ and bearing the spiritual Jew about them, and having been enriched with the circumcision in the Holy Spirit, will draw up for battle in Jerusalem, that is, they will campaign against their enemies, they will act youthfully against those who oppose them, trampling them like scorpions, and treading upon the asp and the basilisk, they will utterly disregard the lion and the dragon; and they will be brilliant and admirable, collecting the wealth from such achievements as gold and silver and clothing. For that the meaning of the prophecy is not in sensible things, how could anyone doubt? For the wealth of the saints is not corruptible and earthly, but spiritual and heavenly and everlasting, which those who teach and are esteemed in other ways in the churches gather for their own souls. For they plunder, as it were, the strength of all the peoples, bringing the choice things of the nations to Christ through faith. For thus He himself also said that he had plundered the goods of the strong man.

But if someone should say that Judah gathers the strength of all the peoples round about, gold and silver and clothing, so that we may understand that by collecting the wisdom in the world they are illumined by it, striving for the doctrines of piety, the sense would have a probable reason. For once the wise women of Israel despoiled the Egyptians, having asked "from their neighbor and from her who dwelt with them articles of gold and silver, and clothing. Therefore, as in sensible things and as in visible materials, the splendor of spiritual goods is signified. And the wealth of teachers is especially their students. And so the divine Paul addressed those who had been saved and had come to believe through him, saying, "I protest by your boasting, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus; and again he called them his own "crown and joy. And this shall be the plague of the horses and of the

mules and of the camels and of the donkeys and of all the beasts that are in those camps, like this plague.

Having already defined the ways of punishment, which in every way and altogether those who have campaigned against the holy city, having become persecutors and insolent men, will at times endure, abominable and contentious, and speaking injustice against God, and lifting up their horn on high, according to the voice of the psalmist, he usefully adds that This shall be the plague of the horses and of the mules and of the camels and of the donkeys and of all the beasts. But by the beasts of burden he indicates those who ride them. For they attacked the Jews and Jerusalem itself, both the farthest and the neighboring nations; some riding on horses, like the Babylonians and Syrians and indeed the nations of the Egyptians; others having yoked camels and donkeys and mules, such as the Moabites, and the nomads of the desert, of whom the prophet Isaiah also makes mention, saying, "In the affliction and the distress, a lion and a lion's cub, thence also vipers and the offspring of flying vipers, who carried their wealth on donkeys and camels. and he says elsewhere that he saw "a rider of a donkey and a rider of a camel. He describes, then, the enemies of the truth as in the type of the nations, who always warred against the earthly Jerusalem, so that from them we might understand our visible and invisible enemies, against whom we have the battle.

And if someone should wish to refer the characteristics of the beasts to the characters of the enemies of the Church, there is nothing wrong in saying and thinking that; as some have become impetuous and bold, like horses, for instance; one might also very reasonably attribute to them love of pleasure and madness for women; others, in the manner of mules, are savage and harsh, but it is customary for the Greek poets also to call them wilder; but those who are like camels in disposition, that is, both uneven and boastful, having their minds lifted up from madness; but others, differing in nothing from donkeys, have been afflicted with the utmost irrationality; for the donkey is sluggish and slow of perception, and an image of the utmost irrationality. But it should be noted that he compares those who have warred against the Church to none of the tame and clean animals, such as a sheep, I say, and an ox, but rather likens them to the abominable and untamed ones, which were also condemned by the words of the law as profane and unclean. And it shall be that whoever is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem, shall go up year by year to worship the King, the Lord God Almighty,

and to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be that whoever of all the tribes of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord God Almighty, these also shall be added to those.

Having said that those who have warred against the churches, and who have raised a high and boastful brow against holy Jerusalem, will be ensnared in the punishments befitting them, he foretells the worship of those who have been left after them, clearly that which is in Christ through faith. For he is the expectation of the nations according to the voice of the patriarch. And he has been set "for a light to the nations, and for a covenant of the "people, to open the eyes of the blind, and to bring out "the bound from bonds, and those sitting in darkness from the prison "house. That therefore, having left the mist of idolatry, and having broken the bonds of the devil's wickedness, those from the nations will come to the light of truth, and will submit to the yoke of the Savior, he will make clear, saying that the remnants of the punished, that is, of those who have fought against the churches; and these are beyond number; will go up year by year to worship the Lord God Almighty and to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. For the law through Moses commanded that the feast of tabernacles be celebrated on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when the abundance of the fields has been gathered into storehouses. For this reason he calls the feast an "exodus," as the works in the fields have already come to an end.

And he commanded to take "ornaments of palm "trees and fruit of a beautiful tree, and branches of a thick tree "and willows and chaste-tree branches," and to drink water from a torrent, and to rejoice over it. And the law made the pretext for the feast the dwelling of Israel in tents, having been delivered from the greed of the Egyptians. But the matter was, then, a type of the mystery concerning Christ. For we ourselves have also been delivered from the greed of the devil, and we have been called, as I said, to freedom through Christ, and we have come under him who is King and God of all, having disregarded the wickedness of those who formerly held power. And we celebrate the true feast of tabernacles, that is, the day of the resurrection of Christ, when the bodies of all are, as it were, fixed in him, although they have been loosed by corruption and held by death. For he is the resurrection, he is the life, as it were a first-offering from the dead and "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep; who fills us with spiritual fruits, and prepares us to store up, as it were, the labors gathered from the fields in the storehouses

above. He will give us the way of life and delight in paradise, clearly a spiritual one, to those who have conquered sin, who are spiritually fragrant, who have the beautiful and lovely fruit of the evangelical life, having lived purely and holily.

And a sign of this again would be the having of ornaments of palm trees and fruit of a beautiful tree bound together with the other branches. He is the torrent of delight with which God the Father has given us to drink; he is the fount of life, and the river of peace, who has inclined to us who have been called from the nations ...ing. We have spoken about these things briefly in other places. Therefore, those who go up to worship the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the feast of tabernacles, are those who have been justified by faith in Christ. But he threatens destruction to those who do not go up, and the same punishments that their persecutors and insolent abusers would endure. For they will lie in the same lot as the enemies, those who have chosen not to love. And this, I think, is what Christ himself said: "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not "gather with me scatters. But if the tribe of Egypt does not go up and does not come there, upon them also shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the sin of Egypt and the sin of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the feast of tabernacles.

As from one nation, that of the Egyptians, I say, it makes clear concerning those who have reached the extreme of error, and who have chosen to practice idolatry in an excessively strange way, that for them a terrible and inescapable judgment and cause of destruction will be their not choosing to honor the worthy grace of salvation through Christ. For they might almost be convicted as murderers of their own souls, if it is true that, while it was possible for them to lay hold of eternal life and the gentleness from above which is set forth for participation by those willing to choose it, and indeed also to cast off sin, they have died in their own errors, and have kept the stain from their wandering and the pollution of their transgression unwashed, and they have also continued in error; and this, although the divine light shines around all things, calling to sight those in mist and darkness. And I would say also concerning each of such persons, "An untimely birth is better than he; "for it came in vanity, and departs in darkness, and in "darkness its

name will be covered. "For it would have been good for "them if they had not been born," according to the voice of the Savior.

But that the saying is not against the Egyptians only, but will also come against all the nations, which will be punished in every way and altogether, for having disregarded the salvation through Christ, and not having honored the festival in Him, he will confirm by saying: This shall be the sin of Egypt and the sin of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. For before the advent of the Savior, perhaps there was still, in part, a reasonable excuse for the nations, saying they had been called by no one; for no one had preached to them. Therefore the Savior also, showing this very thing to us in the gospel parables, said that the laborers who were called about the eleventh hour said this: "No one has hired us. But since Christ has now shone forth, has bound the strong man, has delivered those who were under his perversity, has justified by faith those who come to him, has laid down his own soul for the life of all, they will no longer find any sufficient reason for excuse, who have not accepted so venerable a grace. Therefore Christ will indeed speak the truth concerning them also, if he should say of the nations: "If I had not come and "spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse "for their sin. In that day that which is on the bridle of the horse shall be holy to the Lord Almighty.

Since all war has now been calmed, and battle has been taken away, and enemies have been driven off, and an unbreakable peace now crowns the holy city, that is, the Church, he says that the instruments of war, both trap-pings and bridles, will now be useless. For what need at all will the horse-master have of such a thing, he who knows how to excel in battles, if there is no one at all to lead out against him? Therefore, he says, the things useful to warriors will be sacred vessels and offerings to God. For since he himself is the awarder of peace, to him rightly will be dedicated the now superfluous and henceforth useless instruments of war. For just as the blessed prophet Isaiah said concerning some, that "they shall beat their swords "into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and "nation shall not lift up against nation a sword, and they shall not learn any more "to make war," the times of peace almost persuading them to devote their military implements to the needs of agriculture, and to turn, as it were, to other pursuits, having neglected the study of tactics; so also the divine Zechariah, as if peace, now

unbreakable, has been given by God, says that the useful implements for those who fight will be refashioned into a votive offering to God.

For the warlike spirit will certainly be idle, caring not for horse, nor for bridles, nor for trappings, but rather inclining toward choosing what is necessary for the pursuits that excel in virtue and piety. But to some, it seems that the power of the prophecy has been fulfilled in another way as well. For they say that in due time the wood of the cross was found, still having the nails pierced into it; and the pious Constantine, taking one of these, had it made into a bridle for his own horse, believing that he was blessed by God through this as well. And one might say this is not improbable, if it is so, and it would not be considered unreasonably outside of fitting discourse, that the most pious king was both remembered by God and honored in prophetic utterance. For the Word made mention and proclamation of very many people through the holy prophets at various times, as, for instance, of Josiah and certain others. And sometimes the gentleness and piety of the times are signified through those who rule in them. There is nothing unlikely, then, if the Prophet Zechariah now also recalls a most noteworthy matter, both truly beloved by God and of a pious kingdom, and of times dedicated to the love for Christ. For what else could the nail taken from the precious cross adorning the horses of kings suggest to us, if not the very great and truly admirable piety of the rulers?

And the cauldrons in the house of the Lord shall be like the bowls before the face of the altar. There were cauldrons in the holy tabernacle, and in the temple built after these things, in which the flesh of the sacrifices was boiled, which the priests consumed in a holy place, as the law commanded this to be done, so that the sanctified things might not be carried out anywhere from the sacred precincts. But since those ancient customs have ceased, the mysteries have passed over for us into another manner of worship, and we have been taught through faith to honor the God of all no longer with the slaughter of sheep and with incense, but rather with bloodless sacrifices, and we spiritually minister in the churches to Christ Himself, the Savior of all, we use other sacred vessels instead of the cauldrons, which indeed the Prophet here calls bowls. And these are vessels most necessary for those who drink. And the wise listener will surely understand the power of what is signified, even if our account has been made somewhat more obscurely than it should, because it is necessary to make the narration of the hidden things with reserve. There-

fore, at that time there were cauldrons, but now there are bowls before the face of the altar. And every cauldron in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy to the Lord Almighty; and all those who sacrifice will come and take from them and will boil for themselves.

He calls the mystical vessels cauldrons, still using the ancient names, vessels which are holy, august, and precious, both for those in Jerusalem, that is, in the Church, clearly the divine ministers, and also in Judah itself, that is, again, for those who have received the circumcision in the spirit. And these would again be the ones who have believed. For the vessels of the holy altar are not taken by anyone at all for common use, but are, as I said, holy and kept for the glory of God, and are accustomed to serve only the needs of the holy table, and through them and in them the sacrifices of those who offer are accomplished, not with each person bringing his own vessel, but with all using only the sacred ones. For every cauldron, he says, shall be holy to the Lord. Therefore, the Prophet is speaking as if still on the subject of the sacrifices according to the law, mentioning cauldrons and boiling and He names those who offer sacrifice, but we shall fittingly understand it of the times through Christ and the worship accomplished by us in the Spirit. And we say that the word of the holy prophets was made obscure by divine economy, and not simply set forth for all, lest their holy things be thrown to the dogs, nor indeed should the word fitting only for saints be revealed to the profane and most abominable. And there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of the Lord Almighty in that day.

One might perceive the mind of the ancients to be corrupt and easily broken, and quite effortlessly. For the children of Israel were redeemed from Egypt through Moses, and they shook off the yoke of unbearable slavery, and after very many and admirable signs had been performed for them, they barely came out; and they were brought through the sea itself, and they had eaten the bread from heaven, and they have drunk water unexpectedly brought forth from a rock in the wilderness. What then, the wretches? In Moses' absence they made a calf, and as the prophet says, they took up "the tent of Moloch and the star "of their god Rephan, the figures which they made "to worship them. But they indeed were destroyed; for their bodies fell in the wilderness, as it is written. But when those after them had crossed the Jordan, with Joshua as their general, again as time went on, having come under judges, they served idols; but also in the times of the holy prophets

they sacrificed to the golden heifers, which the accursed Jeroboam made for them, and in addition to these, still erecting precincts and altars, they no less worshiped Baal, Chemosh, Astarte, and Baal-peor. And what is still beyond these evils: for we do not say that only the common and vulgar multitude was involved in these things; but indeed we shall also find many from among the priests themselves who had turned aside. Therefore God also said through the prophet: "The priests did not say, Where is the Lord?

and "those who handled my law did not know me, and the shep- "herds acted impiously against me, and the prophets prophesied by "Baal, and went after what does not profit. And the prophet Ezekiel also saw "about twenty-five men from the "elders of Israel, with their backs only toward the "temple of the Lord and their faces opposite, worship- "ing the sun toward the east. And it would not be at all difficult to pile up very many other examples in these matters; but I think these will suffice for a refutation of the ignorance inherent in them. Therefore the mind of the ancients was shaken, and was quite easily led astray. Therefore God also said concerning them: "They have loved to move their feet and have not refrained, and "God was not well pleased in them. For they were easily carried away into strange idolatries and, being of the blood of Israel, they were eager to imitate the foreign Canaanites. But since the Only-Begotten Word of God has come among us, and having justified by faith, has sealed with the Holy Spirit those who approach his grace, our mind has become steadfast, secure and unshakable, and fixed in piety. For no one will persuade the sanctified to know another god besides the one who is by nature and truly God, whom we have known as God in Christ. For he showed us the Father in himself, saying, "He who has seen me has seen the Father.

Therefore, he says, "in that day," that is, at that time, there will not be a Canaanite, that is, a foreigner and an idolater, in the house of the Lord Almighty. For we are established, as I said, in faith, and we have been crowned with boasts of security through Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

MALACHI

Book 1

It is necessary to say a few things beforehand about the prophecy of Malachi, for the easy understanding of those who will read it, and so that they might

know each of the things contained in it. Therefore, when the times of the captivity had ended, Israel was brought back from Babylon to Judea, and arrived again at the holy city, having thrown off the yoke of slavery; and indeed the divine temple was raised, with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, who was from the tribe of Judah, and Joshua the son of Jozadak, the high priest, overseeing the works. Haggai and Zechariah prophesied at that time to those redeemed from the captivity, with Ezra and Nehemiah being with them the ministers. And contemporary with the aforementioned holy prophets, or a little and briefly after them, was the divine Malachi, who is also called Angel, for Malachi is thus interpreted. But we must not accept the accounts of some concerning him, who have idly fabricated, thinking and saying that he was an angel by nature, but was embodied according to the will of God and became a prophet for those of Israel. For he is called an angel, as I said, especially because his name has this interpretation in itself; then, because by announcing the words from above and from God to those of Israel, he might not implausibly be called an angel.

And indeed the Prophet Malachi himself in the following says concerning every priest, "For "the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law "at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty. And concerning Emmanuel, the prophet Isaiah says, "And they shall wish, he says, that they had been burned with fire, because a "child is born, a son is also given to us, and his name is called "the Angel of Great Counsel. Do you see that announcing to others the will of the highest nature has caused some to be named even angels, although they are not angels by nature? For men are those who interpret the divine law for us, that is, the priests; but the Son is God and from God by nature. So then, according to us, the Prophet Malachi was a man; and the whole scope of his prophecy tends toward these two things. For when the divine temple had been raised, and the time was calling the leaders of the peoples to their priestly duties, that is, those of the blood of Levi, and allowing even those of Israel themselves, if they wished, to fulfill their vows according to the law, they made use of the commandments through Moses, but not blamelessly and properly. For the people brought the customary things for sacrifice, yet not with much care, but rather slothfully and neglectfully. For they brought the more shameful of the flocks, the sick and unacceptable, to the altar.

And the priests received them, no longer inspecting for blemishes according to the law, whether the offering was lame, or had its ears cut, or had its nose slit, or had its tail docked, or had the scab, or had lichens, or was a monorchid. For the law made these things rejectable; and the matter was an insult, and nothing else. And the priests were neglectful in another way also towards the people under their hand, not rightly introducing the things from the laws, and gracefully instructing them in what is pleasing to God, but allowing them to decline into improper dissoluteness, and to be carried outside the straight path. And this is one manner of rebuke; and another in addition to this for those of Israel, for such reasons. For some, having bidden farewell to their affections for their wives, then cast a bill of divorce at them, even when they were sometimes condemned for no fault, and were joined with others, thinking that they in no way grieved God, even if they should choose to do this. And others again were mad for the daughters of foreigners, although the law clearly cried out, "You shall not give your daughter to his son, nor shall you take his daughter for your son; for he will turn away your son from me, and going he will serve gods to others. And there was a long discourse about this also in the books of Esdras. whence some suppose him to be Malachi. But the truth is not so.

And so much for the rebukes in these things; but at the end of the prophecy he makes his discourse about the manifestation of our Savior, since at that time a pure and bloodless sacrifice was about to be offered to God, and the accusations of all were to cease, sin having been taken away, and those on earth being reformed into a newness of life; for the things in Christ are a new creation, the old things having passed away, according to what is written. The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by the hand of his angel. He calls the "burden" of the word of prophecy from God, as it were, the "reception. For the blessed prophets received through the Holy Spirit the knowledge of things to come, and they offered counsels and indeed rebukes to certain people, not from their own heart, plucking out perhaps whatever words they chose, or speaking falsely like some, but interpreting the things from God, and purely and blamelessly conveying the words from above to others. Therefore he says the reception of the prophecy came from the Lord. And through these things he implies that the word of the prophecy contains neither a prediction of some wicked and grievous thing as about to happen to those of Israel, nor indeed praises as for those who have lived rightly; but

rather a rebuke for both priests and peoples. And you will understand "by the hand of his angel" in this way:

for as the one called "angel" was managing, that is, carrying out, the ministry of the prophecy, the burden came upon Israel. And Malachi is called an angel for the reasons I have already mentioned. Lay it then to your hearts. I have loved you, says the Lord. He commands not to make the hearing of what will be said a secondary matter, but rather with earnestness and in the greatest attention and understanding. For it is fitting for those who are about to hear divine words to be disposed in this way, from which the benefit will be very great and most abundant, whenever they pour their mind into it. For somewhere the divine David also sings, "In "my heart I have hidden your words, that I might not sin against "you. For it is possible for one who hears to seem not even to hear, if the words do not touch the mind, but having flown as it were from the speaker's tongue, then dash only against the hearing of the body, they might be counted as equal to vain whispers. Such were those about whom one of the holy prophets said, "Behold, a foolish and heartless people; they have eyes and do not "see; they have ears, and do not hear.

Therefore the Prophet necessarily exhorts, saying, Lay it then to your hearts, that is, by depositing the divine words within your mind and heart, and understanding the power of the oracles from above, by all means agree, that I have loved you, says the Lord, and I deemed you worthy of all gentleness and forbearance and the honor befitting those who are loved. But this again is a very strong reproach, that they returned evil things to him instead of good, although it was necessary, as those deemed worthy of love, to reciprocate with fairness and with zeal and eagerness in everything whatever that is pleasing to him. For if it is one of the absurd things, not to be willing to give rewards to those among us, what argument could be made concerning God who distributes all things for cheerfulness to us richly, if someone did not wish to repay to him the rewards of what has been given; even if it would be especially fitting for those who are truly sound of mind to say that, "What shall we render to the Lord for all that he has "rendered to us? And you said, In what have you loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother, says the Lord, and I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau, and I appointed his borders to destruction and his inheritance to the dwellings of the desert? The Jews are indeed struck at

times by the things that happen from divine wrath, having been impious in many ways.

For they went into captivity, their land having been ravaged, their houses desolate, and together with the divine temple consumed- of the burning of Jerusalem. And the pretext for their suffering such things was their choosing to depart from genuineness towards God, and to esteem reverence for the law as worth very little indeed. Therefore, since God said that He loved them, and very much so, it was likely that they would remember the evils of the captivity, and perhaps say this: In what have You loved us? Most economically, the God of all passes over the events that occurred in between, and runs past the narrative concerning them, but he brings back the proof of love to the beginning of the race, I mean, to Jacob, whom He maintains He loved, but had made Esau hated, although by the laws of nature he was bound in brotherhood to the one who was honored. For as the divine Paul writes, "Though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad," He made Jacob the chosen one, from whom the race of the Jews sprang, but He cast out Esau. And we certainly do not say this was out of partiality; for God is not unjust, nor does He execute an unequal or biased judgment upon each of those on the earth; but having foreknown as God the future things of both and the character of each, He deemed the better and more holy one worthy of love.

Just as, of course, He says He had known the blessed Jeremiah before He formed him in the belly, and consecrated him before he came forth from the womb. For He knew, He knew he would be a prophet and be fit for the ensuing mission of making the proclamation of things to come. So also the divine Paul says that we ourselves, who have been justified by faith, have been sanctified, "For those whom God the Father foreknew and predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son," these He is said to have both called and sanctified. Therefore, according to foreknowledge, Jacob was deemed worthy of love, but Esau was justly hated. Therefore, O Israel, He says, I have loved you. For I would in no way speak falsely, if I were to say this to you, and you will know all the more that the word is right and true, by tracing the manner of the love back to the beginning of the race. For both were from Isaac, but Jacob was good in his ways, and a lover of God, whereas the other was harsh and difficult and ready for profanity. For this reason I have inclined to Jacob, and the inheritance assigned to Esau I have destroyed, and I have giv-

en it over to desolation. But I have held together by my own forbearance that of Jacob, that is you, or the land which you have inhabited. And it should be known that Esau is interpreted as Oak;

and Esau was hard and unbending, yielding little to the wood from an oak, and having sold his birthright for a single meal, he was also named Edom, which is earthly. For this reason holy scripture says the country of those descended from Esau is called Idumea, which the Jews conquered at times, and rendered completely impassable and uninhabited. And what would the meaning of the prophecy wish to declare to those of Israel? This, I suppose. For it says He loved Jacob, and for no other reason than that he became a "plain man, dwelling in a house; but He hated Esau, for he became earthly and "profane" according to the voice of the blessed Paul. It was necessary, therefore, for the Jews to know that it would not have happened that they should suffer desolation and the flight from their motherland to foreigners, if they had imitated Jacob. But since they have become zealous and like-minded with Esau, and were detected going in the track of his awkwardness, they have consequently been given to their enemies. But if someone should wish to apply a spiritual contemplation to what has been said, let him understand clearly, that Jacob is interpreted as 'Supplanter;' and he would be a type of everyone who supplants sin. But Esau, as I said, is 'Oak' and Edom is indeed 'Earthly;' and this one would also be a type of everyone who minds only the things upon the earth.

Therefore God loves the supplanter Jacob, but He has hated Esau the unbending and hard, that is, Edom, which is to say, the one who has inclined to earthly things, and has foolishly chosen temporary and perishing things over spiritual goods. our virtue-loving God will destroy the inheritance of those accustomed to live thus. For the things upon the earth are not secure, nor indeed does it have an unshaken state. But that it will surely fall, the inheritance of the Idumeans, completely desolated, will make clear as in a type. But he who is devoted to God will have a safe and secure hope, and will address the Giver of good things, God, saying "In your hands are my lots. Because if Edom should say, 'It has been overthrown, and we shall return and rebuild its desolate places;' thus says the Lord Almighty, 'They shall build, and I will overthrow; and it shall be called to them the borders of iniquity, and a people against whom the Lord is arrayed forever.' The composition of the diction is indeed very difficult, but the meaning is not remote from the

matters at hand. For I have given, he says, the inheritance of Esau to destruction and desolation, since you who are from Jacob have plundered it.

But perhaps the Idumean will say, 'Even if the country we inhabited has been completely overthrown and has come to an end of evils, nevertheless returning we will raise up the desolate cities and villages, and we, the survivors, will inhabit them.' What then does he say to this? Thus says the Lord, 'They shall build and I will overthrow.' And Edom will certainly be called 'Borders of iniquity,' as having been overthrown because of its exceeding great sin; and 'a people against whom the Lord is arrayed forever.' Therefore, the literal meaning is, I think, none other than this. But I would add that the inheritance of those who have a carnal and earthly mindset—for 'Idumean,' as I said, is interpreted as 'earthly'—will in every way and entirely fall, since God overthrows it; for the affairs in this world do not have security, nor indeed perpetual possession. For temporary desire bypasses those who have it, and it changes like a shadow, either when someone is extinguished by death, or when an unexpected disaster has been brought upon them. But even if one of the spiritual Idumeans should choose to build up his own inheritance, either by collecting wealth from injustice, or by reveling in empty opinions, and wishing to preen himself on the powers of this life, he will find the God of all all but resisting and fighting him. For as the divine disciple has written, "If anyone wishes to be a friend of the "world, he becomes an enemy of God.

For He will not cease, as I said, to oppose those who have chosen to mind earthly things, nor will He stop the fight against them. For He always hates the sinner, and sends away the lover of sin. And your eyes shall see, and you shall say, 'The Lord has been magnified beyond the borders of Israel.' When, he says, you have observed the nature of things, and all but with initiated mind you clearly perceive what I just said, then indeed you will surely say in agreement that the Lord has been glorified and magnified in the borders of Israel. For those who have come from Jacob, that is, the Jews, having stumbled, as I said, because of great impiety, have become exiles and captives and conquerable by their enemies. But when God had mercy on them who had fared miserably and been sufficiently punished, they were brought back to their original state, their affairs having brought them to a better condition. And the country was in a good state, and they inhabited the cities, they rebuilt the temple, they rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, and they were again in

a state beyond hope and according to their prayer; but the country of the Idumeans has been desolated, and has remained in evils, not recovering for the better. Therefore God has been glorified in the borders of Israel.

But it must be known that even according to the innermost meaning, even if some of those who know God should be in offense, even if they are disciplined for their sins, it nevertheless does not happen that they perish completely. But God has compassion after disciplining sufficiently, and brings them back again to cheerfulness. But as for those who love an earthly mindset, and look only to the things of the flesh, He fights them continually and prolongs the times of His wrath upon them; "For it will be called to them," he says, "the borders of the lawless and a people against whom The Lord is arrayed for battle for ever. A son honors his father, and a servant will fear his master. And if I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is he who fears me? says the Lord Almighty. He shows them everywhere as going outside the bounds of proper speech, and as choosing to neglect things which they ought least of all to have neglected. For it would be fitting for decent sons, and quite reasonably so, to lay strong claim to the glory of the one who begot them, so that he may be called the child of a most glorious father. And if one were a genuine servant, he would surely pray for his own master to become illustrious and renowned, not insignificant and despised.

For in this way he himself will also share in the prosperity in these things, and he will make the matter a boast, and will consider it a cause for the highest delight. But you, he says, who ought to honor me as a father and also to fear me as a master, will be caught having erred immoderately in both respects of what is fitting, attributing neither honor to me as a father, nor indeed fear as a master. For where is my honor? And where is the fear, if you do not endure to do any of the things that look to my honor, nor indeed, fearing to be punished, do you yield to my master's laws? He said something of this sort also through the voice of Isaiah: "Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken: I have begotten and brought up sons, but they have rejected me. Therefore we must seek the things that are for the glory of God, and indeed hasten to achieve them, knowing what is written: "As I live, says the Lord, I will honor those who honor me, and he who despises me shall be despised. God, the God of all, will be glorified by us as a father, not by our being eager to accomplish what is pleasant and dear to

ourselves; but rather by our having dedicated our mind to him and following his commands everywhere.

And we will fear him as Lord, checking our inclination to wickedness out of reverence for offending him, and welcoming the judgment at the divine tribunal. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. You priests who despise my name. And you said, In what have we despised your name? by bringing to my altar polluted bread. And you said, In what have we polluted them? in that you say, The table of the Lord is despised, and the food placed on it is despised. He strongly blames the indifference of the Jews, to whom the law also proclaims: "Make the sons of Israel devout. For the multitude under their hand generally follows the goodness of its leaders, but it is wronged not moderately when it sees them neglecting their reverence towards God. For indifference to piety is immediately established and becomes sick along with them, and is shaped by the supineness of the teachers. And that the saying is true, the God of all will confirm, saying: "Because the shepherds have become foolish and have not sought the Lord, therefore the whole pasture did not understand and they were scattered. Therefore, the ministers of the divine mysteries are generally found to be a cause for others of a reputable life, if they should choose to live rightly, and to offer worship to God in the fitting manner;

but of shameful and abominable practices, if they before others should be found to have been made sick by such evils. For this reason also the divine Paul wisely proclaimed to those engaged in teaching that it was fitting for them to become examples to their flocks. You, therefore, he says, are the ones who are distinguished by the boasts of the priesthood, who despise my name. And if you wish to learn the manner of this despising, you will hear him crying out: By your offering polluted bread upon my altar. And if indeed you should say to this again: In what way have we polluted them? I will say to you: As you perhaps think, or rather you even cry out by your deeds, that the table of the Lord is despised and the food placed upon it is despised. Since it is necessary to chew over each of the things that have been said and to interpret clearly, come let us say, what then the defiled bread means to signify. It calls defiled, then, that which is polluted and unclean. But it is necessary to know that, according to what seemed good to the lawgiver, loaves were also brought for the sacrifices that were offered; however, they were unleavened

and clean; And He commanded that only the sacrifice of praise be performed with leavened loaves. And what the mystical meaning of these things might be, we have said sufficiently in other places;

but I will now relate it briefly, so that I might not seem to be sluggish in matters so very profitable. Therefore, the unleavened bread would be a sign of an unleavened and pure life. Thus also the divine Paul writes to those justified in faith, saying, "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. And again, "Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. And Christ instructs the holy apostles, saying thus, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Therefore, the bread is a sign of a pure, sanctified, and unleavened life. Therefore, those who brought unleavened loaves and received unleavened bread according to the law were offering them in place of themselves, as still in types and shadows. And since we do not send away from the churches those who are still catechumens and have not yet washed away sin through holy baptism while we are glorifying God, but rather make them partakers, fulfilling the sacrifice of praise, for this reason, he says, the law also says that they should do this "with leavened loaves," speaking enigmatically of leavened bread as one not yet purified, as I said, through holy baptism, but having in himself, as it were, a certain leaven, the remnants of ancient depravity. You therefore, He says, are the priests who despise my name by offering defiled bread on my altar.

Therefore, those who hold the divine priesthood must take great care that nothing of the sort be done in the churches; and to know that precise observance pleases God, but to choose to be negligent and to be careless of such holy things will greatly grieve Him; for that the matter is not without penalty for those who are negligent, how is it not easy to see, when they hear, "You are the priests who despise my name"? For the negligence of the priests is like a contempt for God, and the transgression is referred to the glory that is fitting for and owed to Him. For if you offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if you offer the lame or the sick, is it not evil? Offer it now to your governor; will he accept you, or will he show you favor? says the Lord Almighty. Although the law commanded to inspect the sacrificial animals for blemishes, and to reject the flawed but consecrate the unblemished, at that time they were bringing them to the altar indiscriminately and

without distinction, and there was very little regard at all for the glory due to God; but there was very earnest care to gather as many victims as possible, and to have an abundance of meat both at home and perhaps even in the holy tabernacle itself. So then, O guardians of the law, if someone offers a blind animal for sacrifice, is the victim not evil?

And if indeed a lame or a sick one, will it escape the blame of being flawed? For will you not indeed reckon such things as evil and not suitable for sacrifice? But if you think it is not so among yourselves, let someone bring them as a gift and in the manner of a present to one of the leaders. But he would not accept it, he says, nor, out of respect for the person of the one offering it, would he make the thing bearable, but he will be very angry as if insulted. It is therefore among the most absurd things, to dare to offer to God what not even one among you would choose to receive; and this transgression is great among us. For if we are about to offer something to God, we wretches seek out the baser and second-rate things of what we have, not considering that He did not make Cain's sacrifice acceptable, because he offered rightly, but did not divide rightly, for himself the first and having kept the choicest for himself, but thinking to honor God with the second-best. But the God of all did not accept his sacrifices. For He will not count as an honor the negligence of those who offer. Indeed, the law made unacceptable for sacrifice the blind among the flocks, and also the lame and the sick, with the blind enigmatically signifying those who do not have the divine eye in their heart;

the lame, those who do not know how to walk uprightly in good works; and the sick, those who do not fulfill their service to God very robustly, but feebly and negligently. And He said somewhere through the voice of a prophet, "Woe to those who do the work of the Lord negligently. Therefore, we must have our mind enlightened, and walking uprightly and strong. For then we shall be acceptable to the Lord and holy before the philanthropic God. And now entreat the face of your God, says the Lord Almighty, and pray to him; these things have happened at your hands; shall I accept your persons from you? says the Lord Almighty. He calls to repentance those who have been impious, and says very well that they must shake off beforehand the wrath for their offenses by changes for the better. For He is good and raises up the broken, and heals the contrite, and turns back the straying. And in saying, Entreat the face of our God, He would suggest, and very reason-

ably so, that God turns away from those who do not scruple to offend Him, and that He averts His own eyes, as it were, from those who do not seek His glory, deeming them worthy neither of mercy, nor of love, nor yet of oversight. "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous," according to what is written.

And He said to some of the sinners through the voice of Isaiah, "When you stretch out your hands to me, I will turn my eyes away from you; and if you multiply your prayer, I will not listen to you, for your hands are full of blood. Therefore, those who have sinned must make propitiation, if indeed they might somehow turn back upon themselves the face of God, and might ward off the harm that will come from His turning away. For it defines the transgression of the priests, and refutes their denial. For he would not speak falsely in saying, At your hands these things have happened. For it is as if he says, You have not been silent when others sinned, but you yourselves, as if by your own hands, have become the perpetrators of the impieties against me, and the charges would be of your negligence, with no one in between. But even if some have perhaps feared to make these reproofs against you, still I myself will not be as one of you, nor will I accept the person of the impious. Similar to this is that through the voice of David, "You thought iniquity, that I would be like you. I will reprove you, and set your sins before your face. For the Judge knows no person; but He is upright and incorruptible as God. Because among you also the doors shall be shut, and you will not kindle my altar for free.

Very aptly, as in a prophecy, he for the present reveals beforehand the beauty of the life in Christ; for since the shadow in the law was just about to cease, as was that ancient priesthood, and since the ministers of the truth were destined to be revealed in due time, who would also be liturgists of the worship in spirit, and would seek very eagerly the glory of God, he says that the doors will be shut against them, or that there would be no sweet savor for those who ministered according to the law; "For if he shuts against a man," he says, "who will open? that is, when the truer tabernacle was revealed, that is, the Church, some who still kept the priesthood according to the law would not enter into it, but being shut out as if through unbelief, they would remain outside and would not touch the holy things. For that they have fallen from the priestly ministry would be clear from God saying through the voice of Hosea, "Because for many days the children of Israel

shall sit, there being no king, nor ruler, nor there being no sacrifice, nor altar, nor priesthood, "nor declarations. Therefore, the virtual abandonment of the worship in the Law, and the shutting up of the priesthood according to it, would be signified, as it seems to me, by saying that the doors should be shut upon them, as if the Church would not admit them;

for it is no longer the time for sacrificing sheep, but the God of all is now honored with bloodless sacrifices. But since he adds to this, 'You shall not kindle my altar for nothing,' we say that the word was spoken in a moral sense. for he wishes now to make clear that they have been called to priestly service, and to put fire on the altar, not that they should undermine the glory of him who called them, but that they should honor him in the proper ways, and have the rewards of the priesthood. But those who have not taken thought for such sacred duties, nor yet out of reverence for the sacred ministry refused to offend God, would justly now be punished. for it would be no small crime, and very reasonably so, to count as nothing the participation in the things given by God, and to shake off and very foolishly reject the honors from God. And so Esau was called earthly and profane, because "for one meal he sold his birthright. Therefore when he says, 'You shall not kindle my altar for nothing,' he wishes to make clear that the priesthood is not without its reward; yet it is not beyond judgment, if someone does not approach it in the fitting manner and way. But it must be known that the Hebrew version has another rendering of the meanings, and even the very construction of the wording. for it said:

That you Levites, and indeed the priests, who have the lowest rank in the temple, and are appointed by you to shut the doors, you will not kindle my altar for nothing, that is, you do not perform your service, that is, the priesthood, without a wage, since the people bring you tithes, first-fruits, and thank-offerings. Because of this, therefore, the things of God have been neglected, and the most necessary thing has not been a concern,- I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord Almighty, and I will not accept a sacrifice from your hands. For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name has been glorified among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord Almighty. He therefore clearly rejects the offering of sacrifice according to the Law, and all but departs from his love for the Jews, and makes the priesthood unwanted and the shadow unacceptable, I mean the slaughter of

oxen and the smoke, because this was not his purpose in the beginning either. And this he made clear to us through other prophets also, saying through the voice of Isaiah: "I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of lambs, and the blood of bulls and goats I do not desire, not even if you come to appear before me. For who has required these things from your hands? You shall not continue to trample my court.

If you bring fine flour, it is in vain; incense is an abomination to me; and through the voice of Jeremiah: "Gather your burnt offerings with your sacrifices and eat the flesh, for I did not speak to your fathers about burnt offerings and sacrifices, in the day that I brought them up from the land of Egypt. For the Law was, as it were, a type and a pre-announcement of the worship in spirit and in truth, and "regulations for the flesh," as the divine Paul writes, "imposed until the time of reformation. And the time of reformation would be none other, I think, than the coming of our Savior. For the first covenant also, because it was not faultless, is said to have vanished; for it grew old. But a place was sought for the new and second one, which is beyond all blame and reproach. For it has been spoken through the Son himself, who has also been named the angel of Great Counsel. Therefore he also said, "I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who sent me, he has given me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak. He said, therefore, clearly to those who served as priests according to the Law, that And they are unwanted by him, or rather that he has no will in them who fulfill the sacrifices in shadows and types, and that he would not accept the things sacrificed by them.

But he foretells that his name will be both great and glorious among those throughout all the world under heaven, and in every place and nation pure and bloodless sacrifices will be offered to his name, the priests no longer belittling him, nor indeed negligently offering to him the spiritual services; but being eager to offer up the sweet fragrances of spiritual incense in diligence and fairness and sanctification, that is, faith, hope, love, and the boasts from good works, the heavenly and life-giving sacrifice of Christ having been clearly set forth, through which death has been abolished, and this corruptible flesh from the earth is clothed with incorruption. But you profane it in your saying, The table of the Lord is defiled, and the food placed on it is despised. That those called from the nations will be better and more reasonable than those from Israel, he makes clear to us also through these things.

For among them the sacrifices are pure, and the incense is fragrant, and the name is great from the rising of the sun to its setting; but among you, he says, the altar is not in great glory and that which is fitting for God. For you profane it, saying, The table of the Lord is defiled, and the things on it are despised. And it is likely that the priests did not use such words, but that they cried this out by their very deeds, just as indeed also, "The fool says in his heart, There is no God.

For through the things by which he is seen to be contemptuous, even if he does not say it with his voice, but nevertheless by his very deeds and the wickedness of his life he has all but cried out, "There is no God. For those accustomed to live thus, as if God were not watching, and to do all things without concern, and to act impiously in an extraordinary way, deny God by their very deeds and actions. In this way, therefore, those who have not been diligent to preserve for the holy altar the reverence most especially fitting and due to it, say by the very things they do, The table of the Lord is defiled. Therefore negligence in these matters must be rejected; and if anyone should not choose to do this, he will certainly hear God saying, "I have no will in you, and I will not accept a sacrifice from your hands. But that offending God is a most terrible thing, how could anyone doubt, if he is of sound mind and senses? And you said, These are from hardship. And I have blown them away, says the Lord Almighty. And you bring stolen things and the lame and the troubled; and you offered them as a sacrifice, shall I accept them from your hands, says the Lord Almighty.

He greatly accused the sacrificing priests, as having by no means chosen to inspect for blemishes the victims being brought forward, but rather accepting both negligently and without examination the lame and blind and sick, although the law had clearly commanded that the blemished victims must be rejected. But if indeed any of the priests drove away, holding to the law, the one bringing the useless thing for sacrifice, those bringing it would insist, putting forward the captivity over and over again, and asserting, and very vehemently, that they were not of poor quality, but rather had suffered hardship on the journey, as they were returning from Babylon to Judea. And they brought what was stolen and what was lame and troubled. For when wild beasts come upon them they sometimes ravage the herds, and if they should happen to seize something, then the shepherd, running up, snatches what was seized from their teeth; either by scaring them with the barking of

dogs, or by throwing a staff; this I think is what is meant by "stolen". These they brought along with those whose feet were maimed, and were no longer able to pasture with the others; and they brought the troubled, that is, those that were finally dying, insulting rather than honoring the God of all. But I have blown them away, he says, says the Lord Almighty.

And since you have decided to sacrifice impiously, not at all, he says, I would accept the things from you, nor would I reckon as a fragrant aroma such lawless and unclean offerings. Therefore, we ought to sacrifice, and that very suitably and diligently, and to offer to God simply, not the despised and most dishonorable things, and those worthy of no account, but the prominent and choice things. But if anyone should offer himself to God; for we remember the blessed Paul having written thus: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, "acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship; let him examine the things concerning himself, and let him become as it were a precise fault-finder of his own soul. Let him see whether he is somehow blind, that is, not having the light of truth in his mind; whether he is lame in the foot by not being able to walk uprightly toward any good thing whatsoever; whether he has seizures and sicknesses. for we must not always sleep, "for our adversary "the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour. When therefore we are found sleepless and watchful, the beast runs by. But if he should see us drowsy and neglectful, he makes us his prey, and renders us sick, that is, dead, and altogether inactive regarding the ability to practice virtue. Let him also be far from being vexed, that is, superior to faint-heartedness and excelling in patience.

For just as the way of patience leads to life, so also faint-heartedness leads to death. For we say this thing is a weakness of mind and a paralysis of heart. Therefore also the blessed prophet Isaiah advises us to be rid of such passions, saying "Be strong, you weak hands and feeble "knees, encourage the faint-hearted in mind, "be strong, do not fear. Behold our God, behold the Lord "comes with strength, and his arm with dominion. And cursed is he who was able, and had in his flock a male, and his vow was upon it, and he sacrifices a corrupt thing to the Lord; for I am a great King, says the Lord Almighty, and my name is glorious among the nations. He then defines the curse of the one who sacrifices impiously, and very fittingly. For if, he says, someone should make a vow, and have in his own flocks the male and unblemished animal, why does he not offer this to God, but rather gathers what would be

worth nothing at all; for this thing is an outrage and nothing else. For we have not, like some who are devoted to darkness and errors and profane idolatries, been enslaved to stones and wood; but rather to God the Almighty, and to the Creator of all things, before whom the heavens tremble, and the earth and all who are in it shudder.

He testifies again to the exceeding fairness of those from the nations, saying that the name of the Godhead is glorious among them, august and worthy of admiration; for we shall be disposed in no other way than in this manner. And our Lord Jesus Christ also accepted the centurion, who was an idolater, and indeed said, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. Cursed, therefore, is he who sacrifices to God what is corrupted, although it is possible for him to honor with better things, if he has in his flocks, as I just said, the unblemished and male animal. But it should be noted that he asks for the male for a sacrifice, although the law had commanded to sacrifice females also to God. We say, therefore, that sacrifices according to a vow, that is, the voluntary ones, accepted an unblemished and male victim, and this was a type of the one offering, the law all but instructing that those willing to ascend to God as a fragrant aroma must be courageous and superior to passions and very far from every blemish. But the sacrifices offered for sins always accepted the female from the lambs, and from the kids. And this too was an enigma of the weakness of those offering. For the female is weak, and second to males in strength. And every sin would be done by a weakened mind, and by one no longer preserving spiritual strength. And now this commandment is for you, O priests.

If you will not listen, and if you will not take it to your heart to give glory to my name, says the Lord Almighty, and I will send upon you the curse, and I will curse your blessing, and I will curse it; and I will scatter your blessing, and it will not be among you, because you do not take it to your hearts. He kindly passes over the charges for what has already happened, and grants mercy, setting up those who have sinned, as it were, at the beginnings of clemency. For I think this is what it means when it kindly says, "And now this commandment is for you, O priests. But it threatens for the future, that if they should not choose to do what they ought to be seen doing, and to take into their inner mind and heart the sense of the divine oracles, and become better than they were before, and seek the glory of God, no longer belittling the altar, nor indeed performing the customary rites simply or unex-

amined, he will in every way and altogether declare them accursed and under divine wrath. And I, for my part, think that "I will curse your blessing and I will scatter it," perhaps signifies this. For when God bestows prosperity on some, the things in the fields will be fertile, and they will be fruitful and in abundance, and the flocks will increase to an immeasurable number, and they themselves will be superior to bodily corruption.

But when he removes his blessing, matters will change to the complete opposite, and prosperity will be entirely absent, but rather those things will prevail over which one would rightly grieve. And the Word says these things as in reference to sensible and temporary matters; but it is necessary to know that if someone does not choose to keep the divine commandments in mind, the good things in his mind will completely vanish into nothing, and he will have no fruit from a life that loves God; but he will be bereft of the blessing from above and from God; and he will fall into curses and the penalties resulting from them. Therefore, one must seek the gift of God; and in what way we shall accomplish this, the Savior himself taught us, saying, "Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Then we shall receive the full blessing and unshakable joy, and we will delight in spiritual fruitfulness, and having become full of every good thing, we shall live a truly honorable and praiseworthy life. Behold, I am setting apart the shoulder for you, and I will scatter dung upon your faces, the dung of your feasts, and I will take you away to the same place; and you will know that I, the Lord, have sent this commandment to you, for my covenant to be with the Levites, says the Lord Almighty.

Something is again hidden in the preceding words, which I think I must clearly explain for those who love to listen; for thus they might understand very well what is being shown. The law, therefore, through Moses, crowning with the highest honors the attendant and minister of the divine altars, has placed him, as it were, in the rank of God. For it said that his inheritance is the offering made by fire to the Lord. And somewhere the divine Paul also said, "Behold Israel according to the flesh. Are not those who approach the altar partakers of the altar? For it was the custom from every sacrifice to set apart for God the breast and the shoulder, and the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys, and indeed the stomach, that is, the belly, the letter of the law enigmatically indicating that all our inner parts, of us who offer ourselves as

a fragrant aroma to God, ought to be both sacred and sanctified. For the inner parts are offered, freed from the impurity within them. The shoulder, however, might be understood as a sign of strength. And I say that we, being strong and courageous for every good work, ought wisely to sing that which is through the lyre of the psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. And concerning the inner parts and the sacrifices performed according to the law, a very meager account has been made by us in other writings;

therefore, refraining from saying these things for the present, of the we will hasten to make the clarification of the things set forth, as far as possible. Therefore, since the law commanded that the sacrificial victims must be inspected for blemishes, and that an unexamined victim not be offered at the altar, and that the portions from the victims be set apart for those appointed for the sacred ministry, they neglected the duty to inspect for blemishes, but they kept the commandment of the so-called portions, not putting what is more pleasing to God before their own desires, and strengthening and hastening to confirm what seemed to profit them, collecting the meat from the sacrifices. This He brings for reproof, and says, Behold, I set apart for you the shoulder; and now he has put "I set apart" instead of "I have already set apart and I wish the custom to be observed hereafter. And I have thrown, as it were, or rather I throw, the stomach against your faces. For since they themselves dishonor the altar, for this reason God says, "I will scatter," as if insulting in return. "For he who despises me," he says, "will be despised. I will therefore take you to the same place, that is, in this very thing I will prevail and convict you as you act impiously.

For whereas you have kept the law concerning your portions, and in no way do you tolerate being negligent of the share given to you, but it seems to you to be a vain thing that one must inspect for blemishes, you will therefore know when the doors are shut upon you, that is, being shut out and sent away from the sacred ministry. That I have given this commandment, that is, the covenant, which I made with the Levites. What then is from this? It is fitting for those who minister in the divine mysteries to know that what seems good to God must be accomplished, and that everything which seems to profit them otherwise must be cast behind the master's commands. For in this way they will be sacred ministers, and not lovers of temporal things and overcome by shameful gains. My covenant was with him of life and of peace.

He brings back the discourse to those who were holy and who served as priests with good repute, and shows the sacred ministry to be a truly admirable thing, at least as far as it pertains to law, and the benefit and security from the divine oracles. For as the most wise Paul writes, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Therefore, when he seems to be making his argument concerning Levi, we must consider well the force of the thoughts, not, of course, entirely to him who was descended from Jacob, and was numbered among the twelve sons;

for he did not serve as a priest at all; but we will understand the matter of the priesthood, and this very thing which is the sacred ministry almost being formed, as it were, in the person of Levi; Therefore, he says, my covenant of life and of peace was with him. For the written law had been spoken, as it were, to the most holy Moses, ministered through angels; and it was established through the mediator Moses for those of the blood of Israel, having a promise of life and peace for those willing to live rightly, and to make what seems good to the lawgiver the rule of their own life. And the discourse seems for the present to hint at something of the more necessary things for contemplation. For the law was given to the ancients, that is, to those of the blood of Israel, introducing the tutelage that leads to Christ, and a certain image and a clear prefiguration of the truer things; but the truth is Christ, who is life and peace, and the shadows through Moses depict him to us. Therefore he also said, speaking to the Jews, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me. The lamb being slaughtered on the fourteenth day of the first month signified him, and wishing to save by his blood those willing to anoint the doorposts of their houses; him the red and unblemished heifer, whose ashes with water sanctified the defiled "for the purifying of the flesh," as it is written;

him the unleavened bread, the turtledoves, the young of the pigeons, and in a word the law was full of the contemplation of Christ. Therefore it is fittingly called a Covenant of life and peace. For having been made alive in him, through him again we have had access to the to God and the Father, and we are at peace with him through obedience and faith. And I gave to him to fear me with fear and to stand in awe of my name. He usefully enumerates the glorious boasts of the priesthood, set forth through the mystical teaching of the law. for it especially instilled in the priests the fear of God, persuading them to stand in awe of his name, that is, preparing them to re-

gard with suspicion and to shrink from the Lord's name, persuading them that the reverence due to it should be not casual, but earnest; for what could be more honorable than this? for it is written, that "He who fears the Lord, this one is healthy. and again "The fear of the Lord is glory and a boast. He has therefore testified to those who have ministered piously and truly the steadfastness unto security. For he does not say that they feared simply, but that they feared with fear, that is, as having received the divine fear in their whole soul and heart. For the intensifications in these things, and the reduplication of the words signify to the hearers the steadfastness in virtue of those who are praised.

A law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found on his lips. For the law commanded also to depart from falsehood, to speak right and just things and to love to make the judgment upon each matter true and unperturbed. But again he seems to call our Lord Jesus Christ "truth," whose law he says was carried on the lips of those who lived in a priestly manner. For even if the law was, as I said, in shadows, yet in it was the form of truth, and the outline, as it were in letters, of the evangelical ordinances. For we will find in the types the power of worship in spirit. But that the law formerly given as an oracle to the ancients through Moses was also the law of Christ, the Savior himself will persuade us, saying "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For amen I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one iota or one tittle shall pass from the law, until all things are accomplished. Walking uprightly in peace he went with me, and turned many from iniquity.

To be at peace with God, what else could it be understood to be, both by ourselves and by others who might be knowledgeable of the divine oracles, than to choose to think and to do what he wills, and in no way to offend him, but rather to be eager to achieve aright the glorious conduct and the admirable and most lawful life? Thus also the divine Paul has spoken to us, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, let us have peace with God. For thus indeed, knowing the Lord by nature and in truth, we honor him. But by attaching reverence to creation, and with profane and filthy sin overpowering our thoughts, we have stood against the Lord, and as it were we rise up against him for battle, lifting a stiff neck, and still practicing what is disobedient and stubborn. And the disciple of the Savior will confirm it, saying "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Who-

ever therefore wants to be a friend of the world, makes himself an enemy of God. But having turned to the God of all through faith, and sin having been taken away, there is nothing in between, nor could anyone shut us out from intimacy with him, but we are joined to him, as it were, through all gentleness, and we will walk by a straight path, and we will truly travel the good road, directing both ourselves and others to it.

And it would be most fitting for these holy priests, concerning whom it might be said, most fittingly, Walking uprightly in peace he went with me and turned many from iniquity. For in a way the flock follows the tracks of the gentleness of their leaders, and those who go by a straight path save many, and they easily persuade them to abandon the licentious and accursed life and the ways of iniquity, and to choose and to love the better and admirable things, and those things for which one ought to be praised both by God and to men. For the lips of a priest shall guard knowledge, and they will seek law from his mouth, because he is a messenger of the Lord Almighty. In what manner indeed he turned many from iniquity, and has walked, directing in peace with God, he clarifies by saying, that he bore on his lips, that is, on his tongue, the knowledge of everything necessary for life, and he became "a teacher of the foolish, a master of infants," and to those willing to learn what seems good to the law a true and most unerring interpreter, not turning the meaning of the divine oracles elsewhere, nor indeed teaching "doctrines, the commandments of men; but as a messenger of God making very clear to the people under his hand what was at times dimly prophesied. For he reports not his own will, nor indeed does he utter words from his own opinion; but rather he serves the Lord's decrees.

And I would say, that in these matters it is also true what is said in the book of proverbs: "A desirable treasure will rest on the mouth of the wise, but foolish men devour it. And it would be to the praise of those who report something from God, to add nothing more to what they report, nor indeed to dare to make any subtraction. Holding this of almost no account at all, the unholy crowds of the Pharisees foolishly sank down to this nonsense, so as to teach "doctrines, the commandments of men," and through their own tradition to nullify the divine commandments. For such were the accusations made against them by Christ. Therefore the law concerning the divine oracles is sure; for it is not possible to add to them, and it is not possible to take away from them. Therefore the lips of the priests will guard the know-

ledge of the law, and he will report it, adding nothing. For this reason he is also called a messenger of the Lord almighty, although being a man by nature, because he clearly reports what seems good to God, and the movement of his tongue has law. But you have turned aside from the way and have made many stumble in the law, and have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord Almighty. He contrasts, in a way, the accusations of the indolent with the moderation of the esteemed, and by comparisons with the better ones he exposes what is base.

For just as light shines in darkness, "and power is made perfect in weakness; so also the beauty of virtue makes the lack of it more manifest, if some baseness or sin should lie beside it. Therefore some lived in a manner befitting priests, in peace directing both themselves and others, and were with God, and turned many away from iniquity. For they bore knowledge on their lips, and became accurate interpreters of the divine words. But those after them, to whom the discourse is addressed, have turned aside from the way; for they slipped from what is proper, and have wronged both themselves and others not moderately; and they have made many stumble in the law, that is, they have made them weak and most inactive concerning the need to choose to live according to the law. For if the leadership goes outside of what is fitting, how was it possible for the subject not to follow away in every way and in all things, and for that which is in the inferior lot, and as being deficient in understanding, to slip down together with the leaders? For just as a lawful and holy priest will make the people under his hand imitators of his own right actions; so also the opposite. For if they themselves have corrupted the covenant of Levi, how was it likely that those initiated by them would consider the law venerable?

And I have made you despised and abased among all the nations, because you have not kept my ways but have shown partiality in the law. He goes back to the sins of the fathers, and reminds them also of the ancient accusations. And since they were not secure concerning the keeping of the law, for this reason he says they were given to those who carried them into captivity, pitiable and cast down and having fallen from all mercy; for what of grievous things did not happen for them to suffer? Or in what calamities have the wretched ones not shared? but if you wish, he says, to learn the causes of the wrath that has come upon you, you will hear him saying "Because you did not keep my ways but showed partiality in the law. This, I think, is what it means

to corrupt the covenant of Levi: to choose not to keep the way of life in the law, but to make exceedingly strange judgments on each matter, although God clearly says, "You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall judge the small and the great alike. And by what he says, that for this reason they have been given to their enemies and have become rejected, through these very things he skillfully makes the threat, that if they should not choose to live rightly, he himself would not refrain from punishing them, and the fitting and most suitable justice for those accustomed to do this will follow those who outrage the law.

Did not one God create you? Is there not one father of you all? Why does each of you forsake his brother, to profane the covenant of your fathers? Judah has been forsaken, and an abomination has occurred in Israel and in Jerusalem. At the beginning of our writing on the Prophet, we said that after the return from Babylon and from the land of the Assyrians, those of Israel, caring little for the commandment of the law, were entangled with foreign women. And indeed their practice proceeded to this point of depravity, that even the priests were carried away with the others, and to consider the women they had already married, who were of the blood of Israel, as most dishonorable, and to send them away from their hearths, but to bring into their homes rather the foreign women, both Ammonite, Moabite, and Idumean women. And from this resulted a great profanation of Israel. For those women did not cease from their ancestral customs, but still served idols, and worshipped the host of heaven, and it was somehow necessary for those who had unlawfully married women so corrupted in mind to be defiled along with them and to offend God. And very much has been said about these things in the books of Ezra. Therefore the God of all accuses them, as dishonoring the women of the blood of Israel, that is, of Judah, while impiously devoting themselves to the daughters of foreigners, although the law forbids the union.

But they, having I know not how despised such venerable things, were either carried away by the beauty of the women to licentious pleasures, or perhaps they wished to gain an advantage through friendships with foreigners, so that they might not fight against them as they were now acquaintances and had a close relationship from the marriages. This was nothing other than to insult God through little faith, as if he were unable to deliver from their hand, or to make them superior to the greed of the foreigners.

Therefore, indeed, the matter grieved God in every way. For this reason he says, seeing them disregard their innate affection, "Did not one God create you? Is there not one father of you all? Why does each of you forsake his brother? For there is one Creator of all, and all belong to one Master, who wishes that which was made to be bound together in unity and concord by the laws of love. For if there were two gods and lords, or even more, it would be nothing unlikely for their creations to be constrained by the opinions of their makers, and to harmoniously adopt a hostile stance toward one another, according to what seems best to those who rule. But since there is one God who is through all, and in all, and over all, what pretext could there be for dissension?

And since, in addition to this, there is also one father of all the Jews according to the flesh, that is, the divine Abraham, what is it that persuades one to embrace the disease of lack of love for one another? Or how is it not fitting for those who are near in blood to render love as if by way of a debt? And how is it not near to madness, to be mad for the daughters of foreigners, dishonoring those at home and of your own race, so that you might profane the covenant of your fathers; for they kept the things prescribed by the divine laws concerning foreign women. For they heard, "Your daughter you shall not give to his son, and you shall not take his daughter "for your son; for he will turn your son away from me, and "he will go and serve other gods. But they, having made nothing of the oracle, have trampled upon the law, and as far as it depended on them, they have rendered the covenant ineffective and profane, grieving the Most Excellent One by the transgressions of the laws. And as if astonished at what was being done, and seeing the nation of women from the blood of Judah being taken advantage of with a most unjust hatred, he adds and says, Judah has been forsaken, and among those who dwell in Jerusalem; O, he says, what a paradoxical thing!

Not to Assyrians, not to Medes, not to Persians, not to Elamites, not to the enemies from the neighbors, but to Israel itself and to those who dwell in Jerusalem has Judah become abominable and hated, that is, the race from Judah and the wretched multitude of related women. It must be known that by 'Israel' he names the ten tribes, which had dwelt in Samaria before the times of the captivity, whom Shalmaneser first deported to the Assyrians and Medes; but by 'those dwelling in Jerusalem,' he means those whom Nebuchadnezzar took during the last captivity, when he burned Jerusalem

and the divine temple itself, whom he also carried away to Babylon. He accuses them, therefore, or rather, he makes no moderate outcry against them, because having abandoned the women of Judah, they unlawfully took in those of the foreign tribes, even though, as I have already said, they were clinging fast to their ancestral customs, and were still wallowing in the filth of idolatry. We must also be on our guard ourselves, who have been justified in Christ and through faith in him have obtained a share of the Holy Spirit, from intermingling with any who may be perverted in mind, profane in thought, and not holding the right faith. For these are of a foreign race and of a strange tongue and "speaking perverse things; with whom if anyone intermingles, he will be utterly and completely defiled. For it is written, "He who touches pitch will be defiled.

Since, then, it is possible to bear fruit spiritually in the Church of Christ, what reason could there be for wishing to be joined, as it were, to others, and to have communion with profane synagogues, and to sharpen the God of all against themselves? Because Judah has profaned the holy things of the Lord, in which he delighted, and has practiced strange gods; the Lord will cut off the man who does these things, until he is even humbled from the tents of Jacob and from among those who bring sacrifice to the Lord Almighty. He says that Judah was hated, not by any of the foreigners but by Judah himself, who profaned the law, by being inclined to love foreign women, and choosing to emulate their ways, and to love the apostasy from God, and to be devoted to the worship of idols. For, as I said, some were being carried away to this, following those unlawfully joined to them, and 'letting out every sail' to their wishes, just as indeed at Shittim those who had been redeemed from Egypt were joined to the women of the Midianites, or Moabites. And they slipped little by little into this foolishness and unholy mind, so that they were even initiated to Baal-peor. For this reason the wretched ones utterly perished. Therefore, the God of all curses the one who does these things, and the unholy lover of such outrageous practices;

and if anyone is acting so among the peoples, until he is destroyed from the tents of Jacob, that is, until he should utterly perish, and lose the memory of his having been born; but if anyone should be of those appointed to the sacred ministry, until he is humbled from among those who bring sacrifice to the Lord almighty, that is, until he should perish and be cast out from the priestly rolls. For, as I said, some of the priests also slipped along

with the others into the crimes of the peoples, and were overcome by foreign women, having utterly disregarded the divine oracles. Therefore if he is accursed who provokes God, and attempts to oppose his ordinances, the things in worldly delights, let us reject the curse, and let no account be made of them, but let us rather hasten to brighten our souls with boasts of obedience. For thus the things of the curse will be ineffective, and with the good things from His own gentleness the Master of all will enrich us. And these things which I hated, you did; you covered the altar of the Lord with tears and with weeping and groaning from weariness. Is it still worthy to look upon a sacrifice or to receive an acceptable offering from your hands? The types of sacrifices according to the law were very many. For some were offered for a voluntary vow, others were thank-offerings, and indeed also for sin.

And again tithes and first-fruits, and the tribute of the didrachma, as from legal commandments were offered to the accounts of the priests. Therefore, bringing voluntary things as a sacrifice to God, they brought, as I said, the lame and the blind and things seized from captivity, always recounting evils, calling the devastation this way and that, and the poverty brought upon them from it, although after the return from Babylon the all-powerful God was gladdening them with incomparable gentleness, and richly bestowing those things in which it was likely for them to delight not moderately. Therefore they brought them dejected and in tears, all but lamenting over the sacrifices and saying to the priests, These are from our toils, that is, not procured without labor, but found with difficulty as from sweat and toil. Then, how, he says, is it still worthy for me to look upon a sacrifice, or how could I still make acceptable what is from a disposition that is not good? For it is fitting to sacrifice cheerfully, celebrating and rejoicing. And this, I think, is what was rightly said through the voice of Paul to those collecting the offerings: "Not from grief, or from necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. Therefore, if we should sacrifice cheerfully, God will both look upon it and accept and praise it, and having accepted it, He will honor and bless it. But I say it is one of the necessary things for benefit to apply another interpretation to the preceding words.

For the God of all made accursed, and very justly, the one who profanes the covenant of the fathers, by being joined to foreign women, with those of their own race being cast out and often condemned for no reason at all. And in addition to these things he accused certain of the priests, as showing parti-

ality in the law, and indeed He said: "The Lord will destroy the man who does these things, until he is humbled from the tents of Jacob, and from among those who offer sacrifice to the Lord Almighty. Then to these things he immediately added: You covered the altar of the Lord with tears and with weeping and groaning from weariness. But "You covered" must be understood as: You caused the divine altar to be filled with lamentations and wailing. For both the women who were unreasonably cast out, and those who have strangely endured an unjust judgment from you priests, stand around the altar, bewailing the ways of injustice and from the toils brought upon them, weeping uncontrollably. Then how is it worthy, he says, to look upon a sacrifice or to receive an acceptable offering from your hands? For just as it is true what is written in the book of Proverbs: "Vows from the hire of a harlot are not pure;

so a priest would not be considered pure and blameless, if, having all but said farewell to the divine ordinances, and having trampled upon the fitting law of the sacred ministry, as if having given offense in no way, he should offer the sacrifice. It is a fearful thing, therefore, to minister to God with unwashed hands, as it were. For I myself say it is necessary for those purified with all strength, at least as far as is possible, to undertake so august a liturgy. For such a one is found outside of all blame and of the movements that come from anger. And you said, "For what reason? Because the Lord has been a witness between you and between the wife of your youth, whom you have abandoned, and she is your partner and the wife of your covenant, and he did not make another, and a remnant of his spirit. and you said, What else does he seek but seed God? When God frequently blamed such things, and persuaded them to love women of their own race, but to turn away from foreigners, and to abstain from marriages which the divine law itself had forbidden, they, lacking understanding, would say, What else but seed does God seek? it is said, he says, through the commandment of Moses, "There shall be no one "barren or sterile among the sons of Israel. And somewhere the God of all said to Abraham, "I will greatly multiply your "seed, as the stars of heaven in multitude.

Therefore, he says, the divine purpose looks to multitude and procreation, so that the grace of procreation promised to Abraham might be brought to its fitting conclusion; but whether this is done by us with foreigners or with our own people, it makes no difference to God, for what was promised is

brought to completion. Tell me then, he says, For what reason did the Lord bear witness between you and the wife of your youth whom you have forsaken? But if you should choose to say this, "For what reason did he bear witness" and command that the one who lives with you ought not be sent away, I too will say in response to this: Consider that she is your partner and the wife of your covenant, that is, one flesh with you and joined to you according to law, and God has not created her otherwise. And she is also, I think, a remnant of his spirit. Practically speaking, the man is somehow mingled both carnally and spiritually with the woman joined to him according to law; and just as they have become one body, so in a way they are also one soul, as love binds them and divine law gathers them into a union of soul. Therefore, he calls the wife a remnant of the man's spirit, and as it were a part of his own soul, on account of the union, which, as I say, lies in the oneness of soul according to love.

Do not, therefore, going beyond proper reason, accuse God, as though perhaps He unjustly rebukes those who send away from the hearth the wife of their youth, their partner in covenant and spirit, who has been united to them carnally. And I think that the most wise Paul, moved by this, wrote to those who had believed in Christ, "Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. And the Savior Himself also said somewhere, "Whoever divorces his wife, "except on the ground of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; "and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. And when the Sadducees, who were fond of inquiry, asked, For what reason "did Moses "command to give a bill of divorce" and be rid of a wife? He said again, "Because Moses, for your hardness "of heart, commanded it; but from the beginning it was not so. "For he who created them made them male and female. What therefore "God has joined together, let not man separate. And guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not forsake the wife of your youth; but if, having hated her, you send her away, says the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, impiety will cover your thoughts, says the Lord; and you shall guard yourselves in your spirit and you shall by no means forsake the covenant.

Since the law clearly and openly prescribed that it was permitted for those who wished to serve a bill of divorce on their spouses and be blamelessly rid of the one who lived with them, the words spoken through the Prophet seemed somehow to oppose what had been long ago established, as he brought to judgment and recorded the crime of transgression for one who

dared to expel and get rid of his wife. Most providentially, therefore, through the preceding words, he neither renders the ancient commandment inoperative, nor does he permit some to make it a pretext for unholy undertakings. For it is not because the law permitted the bill to be given that you who give it are therefore also without accountability, so that you may cleave to foreign women. But even if it is permitted to leave a wife, and to do this by legal decrees, guard yourselves in your spirit from forsaking the wife of your youth. For this is better, even if the law has permitted divorce to those who wish it. But if, having hated her, you send her away, says the Lord the God of Israel; that is, if making the dismissal plausible and well-reasoned, you should write on the bill, "Because I have hated her, I will send her away";

then, impiety would cover the your thoughts, that is, if an impious and profane pleasure should prevail over your thoughts, and the pretense for hating is a vain one, but you find yourself overcome by the beauty of others, and wanting to attach yourself to foreign women, beware, lest you abandon [her], or you will be accursed in every way and manner; for I said that "The Lord will cut off the "man who does these things, until he is humbled from the "tents of Jacob and from those who offer a sacrifice to the Lord "Almighty. And this much is for the obvious and ready interpretation; but those called to sanctification through faith must also be on guard, lest they somehow be carried away, as if to women hateful to God and of another race, to the profane heresies. For the pure and blameless teaching of the doctors of the Church is sufficient for them for spiritual fruitfulness, and it makes them, so to speak, fathers of noble children, spiritually begetting from a good heart the boasts of love for God; to whom be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Book 2

You who provoke God with your words, and you said, "In what have we provoked him? in that you say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and in them he has taken delight, and where is the God of justice? I have already said that not in one way, but rather in many, the God of all was embittered against those of the blood of Levi. and charging them with the negligence of the priests he said, "And you brought what was stolen and the lame "and the diseased," and to this he added, "And you "show partiality in the law. For honoring not as was fitting, and through misplaced respect for some of those who approached, they unrighteously condemned the

weaker, and they brought greed upon some, not judging what was just, according to the law, but bringing forth a biased and unequal verdict; or perhaps also seizing the inheritances which in no way belonged to it; delighting also in bribes, and abusing the honors of the priesthood, and lording it over those under their authority. Some of those who had endured injustices, observing those who had this way of life, so disreputable and utterly lawless, were, so to speak, astounded. For there was no rebuke upon them from God, nor the things which at times happen from wrath to those accustomed to show contempt; but rather they were in comfort and luxury.

So, being distressed at such things, and perhaps no longer able to bear in mind the incomparable gentleness of God, they, so to speak, cried out from faint-heartedness, saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in his sight and in them he has taken delight," that is, perhaps the worker of evil is good in the eyes of God; and he takes pleasure in those who have chosen to live so shamefully. For if this is not true, they say, where is the God of justice? For it was necessary, necessary for the ruler of justice not to be so forbearing towards avaricious priests, and who defile the altar, and are especially zealous to do unjust and unholy and unlawful things. And these would be the charges of the faint-heartedness that had come upon them. But it must be known that, according to the force of what is set forth, those who use such uninstructed voices provoke God. For they have decided, so to speak, to rebuke a forbearing God, who waits, and very kindly, for the return of the straying and the conversion to better things of those who have slipped into sin. And so the divine Paul rebuked those who hesitate and still shrink from repentance, saying, "Or of the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?"

But in accordance with your hardness "and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath "in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Therefore, they who are overcome by such cold faintheartedness and let their tongue loose against God, stumble in every way and altogether, but those who give them the occasions for their weakness would be liable to the charge of transgression. It is necessary, therefore, for the chosen ministers, that is, those called to the priesthood, to live holily and to walk uprightly in the Church. For in this way they will be a pattern of good order and all virtue to the people under their charge, who also honor the God of all when they behold the splendid and excellent beauty of the

priests' way of life. And this, I think, is what was rightly said through the voice of the Savior: "Let your "light so shine before men, that they may see your "good works and glorify your Father who is "in heaven. For just as peoples are scandalized when the ministers choose to live disorderly; so they will gain very great and abundant benefit, if they see them fulfilling what is good, and choosing to live as is pleasing to God. Behold, I send my messenger, and he will survey the way before my face, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom you desire.

Since they were saying, "Where is the God of justice?", the word of the prophecy before us has very opportunely passed over to the mystery of Christ. For Emmanuel has become for us from God the Father "righteousness "and sanctification and redemption," and cleansing from all filth, and a putting away of sins, and a rejection of what is more shameful, and a way to things better and more fitting, and a door, as it were, and a leading to eternal life, and through him has come all correction, and an overturning of greed and a finding of righteousness; for what wonderful things have we not been enriched with through him? Behold, therefore, he says, I will send my messenger, and he will survey the way before my face. And through these words, he seems to be making a pre-announcement of the ministry of the holy Baptist. For Christ himself also said somewhere, "This is "he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger "before your face, who will prepare your way "before you.'" Thus also the divine Isaiah signified him to us, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight the paths "of our God.'" When this had happened, he says, and he who was commanded to announce such things had run a little ahead, Suddenly, he says, the Lord whom you seek will come to his temple, and the messenger of the covenant whom you desire;

and the blessed John also affirms, saying to those coming for the baptism of repentance, "I baptize you with water, but a "man comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to "stoop down and untie; he will baptize you with the "Holy Spirit and with fire. Do you understand, then, how immediately and, so to speak, on the heels of the one announcing him, Christ walked, making himself manifest to those throughout all Judea, and appearing, as it were, suddenly and unexpectedly. But we say that the divine Baptist was called a messenger, not indeed on account of his nature; for he

was born of a woman, and was a man like us; but because the ministry of proclaiming and announcing such things to us was entrusted to him. Therefore the name is from the deed, and will not be significant of the substance of an angel. But he says that he will come to his temple, either because the Word became flesh, and dwelt, as in a temple, in the all-holy body from the holy virgin; that is, was believed to be united immediately and economically to a perfect man, I mean of soul and body. or he simply names as a temple the city that is, as it were, sacred and dedicated to him, clearly that is, Jerusalem; that is, as in a type towards that Church.

And he proclaimed his own coming by working wonders in many ways, "preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and "healing every disease and every infirmity among the people," as it is written. The Lord whom you seek will come, therefore, he says, you who say out of faintheartedness, "Where is the God of justice? And he will come teaching the things that are above the law and beyond shadow and types. For he will be the angel of the covenant long ago foretold through the voice of God the Father. For he said somewhere to the hierophant Moses, "I will raise up a prophet for them from among their brothers like you, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them according to all that I command him. And that Christ was the angel of the new covenant, the blessed Isaiah will also make clear when he says concerning him, "Because every garment gathered by deceit and "every cloak with a price they will repay, and they will wish if "they had been burned with fire. For a child is born to us, a son "is also given to us, whose government is on his shoulder, and his name is called "Angel of Great Counsel," it is clear, that is, of God the Father. Therefore he also said, "I do not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me, he gave me "a command what to say, and what to speak.

For the word of the Savior was not human, but as from God the Father it came to us through the Son according to nature; For he is the Word of the one who begot him; and he will confirm this, saying through the voice of David, "My heart has brought forth a good word. Behold, he is coming, says the Lord Almighty, and who will endure the day of his coming? or who will stand in his sight? Similar to this and very much like it is that through the voice of Isaiah, "Be strong, you weary hands and feeble knees, "be encouraged, you of fainthearted mind, be strong, do not "be afraid; behold, the Lord is coming with strength, and his arm "with dominion. For showing

that he would indeed be very near, or rather, that he was already present, he states clearly that the time of his visitation in this world would not be for a long postponement. And that the power of the economy will not be contemptible to some, nor would it be bearable to the disobedient, he teaches, saying, And who will endure the day of his coming? or who will stand in his sight? And he calls his coming the entry of the Only-begotten in the flesh into this world; and his sight as it were a manifestation. For though he is invisible by nature as God, he became visible, having taken on our likeness.

And the psalmist had clearly proclaimed this in the spirit, saying, "God "will come manifestly, our God, and will not be silent. "For the Word became flesh," as the divine John says, "and dwelt among us," and he was in the form of a servant. And "to those who loved his appearing" he was in no way burdensome; but rather he became mild and gentle, and the giver of eternal life. And God the Father said somewhere concerning him, "Behold, my beloved servant will understand, "in whom I am well pleased. He will not strive nor cry out, "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 to truth. But to those who dishonor the salvation through him, and do not accept the purification through faith, it happened that they suffered the most shameful of all evils; for the wretched have perished. Therefore he also said to the crowds of the Jews, "Truly, I say to you, that unless "you believe that I am, you will die in your sins. And John said somewhere, "He who believes in "him 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. And the baptist also proclaimed to those from Israel, "And already the "ax is laid at the root of the trees;

therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit, is cut down and cast into the fire. Therefore, to the disobedient the time of his coming and of his appearance has become unbearable and not very tolerable. for they were convicted, as they themselves the destroying their souls, and being dead in their own sins, because of not choosing to think rightly, and to receive into mind and heart the purification through faith. Who then, he says, will endure the day of his coming? Or who will stand when he appears? That is, who then will be so terrible and harsh, as in the time and day of his entry into the world; clearly, that which is with the flesh, through which he would be both tangible, that is, visible; to stand and remain unbroken? For he will be pun-

ished in every way and altogether, and will pay the bitter penalties for his folly. For he comes in like a refiner's fire and like the launderers' soap, and he will sit refining and purifying as silver and as gold, and he will purify the sons of Levi and will pour them out like gold and silver. The discourse in these things is made as from a likeness of our own affairs, but it would bring an ineffable revelation of a mystery to the more intelligent. For those wise in these matters test silver and gold, melting down in fire all that is counterfeit and most unbeautiful in them.

But the divine fire from heaven, that is, the grace through the Holy Spirit, by which it would happen that we, even while living, are perfected in the spirit, when it should come into our mind and heart, Christ sending it in, then, yes then, it wipes away all the filth from sin, and consumes the defilement from what was already transgressed; and so it makes those who have it purified and most approved, and, so to speak, spiritually reforges them to newness of life, and henceforth shows them to be bright and sanctified vessels, prepared for honor, useful to the great house, that is, the Church. This divine and spiritual fire the wondrous John indicated, saying, "I baptize you in water, but after me comes a man whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and untie; he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire. We remember also Christ himself saying, "I came to cast fire upon the earth, and what do I wish, if it is already kindled? Therefore, since those of the blood of Israel made no small outcry against the impurity, or rather iniquity, of the Levites, or rather, because of them, they continually provoked the God of all, speaking certain contradictory things and daring to say, "Everyone who does evil is good in his sight, and in them he has taken pleasure, and where is the God of justice?

He usefully foretells that in due time Christ will shine forth, who puts all our sin out of the way, and makes his own priests all-holy, and testing them like gold or silver in the fire, that is, making them approved and brightened. For such, for the most part, are the ministers of the Church, to whom it would be fitting, and very reasonably so, to say that which is through the voice of David, "For you have tested us, O God; you have refined us as silver is refined. For to those of Aaron the vestment according to the law was a garment; but for the chosen in Christ and those appointed to the priesthood, the bright, sacred, and holy vestment will be Christ himself. Therefore God the Father also said through the lyre of the psalmist concerning the church

of the Gentiles, "I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall rejoice with exultation. For salvation, Christ himself, is the admirable vestment of his own priests, or rather, also of all who have believed. "For as many of you," it says, "as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. And they shall be to the Lord, offering sacrifices in righteousness; and the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord, as in the days of old and as in the former years. They will be dedicated, he says, to God; for this, I think, is the meaning of *And they shall be to the Lord, offering*.

And we will be dedicated to God, living no longer for ourselves, but cleaving in every way to love for him, and having chosen with all our strength to do right in those things that seem good to his divine commands. The wondrous Paul also said something of this sort concerning the of Christ, the Savior of us all "For one died for all, that they who live should live no "longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and "was raised. and describing to us, as it were, the beauty of his own way of life, and making manifest the power of the mystery according to Christ, he said again, "I have been crucified with "Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I "now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who "loved me and gave himself for me. Therefore, he says, they will be bringing offerings to the Lord, that is, they will be devoted to his will alone, not "minding earthly "things," not loving the defilements from injustice, not choosing to honor greed against some, but rather bringing sacrifices of righteousness. And it seems to me that Paul spoke very wisely, "For when the priesthood is changed, "there is of necessity a change of the law as well.

For we who are called in Christ approach the sacred ministry no longer through blood and smoke, nor indeed do we bring lambs or kids to God, but rather we fulfill in the churches the holy and spiritual sacrifice understood in Christ, and setting him forth for sanctification, and indeed also for participation in life eternal, as a choice incense, we bring the sweet smells from good works, and sacrificing to him righteousness, we are confident that we shall be accepted. For it is written that, "Honor the Lord from your righteous "labors, and offer to him the firstfruits of your fruits of righteousness. For God is not pleased, I think, with other sacrifices, except with such as these, the God of all. He said, therefore, concerning those called in Christ to the sacred ministry, that they will be better than the first ones, not

slaughtering sheep like them, nor indeed defiling the altar by offering polluted bread; but as in the order of incense, offering righteousness to God, and the spiritual fragrance of the evangelical life. And they will so perform the acceptable worship, as in no way to fall short of the fitting sacrifices in the days of eternity, that is, in the life of the holy spirits in heaven, who spend continuous and long days, or times; and to be equal also to the times of old, that is, to the worship of the saints, who have been in the times of old. For approval came to the ancients through obedience;

thus Abraham offered his son to God, "and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, and he was "called a friend of God. So also Noah "prepared the ark "for the salvation of his household," as it is written. Therefore, he says, the sacrifice of Judah will be pleasing, that is, of the people bearing the circumcision in heart and spirit, and indeed of Jerusalem, the spiritual one, that is, of the Church; just as that of those who have the days of eternity and that of the saints who lived in former times, who became well-pleasing through obedience and faith. And the divine Paul enumerates these in the epistle to the Hebrews, saying many are justified by faith. And I will come near to you in judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulteresses and against those who swear by my name falsely, and against those who defraud the hireling of his wages and those who oppress the widow and those who strike orphans and those who turn aside the judgment of the sojourner and those who do not fear me, says the Lord Almighty. According to the purpose of the matters, our discourse proceeds again even in these things. For those from Israel were saying ignorantly, "Everyone who does evil is good in his sight, "and he has taken pleasure in them, and where is the God of "justice? and what the pretext was for such terrible loose talk, has already been said; nevertheless it will be said again.

For since some of the priests heedlessly, and indeed of the others who were more distinguished and eminent in the highest honors, went to every kind of wickedness and evil deeds, and he appeared beyond measure forbearing- God having care for them; for He is good, kind, gentle, and loving to humanity; for this reason some were belching forth words from unrestrained faint-heartedness. But that there will be in due season a transition to the better for those appointed to sacred service, Christ transforming them into newness of life, and transferring them to good order and to a glorious state and life, he has clearly indicated. But that He would not then accept the

practitioners of wickedness, nor would He deem them worthy of praise and account; but rather He will judge them, and will demand justice for their outrageous lives, he makes clear by saying And I will draw near to you in judgment, that is, I will be brought forth as a judge, and I will be a swift witness, that is, a volunteer and called by no one. For I will pronounce sentence against the wicked. And I will bring out the judgment against them; not with another revealing the things in them, but as God knowing the unseen and hidden things, and bearing witness through the conscience of each of those who have sinned.

And the divine Paul said somewhere that in due season those throughout the whole earth will be presented before the Judge, "their conflicting thoughts accusing or even defending them on the day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men through Jesus Christ. Observe, then, how he says that those who have transgressed both in secret and in public will be brought to judgment. For first he names sorcerers and adulteresses, then those who swear falsely; and these things are hidden and done secretly; for who would ever practice magic openly? Or how would an adulteress choose to be seen by anyone? And I think being hidden is a concern also for those who choose to swear falsely. And the blessed David will refute such foolish people, saying, "Understand, you brutish among the people; and you fools, when will you be wise? He who planted the ear, does He not hear? Or He who formed the eye, does He not see? For absolutely nothing is unseen by God; He alone knows the hidden and the manifest evils. But those things are done secretly and as if in darkness; yet he adds to them also the manifest things, I mean defrauding a hired worker of his wages, and greed and oppression, which some might do against the weaker, I mean widows and orphans. And he adds to these also those who pervert right judgments and those who do not fear him.

And these would also be those who in some other way, besides those just mentioned by us, grieve God. I will be, he says, therefore, a judge and a swift and volunteer witness against sorcerers and adulteresses, and the practitioners of other evils. It is likely that such things were dared by some at that time, and because of them the blasphemy of the many against God occurred. It is necessary, then, with all one's strength to shun evil things, and to run towards better things, and to hasten to accomplish those things by which one might become full of all praise and gentleness. For in this way he will

not share in the things brought by divine wrath upon those accustomed to transgress, but will be within reach of the rewards and glory which God would give to those who love him. Because I am the Lord your God, and I have not changed; and you, sons of Jacob, have not refrained from the sins of your fathers, you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Again he removes them from unholy thoughts and, moreover, words. For to suppose somehow, either that the God of all has been turned away from willing good things to the contrary, or that He no longer loves righteousness, but accepts the lovers of wickedness, how is this not ignorant, but rather discordant and utterly unholy, and filled with the highest impiety?

When, therefore, you see called to judgment, he says, the sorcerers among you, that is, enchanters—these are certainly whispering and scurrilous women—and the practitioners of other evils, then, he says, you will recognize through the events themselves, that I am the Lord your God, who of old and now is both good and a lover of virtue. For I know no turning or change. But I am always and unchangeably that which I am; but you, he says, although being descended from Jacob, a man who loved God and was good and always hated wickedness, and served God, you have not become zealous for his ways; but you have rather imitated the disobedience and intractability of your fathers, who for this very reason went away as captives, leaving the land that bore them, and have been enslaved to the enemies who captured them. And you also have turned aside from my laws and have not kept them. Therefore God is always unchangeable, and as it were fixed in goodness, and unshakable in righteousness; but they have become, so to speak, ones who have kept unchangeableness in evil, and the best imitators of their fathers' impiety. Christ is also found saying this somewhere. For He rightly pronounces woe upon the workshop of the uninstructed scribes and Pharisees. And He spoke thus: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

for you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' Therefore you bear witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets; and you, fill up the measure of your fathers. Therefore it is necessary for us, if we are truly sound of mind and in a stable mind, to emulate as much as possible the most approved of the fathers, and to shake off the imitation of those who are not good. Or if someone should not choose to do this,

but should follow simply and without examination those who have gone before in time, he will surely be like the children of the Greeks, whom if one should mock because, having abandoned the knowledge of the truth and left behind the God by nature, they worship stones, they always bring up the custom of their own fathers. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord Almighty. And you said, "In what shall we return? Will a man supplant God? because you supplant me. And you will say, "In what have we supplanted you? Because the tithes and first-fruits are with you. and you who look are looking at them, and you supplant me. The year was completed, and you brought all the produce into the storehouses, and in his house will be its plunder.

Having very well put a stop to the slander against himself, and having shamed them as much as possible with fitting defenses, he calls to repentance those who have sinned, saying that he will again grant them his usual gentleness, and very readily. For just as he inflicts fitting penalties on those who wish to live wickedly; so to those who, as it were, go backwards, and indeed also refuse to sin any longer, he truly rejoices, everywhere cutting off despair as a cause of destruction. From this it is possible to see what a terrible disease they bring into life, those who counterfeit the grace of repentance, and ignorantly claim for themselves the name of purity. And yet how is it not better to understand, that thinking and having to say that they are pure brings upon them the charge of the utmost impurity? For it is written, "You tell your sins first, that you may be justified. And our divine David also sings somewhere, "For I know my iniquity, and my sin is ever before me. "For no one is clean from filth," according to what is written. Therefore, those who are so feebly sick are in need of the good things that come from repentance, and of the gentleness from above that thoroughly washes the defiled one and justifies the ungodly. Therefore he calls to repentance out of gentleness those who have sinned. But to those who in turn ask and wish to learn the manner of their sin, he says, "Will a man supplant God?

For you are supplanting me. Now to "supplant" is to snatch away, or to cheat, and to think that one might escape notice when lying, perhaps, or even when doing some of the most wicked things. And so Esau was indeed angry with Jacob, and explaining the reason for his murderous intent he said, "For he has supplanted me now this second time; he has taken my birthright, and now he has taken my blessing. Will it then survive, he says, a

man of God, or will he plunder the one who knows all? Why then do you trip me up? But I think it is necessary for a precise clarification of the concepts before us to say now a few things which are also written in the books of Ezra. For when those from Israel returned to Judea, having left the land of the Babylonians, they dwelt in Jerusalem; and the divine temple had been raised, and the orders of priests were finally in order, with singers and sacred psalmists and those set over the gates. Then what happened after this? The redeemed became slothful with regard to the necessity of holding to the divine ordinances. For they did not keep the law, and the transgression of the divine commandment was considered as nothing by them. And they brought for sacrifice, with difficulty and reluctance, the blind and stolen and lame and afflicted.

Then, having harvested in the fields at the proper time the ear of grain and indeed the other seeds, and gathering grapes from the vines, and pressing the fruit of the olive, they did not bring tithes, and the firstfruits according to the law, so that the orders of priests, having self-sufficiency, might apply themselves without distraction to the worship of God, and might remain at the liturgies appointed to them by the law. Therefore, since nothing was being brought, the sacred ministers of the divine altars were scattered, and the temple thus remained desolate, with no sacrifice being performed, nor anything else being done of the things that lead to the glory of God. Therefore, everything in the fields was then being destroyed, and they were oppressed by famine, and indeed they had slipped into such necessity and want, as even to wish to sell their own children to those who had food, until Ezra, having been called to a perception of the divine wrath, charged the leaders of Israel concerning these things; and thus with difficulty they brought tithes and firstfruits, and then the sacred ministers ran in and stood performing their usual duties in the temple. Why then, he says, do you trip me up? The year was completed, the fruits were gathered, and yet the tithes and the firstfruits according to the law are still with you. And in his house, he says, shall be his plunder. It is as if he were to say:

You have gathered the fruits from the fields into your houses, and perhaps you think they are safe for you and lie very well, but in the very houses they will disappear, and the matter will be no different from plunder. For you will be oppressed by famine, even though you have gathered, he says, with sweat and difficulty what was found. We shall know, therefore, from this, that it

will be counted as a great fault, not to offer thanksgivings to God and not to render sufficient gratitude for what he has bestowed for his glory. But if we do this, he will bless us in every way and in all things, and will lavishly bestow good things; but if indeed, having drawn back our hand, we keep what was given for our own luxuries alone, he will neither give more readily, but will scatter, as it were, even that which was gathered with difficulty. For it is necessary to be generous and willing to share, and to set before others for participation the gifts from God. Test me now in this, says the Lord Almighty; if I will not open for you the floodgates of heaven, and pour out for you my blessing, until it is sufficient; and I will set apart for you what is for food, and I will not destroy the fruit of your earth, and your vine in the field will not fail, says the Lord Almighty.

And all the nations will call you blessed, because you will be a desirable land, says the Lord Almighty. Again he lets go of the accusations, and frees them from every charge, and promises to graciously and without remembrance of wrongs grant their wishes, and to delight them with honors beyond description. And he wishes them to learn by experience itself and by facts, that bearing fruit will be in every way beneficial for them. And if they should choose to do this, he promises to bestow an abundant supply of rains, and to distribute the blessing lavishly, so that they may have an abundant sufficiency of edible things, and simply a satisfactory share of the good things from the earth. For I will set apart for you, he says for food. But you will understand **I will distinguish** as **I will set apart**, that is, that each of the things that grow from the earth has its own season, in which it might happen to grow or ripen. And He clearly promises that the fruit of the earth will be free from all harm, and that the vine in the fields will be full of clusters and exceedingly productive of good wine, and when these things have been brought to fulfillment, He says they will then be blessed, and be called a desirable land, that is, one worthy of love because of its fruitfulness and fertility.

Therefore, if anyone has bowels of compassion, he will surely encounter such a God, and will lay up treasure in heaven, and will eat the fruits of his own labors, according to what is written, and will not be like that harsh and foolish rich man, whose land, the Savior says in the gospel parables, had brought forth plentifully. For he said, "What shall I do? I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and I will say to my soul: Soul, you have many

goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, be merry. But while he was thinking such things and being foolish, God says, "Fool, this night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be? Therefore, as I said, the one who shares is full of blessing. Such a one will also have spiritual rains watering the heart, and sufficiently making it glad, and he will bring forth the fruits of piety, in different ways at different times, and as it were distinguished, excelling now in love, now in kindness and brotherly love, in courage and patience. And he will be like a fruitful and most fertile land, illustrious and renowned and truly thrice-blessed. "For a good name is to be chosen rather than great riches," as it is written. You have spoken harsh words against me, says the Lord. And you said, "How have we spoken against you? And you said, "It is vain to serve God;

and what profit is it that we have kept his charge, and that we have walked as suppliants before the face of the Lord Almighty? And now we call strangers blessed; and those who do lawless things are built up; they have resisted God and have been saved. These things those who feared the Lord spoke, each to his neighbor; and the Lord gave heed and listened. When God wishes to correct some of his own who have slipped into sin, He brings their transgressions into the open, and clearly convicts them, and as it were strikes them with reproaches, so that, blushing at their own offenses, they might choose to turn to better and more useful things, and thus be saved, having sought mercy from Him. Therefore, he also accuses those of Israel on another account, and weaves a rebuke that is, as it were, common also to those after them, knowing the matter to be beneficial and salutary for all. For whatever happened to those before us as types, "These things were written for our admonition," as the most wise Paul says. Therefore, he accuses them of unbridled speech, and of choosing to grieve him with slanderous words. For he says, you have spoken harsh words against me. And what then was the manner of the slander? You said, he says, "It is vain to serve God," and that there is no profit in wishing to keep his charge, that is, the ordinances of the law.

Besides this, you say, it is futile also to beseech him, that is, to offer prayers for whatever you might choose. And the God of all is surely true, if he should both say these things and accuse those of Israel. But what indeed was the pretext for the sinful speech of those who had spoken nonsense, it is necessary to say. For countless nations grazed the earth; but from all of them

God chose one, the nation of Israel, and it has been called his portion and his measuring line and his inheritance. And having made them his own, he instructed them by the law, he helped them through the prophets. And what did the frenzied Israel do in response to these things? It has worshipped the host of heaven, it has served idols, it said to the carved images, "You are our gods. The God of all, being reasonably indignant at such terrible impieties, disciplined them in many ways, calling them to repentance by famines, by blight, by scarcity of fruits, by the locust and the cankerworm, by mildew and by caterpillars. For he did not yet wish to strike with a mighty hand, but rather, so to speak, to scare them away with terrors and still measured motions to choose to do what is profitable, and to love the God who is by nature and truly God.

But since they had no regard even for being struck with measure, and went away unbridled into every form of impurity, he sent them into captivity, and caused them to fall under the hand of the Babylonians. But when they were called back to Judea, God having compassion on them, and they rebuilt the walls of the city, and they built up the temple, they again turned to indifference, not fulfilling their vows, not following the ordinances of the law, not bringing tithes or firstfruits; but sluggish and scarcely coming to sacrifice, and slaughtering the lame, the blind, and the diseased, and doing these things improperly, God no less disciplined them with famine and barrenness. But they, although it was necessary, if they were good and knowledgeable of what was profitable, to heal the grieved God of all by returning to what is better, made an unintelligent outcry. For when they saw the neighboring nations, although not knowing God, but rather worshipping carved images, and sick with the ultimate error, were in comfort and luxury, they said foolishly, "He who serves God is vain," and "what profit is it that we have kept his commandments? For we, he says, the keepers of the law are in barrenness and plagues, and we have gone into captivity, although always falling down and becoming suppliants to the Lord Almighty; but those who do none of such things have no plague, no pain.

Therefore we call strangers blessed, and they who do lawless things are built up, they have resisted God and have been saved. For in truth those who wander act against the glory of God in many ways, both offering sacrifices to molten images and "saying to the wood, 'You are my God,' and to the stone, 'You have begotten me.'" These things, he says, those who fear the Lord

spoke among themselves. The accusation is again blasphemy, and a clear proof of the worst sicknesses. For the words are of a sick mind, and to say anything against God is the God-hated filth of a drunken intellect. And that he listens to such words not as it were incidentally, but with diligence, he has assured us, saying: "And the Lord gave heed and heard." For the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world, and that which holds all things together has knowledge of the voice. And if any word should be spoken against his divine glory, this will be heavy and as it were unbearable, although he is accustomed to be exceedingly patient; for this very reason he also said, "You have made your words heavy against me. Therefore it is necessary, then, even if we are in troubles, while God disciplines us for our benefit, not to be exceedingly despondent, nor indeed to think that one who so loves virtue would be unsparing of good things; but rather to examine carefully the things for which we have given offense, and thus to appease, and to ask for mercy.

And if indeed some lovers of sin are in worldly comfort, having the enjoyment of temporary things, it is fitting to attribute the reason to the ineffable economies of his long-suffering toward them. And he wrote a book of remembrance before him for those who fear the Lord and revere his name. and they shall be mine, says the Lord Almighty, in the day that I make for my special possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him well. While those of Israel were mocking him, and speaking unholy nonsense against him, "he gave heed and heard. Then, though it was necessary to impose the fitting penalty on the sinners, and to exact an account for their loose-tongued words, as God he passes over even this, forgetting injuries; but he writes a book of remembrance for those who fear him, concerning whom I think somewhere David himself also said to the one writing the book, "And in your book all shall be written. And we will find our Lord Jesus Christ saying to the holy disciples, "Do not rejoice that the demons are subject to you; but rejoice rather, that the names of yours has been written in heaven. And the divine David very fittingly curses the people of the Jews who killed Christ, saying thus, "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and let them not be written with the righteous.

Therefore the book of remembrance is written for those who fear God, whom He says will also be His own and most well-known at the time of acquisition, when Christ sits upon the throne of His glory, attended by angels, "and He will set the sheep on His right, but the goats on His left, and He will

say to those on His right, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’” For then He will choose them, that is, He will make them chosen, yielding nothing in affection to our fathers, who dote on their own children, especially when they are wise and obedient, and hold their parents in the greatest reverence. And you will turn and see the difference between the righteous and the unrighteous, and between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve. Then indeed, he says, ceasing from such rotten idle talk, and checking your unrestrained and undisciplined tongue, you will no longer revile the God who loves virtue, but having almost cast off your drunkenness, and as it were turning from error, you will see very well what and how great is the difference between the righteous and the lawless, between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve. For the lawless and unruly, and those who shake off the yoke of slavery under Him, will go away to destruction and into endless punishment; “There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,” as it is written;

but the good and God-loving, and those knowledgeable in the divine laws, and cultivators of every virtue, radiant and sanctified, will be crowned with the crown of incorruptibility, and being in the mansions above, they will live together with the holy angels, and being shown as partakers of the glory of Christ, they will delight in the good things for an eternal life, “What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and has not entered into the heart of man,” as it is written. Yet seeing the lovers of wickedness prospering in this life, some of the saints have had doubts, but they did not fail to know that they will have the end of their life in destruction. And so the blessed Jeremiah says something like this: “Righteous are You, O Lord, that I may plead with You, yet I will speak judgments to You. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? All who deal treacherously have thrived. You have planted them, and they have taken root; they have borne children and produced fruit. You are near in their mouth, but far from their reins. And You, O Lord, know me; You have tested my heart before You. Then again he says, “Consecrate them for the day of their slaughter. How long will the earth mourn? You see how he has fallen into a difficulty of thoughts, but he did not fail to know the end of the wicked.

“Because all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass,” as it is written. For behold, a day is coming, burning like a furnace, and it

will burn them, and all the foreigners and all who do lawless things will be stubble, and the coming day will set them on fire, says the Lord Almighty, and neither root nor branch will be left of them. For it is consistent to understand that the day of judgment will be in fire, "in which the heavens will pass away with a rushing noise, and the elements will be dissolved, being burned up, and the earth and the works in it will all be burned up. But we look for new heavens and a new earth according to His promises; for thus said one of the holy disciples. Therefore, he says, the day of the Lord will come like a furnace, and it will burn up all the foreigners, and to these it will add those who do lawless things; for the judgment will be one for both. But see how cleverly he now makes mention of the foreigners. For since they were calling them blessed, saying, "And now we call the arrogant blessed, and they are built up doing "lawless things, they resisted God and were saved," for this reason he says they will be burned up, as having warred against the glory of God, and having chosen to worship the creation rather than the creator.

And we also consider in another way that idolaters are called foreigners and those who in some other manner have been alienated from the holy and chosen race, such as I mean the heretics, concerning whom it might be said, and very appropriately "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us. these, having cast off their divine noble birth, and being separated from the holy and chosen race which has come to be for a possession; clearly through faith in Christ; such people, at any rate, will be food for the all-consuming fire. and those who do lawless things will lie in equal portion before God, even if they happen to be numbered among those who have believed and have been chosen, and know the God who is by nature and in truth. for this is not enough for them for the washing away of sin, if it is true that "faith without works is dead. For faith in Christ justifies, and frees from the stain of previous sins. But if after this someone should be found lazy and fallen away, inclined toward the passions of the flesh and of the world, he has, as it were, put faith to death in himself, adding none of the praiseworthy things, but rather relapsing to the old worthlessness of life.

concerning such people the divine disciple also says "For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.

For what the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire." Therefore, those who do lawless things are on a par with the foreigners, and they will be as stubble, and will be burned up just as if fire were brought upon it. For the wheat is gathered into the barn, as the Savior also says concerning the holy reapers; but the chaff is burned with unquenchable fire. and there shall not be left for them a root or a branch, that is, they will have no hope of growing again to life, and by life I mean that which is lovely and in glory with God, that which is understood as in holiness and blessedness. For if the root is not entirely cut off, nor the branch, as it were, removed from the depths, some hope is saved of growing again; "For there is hope for a tree," according to what is written; "for if it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its shoot will not fail.

But if indeed from below and from its very root, as I said, it should be dug up, and endure a savage cutting of the plants, all hope for it of being able to grow again to life will surely perish with it. Therefore, as by a likeness from plants, he says that all hope of the lovers of sin has been removed. And this the divine Isaiah clearly proclaims, saying "Their worm will not die, and their fire will not be quenched, and they will be a spectacle for all flesh. And for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall arise, with healing in its wings; and you shall go out and leap like calves released from their bonds. and you will tread down the lawless, for they will be ashes under your feet on the day that I am preparing, says the Lord Almighty. The only-begotten Word of God has indeed shone forth, having appeared in this world, having put on our likeness; for he says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us; and while we were in mist and darkness, like a sun, he shines around us with his own rays, and sending a brilliant beam of the true knowledge of God into the hearts of believers, he has made them pure and wise and knowledgeable in every good work. And he showed us the Father in himself, through his ineffable instruction making us most skillful and wise, and having our mind full of the knowledge concerning him.

But having been brought to this brightness and been enriched, as the blessed Paul says, "in every thing in word and in all knowledge and in all wisdom," "we see now in a mirror and in a riddle, and we know "in part. But that which is perfect will come in due time, and then we shall be in the fullest knowledge, when Christ shines on us again from heaven, and abolishes the

knowledge that is partial and in a riddle, but illuminates us as the most perfect, and fills our mind with a certain divine and ineffable light, and makes it radiant by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. For the divinely-inspired Paul said, "Whether prophecies, they shall be done away; whether knowledge, it shall "cease. But we say that we shall not proceed from knowing in part to knowing nothing at all, far from it. For in what way will the time of the future hope not be a loss for the souls of the saints, if they must entirely lose even what they have, not gaining better things, not directing their mind to any of the things that are above, but rather selling off even what has already been acquired, sometimes not without hardship? But prophecies are abolished, and knowledge will cease, when that which is far superior is clearly introduced into our souls.

For just as if someone, when a single lamp is shining in a house and casting a moderate gleam on those who see it, should bring in a torch, it is entirely necessary, so to speak, that the light of the former become inactive, yielding to the immensity of the greater one; and just as when the sun illuminates the world under heaven, the brightness of the stars is left somehow inactive; so too, when a more radiant knowledge is introduced into us, the lesser will be somehow abolished. And Christ also said somewhere to the holy apostles, "These things I have spoken to you in "parables; the hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in "parables, but I will tell you plainly about the "Father. Therefore, to the saints, who have greatly feared the name of God and have become practitioners of every virtue in this world, Christ will shine forth, like a sun of righteousness, casting the rays of the most perfect knowledge, and delivering them from all sickness of the soul, and putting their former affliction as far away as possible. For this is "Healing in his wings; as was said concerning the eagle and its young, according to that which was spoken by the all-wise Moses concerning God and those delivered from Egypt: "As an eagle will shelter its nest, spreading its wings, "it received them. Therefore, he says, there will be healing in his wings. For in this age, the stirrings of the flesh in us are somehow terrible;

for it incites the mind to improper pleasures, and the law of sin rages in our members, even if it happens to be conquered through the goodness of the saints, with Christ helping. And the mind is somehow intoxicated, being tempted in another way by passions; for boasts attack, and worldly ambitions and angers and avarice and the other evils. But since through Christ we have

been enriched with the pledge of the Spirit, we are accustomed to prevail over the passions, though not without sweat; but in the age to come, having the full gleam of the knowledge of God, and being rich in the perfection of the gift of the Holy Spirit, and having put off corruption and the passions of the flesh, we will serve God in every way, not being divided towards sin, nor indeed being troubled by any of the former passions, but living a pure and harmless life in equal rank with the holy angels. For it is written concerning the saints that they will forget their affliction, and it will not come up into their heart; and there will be, he says, "and everlasting joy upon their head, "for upon their head praise and joy and "gladness will overtake them, pain and sorrow and "sighing have fled away. For this reason the Prophet says, or rather God who is the worker and giver of these things, that you will both go out and leap like calves released from bonds.

For just as suckling calves, when released from their bonds, skip about the fields, leaping up and lowing in the flourishing grass; so in due time the saints almost as if released from the bonds of the affliction and care of this life, and of sweat and toils, they will come out into the gladness that befits the holy, treading upon the lawless, who are no longer fighting and resisting, but have already fallen and been conquered, and are as if laid under their feet, because the war from them has been completely done away with. "For there shall be no lion there, nor shall any of the evil "beasts go up there," according to what is written; "but there shall be a clean way, and it shall be called a holy way. For the life of the saints at that time will be without war and free from every stain. And behold, I send to you Elijah the Tishbite before the great and manifest day of the Lord comes, who will restore the heart of the father to the son and the heart of a man to his neighbor, lest I come and strike the earth utterly. A proof of God's gentleness and long-suffering is that Elijah the Tishbite should shine forth for us in due time, when the Judge is at last at hand, heralding him to those throughout the whole world.

For the Son will descend as judge in the glory of God the Father, with angels as his guard, and he will sit "on the throne of his glory," judging the world in righteousness, and he will by all means render to each according to his work. But since we are in very many sins, the divine prophet usefully goes before, leading those on earth to one mind, so that all, brought into unity through faith, and having ceased from their zeal for wickedness, may choose

to fulfill what is good, and thus be saved when the Judge descends. Therefore, the blessed Baptist John, arriving first, came forth "in the spirit and power of Elijah. But just as he proclaimed, saying, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," so too the divine Elijah will then proclaim that he is near, and will be present in just a moment, to judge the world in righteousness. And now perhaps some are divided, and a father is divided against a son, and a son against a father. For one has believed in Christ, while the other is numbered among the unbelievers, and others stand apart from one another's love, torn apart by enmity and unceasing anger, and contentions over any of the affairs of the world. Nevertheless, the prophet will restore, gathering into one faith those long divided, and restoring a man to his neighbor, lest, he says, I come and strike the earth utterly, that is, in every way and completely.

Do you see, then, the gentleness of the Lord of all? He persuades beforehand those on earth, and almost bears witness through the voice of Elijah, that a judge will be present, so that those living on the earth at that time, by correcting their own life with changes for the better, may not meet a harsh judge, who sends to the flame and to the outer darkness; but might rather hear, "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Remember the law of Moses my servant, as I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with ordinances and judgments. He again persuades those who will encounter the words of the Prophet to understand that the proclamation concerning Christ was not something new or unusual, nor was it foretold only by the voice of Malachi; but from above and from the beginning, and from the first times, so to speak, in which Israel was called to the knowledge of God, when God delivered the laws in Horeb through Moses. For the God of all descended in the form of fire upon Mount Sinai, and there appeared smoke and flames darting on high, and inspiring great dread in those who saw; and there was darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, and "the sound of the trumpet sounded "loud. Then indeed, having become terrified, the sons of Israel came and said to the mediator and instructor—this was Moses—"You speak to us, and let not God speak to us, lest we die.

And indeed, to these things, God says, "Rightly all that they have spoken; I will raise up for them a Prophet from among their brothers like you, and I will put my words into his mouth, and he will speak to them according to all that I command him. Do you see how from long ages past the sacred scrip-

ture foretold Christ? But if one would wish to examine the very shadows of the law, he will find Christ being written, and the mystery concerning him. And so he said to the Jews, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. For Christ is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets, through whom and with whom, to God the Father be glory with the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

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