The Festal Epistles (Burgess translation from the Syriac)

Athanasius of Alexandria (c. AD 296–373)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

Contents

Letter 1. **1**

Letter 2. **9**

Letter 3. **14**

Letter 4. **20**

Letter 5. **24**

Letter 6. **29**

Letter 7. **37**

Letter 10. **45**

Letter 11. **55**

Letter 12. To Serapion **66**

Letter 13. **69**

Letter 14. **75**

Letter 17. **80**

Letter 18. **81**

Letter 19. **83**

Letter 20. **90**

Letter 1.

* The first Festal Letter of Pope Athanasius, wherein the first day of the Paschal week is on XI. Pharmuthi; VIII. Id. April; Ær. Dioclet. 45; Coss. Constantinus Aug. VIII. Constantinus Cæs. IV; Præfect. Septimius Zenius; Indict. II.

Of Fasting, and Trumpets, and Feasts.

COME, my beloved: the season calls us to keep the feast. Again, the Sun of Righteousness, causing His divine beams to rise upon us, proclaims beforehand the time of the feast, in which, obeying Him, we ought to celebrate it; so that when the time has passed away, gladness likewise may not leave us. For discernment of the time is a duty strictly enjoined upon us, and a matter of moral obligation; even as the blessed Paul, when instructing his disciple, teaches him to observe the time, saying, Stand (ready) in season, and out of season—that knowing both the one and the other, he might do things seasonable, and avoid the blame for such as are unseasonable. For thus also the God of all distributes every thing in time and season, after the manner of wise Solomon, to the end that, in due time, the salvation of men should be every where spread abroad. Thus, likewise, for instance, not out of season, but in season, the Wisdom of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, passed upon holy souls, fashioning the friends of God and the prophets; so that, although very many were praying for Him, and saying, O that the salvation of God were come out of Sion! the Spouse also, as it is written in the Canticles, praying and saying, O that Thou wert my sister's son, that sucked the breasts of my mother? that Thou wert like to the children of men, and wouldest take upon Thee human passions for our sake!

nevertheless, the God of all, the Framer of times and seasons, and who knows our affairs better than we do, while, as a good physician, He exhorts to obedience in due season—the only one in which we may be healed—so also does He send Him not unseasonably, but seasonably, saying, In an acceptable time have I heard Thee, and in the day of salvation I have helped Thee. And, on this account, the blessed Paul, urging us to note this season, wrote, saying, Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

At set seasons also He called the children of Israel to the Levitical feasts by Moses, saying, Three times in a year ye shall keep a feast to Me, (one of which, my beloved, is that now at hand,) to the celebration of which priestly trumpets call and summon; as the holy Psalmist commanded, saying, Blow with the trumpet in the new moon, on the [solemn] day of your feast. Since this sentence enjoins upon us to blow both on the new moons, and on the solemn days, He hath made a solemn day of that in which the light of the moon is perfected in the full; which was then a type, as this of the trumpets. Sometimes then, as was before said, they were ‡ The Syrine here differs from the commonly received text of the Peshito, which is probably incorrect. It is a literal translation of the LXX, the words of which are also quoted by S. Athan. in his Synopsis. Script. Saer. t. ii. p. 123. The ancient Jewish writers also usually interpreted this passage of the Messiah. The Targum on the verse begins thus: ”And at

that time the King Messiah shall be revealed to the congregation of Israel.” called to feasts; sometimes also to fasting and to war. And this was not done without solemnity, neither were these things like common occurrences; but this sound of the trumpets was solemn, so that every man might come to that which was proclaimed. And this should be learned not merely from me, but from the divine Scriptures, when God was revealed to Moses, and said, as it is written in the book of Numbers: And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Make to thee two trumpets; of silver shalt thou make them, and they shall be for thee to call the congregation— very properly for those who here love Him. So that we may know that these things had reference to the time of Moses— yea, were to be observed so long as the shadow lasted, the whole being appointed as conducive thereto, till the time of reformation. For, (said He,) if ye shall go out to battle* in your land against your enemies that rise up against you, (for such things as these refer to the land; beyond it, in no wise,) then ye shall proclaim with the trumpets, and shall be remembered before the Lord, and be delivered from your enemies.

Not only in wars did they blow the trumpet, but under the law, there was also a festal trumpet. Hear him again, saying in continuance, And in the day of your gladness, and in your feasts, and your new moons, ye shall blow with the trumpets. And let no man think it a light and contemptible matter, if he hear the law command respecting trumpets: it is a wonderful and fearful thing. For because Exod. 19, 16. the trumpet, more than any other voice or instrument, is exciting and very terrible, on this account, instruction was conveyed to Israel by such means, for he was then but a child. But in order that the proclamation should not be thought merely human, being beyond this, it was heard as those voices which were uttered when they received a shock from them in the mount; and they were reminded of the law that was then given them, and kept it. For the law was worthy of admiration, and the shadow was excellent; otherwise, it would not have wrought fear, and induced

reverence in those who heard: and [if such were the case], much more must it have been so with those who at that time saw such things as these.

Be it that these things were then typical, and done as in a shadow. Let us, having recourse to our understanding, and henceforth leaving the figure at a distance, come to the truth, and look upon the priestly trumpets of our Saviour, which cry out, and call us, at one time to war, as the blessed Paul saith: We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities, with powers, with the rulers of this dark world, with wicked spirits in heaven. At another time the call is made to virginity, and lowliness, and conjugal unanimity, saying, To virgins, the things of virgins; and to those bound by a course of abstinence, the things of abstinence; and to those who are married, the things of an honourable marriage; thus assigning to each domestic virtues and an honourable recompense. Sometimes also, the call is made to fasting, and sometimes to a feast. Listen to the same [Apostle] again blowing the trumpet, and proclaiming,

8. Christ our Passover is sacrificed; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness. If further, thou wouldest listen to a trumpet much greater than all these, hear our Saviour saying; In that last and great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. For it became the Saviour not simply to call us to a feast, but to the great feast; only so that we should be prepared to hear, and should conform to the proclamation of every trumpet. For since, as I before said, there are divers proclamations, listen, as in a figure, to the prophet blowing the trumpet; and further, having turned to the truth, be ready for the announcement of the trumpet, for he saith, Blow ye the trumpet in Sion: sanctify a fast. This is a warning trumpet, and commands with great earnestness, that when we fast, we should hallow the fast. For not all those who call upon God, hallow God, since there are some who defile Him; yet not Him—that is impossible—but their own conscience concerning Him; for He is holy, and has pleasure in the saints. And therefore the blessed Paul assigns the reason for men's dishonouring God: Transgressors of the law dishonour God. So then, to point out those who pollute the fast, he saith here, sanctify a fast. For many, crowding to the fast, pollute themselves in the thoughts of their hearts, sometimes by doing evil against their brethren, sometimes by daring to defraud. And, to mention nothing else, there are many who exalt themselves above their neighbours, bringing about a great offence by these means.

For also the boast of fasting did no good to the Pharisee, although he fasted twice in the week, only because he exalted himself against the publican. In the same manner also the Word found fault with the children of Israel on account of such a fast as this; exhorting them by Isaiah the Prophet, and saying, This is not the fast and the day that I have chosen, that a man should humble his soul; not even if thou shouldest bow down thy neck like a hook, and shouldest strew sackcloth

and ashes under thee; neither thus shall ye call the fast acceptable. That we may be able to shew what kind of persons we should be when we fast, and of what character the fast should be, listen again to God commanding Moses, and saying, as it is written in Leviticus, And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, In the tenth day of this seventh month, there shall be a day of atonement; a convocation, and a holy day shall it be to you; and ye shall humble your souls, and offer whole burnt-offerings unto the Lord. And afterwards, that the law might be determinate Levit. 23, on this point, He further saith, Every soul that shall not humble itself, shall be cut off from the people. Behold, my brethren, what a fast can do, and in what manner the law commands us to fast. It is required that not only should we fast with the body, but also with the soul.

Now the soul is humbled when it is not found [occupied] with wicked opinions, being nourished with becoming virtues. For virtues and vices are the food of the soul, and it can eat either of these two meats, and incline to either of the two, according to its own will. If, on the one hand, it is bent toward virtue, it will be nourished by virtues; by righteousness, by temperance, by meekness, by fortitude. Even as Paul saith, Being nourished by the word of truth. Such was the case with our Lord, who said, My meat is to do the will of My Father which is in heaven. But if it is not thus with the soul, and it inclines to that which is beneath, it is then nourished by nothing but sin. For thus also the Holy Ghost, describing sinners and their food, alluded to the devil when He said, I have given him to be meat to the (LXX. people of Æthiopia. For this is the food of sinners. And vers.)

S. Athan, here speaks of Leviathan as a type of Satan; of the Æthiopians as typical of sinners; of sinners feeding on the devil, as the righteous feed upon Christ. For the first, conf. S. Cyril. Alexandr. Comment. in Esaiam cap. xxvii. lato nomine, dixerat, eundem nunc Leviathan appellet. (Again, tom. vii. p. 277.) 'Draco iste quem formasti ad illudendum ei! Iste est Draco qui de Paradiso ejectus est; qui decepit Evam, et datus est in hoc mundo ad illudendum nobis. Also, on Isaiah xxvii. 1. reference is made to Apoc. xii. 7. and Luke x. 19. St. Augustine on the passage says; Tu confregisti caput draconis. Cujus draconis? Intelligimus dracones omnia dæmonia sub diabolo militantia; quem ergo singularem draconem cujus caput cenfractum est, nisi ipsum diabolum intelligere debemus? as our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, being heavenly bread, is the food of the saints, according to this; Except ye eat My flesh, and drink My blood; so is the devil, the food of the impure, and of those who do nothing which is of the light, but work the deeds of darkness. Therefore, in order to withdraw and turn them from vices, He enjoins upon them, as sustenance, the food of virtue. Now this is, humbleness of mind; lowliness to endure humiliations; the acknowledgment of God.

For not only does such a fast as this obtain propitiation for souls, but it also, being sanctified, prepares the saints, and raises them above the earth. And indeed

that which I am about to say is wonderful, yea it is of those things which are very miraculous; yet not far from the truth, as ye may be able to learn from the sacred* writings. That great man Moses, when fasting, conversed with God, and received the law. The great and holy Elias, when fasting, was also thought worthy of divine visions, and at last was taken up like Him who ascended into heaven. And Daniel also, when fasting, and although a very young man, was entrusted with the mystery, and he alone understood the secret things of the king, and was thought worthy of divine visions. But because the length of the fast of these men was wonderful, and the days prolonged, let no man lightly fall into unbelief on that account; but rather let him believe and know, that the looking to God, and the word which [pro-

S. Aug. too, ut supra; Quomodo intelligo populos Æthiopes? Quomodo nisi per hos, omnes gentes? et bene per nigros; Æthiopes enim nigri sunt. Ipsi vocantur ad fidem, qui nigri fuerunt etc. Suiter, Thes. v. Αἰθίωφ quotes from Orat, de evitu animae quæ Cyrillo Alex. adscribitur, p. 405.— δαίμονας, ὡς Αἰθίοπας ῥοφώδεις. Hesychius, Cent. I ad Theodulum, num. 23. duimones vocat, νοητοὺς Αἰθίοπας; spirituales Æthiopes. Larsow quotes S. Athan. tom. ix. p. 120. where Αἰθίοπες is explained by οἱ μελανωθέντες ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν. The Heb. word which the LXX. translate by Αἰθίοπες is =" The whole of the comment of S. Aug. on the passage affords a remarkable amplification of the words of our Author, though reference is not directly made to the words of St. John (vi. 53.) He alludes to the golden calf, which Moses made the children of Israel to drink of, and adds; Quid est hoc, nisi quia adoratores diaboli corpus ipsius facti erant? Quomodo agnoscentes Christum fiunt corpus Christi, ut eis dicatur; Vos autem es is corpus Christi et membra.

"The word in the Syriac is μυσι 'priestly.' But in this and in other places, it appears to be for the Greek Ἱερός. Conf. τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα. 2 Tim. in. 15. ceeds] from Him, suffice to nourish those who hear, and stand to them in place of all food. For the angels are no otherwise sustained than by beholding at all times the face of the Father, and of the Saviour Who is in heaven. And thus Moses, as long as he talked with God, fasted indeed bodily, but was nourished by divine words. When therefore he descended among men, and God was gone up from him, he suffered hunger like unto men. For it is not said that he fasted longer than forty days—those in which he was conversing with God. And, generally, each one of the saints has been thought worthy of the food of virtues such as this.

11. 13. 14. Wherefore, my beloved, having our souls nourished with divine food, with the word, and according to the will of God, and fasting bodily in things external, let us keep this great and saving feast as becomes us. For the foolish Jews, receiving indeed this divine food typically, ate a lamb in the passover. But not understanding the type, even to this day they eat the lamb, being in error; the more so in that they are without a city and the truth. As long as Judæa and the city existed, there were a type, and a lamb, and a shadow, since the law thus commanded:

These things shall not be done in another city; but in the land of Judæa—but without [the land of Judæa] in no place whatever. And besides this, the law commanded them to offer whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices, when there was no other altar than that in Jerusalem. For on this account, in that city alone, was there an altar and temple built, and they were commanded to perform these rites in that city only, to the end that when that city should come to an end, then also those things that were figurative might receive their end. Now observe: that city, since the coming of our Saviour, has had an end, and all the land of Judæa been laid waste; so that from the testimony of these things, (and we need no external proof, being assured by our own eyes of the fact,) there must, of necessity, be an end of the shadow.

And it is meet that these things should not be learned from me: but the priestly voice cried before, Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, and publisheth peace; and what is the message he published, but The Jewish ordinances only till the time of Christ. 11

that which he goes on to say to them, Keep thy feasts, O Judah; pay to the Lord thy vows. For they shall no more go to that which is old; it is finished; it is taken away: he is gone up who breathed upon the face, and delivered thee from affliction. Now who is he that went up? a man may say to the Jews, in order that even the boast of the shadow may be done away; neither is it an idle thing to listen to the expression, It is finished; He is gone up who breathed. For nothing also was finished before he went up who breathed. But as soon as he went up, it was finished. Who was he then, O Jews, as I before said? If Moses, the assertion would be false; for the people were not yet come to the land in which alone they were commanded to perform these rites. But if Samuel, or any other of the prophets, even in that case there would be a perversion of the truth; for up to that time these things were done in Judæa, and the city was standing. For it was necessary that while that stood, these things should be performed. So that it was no one of these men, my beloved, who went up. But if thou wouldest hear the true matter, and be kept from Jewish fables, look to our Saviour who went up, and breathed upon the face, and said to His disciples, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. For as soon as these things were done, every thing then came to an end; for the altar was broken, and the veil of the temple was rent; and although the city was not yet laid waste, yet the abomination was ready to sit in the midst of the temple, and the city, and those ancient ordinances, to receive their final consummation.

Since then we have passed the time of the shadow, and no longer perform rites under it, but have turned, as it were, unto the Lord: for the Lord is a Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty: as we hear from the priestly trumpet; no longer slaying a material lamb, but that true Lamb that was slain, even our Lord Jesus Christ, Who was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and was dumb, as a lamb before her shearers; being purified by His precious blood, which speaketh

better things than that of Abel; having our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel; holding in our hands the rod and staff of the Lord, by which that saint was comforted, who said, Thy rod and Thy staff 4. Phil. 4, 5. 40. Ephes. 4, 22-24. they comfort me; and to speak collectively, being in all respects prepared and careful for nothing, because, as the blessed Paul saith, The Lord is at hand; and as our Saviour saith, In an hour when we think not, the Lord cometh;— Let us keep the Feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Putting off the old man and his deeds, let us put on the new man, which is created in God, in humbleness of mind, and a pure conscience; in meditation of the law by night and by day. And casting away all hypocrisy and fraud, putting far from us all haughtiness and guile, let us take upon us love towards God and towards our neighbour; that being new [creatures], and receiving the new wine, even the Holy Spirit, we may properly keep the feast, even the month of these new [fruits]".

P We begin the holy fast on the fifth day of Pharmuthi, (March 31,) and joining to it according to the number of those six holy and great days, which are the symbol of the creation of this world, let us rest and cease (from fasting) on the tenth day of the same Pharmuthi, (April 5,) on the holy sabbath of the week. And when the first day of the holy week dawns and rises upon us, on the eleventh day of the same month, (April 6,) numbering from it all the seven weeks, one by one, let us keep feast on the holy day of Pentecost—that which was at one time to the Jews, typically, the feast of weeks, in which they granted forgiveness and settlement of debts; and indeed that day was one of deliverance in every respect. Let us keep the feast on the first day of the great week, as a symbol of the world to come, in which we here receive a pledge that we shall have ever-

° Alluding to Deut. xvi. 1. Φύλαξαι τὸν μῆνα τῶν νέων (scil. καρπῶν) LXX. Observa mensem novarum frugum. Vulg. i. e. the month of Abib. Heb. □□□□□□□□ In Chaldee, we have fructum protulit, imprimis de fructu primo et præcoce, (Hos. ix. 10. Targ.) Syr. □□□□□□□□□ flores produxit. Gesen. Lex. Heb. P We should not have much difficulty in fixing upon many of the phrases and expressions used by St. Athan. towards the close of his Epistles, by referring to the concluding sentences in the Paschal Letters of S. Cyril, who seems herein to have closely imitated his illustrious predecessor in the Patriarchate. The Syriac translator must frequently have had before him the following expressions: ἀρχόμενοι τῆς ἁγίας τεσσαρακοστῆς—ἐπισυνάπτοντες—συνάπτοντες ἑξῆς—περιλύοντες τὰς νηστείας—καταπαύοντες τὰς νηστείας—ἐσπέρᾳ βαθείᾳ σαββάτου—τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ κυριακῇ. lasting life hereafter. Then having passed from hence, we shall keep a perfect feast with Christ, while we cry out and say, like the saints, I will pass to the place of the wondrous tabernacle; to the house of God; with the voice of gladness and thanksgiving; the shouting of those who rejoice; so that sorrow and affliction and sighing shall flee away, and gladness and joy be upon our heads!

May we be adjudged worthy to accomplish these things when we remember the poor, and do not forget kindness to strangers! But above all, when we love God with all our soul, and might, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves: receiving those things which the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man; which God hath prepared for those that love Him, through His only Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; through Whom, to the Father alone, by the Holy Ghost, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Salute one another with a kiss. All the brethren who are with me salute you. Here endeth the first Festal Letter of holy Athanasius.

Letter 2.

Easter-day XXIV. Pharmuthi; XIII. Kal. Mai.; Æra Easter-day Dioclet. 46; Coss. Gallicianus, Valerius Symmachus; on April 19. Præfect. Magninianus; Indict. III. AGAIN, my brethren, is Easter come, and gladness; for again the Lord hath brought us to this season; so that when, according to custom, we have been nourished with His words, we may duly keep the feast. Let us celebrate it then, even heavenly joy, together with those saints who also formerly proclaimed such a feast as this, and were ensamples to us of conversation in Christ. For not only were they entrusted with the charge of preaching the Gospel, but, upon examination, we shall see, as it is written, that its power was also displayed in them. Be ye therefore followers of me, he (St. Paul) wrote to the Corinthians. Now the apostolic expression is instructive to all of us; for those precepts which he forwarded to individuals, he, at the same time, enjoined upon every man in every place, inasmuch as he was a teacher of all nations in faith and truth. And, generally, the precepts of all the saints have an equally extended application by way of exhortation; as Solomon, too, makes use of proverbs, saying, Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding; for I give you a good gift; forsake ye not my word; for I was an obedient son to my father, and beloved in the sight of my mother. For a worthy father employs the right method of instruction, when he exhibits zeal in teaching others those things that had been properly imparted to himself; so that when he meets with opposition, he may not be ashamed on hearing it said, Thou therefore that teachest others, teachest thou not thyself? but rather, like the good servant, may both save himself and gain

Conf. Letter iii. others; and thus, when the grace committed to him has been doubled, he may hear, Thou good and faithful servant, Mat. 25, 21. thou hast been faithful in a little, I will set thee over much: enter into the joy of thy Lord. Be it then, on our parts, a becoming duty, if at all times, so especially in the days of the feast, to be, not hearers only, but also doers of the commandments of our Saviour; that also, having imitated the conversation of the saints, we may enter together into the joy of our Lord which is in heaven, which is not transitory, but truly abideth; of which evil doers having deprived themselves, there remaineth to them as the fruit of their ways, sorrow and anguish, and groaning, the result of

torments. Let a man look on such as these, how thus they bear not the image[c] of the conversation of the saints, nor of that right understanding, by which man at the beginning was rational, and in the form of God. But being barely on a level with the beast without understanding, and like it in unlicensed pleasures, they are described by comparison with lustful horses; also, for their craftiness, and errors, and sin laden with death, they are called a generation of vipers, as Luke saith. Now having thus fallen, and grovelling in the dust like the serpent, they thought of nothing but things which are seen, esteeming them to be good; and rejoicing in these things, but not serving God, they ministered to their own desires. Yet even in this state, the man-loving[f] Word, who came for this purpose, that He might seek that which was lost and find it, sought to restrain them from folly like this, crying and saying, Be ye not as the horse and the mule which have

We have here the first fragment extant of the original Greek text. It is to be found in Cosmas Indico-pieustes, p. 316, with the title, translated) may serve to give us a correct opinion of the fidelity and accuracy with which the Syriac translator performed his part. The same may be said of the few other remaining lines extant in the Greek. The Ms. reads John incorrectly—for Matthew (iii 7.) or Luke (iii. 7.) Is. 23, 2. (LXX. vers.)

28. no understanding, whose checks ye hold in with bit and bridle. Because they were careless and like the wicked, the prophet also prays in spirit and says, Ye are to me like merchant-men of Phœnicia. And the avenging Spirit protests against them in these words, Lord, in Thy city Thou wilt despise their image. Thus then, being changed into the likeness of fools, they so far fell away in their understanding, that, by their excessive reasoningh, they even likened the Divine Wisdom to themselves, thinking it to be like their own worksi. Therefore, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the corruptible image of man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God gave them ever to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. For they did not listen to the prophetic voice that reproved them. (saying.) To what have ye likened the Lord, and with what have ye compared Him? neither to David, who prayed concerning such as these, and sang. All those that make them are like unto them, and all those who put their trust in them. For, being blind to the truth, they looked upon a stone as God; and further, like senseless creatures, they went on in darkness; and, as the prophet cried, They hear indeed, but they do not understand; they see indeed, but they do not perceive; for their heart is waken fat, and with their ears they hear hearily.

Now those who do not observe the feasts, continue such persons even to the present day: pretending indeed and devising names of feasts, but rather introducing days of mourning than of gladness: For there is no peace to the wicked,

saith the Lord. And as Wisdom saith, Gladness and joy are taken from their mouth. Such then are the feasts of the wicked. But the wise servants of the Lord, who have truly put on the man which is created in God, have received gospel words, and account, as of general application, the commandment given to Timothy, which saith, Be thou an example to the believers in word, in conversation, in lore, in faith, in purity. They keep the Feast with such propriety, that even the unbelievers, seeing their order, may say, God is with them of a truth. For as he who receives an apostle receives Him who sent him, so he who is a follower of the saints, makes the Lord in every respect his end and aim; even as Paul, being a follower of Him, says, Is I also of Christ. For there is first the precedent of our Saviour, and herein is the height of His divinity, in that when He conversed with His disciples, He said, Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls. For also when He put

11. water into a basin, and girded himself with a towel, and washed His disciples' feet, He said to them, Know what I have done. Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If therefore I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet: for I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, ye also should do. Oh! my brethren, how shall we admire the loving-kindness* of our Saviour? With what power, and what kind of trumpet should a man cry out, when exalting such helps as these which He gives? That not only should we bear His image, but should also receive from Him an example as a pattern of heavenly conversation; that we should go on as He hath begun; that suffering, we should not threaten; being reviled, we should not revile again: but should bless them that curse; and in every thing commit ourselves to God who judgeth righteously. For those who are thus disposed, and fashion themselves according to the Gospel, will be partakers of Christ, and imitators of apostolic conversation; on account of which they shall be deemed worthy of that praise from him, with which he praised the Co-

rinthians, when he said, I praise you that in every thing ye are mindful of me. Afterwards, because there were men using indeed his words, but wishing to obey them according to their lusts, and daring to pervert them, as the followers of Hymeneus and Alexander, and before them the Sadducees, who, as he said, haring made shipwreck of faith, were entangled in the mystery of the resurrection; on this account he immediately proceeded to say, And as I have delivered to you traditions, hold them fast. That is, in truth, that we should think no otherwise than the teacher hath delivered. For not only in outward form did those wicked men disguise themselves, who, as the Lord says, put on sheep's clothing, and appeared like unto whited sepulchres; but they took those divine words in their mouth, while having within an evil conscience. And the first, forsooth, who appeared thus, was the serpent, the inventor of wickedness from the beginning,—the devil,—who, under a disguised form, conversed with Eve, and forthwith deceived her. But after him and

with him are all inventors of unlawful heresies, who indeed refer to the Scriptures, but do not hold such opinions as the saints have handed down, receiving them as the traditions of men: erring, because they do not rightly know them, nor their power. Therefore Paul deservedly praises the Corinthians, because their opinions were in accordance with his traditions. And the Lord most righteously reproved the Jews, saying, Wherefore do ye also transgress the commandments of God on account of your traditions. For they changed the commandments they received from God to suit their own follies, and adhered rather to the traditions of men. Respecting these, a little after, the blessed Paul again gave directions to the Galatians who were in danger thereof, writing to them, If any man preach to you aught else than that ye have received, let him

from them. Orat. ii. §. 18, conf. Epiph. Hier. 69, 15. Or rather they took some words of Scripture, and made their own deductions from them, viz. 'Son,' 'made,' 'exalted,' &c. 'Making their private irreligiousness as if a rule, they misinterpret all the divine oracles by it.' Vid. note to p. 178, of 'Select Treatises of S. Athanasius,' published in this series. Vide also Athan. Epistola ad Episc. Egypti et Libyae, p. 214. Οὕτως καὶ τὴν Ἑξαν ἠπατήσεν, οὐ τὰ ἴδια λαλῶν, ἀλλ' ὑποκρινόμενος μὲν τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ βήματα, τὴν δὲ διάνοιαν αὐτῶν παραποιῶν. Athan. frequently speaks of heresies as having their origin in truth, of which, however, only a partial and imperfect view is taken: one doctrine is often unduly dwelt upon to the suppression of others, or enforced with such subtlety of reasoning as to unfit the mind for the reception of others equally important. 1 οἱ κίνδυνοι (Syr.) αὐτοῦ ἦσαν ποιοῦντες. The Syriac is apparently a literal translation of these words.

be accursed. For there is no fellowship whatever between the words of the saints, and the fancies of human invention; for the saints are the ministers of the truth, preaching the kingdom of heaven; but those who are borne in an opposite direction, have nothing better than to eat, and think their end is that they shall cease to exist, while they say, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Therefore also the blessed Luke reproves the inventions of men, and hands down the relations of the saints, saying in the beginning of the Gospel, Since many have taken in hand to write narrations of those events of which we are assured, as those who from the beginning were witnesses and ministers of the Word have delivered to us; it hath seemed good to me also, who have adhered to them all from the first, to write correctly in order to thee, O excellent Theophilus, that thou mayest know the truth concerning the things in which thou hast been instructed. For what the saints respectively received, they give without alteration, for correctness of doctrine concerning mysteries. Of them the (divine) word would have us disciples, and right is it that they should be our teachers, and necessary is it that we should submit to them alone; for of them only is the word faithful and worthy of all acceptation, inasmuch as they did not become disciples because they heard from others; but

being eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word, they handed down what they had heard from Him.

Some, indeed, related the great miracles performed by our Saviour, and preached His eternal Godhead. Others, again, wrote of His being born in the flesh of the Virgin, and proclaimed the festival of the holy passover, saying, Christ our Passover is sacrificed; so that each one of us, and all of us together in common, and all the churches in the world may remember, as it is written, That Christ rose from the dead, of the seed of David, according to the Gospel. And let not that escape our observation which Paul delivered, declaring it to the Corinthians; that, I mean, concerning His resurrection, whereby he destroyed him that had the power of death; that is, the devil, and raised us up together with Him: having loosed the bands of death, and vouchsafed a blessing instead of a curse: joy instead of grief; a feast in the place of mourning, in this holy joy of Easter; which being continually in our hearts, we always rejoice, as Paul commanded; Praying without ceasing; in very thing giving thanks. We therefore do not neglect to 17. publish its seasons, as we have received from the Fathers.

Again we write. Again, holding the apostolic traditions, we put one another in remembrance in our meetings for prayer; and keeping the feast in common, with one month we truly give thanks to the Lord. For thus receiving the grace, and being followers of the saints, we shall make our praise in the Lord all the day, as the Psalmist says. In this way, when we properly keep the feast, we shall be counted worthy of that joy which is in heaven. We begin the fast of forty days on the 13th of the month Phamenoth, (Mar. 9.) After we have given ourselves to fasting in continued succession, let us begin the week of the holy Easter on the 18th of the month Pharmuthi, (April 13.) Then ceasing on the 23d of the same month Pharmuthi, (April 18.) and keeping the feast afterwards on the first of the week, on the 24th, (April 19.) let us add to these the seven weeks of the great Pentecost, altogether rejoicing and exulting in Christ Jesus our Lord, through Whom to the Father be glory and dominion by the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

The brethren which are with me salute you. Salute one another with a holy kiss. Here endeth the second Festal Letter of the holy my Lord Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria.

Letter 3.

Easter-day XVI Pharmuthi; III Id. April; Era Dioclet. Easter-day on April 11. 47; Coss. Annius Bassus, Ablabius; Praefect. Florentius; Indict. IV. AGAIN, my beloved brethren, the day of the feast draws near to us, which, above all others, should be devoted to prayer; which the law commands to be observed, and which it would be inconsistent with our episcopal duties to pass over in silence. For although we have been held under restraint by those who afflict us, that, on account of them, we should not announce to you this season; yet thanks be to God, who comforteth the afflicted, that we have not been put to silence, as though overcome by the wickedness of our accusers; but obeying the voice of truth, together with you shout in the day of the feast. For the God of all hath commanded, saying, Speak, and the children of Israel shall keep the Passover. And the Spirit exhorts in the Psalm; Blow the trumpet in the new moons[c], in the solemn day of Nah. 1, 15. your feast. And the prophet cries; Keep thy feasts, O Judah. I do not send this to you as though you were not aware of it; but I publish it to those who know it, that ye may perceive that although men have separated us, yet God

I think the translation here given of the Syriac □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ is the correct one. I have taken □□□□ in its more restricted ecclesiastical sense 'episcopal.' Vid. Mich. note in Lex. Syr. in v. .□□□□ This seems to suit better with the expression 'pass over in silence,' as well as the following sentence, both The 'Εἶπον, καί' of the LXX. is found here, though it does not appear in the Peshito version. having joined us again, we approach the same feast, and always worship the same Lord.

And we do not keep the festival as observers of days, knowing that the Apostle reproves those who do so, in those words which he spake: Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. But rather do we look upon the day as a solemn one because of the feast; so that all of us, who serve God in every place, may be well-pleasing to God by prayers. For the blessed Paul, when announcing the nearness of gladness like this, did not announce days, but the Lord, on whose account also we keep the feast, saying, Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed; so that all of us, contemplating the eternity of the Word, may have nearness of access to Him. For what else is the feast, but the service of the soul? And what is that service,

but prolonged prayer to God, and unceasing thanksgiving? The unthankful having put these far from them, consequently also rightly deprive themselves of the joy springing therefrom: for joy and gladness are taken from their mouth. Therefore, the divine word doth not allow them to have peace; For there is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord, working the work of anguish and sorrow. So, not even to him who owed ten thousand talents did the Gospel grant forgiveness Mat. 18, 24. in the sight of the Lord. For even he, having received forgiveness of great things, was forgetful of kindness in little ones, so that he paid the penalty also of those former things. And very properly so; for it was incumbent on

4 The time of the Jewish types and shadows having passed away, the observance of the particular days relabrated among them is likewise abungated. They think principally of the scasons; we are to direct our attention chiefly to the substance of the festival— Christ. When directions for keeping the Jewish feasts were given in the O. T. especial stress was laid on the particular day. In the N. T. on the contrary, our Saviour is the one great subject introduced to our notice— Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed. 2 οὐκαι γὰρ ἐστινά οὐκαι 'unceasing thanksgiving'— a similar expression to 'prolonged prayer' in the preceding line—not 'trewifteen,' 'voluntary,' as Larsow renders it. Vid. Cast. Lex. Syr. in v. V. 1/10. 1/10. 'abstinuit.' In this sense, the word is requate with V. Εὐχαριστία ἀδιάλαιπτος (?) Conf. Clemens Alex. Strom. 7. I. ἀδιάλαιπτος ἀγάπη. Also I Thess. v. 16, 17, both in the Greek and in the Syriac vers. and Letter xi. 6 This is apparently a quotation from Scripture, though I cannot find the event words. Perhaps it is from Jer. vi, the phraseology of v. 28, being transferred to the sentiment of v. 31. The expression has already occurred, p. 17. 7 As, in the parable, the servant was held accountable for the debt, (which had otherwise been forgiven him, having himself experienced kindness, to be merciful to his fellow servant. Also, he that received the one talent, and bound it up in a napkin, and hid it in the earth, was consequently cast out as an unthankful person, hearing the

Mat.25,26. words, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gathered where I have not strawed; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money into the bank, and on my return, I should have received mine own. Take therefore the talent from him, and giveh it to him that hath ten talents. For, as a matter of course, when he was required to deliver up to his lord that which belonged to him, he should have acknowledged the kindness of him who gave it, and the value of that which was given. For he who gave was not a hard man; had he been so, he would not have given even in the first instance: neither was that which was given unprofitable and vain; for then he had not found fault. But both he who gave was good, and that which was given was capable of bearing fruit.

26. As therefore he who withholdeth corn in seed-time is cursed, according to the divine proverb; so he who is careless about grace, and hides it without culture, is

properly cast out as a wicked and unthankful person. On this account, he praises those who increased [their talents], say- Mat.25,23. ing, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful in a little, I will place thee over much; enter into the joy of thy Lord. This was fit and reasonable; for, as the Scripture declares, they had gained as much as they had received. Now it is right, my beloved, that our will should keep pace with the grace of God, and not fall short; lest when our will remains idle, the grace given us1 should begin to depart, and the enemy finding us empty and naked, should enter [into us], as was the case with him spoken of

Mat.12,24. in the Gospel, from whom the devil went out; for having gone through dry places, he took seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and returning and finding the house empty, he dwelt there, and the last state of that man was him,) on account of his cruelty to his fellow-servant; so sinners, who ungratefully withhold praise and thanksgiving from God, are deprived of the blessings they before enjoyed. 1 For 2000 leg. 2000 2 For 2001 leg. 2001 worse than the first. For the withdrawal from virtue gives place for the entrance of the unclean spirit. There is, moreover, the apostolic injunction, that the grace given us should not be unprofitable; for those things which he (Paul) wrote to his disciple as of private application, he enforces on us through him, saying, Neglect not the gift that is in thee. For he who tillet his land shall be satisfied with bread; but the paths of the slothful are strewn with thorns; so that the Spirit forewarns a man not to fall into them, saying, Break up your fallow ground, sow not among thorns. For when a man despises the grace given him, and forthwith falls into the cares of the world, he delivers himself over to his lusts; and thus in the time of persecution he is offended, and becomes altogether unfruitful.

Now the prophet points out the end of negligence like this, saying, Cursed is he who doeth the work of the Lord carelessly. For he who is enlisted in the service of the Lord should be zealous and careful, yea, moreover, burning like a flame; so that when, by an ardent spirit, he has destroyed all earthly sin, he may be able to draw near to God, Who, according to the expression of the saints, is called a consuming fire. Therefore, the God of all, Who maketh His angels [spirits], is a spirit, and His ministers a flame of fire. Wherefore, in the departure from Egypt, He forbade the multitude to touch the mountain, where God was appointing them the law, because they were not of this character. But He called blessed Moses to it, as being fervent in spirit, and possessing unquenchable grace, saying, Let Moses alone draw near. On this account he also entered into the cloud, and when the mountain was smoking, he was not injured; but rather, through the words of the Lord, which are choice silver tried in the earth, he descended more pure.

Therefore the blessed Paul, when desirous that the grace of the Spirit given to us should not grow cold, exhorts. προσερχομένοις ταύτῃ τῇ ἐπαγγελίᾳ. Vul. also S. Athan. Epist. i. ad Serap. t. i. p. 520. 3a. Syr. Ἰάκδοσι ’material,’ ’earthly,’

an adjective formed from the Gr. ἄλπ. 1 19. saying, ”Quench not the Spirit. For thus shall we also remain partakers of Christ”, that is, if we hold fast unto the end the Spirit given at the beginning. For he said, Quench not; not because the Spirit is placed in the power of men, and is able to suffer any thing from them; but because bad and unthankful men are such as manifestly wish to quench it; since they, like the impure, persecute the Spirit with unholy deeds. For the holy Spirit of admonition flees from guile, and dwells not in a body under the influence of sin; but even removes for from imaginations void of understanding. But they being void of understanding, and guileful, and lovers of sin, walk still as in darkness, not having that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Now a fire such as this laid hold of Jeremiah the prophet, when the word was in him as a fire, and he said, ”I pass away from every place, and am not able to endure it. And our Lord Jesus Christ, in that He was good and man-loving, came that He might cast this upon earth, and said, And what? would that it were already kindled?” For He desired, as He testified in

23. 32. Ezekiel, the repentance of a man rather than his death; so that evil should be consumed in all men, to the end that the soul, being purified, might be able to bring forth fruit; For 1150 11 leg. 1150 11. The 11 after 1150 should probably be omitted, the error having arisen from the word occurring just before. Conf. S. Athan. Epist. ad Dracont. tom. i. p. 209. for the word which is sown by Him will be productive, some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred. Thus, for instance, those who were with Cleopas, although infirm at first from lack of knowledge, yet afterwards were inflamed with the words of our Saviour, and brought forth the fruits of the knowledge of Him. The blessed Paul also, when seized by this fire, revealed it not to flesh and blood; but having experienced the grace, he became a preacher of the Word. But not such were those nine lepers who were cleansed from their leprosy, and yet were unthankful to the Lord Who healed them; nor Judas, who obtained the lot of an apostle*, and was named a disciple of the Lord, but at last, while eating bread with our Saviour, lifted up his heel against Him, and became a traitor. But such men have the due reward of their folly, since their hope will be vain through their ingratitude: for there is no hope whatever to the ungrateful; the last fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, awaiting those who disregard divine light. Such then is the end of the unthankful.

But the faithful and true servants of the Lord, knowing that the Lord loves the thankful, never cease to praise Him, ever giving thanks unto the Lord. And whether the time is one of ease or of affliction, they offer up praise to God with thanksgiving, regarding not these things of time, but worshipping the Lord, the God of times. Thus of old time, Job, who possessed fortitude above all men, thought of these things when in prosperity; and when in adversity, he patiently endured, and when he suffered, gave thanks. As also the humble David, in the very time of affliction sang praises and said, I will bless the Lord at all times. And the blessed Paul, in

all his Epistles, so to say, ceased not to thank God. In times of ease, he failed not; but in affliction he gloried, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and that hope maketh not ashamed. Let us, being followers of such men,

18. 111. pass no season without thanksgiving; but especially now, when the time is one of tribulation, which the heretics excite against us, will we praise the Lord; uttering the words of the saints; All these things have come upon us, yet have we not forgotten Thee. For as the Jews at that time, although suffering an assault from the tabernacles of the Edomites, and oppressed by the enemies of Jerusalem, did not give themselves up, but all the more sang praises to God; so we, my beloved brethren, though hindered that we should not speak the word of the Lord, will the more proclaim it; and being afflicted, we will sing Psalms[c], that we are accounted worthy to be despised, and to labour anxiously for the truth. Yea, moreover, being grievously vexed, we will give thanks. For also the blessed Apostle, who gave thanks at all times, urges us in the same manner to draw near to God, saying Let your requests, with thanksgiving, be made known unto God. And being desirous that we should never desist from such a purpose as this, he says, At all times give thanks;

17. pray without ceasing. For he knew that believers are strong while employed in thanksgiving; and that rejoicing they pass over the walls of the enemy, like those saints who said, Through Thee will we pierce through our enemies, and by my God I will leap over a wall. At all times let us stand firm, but especially now, although many afflictions overtake us, and many heretics are furious against us. Let us then, my beloved brethren, celebrate with thanksgiving the holy feast which now draws near to us, girding up the loins of our minds, like our Saviour Jesus Christ, of Whom it is written, Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the girdles of His reins. Each one of us having in his hand the staff which came out of the root of Jesse, and our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel, let us keep the feast as Paul saith, Not with the old leaven, but with the unlearned bread of sincerity and truth; assured that we thus reverently think of Christ, and depart not from faith

The Syr. □□□□□ must be an error of the copyist for .□□□□□ Compare Ps. lxxxiii. 6. [c] Conf. James v. 13. in Him, nor defile ourselves together with heretics, and strangers to the truth, whose conversation and whose will bring them down. But rejoicing in afflictions, we break through the furnace of iron and darkness, and pass, unharmed, over that terrible Red Sea. Thus also, when we look upon the confusion of heretics, we shall, with Moses, sing that great song of praise, and say, We will sing unto the Lord, for He is to be gloriously praised. Thus, singing praises, and looking upon sinners against us, who have been submerged, we pass over to the wilderness. And being first purified by the fast of forty days, by prayers,

and fastings, and discipline, and good works, we shall be able also to eat the holy Passover in Jerusalem.

The beginning of the fast of forty days is on the fifth of Phanenoth (Mar. 1.); and when, as I have said, we have first been purified and prepared by those days, we also begin the holy week of the great Easter on the tenth of Pharmuthi (Apr. 5.), in which, my beloved brethren, we should observe more prolonged prayers, and fastings, and watchings, that we may be enabled to anoint our lintels with precious blood, and to escape the destroyer. We cease (fasting) then, on the fifteenth of the month Pharmuthi (Apr. 10.), when we hear from the angels in the evening of the seventh day of the week, Why seek ye the living among the dead? for He hath risen. Immediately afterwards the first day of the great week receives us, I mean on the sixteenth of the same month Pharmuthi (April 11.), on which our Lord having risen, vouchsafed to us peace towards our neighbours. When then we have thus kept the feast according to His will, let us add from that first day in the holy week, also the seven weeks of Pentecost, in which we, receiving the grace of the Spirit, shall be giving thanks to the Lord at all times; through Whom to the Father be

7. 23. dead upon the sea-shore. Larson renders it ’and die Sunde in uns untergehen sehn’—a translation the Syribe will hardly admit. * προστάδες, Syr. glory and dominion, by the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen. Salute one another with a holy kiss. The brethren who are with me salute you. I pray, brethren beloved and longed for, that ye may have health, and that ye may be mindful of us in the Lord. Here endeth the third Festal Letter of holy Athanasius.

Letter 4.

Easter-day VII Pharmuthia; IV Non. Apr.; Æra Dioclet. 48: Coss. Fabius Pavatianus, Mavilius Hilarianus; Prae-Easter-day fect. Hyginus; Indict. V. on April 2. He sent this Letter from the Comitatus by a soldier. I SEND unto you, my beloved, late and beyond the accustomed time; yet I trust you will forgive the delay, on account of my far travelling, and because I have been tried with protracted illness. Being then hindered by these two causes, and unusually severe storms having occurred, I have deferred writing to you. But notwithstanding my far travelling, and my grievous sickness, I have not forgotten to give you the festal notification, and, in discharge of my duty, I now announce to you the feast. For although the letter has been delayed beyond the accustomed period of the proclamation, yet it should not be considered ill-timed, inasmuch as, since the enemies have been put to shame and reproved by the Church, because they persecuted us without a cause, we may now sing a festal song of praise, uttering

the triumphant hymn against Pharaoh; We will sing unto the Lord, for He is to be gloriously praised; the horse and his rider He hath cast into the sea. For we proceed duly, my beloved, from feast to feast; again festal meetings, again holy watchings stir up our minds, and keep our consciences on the guard to spiritual contemplation of good things.

Judith 13, 8. We do not celebrate these days in the character of mourners; but, as refreshing ourselves with spiritual food, we impose silence on our fleshly lusts. For by these means we shall have strength to overcome our adversaries, like blessed Judith, when, first having occupied herself with fastings and prayers, she overcame the enemies, and killed Olophernes. And blessed Esther, when destruction was about to come on all her race, and the nation of Israel was ready to perish, defeated the fury of the tyrant by no other means than by fasting and prayer to God, and changed the ruin of her people into safety. Now as those days are considered feasts for Israel, so also in old time they were called feasts when an enemy was slain, or a conspiracy against the people broken up, and Israel delivered. On this account it was that blessed Moses of old time ordained the great feast of the Passover, and our celebration of it, because, namely, Pharaoh was killed, and the people were

delivered from bondage. But then, when those who tyrannized over the people were slain, feasts and holidays were observed partially—in Judaea—with reference to time. Now, however, that the devil is slain, that tyrant against the whole world, we do not approach the feast, my beloved, as a temporal one, but as being eternal and heavenly. For we proclaim it not as it were in shadows, but we come to it in the truth.

They indeed, when filled with the flesh of an irrational lamb, accomplished the feast, and having anointed their door-posts with the blood, deprecated the destroyer. But now we, eating of the Word of the Father, and having the lintels of our hearts sealed with the blood of the New Testament, acknowledge the grace given us from the Saviour, who said, Behold, I have given unto you to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. For no more does death reign; but instead of death henceforth there is life, since our Lord said, I am the life; so that every thing is filled with gladness and rejoicing; as it is written, The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice. For when death reigned, sitting down by the rivers of Babylon, we wept, and mourned, because we had experienced the bitterness of captivity; but now that death and the kingdom of the devil is abolished, every thing is entirely filled with joy and gladness. And God is no longer known in Judaea only, but in all the earth, their voice hath gone forth, and the knowledge of Him hath filled all the earth. What remains, my beloved, is obvious; that, as the result, we approach such a feast, not with filthy raiment, but with our consciences covered with pure garments. For we need in this to put on our Lord Jesus, that we may be able to celebrate the feast with Him. Now we are clothed with Him when we love virtue;

when we are enemies to wickedness; when we exercise ourselves with temperance; when we mortify lasciviousness; when we love righteousness, in preference to iniquity; when we esteem sufficiency; when we have fortitude of mind; when we forget not the poor, but open our door to all men; when we assist humble-mindedness, but hate pride. By these things Israel of old, after having first fought the battle, as in a figure, came to the feast. Such things were then set forth, as in the shadow. But we, my beloved, the shadow having received its fulfilment, and the types being accomplished, should no longer consider the feast a figurative one; neither should we go up to Jerusalem which is beneath, to sacrifice the Passover, according to the unseasonable observance of the Jews, lest, while the season passes away, we should be regarded as acting unseasonably; but, in accordance with the injunction of the Apostles, let us go beyond the types, and sing the new song of praise. For this they also observed; and as being assembled together with the Truth,

17. they drew near, and said unto our Saviour, Where wilt Thou that we should make ready for Thee the Passover? For no longer were these things done at Jerusalem which is beneath; neither was it considered that the feast should be celebrated there alone; but wherever God willed it to be. Now He willed it to be in

every place, so that in every place incense and a sacrifice might be offered to Him. For although, as in the historical account, they were commanded not to introduce the feast of the Passover any where, but only in Jerusalem; yet when the things pertaining to that time were fulfilled, and those which belonged to shadows had passed away, and the preaching of the Gospel was to be extended every where; when, indeed, the disciples were spreading the feast in all places, they asked our Saviour, 17. Where wilt Thou that we shall make ready? Our Saviour also, since He was changing the typical for the spiritual, promised them that they should no longer eat the flesh of a lamb, but His own, saying, Take, eat and drink; this is My body, and My blood. When we are then nourished

26-28. 1 Conf. Letter i. p. 3. 2 Tâsis Syr. 3 Such a song as is in accordance with the superior blessings of the Christian dispensation. Ps. xviii. 1. Rev. xiv. 3. 4 1:10 505 σὺν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. I understand this as referring to Christ. Vid. John xiv. 6. by these things, we shall also, my beloved, properly keep the feast of the Passover. We commence on the first of Pharmuthi (Mar. 27.); and having ceased on the sixth of the same month (Apr. 1.), on the evening of the seventh day, and the holy first day of the week having risen upon us on the seventh of the same Pharmuthi (Apr. 2.), celebrate we too the days of the holy Pentecost following thereon, by them introducing a symbol of the world to come. But that henceforth we may be with Christ for ever, let us give praise to God over all in Christ Jesus, and through Him, with all saints, say unto the Lord, Amen.

Salute one another with a holy kiss. All the brethren who are with me salute you. We have sent this letter from the Comitatus, by the hand of an attendant officer, to whom it was given by Ablabius, the Praefect of the Praetorium, who fears God in truth. The whole interval of fifty days between Easter-day and Whitsunday (all which time was sometimes denominated Pentecost) was looked upon by the early Church as a time of rejoicing. During the continuance of it, the ordinary fasts, as on Wednesdays and Fridays, were generally suspended, though not alike by all the Churches of Christendom. Cassian Collat. xxi. c. xi. (Lips. 1733. p. 461.) speaks of the monasteries of Syria paying little regard to the rule which forhade kneeling at prayers, or fasting in Pentecost, while the Egyptians carefully observed it. Crepinus diligentius perennetari, cur apud. Egyptius tanta observantia caveretur, ne quis penitus totis Quinquagesima diebus vel gema in oratione curvatet, vel asque ad horam nonam jejunare praesmerit; eoque ad diligentius scrut-bamur, quod requaqnam hoc tanta cautione servari in Syriae monasteriis videramus. Bingham's Christian Ant. book xx. ch. 6.

It was due to this custom of regarding the whole season of Pentecost as one of rejoicing, during which fasts were suspended, that it is mentioned as a symbol of the world to come. S. Cyril uses the same comparison towards the end of his 26th Paschal discourse, συνάπτοντες ἕξης καὶ τὰς ἑπτὰ ἑβδομάδας τῆς ἁγιάς Πεν Vide

note to the title of this Letter. I am inclined to think that the person here mentioned belonged to the classtermed palatini. These were employed about the palace of the emperor, and though not actually of the number of the army, or accustomed to bear arms, were nevertheless included in the term 'military,' whatever service might be assigned them. This may account for the word used with reference to him in the title of the Letter. Among the number of these palatini, was one who was specially engaged as the bearer of the ordinary communications to and from the Emperor and the Patriarch. There was an officer to whom the general superintendence of the palace and the command of the palatini was committed. Ablabius probably now filled that post. Vid. Suicer. Thes. in v. Παλαιτίνα.

7 Ablavius (hic, Ablabius) Praefect of the city, the minister and favourite of Constantine the Great, was murdered after the death of the latter. He was consul in the preceding year. Zosimus ii. 40. (Smith's Diet. of Gr. and Rom. Biography.) D 2 For I am at the Comitatus, having been summoned by the emperor Constantine to see him. But the Meletians, who were present there, being envious, sought our ruin before the Emperor. But they were put to shame and driven away thence as calumniators, being confuted by many things. Those who were thus driven away were Callinicus, Ision, Eudaemon, and Gelous Hieracammon, who, on account of the shame of his name, calls himself Eulogius. Here endeth the fourth Festal Letter of holy Athanasius.

Letter 5.

Easter-day, Coss. Dalmatius and Zenophilus; Prefect. Paterius; VI. Indict. XVII. Kal. Maii; XX. Pharmuthi; Easter-day XI. Moon; VII. Gods; Era Dioclet. 19. on April 15. WE duly proceed, my brethren, from feasts to feasts, duly from prayers to prayers; we advance from fasts[c] to fasts, and join holy-days to holy-days. Again the time has arrived which brings to us a new beginning, even the announcement of the blessed Passover, in which our Lord was sacrificed. We eat, as it were, the food of life; and, thirsting continually, are at all times delighted, as it were, from a fountain, by His precious blood. For we, on the one hand, are always eagerly desirous; He, on the other, stands ready for those who thirst; and for those who thirst, there is the word of our Saviour, which, according to His lovingkindness, He vouchsafed in the day of the feast; If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. Nor was it then alone

The Syriac must be for 'Paterius' not 'Paterius,' as Larsow writes it. The Nun and the Yod are often confounded in the Ms. Moreover, the letter Oisph would not be written in Syriac as part of the final syllable 'tus,' though it does frequently appear in the Ms. in the termination 'ius:' e. g. Patricius, Anicius, Septimius, Florentius. We know that the pretect in the year 319 bore the name of Paterius. Vid. Baron. Ann. Eccles. tom. 4. p. 8. §. xxi. [c] Read 1100, with the Rebu. The allusion here is to the time of the year at which Easter is celebrated, viz. the Spring, and in particular to the passage in Deut. chap. xxvi. 1, which is more than once quoted in these letters: Φύλαξαι τὸν μῆνα τῶν νέων. Vid. note o to Letter i. p. 12.; also note to Letter xix, sub init. In the expression 'new beginning' reference is also made to our Saviour, (ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ. Apocal. iii. 14.) to whom we are brought near in the feast, according to what follows. Conf. Athan. contra Apollinarium, hb. i. §. 20. p. 748 9.

when any one drew near to Him, that He cured his thirst; but, moreover, whenever it is sought, is there access freely for any man to the Saviour. For the grace of the feast is not limited to one time, nor does its splendid brilliancy suffer an eclipse; but it is always near, enlightening the conscience of those who earnestly desire itf. For there is constant virtue in this, to those who are illuminated in their minds, and

meditate on the divine Scriptures day and night, like the man to whom a blessing is given, as it is written in the sacred Psalms; Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of corrupters. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night. For it is not the sung, or the moon, or the host of those other stars which illumines him; but he glitters with the high effulgence of God over all. For it is God, my beloved, even the God Who at first established the feast for us, Who vouchsafes the celebration of it year by year. He also brought about the slaying of His Son for salvation, and gave us this reason for the holy feast; to which every year is a witness, the feast being proclaimed annually at a season corresponding with the present.

This also leads us on from the cross by means of this world to that which is before us, and God produces even now from it the joy of glorioush salvation, bringing us to the same assembly, and in every place uniting all of us in spirit; appointing us common prayers, and a common grace proceeding from the feast. For this is the marvel of his lovingkindness, that He should gather together in the same place those who are at a distance; and make those who appear to be far off in the body, to be near together in unity of spirit. Wherefore then, my beloved, do we not acknowledge the grace as becometh the feast? Wherefore do we not make a return to our Benefactor? It is indeed impossible to make an adequate return to God; still, it is a

f. Vide note c to Letter i. p. 3. g. In the Ms. 1500 is written by mistake for 1500. h. Syr. 1500. This root is unknown in Syriac, and I believe in all the Shemite languages. There is, I doubt not, an error in the text, and that the word should be some form of the root 1501 which, in Heb. Chald. Syr. Æthiop. and Arabic, conveys the idea of splendor. wicked thing for us who receive the gracious gift, not to acknowledge it. Nature itself manifests our inability; but our own will reproves our unthankfulness. Therefore the blessed Paul, when admiring the greatness of the gift of God, said, And who is sufficient for these things? For He made the world free by the blood of our Saviour; then, again, He caused the grave to be trodden down by the death of our Saviour, and opened the gates of heaven, granting through our Saviour an uninterrupted way to those who ascend (thereto). On this account, one of the saints, while he acknowledged the grace, but was insufficient to repay it, said, What shall I render unto the Lord for all He has done unto me? For instead of death he had received life; freedom instead of bondage; and the kingdom of heaven instead of the grave. For of old time, death reigned from Adam to Moses; but now the divine voice hath said, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise. And the saints, being sensible of this, said, Except the 43. Lord had helped me, my soul had almost dwelt in hell. Besides all this, being compelled to make a return, while he acknowledged the gift, he wrote finally, saying, I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord; precious in His sight is the death of His saints.

With regard to the cup, our Lord also said, Are ye able Mat. 20, 22. to drink of that cup which I am about to drink of? And when the disciples assented, the Lord said, Ye shall indeed drink of My cup; but that ye should sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give; but to those for whom it is prepared. Therefore, my beloved, let us be sensible of the gift, though we are found incompetent to repay it. As we have ability, let us meet the occasion. For although nature is not able, with things unworthy of the Word, to return a recompense for such benefits, yet let us render Him thanks while we persevere in piety. And how can we be more regardful of piety, than when we acknowledge God, Who, in His love to mankind, has bestowed on us such things? (For thus we shall obediently keep the law, and observe the commandments thereof. Further, we shall not, as unthankful persons, be accounted transgressors of the law, or do those things which ought to be hated; for the Lord loveth the thankful;) when too we offer ourselves to the Lord, like the saints; when, finally, we subscribe ourselves, living not to ourselves, but to the Lord, Who

died for us, as also the blessed Paul did, when he said, I am crucified with Christ, yet I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Now our life, my brethren, truly consists in our denying all bodily things, and continuing stedfast in those only of our Saviour. Therefore the season now requires this of us, that we should not only utter such words, but also imitate the deeds of the saints. But we imitate them, when we acknowledge Him Who died; and no longer live unto ourselves, but Christ henceforth lives in us; when we render a recompense to the Lord to the utmost of our power; when, I say, we make a return, not by giving any thing of our own, but those things which we have before received from Him; this being especially of His grace, that He should require, as from us, His own gifts. He bears witness of this when He says, My offerings are My gifts. That is, those things which ye give Me are yours, as having received them from Me; but they are the gifts of God. And let us offer to the Lord every virtue, and the true holiness He requires; and in piety let us keep the feast to Him with those things which He has hallowed for us.

Let us thus engage in the holy fasts, as having been Perhaps S. Athanasius had in mind here the words of David, (1 Chron. xxix. 14.) All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee." prescribed by Him, and by means of which we attain the way to God. But let us not be like the heathen, or the ignorant Jews, or as the heretics and schismatics of the present time. For the heathen think the accomplishment of the feast is in the abundance of food; the Jews, erring in the type and shadow, think it still such; the schismatics keep it in separate places, and with vain imaginations. But let us, my brethren, be superior to the heathen, in keeping the feast with sincerity of soul, and purity of body; to the Jews, in no longer receiving the type and the shadow, but as having been gloriously illumined with the light of truth, and as looking upon the Sun of Righteousness; to the schismatics, in not rending the coat of Christ, but in one house, even in the Catholic Church,

eating the Passover of the Lord, Who, in giving us His holy laws, instructed us to virtue, and for the exercise thereof, promised the feast. For the Passover is in truth a turning from vice to virtue, and a conversion from death unto life. This may be gathered even from the type of old time. For then they were solicitous to pass from Egypt to Jerusalem; but now we remove from death to life. They also at that time passed from Pharaoh to Moses, but now we go up from the devil to the Saviour. And as, at that time, an emblem of their deliverance was every year established as a witness;

46. A S. Cyril, towards the end of his homilies de Festis Paschalibus, frequently speaks of the quadragesimal fast, as of Apostolic or Evangelical origin: κατὰ τὰς ἀποστολικὰς παραδόσεις are the terms he employs in his seventh, fifteenth, and twentieth homilies, when declaring the periods at which Lent was to begin and end. The words κατὰ τὰς εὐαγγελικὰς διατάξεις—κατὰ τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν παραδοσιν—ὡς τὸ εὐαγγελικὸν διαλαλεῖ κήρυγμα, are similar terms found in other of his paschal discourses. A The figure of the ἴννινα ιπεο- sutilis, (John xix. 23.) as applied to the indivisible Church, owes its origin and frequent use to the Arian dispute. It is mischievously to tear the body of the Church, to sever and to rend its whole garment (διασπᾶν τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ μερίξειν τὸν ἄλυτον αὐτῆς χιτάνα.) Vide Germani I. Patriarchæ Constantin. de hæresibus et synod. apud A. Mai Spicil. t. vii. p. 44. So also, §. 15. "Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, who was against receiving Aries back again into communion with the Church, relates that the Lord appeared to him clad in torn garments (ἐβρηγμένους χιτάνας ἀμπεχόμενον). On his asking, O Lord! who has rent Thee? (τὶς σε περιέσχισεν Κύριε;) the answer was, Aries has rent Me; receive him not, for he is condemned now and for ever. L.

so now, introducing the memorial of our salvation, we fast, meditating on death, that we may be able to live. And we watch, not as mourning, but as waiting for the Lord, when He shall have returned from the wedding; so that we may vie with each other in the triumph, hastening to announce the result of victory over death. Would therefore, O my beloved, (for the word requires this,) that we here so governed ourselves at all times and entirely, and so lived, as never to forget the noble acts of God, nor to depart from the practice of virtue! As also the Apostolic voice exhorts; Remember Jesus Christ, that He rose from the dead. Not that there was a limited season of remembrance appointed; but that at all times He should be in our thoughts. Yet, on account of general supineness, we delay from day to day. Let us then begin in these days. To this end a time of remembrance was appointed, which should set before the saints the recompense of the reward of their calling, while to the careless it should be a reproving monitor.

Therefore in all the remaining days, let us persevere in virtuous conversation, repenting, as is our duty, of our neglect in various things, of whatever kind it may be;

for there is no one free from defilement, though his course may have been but one hour on the earth, as that man of surpassing fortitude, Job, testifies. But, stretching forth to those things that are to come, let us pray that we eat not the Passover unworthily, lest we be exposed to dangers. For to those who keep the feast in purity, the Passover is heavenly food; but to those who observe it profanely and contemptuously, it is harm and loss. For it is written, Whosoever shall eat and drink unworthily, is guilty of the death of our Lord. Wherefore, let us not proceed, as merely regarding the performance of the act of the feast, but as being about to approach the divine Lamb, and to touch heavenly food. Let us cleanse our hands; let us purify the body. Let us keep our whole spirit from guile; not giving up ourselves to excess, and to lusts, but occupying ourselves entirely with our Lord, and with divine doctrines; so that, being altogether pure, we may be able to partake of the Word.

We begin the holy fast on the fourteenth of Pharmuthi (Apr. 9.), on the evening of the Sabbath; and having ceased on the nineteenth of the same month Pharmuthi (Apr. 14.), the first day of the holy week dawns upon us on the twentieth of the same month Pharmuthi (Apr. 15.), to which we join the seven weeks of Pentecost; with prayers, and distribution towards our neighbour, and love towards one another, and, which is above all, a conciliatory disposition. For in this manner also shall we be heirs of the kingdom of heaven, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom to the Father be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. All the brethren who are with me salute you. Salute one another with a holy kiss. Here endeth the fifth Festal Letter of holy Athanasius.

Letter 6.

Easter-day, XII. Pharmuthi; VII. Id. April: XVII. Moon; Easter-day Era Dioclet. 50; Coss. Optatus Patricius, Anicius on April 7. Paulinus; Prefect; Philagrius, the Cappadocian; VII. Indict. Now again, my beloved, has God also brought us to the season of the feast, and through His loving-kindness we have reached the period of assembly for it. For that God who brought Israel out of Egypt, even He also at this time calls us to the feast, saying by Moses, Observe the mouth of new fruits[c], and keep the Passover to the Lord thy God: and by the prophet, Keep thy feasts, O Judah; pay to the Lord thy vows. If then God Himself loves the feast, and calls us to it, it is not right, my brethren, that it should be delayed, or observed carelessly; but that with alacrity and zeal we should come to it; so that, having begun joyfully here, we may also receive an earnest of that heavenly feast. For if we diligently keep the feast which is celebrated here, doubtless we shall receive the perfect joy which is in heaven; as the Lord says; With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, that I will not

There appears to be an error in the Syriac text: we must read □□□□□□□ in place of □□□□□□ This Philagrius was a violent persecutor of the Church, taking part with the Arians. He was an apostate (παραβάτης) from the true faith. Conf. Hist. Arian. ad Monachos, p. 276. §. 9. and p. 277. §. 12. An elegant comparison between Athan. and Philagrius is however drawn out by Greg. Nazianzen, tom. i. p. 401. ed. Par. 1778. Conf. note to title of Letter x. [c] Conf. note o, to Letter i. p. 12.

eat it, until it is fulfilled with you in the kingdom of God. Now we eat it when, having entertained in our minds the occasion of the feast, and acknowledging the Deliverer, we are properly attracted to His grace, as Paul saith; So that we may keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. For the Lord died in those days, that we should no longer do the deeds of death. He gave His life, that we might preserve our own from the snares of the devil. And, what is most wonderful, the Word became incarnate, that we should no longer live in the flesh, but in spirit should worship God, who is a Spirit?

He who is not so disposed, though employing the days, does not keep the feast, but, like an unthankful person, finds fault with the grace; and though he may esteem the days before others, he does not supplicate the Lord who in those days redeemed him. Let him by all means hear, though fancying that he keeps the feast, the Apostolic voice reproving him: Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years: I fear lest I have laboured among you in vain. For 11. the feast is not on account of the days; but we observe it, because in them the Lord suffered in our stead, for our Passover, Christ, is sacrificed. Even as Moses, when teaching Israel not to consider the feast as pertaining to the days, but to the Lord, said, It is the Lord's Passover. To the Jews forsooth when they thought they celebrated the Passover, because they persecuted the Lord, the feast was useless; since it no longer bore the name of the Lord, even according to their own testimony. It was not the Passover of the Lord, but that of the Jews. The Passover was named after Is. 1, 14.

15. &c. 19. 20. 65. 28. the Jews, my brethren, because they denied the Lord of the Passover. On this account, the Lord, turning away His face from such a doctrine of theirs, saith, Your new moons and your sabbaths My soul hateth. So now, those who keep the Passover in like manner, the Lord again reproves, as He did those lepers who were cleansed, when He loved the one as thankful, but was angry with the others as ungrateful, because they did not acknowledge their Deliverer, but preferred the cure of the leprosy to Him Who had healed them. But one of them when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell on his face at the feet of Jesus giving Him thanks; and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but those nine—whence are there none found who returned to give glory to God, but this stranger? And there was more given to this one than to the rest; for being cleansed from his leprosy, he heard from the Lord, Arise, go thy way; thy faith hath saved thee. For he who giveth thanks, and he who glorifies, have kindred feelings, in that they bless their Helper for the benefits they have received. So the Apostle exhorts all men to this, saying, Glorify God with your body; and the prophet commands, saying, Give glory to God.

Although testimony was borne by Caiaphas against our Redeemer, and He was set at nought by the Jews, and was condemned by Pilate in those days, yet very exalted and most mighty was the voice of the Father which came to Him; I have glorified, and will glorify again. For those things which He suffered on our account have passed away; but those concerning Him as our Saviour remain for ever. The Syriac would seem to remove the note of interrogation from πού, and to give the meaning 'how is it that those nine did not return to give glory to God, while this stranger did?' εἰ μὴ is thus to be taken as in Luke iv. [c] Conf. Athan. Expos. in Psalmos. (Ps. lxvii. 35.) Δότε δόξαν τῷ Θεῷ— οὕτω καὶ Παῦλος δοξάσατέ, φησι, τὸν Θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν, καὶ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι ὑμῶν. The ideas of 'praising' or 'glorifying,' and

'giving thanks,' are closely connected, and are sometimes expressed by the same word, e. g. Heb. □□□□□□ Gr. 'Ομολογεῖν. Conf.

Ps. l. 23. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth V.e. Suicer in voe 'Ομολογεῖν says, Ομολογεῖν significat laudare, celebrare, glorificare, gratias agere; idque—per synecdochen generis Hebraicam: nam qui aliquem celebrant, illi confitentur, vel potius profitentur res praelare ab eo gestas, vel beneficia ab eo accepta. Christ, while on earth, suffered as man, but was glorified as God, the Father bearing testimony of Him. His sufferings for us have ceased, but the glory of them shall endure eternally. Conf. Phil. ii. 7—11.

On this account, my brethren, when we remember these things, let us not be occupied with meats, but let us glorify the Lord; let us become fools for Him Who died for us, even as Paul said; For if we are foolish, it is to God; or if we are sober-minded, it is to you; since because one died for all men, therefore all were dead to Him; and He died for all, that we who live should not henceforth live to ourselves, but to Him Who died for us, and rose again. No longer then ought we to live to ourselves, but, as servants, to the Lord. And not in vain should we receive the grace, as the time is especially an acceptable one, and the day of salvation hath dawned, even the death of our Redeemer. For even for our sakes the Word came down, and being incorruptible, put on a corruptible body for the salvation of all of us. On this subject Paul speaks plainly, saying, This corruptible must put on incorruption. The Lord too was sacrificed, that by His blood He might abolish death. Full well did He once, in a certain place, blame those who participated vainly in the shedding of His blood, while they did not delight themselves in the flesh of the Word, saying, What profit is there in My blood, that I go down to corruption? This does not mean that the descent of the Lord was of no advantage; for it gained the whole world;

but rather that after He had thus suffered, sinners would prefer to be without it, to profiting by it. For He regarded our salvation as a delight and a peculiar gain; while, on the contrary, He looked upon our destruction as loss. Also in the Gospel, He praises those who increased the grace twofold, both him who made ten talents of five, and him who made four talents of two, as those who had profited, and turned them to good account; but him who hid the talent He cast out as wanting, saying to him, Thou wicked serrant! oughtest thou not to have put my money into the bank? then on my return, I should have received mine own with interest. Take, therefore, from him the talent, and give it to him that hath ten talents. For to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. For it is not His will that the grace we have received should be unprofitable; but He requires us, as a duty, to render Him of His fruits, as the blessed Paul saith; The fruit of the Spirit is lore, joy, and peace.

Therefore, being right-minded, and owing no man any thing, but rather giving every thing to every man, he was a teacher of the like propriety of purpose, saying, Render to all their dues. He was like those sent by the householder to receive the fruits of the vineyard from the husbandmen; for he also exhorted all men to render a return”; but Israel despised, and rendered not. Their inclinations were not good; nay, moreover, they killed those that were sent; so that there was no reverence shewn the Lord of the vineyard”, but He was even slain by them. Notwithstanding, when He came and found no fruit in them, He cursed them through the fig-tree, saying, Let there be henceforth no fruit from thee; and the fig-tree died fruitless, so that even the disciples wondered when it withered away. Then was fulfilled that which was also spoken by the prophet; I will take away from them the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the scent of myrrh, and the light of a lamp, and the whole land shall be destroyed. For the whole service of the law has been removed from them, and henceforth and for ever they remain without a feast. And they observe not the Passover; for how can they? They have no abiding place, but they wander every where. And they eat unlea-

” The comparison here made, as well as the order of the words in the Syriac text, requires the translation here given. Larsow renders the passage, ’he was studious to render a return to all men.’ But though I can might take this signification, it would not suit here. Those who were sent to the husbandmen exhorted them to make a proper return of the fruits; St. Paul, who was sent as a preacher of the Gospel to all the world, exhorted all men to a perform- ance of their Christian duties. The same word is employed before in this letter; ’The apostle exhorts all men to this,’ p. 52. I can is the expression in p. 4, where we read ’urging us to note.’ Conf. ’De Passione et Cruce Domini,’ p. 62. After quoting the verse of Scripture, ’Render to all their dues, &c.’ there follows; τοῦτο πεποίηκεν αὐτὸς ὁ ταῦτα κηρύττων. ὥσπερ οὖν παρρησιάζετο γράφων. τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα κ. τ. λ.

vened bread without fulfilling the law, since they are unable first to sacrifice the lamb, as they were commanded to do when eating unleavened bread. But in every place they transgress the law, and judgments are inflicted on them by God; so that they introduce days of grief and not of gladness. Now the cause of this to them was their slaying of the Lord, and their not reverencing the Only-Begotten. At this time also, the altogether wicked heretics and ignorant schismatics are in the same case: the one, in that they slay the Word; the other, in that they rend the coat. They also remain expelled from the feast, because they live without godliness and knowledge, and emulate the conduct shewn in the matter of Bar Abbas the robber, whom the Jews desired instead of the Saviour. Therefore the Lord cursed them under the figure of the fig-tree. Yet also even thus He spared them in His loving-kindness, not destroying them, root and all. For He did not curse the root, but [said], that no man should eat fruit of it thenceforth. When He did this, He brought the shadow

to nought, causing it to wither; but preserving the root, so that we might [not] be grafted upon it: they too, if they remain not in unbelief, may attain to be grafted into their own olive tree. When therefore the Lord had cursed these because of their negligence, He removed from them the new moons, the true lamb, and that which is truly the Passover. But to us it came: there came too the solemn day, in which it is incumbent upon us to call to the feast with a trumpet, and separate ourselves to the Lord with thanks Matt. 26, 58.

17. 13. giving, considering it as our own festival. For we are bound to celebrate it, not to ourselves, but to the Lord; and to rejoice, not in ourselves, but in the Lord, Who bore our afflictions, and said, My soul is sorrowful unto death. For the heathen, and all those men who are destitute of our faith, keep feasts according to their own wills, and have no peace, since they sin against God. But the saints, as those who live to the Lord, also keep the feast to Him, saying, I will rejoice in Thy salvation, and, my soul shall be joyful in the Lord. The commandment also is common to them, Rejoice, ye righteous, in the Lord—so that they also may be gathered together, to sing that common and festal Psalm, Come, let us rejoice, not in ourselves, but, in the Lord. For thus, the patriarch Abraham rejoiced not to see his own day, but that of the Lord; and when he thus longed for it, he saw it, and was glad. And when he was tried, by faith he sacrificed Isaac, and offered up his only-begotten son—he who had received the promises. And, in offering his son, he worshipped the Son of God. And, being restrained from sacrificing Isaac, he saw the Messiah in the ram, which was offered up instead as a sacrifice to God. The patriarch was tried then, through Isaac; not however that he was sacrificed, but He who was pointed out in Isaiah; He shall be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers he shall be speechless; but He took away the sin of the world.

especially the first Letter of this series. In both, allusion is made to Eccles. chap. iii. where it is stated that there is a time for every thing; the command given to Moses, Numb. x. 1. is quoted in both; and the figure of the Christian trumpet is also contained equally in both. The Passover is no longer to be a feast of the Jews: it is to be celebrated by Christians as a festival of the Lord. Vid. page 45 and note g. See note to Letter ii. p. 18. where add that Jeroboam is called σχισματοποιός by Athan.: Synopsis Sac. Script. p. 135. The latter part of the translation Whom (i. e. Isaac) he had received by a promise. The Syriac here is more exact to the Greek, □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ He (i. e. Abraham) who had received the promises. The Syriac, here rendered by 'ram,' is □□□□ though we might have expected .□□□□ It is the same word that is used directly after, in the quotation from Isaiah, and rendered 'lamb.' Difference between the sacrifice of Christ, and that of Isaac. 51

And on this account [Abraham] was restrained from laying his hand on the lad, lest the Jews, taking occasion from the sacrifice of Isaac, should reject the prophetic

declarations concerning our Saviour, even all of them; but more especially those uttered by the Psalmist: Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not; a body Thou hast prepared Me; and should refer all such things as these to the son of Abraham. For the sacrifice was not properly the establishment of Isaac, but of Abraham who also offered, and by that he was tried. Thus God accepted the will of the offerer, but prevented that which was offered from being sacrificed. For the death of Isaac did not procure freedom to the world, but that of our Saviour alone, by whose stripes we all are healed. For He raised up the falling, healed the sick, satisfied those who were hungry, and filled the poor; and, what is more wonderful, raised us all from the dead: having abolished death, He hath brought us from affliction and sighing to the rest and gladness of this feast, a joy which reacheth even to heaven.

For not we alone are affected by this, but because of it, even the heavens rejoice with us, and the whole church together of the first-born, written in heaven, is made glad, as the prophet proclaims, saying, Rejoice, ye heavens, for the Lord hath comforted Israel. Shout, ye foundations of the earth. Cry out with joy, ye mountains, ye high places, and all the trees which are in them, because the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and Israel hath been glorified. And again; « I use the word 'establishment' for want of one that would better express the meaning. The Syriae is which is the rendering of the Greek διόρθωσις in Heb. ix. 10, μέχρι καιροῦ διορθώσεως. The sacrifice of Isaac was not only to serve as a type of the death of Christ; but the particular circumstances attending it, were designed for the instruction of Abraham, and his establishment in the Christian faith. Cont. The phylact on the passage in Heb. — ἄχρι τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παρουσίας, τοῦ μελλοντος διωρθώσασθαι ταῦτα, καὶ τὴν ἀληθινὴν καὶ πνευματικὴν πατρείαν ἐπεισαγαγεῖν. The original Greek was probably οὐ γὰρ ἡ διόρθωσις τοῦ Ἰσαὰκ ἦν ἡ θυσία, ἀλλὰ τοῦ Ἀβραάμ,

1 2 Is. 19, 13. I Rejoice, and be glad, ye heavens; let the hills melt into gladness, for the Lord hath had mercy on His people, and comforted the oppressed of the people. The whole creation keeps a feast, my brethren, and every thing that hath breath praises the Lord, as the Psalmist [says], both on account of the destruction of the enemies, and our salvation. And very right is it; for if there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, what should there not be over the abolition of sin, and the resurrection of the dead? Or what kind of a feast and gladness must there be in heaven: how must all its hosts joy and exult, as they rejoice and watch in our assemblies, both those held from time to time, and especially those at Easter? For they look on sinners while they repent; on those who have turned away their faces, when they become converted; on those who formerly persisted in lusts and excess, but who now humble themselves by fastings and temperance; and, finally, on the enemy who lies weakened, no longer possessed of life, being bound hand and foot, so that we may mock at him; Where is thy victory, O Death? where is thy sting, O Grave? Let us then sing unto the Lord a victorious song of praise.

Who then will conduct us to such a company of angels as this? Who, coming with a desire for the heavenly feast, and the angelic holiday, will say like the prophet, I will pass to the place of the wondrous tabernacle, unto the house of God; with the voice of joy and praise, with the shouting of those who keep festival? To such a state, the saints also encourage us, saying, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob. But such a feast as this is not for an impure person, neither is the approach to it for sinners; but it is for the virtuous and diligent; and such as have the same end in view as the saints; for, Who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place, but he that hath clean hands, and a pure heart: who hath not devoted his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully to his neighbour. For he, as the Psalmist adds, when he goes up, shall receive a blessing from the Lord. Now this clearly also refers to what the Lord gives to them at the right hand, saying, Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. But the deceitful, and he 31. that is not pure of heart, and possesses nothing that is pure, (as the Proverb saith, To a deceitful man there is nothing good, shall assuredly, being a stranger, and of a different 13.

race from the saints, be accounted unworthy to eat the Passover, for a foreigner shall not eat of it. Thus Judas, Exol. 12, when he thought he kept the Passover, because he plotted 43. deceit against the Saviour, was estranged from the city which is above, and from the apostolic company. For the law commanded the Passover to be eaten with due observance; but he, while eating it, was sifted of the devil, who had entered his soul.

Wherefore let us not be affected as those who keep the feast on earth, but as celebrating it in heaven with the angels. Let us glorify the Lord, by temperance, by righteousness, and those other virtues. And let us rejoice, not in ourselves, but in the Lord, that we also may be inheritors with the saints. Let us keep the feast then, as Moses. Let us watch like David, who rose seven times, and in the middle of the night gave thanks for the righteous judgments of God. Let us be early, as he said, In the morning I will 3. stand before Thos, and Thos will look upon me; in the morning Thos will hear my voice. Let us fast like Daniel: let us pray without ceasing, as Paul commanded; all of us recognising the season of prayer, but especially those who are honourably married, so that when a testimony is borne to us by these things, and we keep the feast by them, we may be able to enter into the joy of our Lord in the kingdom of heaven. But as Israel, when going up to Jerusalem, was first purified in the wilderness, being trained to forget the customs of Egypt: as the [divine] word has graciously prescribed to us the holy fast of forty days; let us first be purified and purged, so that when we depart hence, having been careful of fasting, we may be able to ascend to the upper chamber with the Lord, to sup with Him; and may be partakers of the joy which is in heaven. In no other manner shall we be able to go up to Jerusalem, and to eat the Passover, but as we apply ourselves to the fast of forty days.

We begin the fast of forty days on the first day of the month Phamenoth (Feb. 25.); and having prolonged it till the fifth of Pharmuthi (Mar. 31.), suspending it upon the previous first days of the week, and the Saturdays, then we begin again on the holy days of Easter, on the sixth of Pharmuthi (Apr. 1.), and cease on the eleventh of the same month (Apr. 6.), late in the evening of the Saturday, immediately after which there rises upon us the first day of the holy week, on the twelfth of Pharmuthi (Apr. 7.), which extends its beams, with unobscured grace, to all the seven weeks of the holy Pentecost. Resting on that day, we shall have fulfilled, through all the season, the feast of Easter, by Jesus Christ our Lord, through Whom, to the Father, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. All the brethren who are with me salute you. Salute one another with a holy kiss.

Here endeth the sixth Festal Letter of the holy and God-clad Athanasius.

Letter 7.

Easter-day IV. Pharmathi; III. Kal. April; XX. Moon; Er. Dioclet. 51; Coss. Julius Constantinus, the brother of Easter-day Augustus, Rufinus Albinus; Prafeet, the same Philagrius; on March VIII. Indiet. THE blessed Paul wrote to the Corinthians that he always bore in his body the death of Jesus; not as though he alone should make that boast, but also they and we too; and in this let us be followers of him, my brethren. And let this be the customary boast of all of us at all times. In this also David participated, saying in the Psalms, For thy sake we 22. die all the day; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Now this is becoming in us, especially in the days of the feast, when a commemoration of the death of our Saviour is held. For he who is made like Him in His death, is also careful in the practice of virtue, having mortified his members which are upon the earth, and crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts: but he lives in the Spirit, and is conformed to the Spirit. He is always mindful of God, and forgets Him not, and never does the deeds of death. On this account, in order that we may bear in our body the death of Jesus, he immediately adds, when describing such fellowship, we having the same spirit of faith, as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak. He adds also, speaking of the grace that arises from knowledge; For He that raised

The twentieth Letter, as far as it is extant, bears a great resemblance with this. In both, the comparison between natural and spiritual food is enlarged upon, and several of the same quotasup Jesus, will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us before Him with you. When, by such faith and knowledge, the saints have attained to this true life, they also receive, doubtless, the joy which is in heaven: for which the wicked not caring, are deservedly deprived of the blessedness arising from it. (LXX. vers.) Mat. 25, 11. 25. 13.

For, let the wicked be taken away, so that he shall not see the glory of the Lord. For although, when they shall hear the universal publication of the promise, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, they shall rise and shall reach even to heaven, knocking and saying, Open to us; nevertheless the Lord will reprove them, as those who put the knowledge of Himself far from them, saying, I know you not.

But the holy Spirit cries against them, The wicked shall be turned into hell, even all the nations that forget God. They indeed humble themselves, (we may say of the wicked,) but not by a discipline opposed to sin: for they do not, like the saints, bear death in their body. They rather bury the soul in sins and follies, drawing near to the dead, and satifying it with dead nourishment; like young eagles which, from high places, fly upon the carcasses of the dead, and which the law prohibited, commanding figuratively. Thou shalt not eat the eagle, nor any other bird that feedeth on a dead carcase; and it pronounced unclean whatsoever eateth the dead. But these kill the soul with lusts, and say nothing but, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. And the kind of fruit those have who thus love pleasure, he immediately describes, adding, And these things are revealed in the ears of the Lord of Hosts, that this sin shall not be forgiven you until ye die. Yea, even while they live, they shall be ashamed, because they consider their belly their Lord: and, when dead, they shall be tormented, as those who have made a beast of such a death. To this effect also Paul bears witness, saying, Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them. And the divine saying declared before respecting them: The death

The commonly received railing of the Greek in this place is δὰ Ἰησοῦ, which the Eeshua version agrees: have οὐκ Ἰησοῦ, (Vas. 6am. 10am.) which Athan, appears to have adopted, Genl. Eph. ii. 6. Vas. 6am. 10am. Some Mos. however, 1 Cor. 12am. 10am. 10am. contrasted with the state of the good here and hereafter. 57 of sinners is evil, and those who hate the righteous commit sin. For bitter is the worm, and grievous the darkness, which wicked men inherit. But the saints, and the real followers of virtue, mortify their members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, wicked passions, evil concupiscence; and, as the result of this, are pure and without spot, confiding in the promise of our Saviour, who said, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. These, having become dead to the world, and renounced the merchandise of the world, meet with an honourable death such as this: for, precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. They are also able, preserving the Apostolic likeness, to say, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lireth in me. For that is the true life, which a man lives in Christ: for although they are dead to the world, yet they dwell, as it were, in heaven, meditating on those things which are above, as he who was a lever of such a habitation said, While we walk on earth, our dwelling is in heaven.

Those, therefore, who thus live, and participate in such virtue, are alone able to give glory to God, which may be set down as the peculiar duty of a feast and a holiday. For the feast is not an indulgence in food, nor splendor of clothing, nor days of leisure, but it is an understanding directed to God, and the offering of thanksgiving by a song Ps. 115, 17. 18. Ecclus. 16, 9. 28. Vs 118, 17. of praise to Him. Now this appertains to the saints alone, who live in Christ: for it is written, The dead shall not praise Thee, O Lord, neither all those who go down to hell; but

we who live will bless the Lord, from henceforth even for ever. As also it was with Hezekiah, who was delivered from death, and therefore praised God, saying, Those who are in hell cannot praise Thee; the dead cannot bless Thee; but the living shall bless Thee, as I also do. For to praise and bless God belongs to those only who live in Christ, and by such means they go up to the feast; for the Passover is not of the Gentiles, nor of those who are yet Jews in the flesh; but of those who acknowledge the truth in Christ, according to the declaration of him who was sent to proclaim such

a feast; Our Passover, Christ, is sacrificed. Therefore, although wicked men press forward to keep the feast, and, as at a feast, praise God, and intrude into the Church of the saints, yet God expostulates, saying to the sinner, Wherefore dost thou talk of My laws? And the gentle Spirit rebukes them, saying, Praise is not comely in the month of a sinner. Neither hath sin any place in common with the praise of God; but the sinner has a mouth speaking perverse things, as the Proverb saith, The month of the wicked answereth evil things. For how is it possible for us to praise God with an impure mouth? since things which are contrary to each other cannot exist in the same person. For what communion is there of righteousness with iniquity? or, what fellowship is there between light and darkness? So exclaims Paul, a minister of the Gospel.

Thus it is that sinners, and all those who are aliens from the Catholic Church, heretics, and schismatics, since they are excluded from the praise of the saints, cannot properly even continue observers of the feast. But the righteous man, although he appears dying to the world, uses plainness of speech, saying, I shall not die, but live, and narrate all Thy marvellous deeds. For even God is not ashamed to be called the God of those who truly mortify their members Conf. Letter vi. p. 46, note i.

which are upon the earth, but live in Christ; for He is the God of the living, not of the dead. And He, by His living Word, quickeneth all men, and gives Him to be food and life to the saints; as also the Lord exclaims, I am the bread of life. The Jews, being unsound in their perception, and having the senses of the mind unexercised to virtue, and not alive to seek after such bread, murmured against Him, because He said, I am the bread which came down from heaven, and giveth life unto men. For sin has her own peculiar bread, [bread] of her death; wherefore, calling to those who are lovers of pleasure and lack understanding, she saith, Touch with delight secret bread, and sweet waters which are stolen; for he who merely touches them knows not that the earth-born perish with her. For even when the sinner looks for gratification, he finds not the result of its meat pleasant, as the Wisdom of God saith again, Bread of deceit is pleasant to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel. And, Honey droppeth from the lips of a whorish woman, which, for a time, is sweet to thy palate; but at the last thou shalt find it more bitter than

gall, and sharper than a two-edged sword. Thus, then, he eats and is delighted for a little time; afterwards he spurneth it when he hath removed his soul afar. For the fool knoweth not that those who are far from God shall perish.

Moreover, in accordance with this, the prophetic admonition says, by way of restraint, What hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Gilhon? And what hast thou to do in the way of Asshur, to drink the waters of the rivers? But the wisdom of God, which loves mankind, forbids these things, crying, But depart quickly, tarry not in the place, neither fix thine eye upon it; for thus thou shalt pass over strange waters, and depart quickly from the strange river. She also calls them to herself, For wisdom hath builded her house, and supported it on seven pillars; Conf. Col. in 5. Larson renders this passage erroneously, as I conceive. [c] He quickens through His living word every one, gives to him fear, and to the saints, life. The Sykes is literally translated, as given away, and the context seems to require that Christ should be here set forth as food and life, or, the food of life—the bread of life.

This quotation is from Prov. ix. 18. The words are found in the LXX. version, though not in the original H. prov. she hath killed her sacrifices, and mingled her wine in the goblets, and prepared her table: she hath sent forth her servants, inviting to the goblet with a loud proclamation, and saying, Whoso is foolish, let him turn in to me; and to them that lack understanding she saith, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine I have mingled for you. And what expectation is there in return for these things? Forsake fully that ye may live, and seek understanding that ye may abide. For the bread of Wisdom is also living fruit, as the Lord said: I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever. For when Israel ate of the manna, which was truly pleasant and wonderful, he died: and it was not the case that he who ate of that lived for ever, but all that multitude died in the wilderness. The Lord thus teaches, saying, I am the bread of life: your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which came down from heaven, that a man should eat thereof, and not die. Now wicked men hunger for bread like this, for sickly souls will hunger; but the righteous alone, being prepared, shall be satisfied, saying, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when Thy glory is seen by me.

15. For he who partakes of divine bread always hungers with desire; and he who thus hungers has a never-failing gift, as Wisdom promises, saying, The Lord will not stay the righteous soul with famine. It is also promised in the Psalms, I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread. We may also hear our Saviour saying, Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Well then do the saints and those who love the life which is in Christ raise themselves to a longing after such food as this. And one earnestly implores, while the want of the true believer is supplied by Christ. 61 saying, Is

the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so , panteth my soul after Thee, O God? My soul thirsteth for the living God, when shall I come and see the face of God? And another: My God, my God, I seek Thee early; my soul 2. thirsteth for Thee; often does my flesh, in a dry and pathless land, and without water. So did I appear before Thee in holiness to see Thy power and Thy glory.

Since these things are so, my brethren, let us mortify our Cel. 3. 5. members which are on the earth, and be nourished with living bread—by faith and love to God—knowing that without faith it is impossible to be partakers of such bread as this. For our Saviour, when He called all men to Him, and said, If any man thirst, let him [come] to Me and drink, immediately added the faith without which a man cannot receive such food: He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. And further, He always nourished His believing disciples with His words, and gave them life by the nearness of His divinity: but to the Canaanitish woman, because she was not yet a believer, He deigned not even a reply, although she stood greatly in need of food from Him. He did this not from scorn, far from it: (for the Lord is loving to men and good, and on that account He went into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; but because of her unbelief, and because she was a profane woman, destitute of the word. And He did it right only, my brethren: for it was not of advantage that she should prefer her supplication before faith, but that she should corroborate her prayer by her faith: For he 6. that cometh to God, must first believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek Him;

and that without faith it is impossible for a man to please Him. This Paul teaches, Now that he was up to that time an unbeliever, one of the profane, He shows, saying, It is not meet to take the children’s Med. 15. 26. bread, and to cast it to dogs. She then, being convinced by the power of the word, and having changed her profane state, also acquired faith: for the Lord no longer treated her as a dog, but conversed with her as with a human being, saying, O woman, great is thy faith? As therefore she believed, He forthwith granted to her the fruit of faith, and said, Be it N. 15. 25.

The word 12b 201 probably to be supposed in the M— to thee as thou desirest. And her daughter was healed in the self-same hour. For the righteous man, when fed by faith and knowledge, and performance of divine words, has his soul always in health. Wherefore it is commanded to receive to ourselves him who is weak in the faith, and to nourish him, even if he is not yet able to eat bread, but herbs, (for he that is weak eateth herbs.) For even the Corinthians were not able to partake of such bread, being yet babes, and like babes they drank milk. For every one that partaketh of milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, according to the words of that godlike man. The Apostle also enjoins his beloved son Timothy, in his first Epistle, to be nourished with the word of faith, and the good doctrine whereto he

had attained. And in the second, Preserve thou the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. And not only here, my brethren, is this bread the food of the righteous; neither are the saints on the earth alone nourished by such bread and such blood; but we also eat them in heaven, for the Lord is the food even of the exalted spirits, and the angels, and He is the joy of all the heavenly host. And to all He is every thing, and He spareth all according to His lovingkindness. Already hath the Lord given us angels' food, and He promises to those who continue with Him in His trials, saying, And I promise to you a kingdom, as My Father hath promised to Me; that ye shall eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

What kind of a banquet is it, my brethren, and how great ? For . . . leg. . . . Conf. Letter i. p. 8. For the angels are no otherwise sustained than by be- holding at all times the face of the Father, and of the Saviour Who is in heaven. Conf. Ps. lxxviii. 25. 26. And gave them food from heaven. So man did eat angels' food. S. Athan. on the passage (Expos. in Psalmos, p. 908.) says, that God not only fed the bodies of the Israelites with manna, but also their souls with a certain reasonable and heavenly virtue, ὥσπερ ἀμελεὶ διατρέφει καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους. Referring to 1 Cor. x. 3. he says, ὡς πνευματικὸν ἔφαγον βρῶμα, τοῦτο δὲ ἦν ὁ νῦν ὄρτος ἀγγέλων ὀνομαζόμενος.

is the harmony and gladness of those who eat at this heavenly table! For they delight themselves not with that food which is cast out, but with that which produces life everlasting. Who then shall be deemed worthy of that assembly? Who is so blessed as to be called, and accounted worthy of that divine feast? For, blessed is he who shall eat bread in Thy kingdom. For he who has been adjudged worthy of this heavenly calling, and by this calling has been sanctified, if he grow negligent in it, although washed, becomes defiled: counting the blood of the corenant by which he was sanctified a profane thing, and despising the Spirit of grace, he hears the words, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having wedding garments? For the banquet of the saints is spotless and pure; for many are called, but few chosen. Judas, to wit, though he came to the supper, inasmuch as he thought lightly of it, went out from the presence of the Lord, and having abandoned his Life, hanged himself. But the disciples who continued with the Redeemer, partook also of the happiness of the feast. And that young man who went into a far country, and there wasted his substance, living in dissipation, if he contract a desire for this divine feast, and, coming to himself, shall say, How many hired servants of my father have bread to spare, while I perish here with hunger!

and shall then arise and come to his father, and confess to him, saying, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am not worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants;—when he shall thus confess, then he shall

be counted worthy of more than he prayed for. For the father does not receive him as a hired servant, neither does he look upon him as a stranger; but he kisses him as a son; he receives him as a dead man alive again; and deems him worthy of the divine feast, and gives him his former and precious garment[c]. So that, on this account, there is singing and gladness in the paternal home. For this is the work of the lovingkindness and grace of the father, that not only should he make him alive from the dead, but that he should also render his grace illustrious through the Spirit. Therefore, instead of cor-

15. Heb.10.29. Mat.22,12. Mat.22,14. 17. ruption, he clothes him with an incorruptible garment; instead of hunger, he kills the fatted calf; that he should not henceforth travel afar off, [the father] busies himself on his return, providing shoes for his feet; and, what is most wonderful, putting a divine signet-ring upon his hand; whilst by all these things He begets him afresh[c] in the image of the glory of Christ. These are the gracious gifts of the Father, by which the Lord honours and nourishes those who abide with Him, and also those who return to Him and repent. For He promises, saying, I am the bread of life; he that cometh unto Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. We, too, shall be counted worthy of these things, if, at all times, we cleave to our Saviour, and if we are pure, not only in these six days of Easter, but consider our whole course as a feast, and continue near and not far off, saying to Him, Thou hast the words of eternal life, and whither shall we go? Let those of us who are far off return, confessing our iniquities and possessing nothing before men, but by the spirit mortifying the deeds of the body. For thus, having beforehand nourished the soul here, we shall partake, with angels, at that heavenly and spiritual table; not knocking, and being repulsed, like those five foolish virgins, but

In the Syr. Ms. there is an error through the transposition of letters, □□□□□□□□□□□ being written instead of .□□□□□□□□□□□ Syr. □□□□□□ □□□ So we find quoted in Castell s. v. □□□□□□ □□□ Ablutio □□□□□□ □□□ que denuo fit. [c] The word πάσχα appears to be applied in this place κατ’ ἐξοχήν, to the Passion week, (ἡ ἁγία καὶ μεγάλη ἑβδομᾶς—ἑβδομᾶς τῶν πασχῶν). So wread (Athan. op. tom. i. p. 256.) μετὰ γὰρ τὰ ἑβδομὰ τοῦ πάσχα κ. τ. λ. The Greeks usually designated the days of the week, not after the preceding, but the following Sunday. Thus after the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, κυριακὴ τοῦ ἀσώτου (Latinis Dominica Septua gesimæ), those days that follow immediately, viz. the second third, fourth ferier, &c. were by the Greeks termed ἡ δευτέρα τῆς ἀποκρέω, ἡ τρίτη, &c. until the following Sunday, which was termed κυριακὴ τῆς ἀποκρέω (Latinis, Dominica Sexagesimæ), while the whole week was called ἑβδομὰς τῆς ἀποκρέω. Vid. Suicer. Thes. in voc. ἀποκρέως, and the notes of Valesius on Euseb. Orat. in laud. Constant. ch. ix. With us, Easter-week includes the six days following Easter-Sunday; with the Greeks, the ἑβδομὰ τῶν πασχῶν was applied to the preceding six days, as here.

Athan. frequently speaks in these Epistles of the Easter-festival as designed to bring us nearer to Christ. Our whole life is to be a continual spiritual feast of praise and thanksgiving to God, whereby we are to be prepared for Christ's presence in heaven. Vid. supra, p. 57. and Letter v. sub init. entering with the Lord, like those who were wise and loved the bridegroom; and, shewing the death of Jesus in our 10 bodies, we shall receive life and the kingdom from Him. We begin the fast of forty days on the twenty-third of Mecheir (Feb. 17.), and the holy fast of the blessed feast on the twenty-eighth of Phamenoth (Mar. 21.); and having joined to these, six days after them, in fastings and watchings, as each one is able, let us cease on the third of the month Pharmuthi (Mar. 19.), on the evening of the seventh day. Also that day which is holy and blessed in every thing, which possesses the name of Christ, the Lord's day 1, having risen upon us, (on the fourth of Pharmuthi, Mar. 30.), let us afterwards keep the holy feast of Pentecost. Let us at all times worship the Father through Christ, by Whom to Him and with Him be glory and dominion by the Holy Ghost for ever and ever. Amen.

All the brethren who are with me salute you: salute one another with a holy kiss. Here endeth the seventh Festal Letter of holy Athanasius the Patriarch. There is no eighth or ninth, for he did not send them, for the reason I have before mentioned 2. 2 See the Index. Athan, left Egypt in this year to attend the synod at Tyre; thence repaired to the Emperor Constantine to plead his cause before him. Failing of success in this, he retired, as an exile, to Treviri, in Gaul. I have changed the order of the last two sentences from that in which they are written in the Syr. Ms.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Letter 10.

Easter-day on Mar. 26. Coss. Ursus and Polemins; Præf. the same Theodorus, of Heliopolis; and after him, of the Catholics, for the second year, Philagrius*; Indict. XI.; Easter-day, VII. Kal. Ap. XXX. Phamenoth; Moon 18½; Æra Dioclet. 54.

ALTHOUGH I have been all this distance from you, my brethren, I have not forgotten the custom which obtains among you, which has been delivered to us by the fathers, so as to be silent without notifying to you the time of the annual holy feast, and the day for its celebration. For although I have been kept in restraint by those afflictions of which you have doubtless heard, and severe trials have been laid upon me, and a great distance has separated us; while the enemies of the truth have also been on the watch against us, laying snares to discover a letter from us, so that, by their accusations, they might add to the pain of our wounds; yet the Lord, strengthening and comforting us in our afflictions, we have not feared, even when kept in the midst of such machinations and conspiracies, to indicate and make known to you our saving Easter-feast, even from the ends of the earth. Also when I wrote to the presbyters of Alexandria, I urged that these letters might be sent to you through their instrumentality, knowing the fear imposed on them by the adversaries. Still, I exhorted them to be mindful of the apostolic boldness of speech[f], and to say, Nothing separates us from the love of Christ; neither affliction, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword. Thus, keeping the feast myself, I was desirous that you also, my beloved, should keep it; and being conscious that an announcement like this is incumbent on me, I have not kept back from discharging the duty, since I was jealous of incurring the imputation implied in the Apostolic counsel; Render to every man his due.

While I then committed all my affairs to God, I considered it as a duty to celebrate the feast with you, not taking into account the distance between us. For although place divides us, yet the Lord, the Giver of the feast, and actions. The death of Constantine, in the year 337, changed the aspect of the affairs of the Church. Athanasius was again taken into favour, and permitted to return to Alexandria, Constantine the younger, who succeeded to the government of Gaul, furnishing a letter to the people of Alexandria, and declaring that it had been the intention of his fa-

ther, had he lived, to act in the same manner. According to the Index, S. Athan. returned from Gaul on the twenty-seventh of the month Arbyr, answering to the twenty-fifth of November. The Egyptian year (be it remembered) commenced on the twenty-ninth of August. Assembled at the Council of Nice.

We frequently meet with the expression ἰβδομὰς τοῦ σωτηριώδους πάσχα towards the end of the Paschal discourses of S. Cyril. Conf. Letter iii. p. 22, and note 5. V 2 Matt. 18, 20. Who is Himself our feast, Who is also the Bestower of the Spirit, brings us together in mind, in harmony, and in the bond of peace. For when we mind and think the same things, and offer up the same prayers on behalf of each other, no place can divide us; but the Lord gathers and unites us together. For if He has promised, that when two or three are gathered together in His name, He is in the midst of them, it is plain that being in the midst of those who in every place are gathered together, He unites them, and receives the prayers of all of them, as if they were near, and listens to all of them, as they cry out the same Amen.

I have thus borne affliction like this, and all those trials which I mentioned, my brethren, when I wrote to you. And that we may give you pain in nothing, I would now □□□□□□□ 'and who is our feast' □□□□□ (or, (□□□□□□ □□□□□□ 'Christ our Passover.' Larson has missed the point of these words. also (only) briefly remind you of these things, because it is not becoming in a man to forget, when more at ease, the pains he experienced in tribulation; lest, like an unthankful and forgetful person, he should be excluded from the divine assembly. For at no time should a man inwardly praise God, more than when he has passed through afflictions; nor, again, should he at any time give thanks more than when he finds rest from toil and temptations. As Hezekiah, when the Assyrians perished, praised the Lord, and gave thanks, saying, The Lord is my salvation, and I will not cease to bless Thee with harp all the days of my life, before the house of the Lord. And those three blessed men who were tried in Babylon, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, when they were in safety and the fire became to them as dew, praised and gave thanks, singing a song unto God. I, too, like them, have written, my brethren, having these things in mind; for even in our time, God hath made possible those things which are impossible to men. And those things which could not be accomplished by man, God hath shewn to be easy of accomplishment, by bringing us to you. For God does not give us as a prey to those who seek

* Perhaps for □□□□□□□□□□ we should read .□□□□□□□□□□ to swallow up not so much us, as the Church, and by wickedness to overwhelm faith and godliness. They indeed imagined such things; but God, who is good, multiplied His loving-kindness towards us, not only when He vouchsafed to us by His Word the common salvation of us all; but also now, when enemies have persecuted us, and have sought to seize upon us. As the blessed Paul saith in a certain place, when describing the incomprehensible riches 5. of Christ: But God, being rich in mercy, for the great

love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in follies and sins, quickened us through Christ. For the might of man and of all creatures, is weak and poor; but the Might which is above man, and uncreated, is rich and incomprehensible, and hath no beginning, but is eternal. It does not, then, possess one method only of healing; but, being rich, it works in divers manners for our salvation by means of His Word, Who is not restricted or hindered in His dealings towards us; but since He is rich and manifold, He varies Himself according to the individual capacity of each soul. For He is the Word, and the Power, and the Wisdom of

Wis. 7, 27. God, as Solomon testifies concerning Wisdom, that being one, it can do all things, and remaining in itself, it maketh all things new; and passing upon holy souls, fashioneth the friends of God and the prophets. To those then who have not yet attained to the perfect way—as a lamb—there is I milk, and this was administered by Paul: I have fed you with milk, not with meat. To those who have advanced from the full stature of childhood, but still are weak as regards perfection, the food is according to their capacity, being again administered by Paul; Let him that is weak eat herbs. But as soon as ever a man begins to walk in the The conjunction O, seems wanting in the Syriac. The Syriac seems to require this rendering. Or it may be, 'quickened us in Christ.' The Peschito (Sos lumen) agrees better with the original; συνενωσιοίησε τῷ Χριστῷ.

All the various attributes and perfections of the Deity, as exhibited in the person of Christ, work together for the salvation of man. By His gospel, He instructs them; by His power, He upholds and strengthens them; and by His wisdom, He guides them. Conf. Letter i. p. 3. The sense in the last few lines, and in those that follow, is clear, though the construction appears somewhat obscure. Milk, herbs, and meat, are severally mentioned in connection with the different advances made in the Christian course. The translation of Prof. Larson is unsatisfactory, and, as I think, erroneous. perfect way, he is no longer fed with the things before mentioned; but he has the Word for bread, and flesh for food, for it is written, Strong meat is for those who are of full age, for those who, by reason of their capacity, have their senses exercised. Further also, when the word is sown, it does not yield a uniform produce of fruit in this human life, but one various and rich; for it bringeth forth, some an hundred, and some sixty, and some thirty, as the Saviour teaches—that Sower of grace, and Bestower of the Spirit. And this is no doubtful matter, nor one that receives no confirmation; but it is in our power to behold the field which is sown by Him; for in the Church the word is manifold and the produce rich. Nor are virgins alone signified by such a field; nor monks alone, but also honourable matrimony and the abstinence of each one. For in sowing, He did not compel the will beyond the power. Nor is the grace confined to the perfect alone; but it is sent down also among those who occupy the middle and the third ranks, so that He might rescue all men generally to salvation.

Therefore also He hath prepared many mansions with the Father, so that although the dwelling-place is various in proportion to the advance in moral attainment, yet all of us are within the wall, and all of us enter within the same fence, the devil being cast out, and all his host expelled thence. For apart from light there is darkness, and apart from blessing there is a curse. The devil also is apart from the saints, and sin far from virtue. Therefore also the Gospel rebukes Satan, saying, Get thee behind Me, Satan. But us it calls to itself, saying, Enter ye in at the strait gate. And again, Come, blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom which is prepared for you. So also the Spirit 34. 1 In the Syriac text, as published by Mr. Cureton, as well as in the German translation by Prof. Larson, there is a hiatus here, the next two or three pages, as far as the words ”He wept,” being wanting. Two more leaves were afterwards discovered among the fragments in the British Museum by the learned Editor, and to his courtesy I am indebted for the knowledge of their existence. One of them belongs to this part; the

other to the eleventh Letter. The Syriac text of both of them will be found in the Appendix. 2 Vide note i to page 68. 3 In the Ms. 120:1000 (virtue) is written by mistake for 120:1000 (produce). 4 L. 1000 Vid. Cast. Lex. Syr. p. 660. not. Mich. Ps. 100, 4. 20.

before cried in the Psalms, saying, Enter into His gates with psalms. For by means of virtue a man enters in unto God, as Moses did into the thick cloud where God was. But through vice a man goes out from the presence of the Lord; as Cain, when he had slain his brother, went out, as far as his will was concerned, from the face of God; while the Psalmist enters, saying, And I will go in to the altar of God, even to the God that delighteth my youth. But of the Devil the Scripture beareth witness, that the Devil went out from before God, and smote Job with sore boils. For this is the characteristic of those who go out from before God—to smite and to enter among the men of God. And this is the characteristic of those who fall away from the faith—to injure and persecute the faithful. The saints, on the other hand, take such to themselves, and look upon them as friends; as also the blessed David, using plainness of speech, says, Mine eyes are on the faithful of the earth, that they may dwell with me. But those that are weak in the faith, Paul urges that we should the rather take to ourselves. For virtue is philanthropic, just as in men of an opposite character, sin is misanthropic. In this manner Saul, in that he was a sinner, persecuted David; whereas David, though he altogether possessed the opportunity, did not kill Saul. Esau too persecuted Jacob, while Jacob sought to overcome his wickedness by meekness. And those eleven sold Joseph; but Joseph, in his loving-kindness, had pity on them.

But what need we many words? Our Lord and Saviour, when He was persecuted by the Pharisees, wept for their destruction. He was treated injuriously, but He threatened not; not when He was afflicted, not even when He was killed. But He

suffered anguish for the sake of those who presumptuously did such things. They, however, contemptuously cast from them life, and light, and grace. All these were theirs through that Saviour Who suffered in our stead. It was in truth for such their darkness and blindness, He wept. For if they had understood the things which are written in the Psalms, they would not have been so vainly daring against the Saviour, the Spirit having said, Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? And if they had thought upon the prophecy of Moses, they would not have hanged Him Who was their life. And if they had examined with their understanding the things which were written, they would not studiously have fulfilled the prophecies which were against themselves, so as for their city to be now desolate, grace taken from them, and they also themselves without the law, being no longer called children, but strangers. For thus in the Psalms was it before declared, saying, The strange children have acted falsely by Me. Also by Isaiah the prophet; I have begotten and brought up children, and they have rejected Me. And, further, they are no longer called the people of God, and a holy nation, but rulers of Sodom, and people of Gomorrah;

having exceeded in this even the iniquity of the Sodomites, as the prophet also saith, Sodom is justified before thee. For the Sodomites acted injuriously against angels, but these against the Lord, and God, and King of all, and dared to slay the Lord of angels; not knowing that Christ, Who was slain by them, is living, while those Jews who had conspired against the Lord died, having rejoiced a very little in these temporal things, and falling away from those which are eternal. They were ignorant of this—that the immortal promise has not respect to temporal enjoyment, but to the hope of those things which are everlasting. For through many tribulations, and labours, and sorrows, the righteous man enters into the kingdom of heaven; but when he arrives where sorrow, and distress, and sighing, shall flee away, he shall thenceforward enjoy rest; as Job, who, when tried here, was afterwards the familiar friend of the Lord. But the lover of pleasures,

Syr. The sense ’fulfilled’ not ’spoken’ is required here, Larson gives the latter. The two words and were anciently confounded together, and that not merely by the Syriac copyists. Vid. Castell. Lex. Syriac. p. 500. not. Mich. rejoicing for a little while, afterwards passes a sorrowful life; like Esau, who had temporal food, but afterwards was there condemned.

One may say that a distinction like this may be compared to the departure of the children of Israel and the Egyptians from Egypt. For the Egyptians, rejoicing a little while in their injustice against Israel, when they went forth, were all drowned in the deep; but the people of God, being for a time smitten and injured, by the conduct of the taskmastersh, when they came out of Egypt, passed through the sea unharmed, and walked in the wilderness as an inhabited place. For although, according to the mode of living customary among men, the place was desert; yet, through the

gracious gift of the law, and also through their intercourse with angels, it was no longer desolate, but inhabited, yea, and more than inhabited. As also Elishah, when he thought he was alone in the wilderness, was with companies of angels; so, in this case, though the people were first afflicted, and in the wilderness, yet those who remained faithfulk afterwards entered the land of promise. In the same manner those also who suffer temporal afflictions here, after having remained stedfast, go forth to a place of comfort; while those who here persecute are trodden under foot, and have no good end. For even the rich man, according to the accurate description of the Gospel, having lived in pleasure here for a little while, suffered hunger there; and having drunk largely here, he was there parched with thirst. But Lazarus, after being afflicted in worldly things, found rest in heaven; and having hungered for bread ground from corn, he was there satisfied with that which is better than manna, even the

19. 1 The reference is apparently to the history of Elisha as recorded in 2 Kings vi. 13—17, though the mention of the wilderness agrees better with the history of Elijah, as found in 1 Kings xix. 4—8. I cannot, however, agree with Prof. Larsow, who states that for Elisha we ought to read Elijah. Lord who came down and said, I am the bread which came down from heaven, and giveth life to mankind. Johu 6, 51.

Oh! my dearly beloved, if we shall gain comfort from afflictions; if rest from labours; if health after sickness; if after death there is immortality; it does not become us to be much distressed by the temporal ills that afflict mankind. It is not right to be greatly moved because of the trials which befall us. It is not right to fear if the host that contended with Christ, should conspire against godliness; but we should the more please God through these things, and should consider such matters as the probation and exercise of a virtuous life. For how shall patience be looked for, if there have not previously been labours and sorrows? Or how can experience be afforded of fortitude, when there has not first been an assault from enemies? Or how can a spectacle of fortitude be exhibited, when contumely and injustice have not preceded? Or how can long-suffering be expected, when opposition on the part of Antichrists has not first existed? And, finally, how can a man hope to witness virtue, when the iniquity of the very wicked has not previously displayed itself? Thus even our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ comes before us [as an example], when He would shew men how to suffer; Who, when He was smitten, bore it patiently; being reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but He gave His back to the smitters, and His checks to buffetings, and turned not His face from spitting; and, at last, was willingly led to death, that we might behold in Him the image of all that is virtuous and immortal; and all of us, conducting ourselves after these examples, might truly tread on serpents and scorpions, and on all the power of the enemy.

Thus, too, Paul, while he conducted himself after the example of the Lord, also exhorted us, saying, Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ. In this way, he prevailed against all the host of the devil, writing, I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ. For the enemy presents himself to us in afflictions, and trials, and labours, doing every thing, and striving eagerly to cast us down. But the man who is in Christ, setting himself against those that oppose, and revisiting wrath by long-suffering, contumely by meekness, and vice by virtue, obtains the victory, and exclaims, I can do all things through Christ, Who strengtheneth me; and, In all these things we are conquerors through Christ Who loved us. This is the grace of the Lord, and these are the Lord's corrective measures towards the children of men. For He suffered to procure freedom from suffering for those who suffer in Him; and He descended that He might raise us up; He took on Him the trial of being born, that we might love Him Who is unbegotten; He went down to corruption, that corruption might put on immortality; He became weak for us, that we might rise with power; He descended to death, that He might bestow on us immortality, and give life to the dead. Lastly, He became man, that we who die as men might live again, and that death should no more reign over us; for the Apostolic word proclaims, Death shall not have the dominion over us.

P A passage very similar to the above, in which Christ is proposed as an example to us in His sufferings, occurs in the treatise 'de Passione et Cruce Domini,' p. 73. §. 19. Q The order of the words here is that found in some Mss. of the Greek Text. οὔτε ἐνεστῶτα, οὔτε μέλλοντα, οὔτε δυνάμεις. Now because they did not thus consider these matters, the Ario-maniacs, being opposers of Christ, and heretics, smite Him who is their Helper, with their tongue, and blaspheme* Him who set [them] free; and, referring all things to their wrong source, have become heterodox concerning the Redeemer. *Because of His coming down, which was on behalf of man, they have denied His essential It may be remarked here, 1st, The treatise from which this is quoted is placed amongst the ἀμφιβαλλόμενα. Indeed, the learned editor of Athanasius hesitated whether to include it among the spurious works. In his prelived remarks he says, 'animus fuerat eam inter spuriu ab egare: quia tamen in antiquaribus colubibus, et in Athanasius collectienibus reperitur, co nomin in er subla eam re ensemus.' We have had more than one opportunity, beside the present, of abduing parallel passages from the same treatise in illustration. These observations will lead us to the conclusion, (the authenticity of the Festal Letters being placed beyond a doubt), either that one of the writers transferred, not only the ideas, but the very words of the other into his writings; or else, that the treatise 'de Passione, &c.' emanated from the same mind which in beted the Letters. Perhaps an accurate consideration of the question will decide us in favour

of the latter opinion. 20th, We may remark, that the Syriac [scribble] 'unbegotten' lives, if need were, the Benedictine reading ἀγεννήτῳ in opposition

to that of some Mes. ἀγενήτῳ. (For the distinction, between ἀγένητον, ἀγέννητον, &c. see the remarks of the Benedictine editors Athan. op. tom. i. p. 163.) 34th, The connexion of the sentence in the Syriac, as well as the text of the Greek, would suggest a suspicion that a line has been omitted after the words, 'He went down to corruption, that corruption,' and that we should read, 'He went down to corruption, that corruption might put on incorruption; He clothed Himself with mortality, that mortality might put on immortality.' Compare with the whole passage, S. Cyril. Hum. P. ch. xx. p. 259. προσεκληφώς δὲ μᾶλλον ὅπερ οὐκ ἦν, ἵνα καὶ ἡμᾶς μεταστοιχειώσῃ πρὸς τὴν ἀμείνω τε καὶ εὐκλειστήραν ζωήν. The same ideas are also expressed in S. Athan. de Incarn. t. i. p. 695, without, however, the same correspondence of words and phrases. The Syriac here is [scribble] 'Arius and Manetes.' The same words are found twice in the next Letter. There seems little doubt that the translator mistook the Greek word Ἀνευμανῖται, a term applied to the Arians in other places by Athan. used also by Epiphanius.

Godhead; and seeing that He came from the Virgin, they have questioned His being truly the Son of God; and, considering Him as become incarnate in time, they have denied His eternity; and, looking upon Him as having suffered for us, they have renounced their faith in Him as the incorruptible Son from the incorruptible Father. And, finally, because He was burdened for our sakes, they deny the things which concern His essential eternity; partaking of the deed of the unthankful, who rejected the Saviour, and offering Him insult instead of acknowledging His grace. To them may these words properly be addressed: Oh! unthankful opponent of Christ, altogether wicked, and the slayer of his Lord, mentally blind, and a Jew in his conscience, hadst thou understood the Scriptures, and listened to the saints, who said, Cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved; or again, Send out Thy light and Thy truth;—then wouldst thou have known that the Lord did not descend on His own account, but for us; and, for this reason, thou wouldst the more have admired His loving-kindness. And hadst thou considered what the Father is, and what the Son, thou wouldst not have blasphemed the Son, as [being come] of a mutable nature. And hadst thou understood His work of loving-kindness towards us, thou wouldst not have alienated the Son from the Father, nor have looked upon Him as a stranger, Who reconciled us to His Father. I know these are hard sayings, not truly to those who oppose Christ[c], but also to the Schismatics; for they are united together, as men of kindred feelings. For they have learned to rend the seamless coat of God: they think it not strange to divide the indivisible Son from the Father.

I know, indeed, that when these things are spoken, they will gnash their teeth upon us, with the devil who stirs them up, since they are troubled by the declaration of

the true glory concerning the Redeemer. But the Lord, who always has scoffed at the devil, does the same even now, saying, I am in the Father, and the Father in Me. This is the Lord, Who is manifested in the Father, and in Him also the Father is manifested; Who, being truly the Son of the Father, at last became incarnate for our sakes, that He might offer Himself to the Father in our stead, and redeem us through His offering and sacrifice. This is He Who once, in old time, brought the people out of Egypt; but Who afterwards redeemed all of us, or rather the whole race of men, from death, and brought them up from the grave. This is He Who, in old time, was sacrificed as a lamb, having been typified in the lamb; but Who afterwards was slain for us, for Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed. This is He Who delivered us from the snare of the hunters;—I mean, that He cast out the opposers of Christ[f], and the Schismatics, —and again rescued us His Church. And because we were then victims of deceit, He hath now delivered us by His own self.

What then is our duty, my brethren, on account of these Syr. ξένος. One of the erroneous assertions of the Arians, as given by S. Alexander in his Encyclic Epistle, (Athan. op. tom. i. p. 385.) is the following: ξένος τε καὶ ἀλλότριος καὶ ἀπεσχονομενος ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐσίας. [c] i. e. the Arians. Vid. note z. p. 78. Syr. χιτάν. The words translated 'rend' and 'seamless' are cognate in the Syriac, and answer to σχίξειν and its derivatives. The Arians are thence called Διατομῖται. Vid. I. Damascen. de haressib. [f] i. e. the Arians. The connexion seems to require that a passive sense should be given to as is here done. things, but to praise and give thanks to God, the King of all? And let us first exclaim in the words of the Psalms, Blessed be the Lord, Who hath not given us over as a prey to their teeth. Let us keep the feast in that way which He hath consecratedh to us for salvation—the holy day of Easter—so that we may celebrate the feast which is in heaven with the angels. Thus, anciently, the people of the Jews, when they came out of affliction into a state of ease, kept the feast, singing a song of praise for their victory.

Esther 3, 9. So also the people in the time of Esther, because they were delivered from a deadly decree, kept a feast to the Lordi; reckoning it a feast, returning thanks to the Lord, and praising Him for having changed their condition. Therefore let us also, performing our vows to the Lord, and confessing our sins, keep the feast to the Lord, in conversation, moral conduct, and manner of lifek; praising our Lord, Who hath chastened us a little, but hath not utterly failed and forsaken us, nor altogether kept silence from us. For if, having also brought us out of the crafty and famous Egypt of the opposers of Christl, He hath caused us to pass through many trials and afflictions, as it were in the wilderness, to His holy Church, so that from hence, according to custom, we can send to you, as well as receive letters from you; on this account especially I both give thanks to God myself, and exhort you to thank Him with me and on my behalf, this being the Apostolic custom, which these opposers of Christ, and the Schismatics, wished to put an end to, and to

break off. The Lord did not permit it; but both renewed and preserved that which was ordained by Him through the Apostle, so that we may keep the feast together, and together keep holy-day, the one with the other, according to the tradition and commandment of the fathers.

We begin the fast of forty days, on the nineteenth of the month Mecheir (Feb. 13.); and the holy Easter-fast on the twenty-fourth of the month Phamenoth (Mar. 20.) We cease from the fast on the twenty-ninth of the month Phamenoth (Mar. 25.) late in the evening of the seventh day. And we thus keep the feast on the first day of the week which dawns on the thirtieth of the month Phamenoth (Mar. 26.); from which, to Pentecost, we keep holy-day, through seven weeks, one after the other. For when we have first meditated properly on these things, we shall attain to be counted worthy of those which are eternal, through Christ Jesus our Lord, through Whom to the Father be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Greet one another with a holy kiss, remembering us in your holy prayers. All the brethren who are with me salute you, at all times being mindful of you. And I pray that ye may have health in the Lord, my beloved brethren, whom we love above all.

Here endeth the tenth Letter of holy Athanasius. Conf. Epist. ii. ad Orsinium tom. i. also Phil. iv. 1.—my brethren, dearly p. 694. ἐβρασθαι ὁμὸς ἐν κυρίᾳ εὐχομαι, beloved and longed for—stand fast in ἀγαπητοί καὶ ποθεϊκότατοι ἀδελφοί (1.) the Lord, my dearly beloved. G

Letter 11.

Coss. Constantius Augustus II., Constans I.; Prefect. Easter-day Philagrius, the Cappadocian, for the second time; Indict. on Apr. 15. XII.; Easter-day XVII. Kal. Mai.; XX. Pharmuthi; Afra Dioclet. 55. THE blessed Paul, being girt about with every virtue, and called faithful of the Lord—for he was conscious to himself of nothing but what was a virtue and a praise, or what was in harmony with love and godliness—familiarized these things to himself the more, and was carried up even to heavenly places, and was borne to Paradise; to the end that, as he surpassed the conversation of men, he should be exalted above men. And when he descended, he preached to every man; We know in part, and we prophesy in part; 9. 12. here I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. For, in truth, he was known to those saints who are in heaven, as their fellow-citizen. And in relation to all that is future and perfect, the things known by him here were in part; but with respect to those things which were committed and entrusted to him by the Lord, he was perfect; as he said, We who are perfect, should be thus minded. For as the Gospel of Christ is the fulfilment and accomplishment of the ministration which was supplied by the law of Israel, so future things will be the accomplishment of such as now exist, the Gospel being then fulfilled, and the faithful receiving those things which, not seeing now, they yet hope for, as Paul saith; For what a man

24. 25. Conf. Eph. vi. 14. Conf. 1 Cor. iv. 4. [c] The reading of the Ms. □□□□ □□□ we should read □□□□□ must be an error for .□□□ Conf. Eph. ii. 19. I have no doubt that the Syriac Ms. is again faulty here, and that for □□□□□ we should read □□□□□ □□□□ as here rendered. seeth, why doth he also hope for? But if we hope for those things we see [not], we then by patience wait for them.

Since then that blessed man was of such a character, and an apostolic grace was committed to him, he wrote, wishing that all men should be as he was. For virtue is philanthropic, and the company of the kingdom of heaven is a large one: for thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads there serve the Lord. And though a man enters it through a strait and narrow way, yet, having entered, he beholds an immeasurable space, and a place greater than any other, as they declare, who were eye-witnesses and heirs of these things. Thou didst place afflictions before us.

But afterwards, having related their afflictions, they say, Thou broughtest us forth into a wide place: and again, In affliction Thou hast enlarged us. For truly, my brethren, the course of the saints here is a troubled one; since they either endure painfulness through longing for those things which are to come, as he who said, Woe is me that my pilgrimage is prolonged; or they are afflicted and wearied for the salvation of other men, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians, saying, Lest, when I come to you, God should humble me, and I should bewail on account of many of those who have before sinned, and not repented for the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciriousness which they have committed. As Samuel bewilled for the destruction of Saul, and Jeremiah wept for the captivity of the people. But after this affliction, and sorrow, and sighing, when they depart from this world, a certain divine gladness, and pleasure, and exultation receives them, from which pain, and sorrow, and sighing, flee away.

Since we are thus circumstanced, my brethren, let us never depart from the way of virtue; but also that we should be such persons, he (St. Paul) exhorted, saying, Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ. For he not only gave this advice to the Corinthians—since he was not their Apostle alone—but also, since he was a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity, us also, even all of us, he admonished by them; and, in short, the things he wrote to each particular person are commandments common to all men. On this account, when he wrote to others, some he exhorted, as, for instance, in the Epistles to the Romans, and the Ephesians, and Philemon. Some he reproved, and was indignant with them, as in the case of the Corinthians and Galatians. But to some he gave advice, as to the Colossians and Thessalonians. The Philippians he approved of, and was made glad by them. The Hebrews he taught that the law was a shadow to them. But to his elect sons, Timothy and Titus, when they were near, he gave instruction; when far away, he put them in remembrance. For he was all things to all men; and being himself a perfect man, he adapted his teaching to the need of every one, so that by all means he might rescue some of them. Therefore his word was not without fruit; but, in every place, it is planted and productive even to this day. And wherefore, my beloved?

For it is necessary that we should search into the apostolic mind. Not only in the beginning of the Epistles, but also at their close, and in the middle of them, he used persuasions and admonitions. I hope, therefore, that by your prayers, I shall, in no respect, give a false representation of the plan of that holy man. As he was well skilled in these divine matters, and knew the power of the divine teaching, he deemed it necessary, in the first place, to make known the word concerning Christ, and the mystery regarding Him; and then afterwards to point to the correction of habits, so that when they had learned to know the Lord, they might readily acquiesce in the observance of those things which He commanded. For when the

Conf. Letter ii. p. 15, and Letter iii. p. 28. Vid. note x to Letter vii. p. 62. Guide to the laws is unknown, one does not readily pass on to the observance of them.

The faithful Moses, the minister of God, adopted this method; for when he promulgated the words of the divine dispensation of laws, he first proclaimed the matters relating to the knowledge of God: Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord. Afterwards, having shadowed Him forth to the people, and taught of Him in Whom they ought to believe, and informed their minds of Him Who is truly God; then he further lays down the law relating to those things whereby a man may be well-pleasing to Him, saying, Thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; together with the other commandments. For also, according to the Apostolic teaching, He that draweth near to God must believe that He is, and that He is a recorder of them that seek Him. Now He is sought by means of virtuous deeds, as the prophet saith: Seek ye the Lord, and when ye have found Him, call upon Him; when He is near to you, let the wicked forsake his ways, and the lawless man his thoughts. It will also be well if a man is not offended at the testimony of the Shepherd, saying in the beginning of his book, Before all things believe that there is one God, Who created and established all these things, and from non-existence called them into being. And, further, the blessed Evangelists— those who brought to remembrance the words of the Lord— in the beginning of the Gospels, wrote the things concerning our Saviour;

so that, having first made known the Lord, the Creator, they might command belief, when narrating the events that took place. For how could they have been credited, when writing respecting him who [was blind] from his mother's womb, and those other blind men who recovered their sight, and those persons who rose from the dead, and the changing of water into wine, and those lepers who were cleansed; if they had not taught of Him as the Creator, writing, In the beginning was the Word! Or, according to Matthew, that He Who was born of the seed of David, was Emmanuel, and the Son of the living God? He from Whom the Jews, with the Arians, turn away their faces, but Whom we acknowledge and worship.

The Apostle, therefore, also, as was meet, sent to others; but his own son he plainly reminded, that he should not despise the things in which he had been instructed by him. He also enjoined him: Remember Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my Gospel. But as he speaks of these things being delivered to him, to be always had in remembrance, so he immediately writes to him, saying, Meditate on these things: be engaged in them. For constant meditation, and the remembrance of divine words, strengthens piety towards God, and produces a love to Him inseparable and not merely formal; as he (S. Paul) entertaining such feelings, speaks in behalf of himself and others like-minded, saying boldly, What shall separate us from the lore of God? For they who are such, being

confirmed in the Lord, and possessing an unshaken disposition towards Him, and being one in spirit, (for he who is joined

well as by the Arians, who, however, perverted its meaning. In the fragment of the thirty-ninth epistle, the 'Shepherd' is also excluded from the Canon.

to the Spirit is one spirit, are sure as the mount Sion; and although ten thousand trials may rage against them, they are founded upon a rock, which is Christ. In Him the careless take no delight; and while they entertain no imaginations of good thoughts, they are sullied by temporal attacks, and esteem nothing more than the unstable things here, being reproachable as regards the faith. For either the care of this world, or the deceitfulness of riches, chokes them; or, as Jesus said in that parable which had reference to them, since they have not established the faith that has been preached to them, but are only for a time, immediately, in time of persecution, or when affliction ariseth through the word, they are offended. Now of men of evil imaginations we say, [they regard] not truth, but falsehood; and not righteousness, but iniquity, for their tongue learneth to speak lies. They have done evil and have not ceased, that they might repent. For, persevering with delight in wicked actions, they hasten thereto without turning back, even treading underfoot the commandment with regard to neighbours, and, instead of loving them, devise evil against them, as the saint testifies, saying, And those who seek me evil have spoken vanity, and imagined deceit all the day. But that the cause of such meditation is none other than the want of instruction, the divine proverb has already declared; The son that forsaketh the commandment of his father meditateth evil words.

But for such meditation as this, inasmuch as it is evil, the Holy Spirit chides in these, and reproves too in other terms, saying, Your hands are polluted with blood, your fingers with sins; your lips have spoken lawlessness, and your tongue imagineth iniquity: no man speaketh right things, nor is there true judgment. But what the end is of such perverse imagining, He immediately declares, saying, They trust in canities and speak falsehood; for they conceive mischief, and bring forth lawlessness. They have

The proper reading of the text is, He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit. The Peschito version adds 'with Him'—is one spirit with Him. Conf. Pseudo-Chrys. As the Church built by Christ cannot be thrown down, so any such Christian who has built himself upon Christ no adversity can overthrow, according to that, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Catena Aurea, vol. i. p. 292, ed. Oxford, 1841. Vid. note k, Letter v. p. 39. The exact words do not occur in Scripture. The quotation is probably made up of more than one proverb. hatched the eggs of an asp, and woven a spider's web; and he who is prepared to eat of their eggs, when he breaks them finds gall, and a basilisk therein. But, again, what the hope Isaiah 59, of such is, He has already announced. Because righteous- 9-11. ness does not

overtake them, when they waited for light, they had darkness; when they waited for brightness, they walked in a thick cloud. They shall grope for the wall like the blind, and as those who have no eyes shall they grope; they shall fall at noon-day as at midnight; when dead, they shall groan. They shall roar together as a bear, or [mourn] as a dove.

This is the fruit of wickedness; these rewards are given to those that employ it; for perverseness does not deliver those who regard it. But, in truth, against them it opposes itself, and before them it tears, and rather prepares for them harm. Woe to them against whom these are borne! for it is sharper than a two-edged sword, slaying beforehand those who will lay hold of it. For their tongue, according to the testimony of the Psalmist, is a sharp sword, and their teeth spears and arrows. But the wonderful part is that while often he against whom men imagine [harm] suffers nothing, they are pierced by their own spears: for they possess, even in themselves, before they reach others, anger, wrath, malice, guile, hatred, bitterness. Although they may not be able to bring these upon others, they forthwith return upon and against themselves, as the Psalmist prays, saying, Let their sword enter into their own heart. There

22. is also such a proverb as this: The wicked is encircled by the chain of his sins. The Jews in their imaginings, and in their agreeing to act unjustly against the Lord, forgat that they were bringing wrath upon themselves. Therefore also does the [divine] word lament for them, saying, Why do the people exalt themselves, and the nations imagine vain things? For vain indeed was the imagination of the Jews, meditating death against the Life, and devising unreasonable things 1 In his exposition on this passage in the Psalms, S. Athan, directly refers these words to the conduct of the Jews against our Lord in putting Him to death, as he also does here. 3 The parallel clause of this sentence would seem to determine, that by 'Life' here we must understand Christ.

against the Word of the Father. For who that looks A.D. 3:9. upon their dispersion, and the desolation of their city, may not aptly say, Woe unto them, for they have imagined an 10. eril imagination, saying against their own soul, let us bind the righteous man, because he is not pleasing to us. And full well is it so, my brethren; for when they erred concerning the Scriptures, they knew not that he who diggeth a pit for his neighbour falleth therein; and he who destroyth a hedge, a serpent shall bite him. And if they had not turned their faces from the Lord, they would have feared what was before written in the divine Psalms: The heathen are caught in the pit which they made; in the snare which they hid is their own foot taken. The Lord is known when executing judgments: by the works of his hands is the sinner taken. Let them observe this, and how that the snare they know not shall come upon them, and the net they hid take them. But they understood not these things, for had they done so, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Therefore

the righteous and faithful servants of the Lord, who are made disciples for the kingdom of heaven, and bring Mat. 13, 52. forth from it things new and old; and who meditate on the words of the Lord, when sitting in the house, when lying down or rising up, and when walking by the way;—since they are of good hope because of the promise of the Spirit which said, Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of corrupters; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night;—being grounded in faith, rejoicing in hope, fervent in spirit, they Ps. 49, 3.

(LXX. vers.) have boldness* to say, My mouth shall speak of wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding. And again, I have meditated on all Thy works, and on the work of Thy hands has been my meditation. And, If I have remembered Thee on my bed, and in the morning have meditated on Thee. Afterwards, advancing in boldness, they say, The meditation of my heart is before Thee at all times. And he immediately after introduces us to the end of such an one, saying, The Lord is my Helper and my Redeemer. For to those who thus examine themselves, and conform their hearts to the Lord, nothing adverse shall happen; for, indeed, their heart is strengthened by confidence in the Lord, as it is written, They who trust in the Lord [shall be] as the mount Sion: he who dwelleth in Jerusalem shall not be moved for ever. For if, at any time, the crafty one shall be presumptuously bold against them, chiefly that he may break the rank of the saints, and cause a division among brethren; even in this they look to the Lord, not only as an avenger on their behalf, but also, when they have already been beaten, as a deliverer for them. For this is the divine promise; The Lord shall fight for you.

14. 12. 113. 14*. And further, although afflictions and trials from without overtake them, yet, being fashioned after the apostolic words, and being stedfast in tribulations, and persevering in prayers; by meditation, moreover, on the law; they stand against those things which befall them, are well-pleasing to God, and give utterance to the words which are written, Afflictions and distresses are come upon us; but Thy commandments are my meditation. And whereas, not only in action, but also in the thoughts of the mind, do men attend to deeds of virtue, he afterwards adds, saying, Mine eyes prevent the dawn, that I might meditate on Thy words. For it is meet that the spiritual meditations of those who are whole should precede their bodily actions. And does not our Saviour, when intending to convey similar instruction, begin with the thoughts of the mind? saying, Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery: and, Whosoever shall be angry with his brother*, A.21. 339, is guilty of murder. For where there is no wrath, murder is prevented; and where lust is first removed, there can be no crime connected with adultery.

Necessary then is meditation on the law, and uninterrupted converse with virtue, that the saint may lack nothing, but be perfect to every good work. For by these things is the promise of eternal life, as Paul wrote to Timothy, calling constant meditation exercise, and saying, Exercise thyself unto godliness; for bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable for all things, since it has the promise of the present life, and of that which is eternal. Worthy, indeed, of admiration is the virtue of that man, my brethren! for, through Timothy, he also enjoins upon all the necessity of devoting the mind to nothing in preference to godliness: yet, above every thing, to determine upon faith in God. For what favour has the perverse man to expect, though he may fancy he keeps the commandments? Nay, rather, the perverse man is unable even to keep a portion of the law; for, as is his conscience, such, of necessity, must be his actions; as also the Spirit reproves such, saying, The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. After this, the Word, shewing that actions correspond with the thoughts, says, They are corrupt; they are profane in their machinations. The perverse man, then, is in every respect corrupt in his body: stealing, committing adultery, cursing, being drunken, and doing such like things. Even as Jeremiah, the prophet, convicted Israel of these things, crying out and saying, Oh, that I had a lodge far off in the wilderness! then would I leave my people and depart from them:

for they are all adulterers, an assembly of oppressors, who draw out their tongue as a bow; lying and not truth has prevailed upon the earth, and they proceed from iniquities to iniquities; but Me they have not known. Thus, on account of their wickedness and falsehood, and their deeds, in that they proceed from iniquity to iniquity, he reproves their machinations; but, because they knew not the Lord, and were faithless, he charges them with perverseness. For faith and godliness are allied to each other, and sisters; and he who believes in Him is godly, and he also who is godly, believes the more. He therefore who is in a state of wickedness, undoubtedly also erreth from the faith; and he who falleth from godliness, falleth from the true faith. Paul, for instance, bearing testimony to the same point,

16. 17. advises his disciple, saying, Aroid profane conversations; for they rather advance in ungodliness, and their word doth eat as doth a canker, of whom are Hymenæus and Philetus. In what their perverseness consisted he declares, saying, 18. Who have erred from the faith, saying that the resurrection is already past. But again, desirous of shewing that faith 12. is yoked with godliness, the Apostle says, And all those who will live godly in Jesus Christ shall suffer persecution. Afterwards, that no man should renounce godliness through persecution, he counsels them to preserve the faith, adding, 14. Thou, therefore, continue in the things thou hast learned, and hast been assured of. And as when brother is helped by brother, they become as a wall to each other; so faith and godliness, being of kindred growth, hang together; and he who is occupied in the one, of necessity is strengthened by

the other. Therefore, wishing the disciple to be exercised in godliness unto the end, and to contend in faith, he

counsels them, saying, Fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life. For if a man first put away the perverseness of idols, and properly confesses Him Who is truly God, he also then fights by faith with those who war against him. For of these two things we speak of—faith and godliness—the hope is the same, even everlasting life; 7. 8. for he saith, Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life. And, exercise thyself unto godliness, for it hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

For this cause, the Ario-maniacs, who now have gone out from the Church, being opposers of Christ, have digged a pit of unbelief, into which they themselves have been thrust; and, since they have advanced in ungodliness, they overthrow the faith of the simple; blaspheming the Son of God, and saying that He is a creature, and has His being from things which are not. But as then against the adherents of Philetus and Hymenæus, so now the Apostle forewarns all men against ungodliness like to theirs, saying, The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His; and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity. For it is well that a man should depart from wickedness and deeds of iniquity, that he may be able properly to celebrate the feast; for he who is defiled with the pollutions of the wicked is not able to sacrifice the Passover to the Lord our God. Thence, also, the people who were then in Egypt said, We cannot sacrifice the Passover in Egypt to the Lord our God. For God, Who is over all, willed that they should go far away from the servants of Pharaoh, and from the furnace of iron: so that being set free from wickedness, and having carefully put away from them all strange notions, they might be recipients of the knowledge of God and virtuous deeds. For He saith, Go far from them: depart from the midst of them, and touch not the unclean things.

For a man will not otherwise depart from sin, and lay hold on virtuous deeds, than by meditation on his acts: and when he has been practised by exercise in godliness, he will lay hold on the reward of the confession of faith; which also Paul, after he had fought the fight, possessed, namely, the crown of righteousness which was laid up; which the righteous Judge will give, not to him alone, but to all who are like him.

For meditation like this, and exercise in godliness, since it was always familiar to the saints, should be familiar to us also, at such a time as the present, when the divine word requires us to keep the feast with them. For what is the feast, but the constant worship of God, and the recognition of godliness, and unceasingp prayers, with concord, from the whole heart? In this manner, Paul, wishing us to be thus disposed, enjoins, saying, Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in every thing gire thanks. Not, therefore, in a divided manner, but unitedly and collectively, let us

all keep the feast together, as the prophet exhorts, saying, O come, let us rejoice in the Lord; let us make a joyful noise unto God our Saviour. Who then is so negligent, or who so disobedient to the divine command, as not to forsake every thing, and run to the general and common assembly of the feast? which is not in one place only, for

not one place alone keeps the feast; but into all the earth their song has gone forth, and to the ends of the world their words. And the sacrifice is not offered in one place, but in every nation, incense and a pure sacrifice is offered unto God. When in this united manner from all those who are in every place, praise and prayer shall ascend to the gracious and good Father; when the Catholic Church, which is in every place, with gladness and rejoicing, celebrates together the same worship to God; when all men in common send up a song of praise and say, Amenq; how blessed will it not be, my brethren! who will not, at that time, be engaged, praying devoutly? For even the walls of every adverse power, yea even of Jericho especially, falling down, and the gift of the Holy Spirit being then richly poured upon all men, every man perceiving the coming of the Spirit shall say, We are all filled in the morning with Thy favour, and we rejoice and are made glad in our days.

Since then these things are so, let us make a joyful noise with the saints, and let no one of us fail of his duty in these things; thinking nothing of the affliction or the trials which, especially at this time, have been enviously directed against us by the party of Eusebius. They even now wish to injure us, and, by their accusations, to compass our death, on account of godliness, whose defender is the Lord. But, as faithful servants of the Lord, (since ye know that there is salvation for us in the time of trouble; for our Lord also promised, saying, Blessed are ye when men revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for your reward is great in heaven. Again, it is the word of the Redeemer, that affliction shall not befall every man in this world, but only those who have a holy fear of Him,—on this account, the more the enemies afflict us, the more should we be enlarged*; although they revile us, we should still contend*; and in proportion as they would turn us aside from godliness, we should boldly* preach it, saying, All these things are come upon us, yet have we not forgotten Thee. And we have not acted perversely with the Ariomaniacs*, who say that Thou hast existence from those things that exist not. The Word, which is eternally with the Father, is also from Him.

Let us therefore keep the feast, my brethren, celebrating it not as worthy of grief and mourning; neither let us be confounded with heretics through temporal troubles brought upon us by godliness. But if any thing that would promote joy and gladness should offer, let us attend to it; so that our heart may not be sad, like that of Cain; but that, like faithful and good servants of the Lord, we may hear the

words, Enter into the joy of thy Lord. For we do not 96*The Arians and the Jews equally opposed to Christ.*

introduce days of mourning and sorrow, as a man may consider those of the Passover to be; but we keep the feast, being filled with joy and gladness. We keep it then, not regarding it after the deceitful error of the Jews; nor according to the teaching of the Arians, which takes away the Son from the Godhead, and numbers Him among creatures; but as viewing it according to the correct doctrine we derive from the Lord. For the deceitful error of the Jews, and the unbounded impiety of the Arians, involve nothing but sad reflections. The former, indeed, commenced with killing the Lord; the latter remove the occasion of His conquering that death which was brought upon Him by the Jews, in that they say He is not the Creator, but a creature. For if He were a creature, He would have been holden by death; but if He was not holden by death, as the Scriptures aver, He is not a creature, but the Lord of the creatures, and the substance of this immortal feast. For the Lord of death would abolish death; and being Lord, what He would was accomplished; for we have all passed from death unto life. But the imagination of the Jews, and of those who are like them, was vain in regard to Him, since the result was not such as they contemplated, but turned out adverse to themselves; and at them He that sitteth in the heaven shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Farther, when our Saviour was led to death, He restrained the women who followed Him weeping, saying unto them, Weep not for Me; meaning to shew that the Lord's death is an event, not of sorrow, but of joy, and that He Who dies for us, is alive. For He does not derive His being from those things which are not, but from the Father.

It truly is a subject of joy, that we can see the signs of victory against death, even our own incorruptibility, through the body of the Lord. For since He rose gloriously, it is clear that the resurrection of all of us will take place; and since His body remained without corruption, there can be no doubt regarding our incorruption. For as by one man, Rom. 5, as saith Paul, (and it is the truth,) sin passed upon all men, so by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall all rise. For, he says, this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But this took place in the time of the Passion, in which also our Lord died for us, for our Passorer, Christ, is sacrificed. Therefore, because He was sacrificed, let each of us feed upon Him, and with alacrity and diligence partake of His sustenance; since He is given to all without grudging, and is in every one a well of water flowing to everlasting life.

We begin the fast of forty days on the ninth of the month Phanenoth (Mar. 5.); and having, in these days, served the Lord with abstinence, and first purified ourselves, we also commence the holy Easter on the fourteenth of the month Pharmuthi (April 9.) Afterwards, extending the fast to the seventh day, on the seventeenth of the

month, let us rest late in the evening. And the light of the Lord having before dawned upon us, the first day of the week will illumine us, on which our Lord arose. It behoves us, then, to rejoice and be glad with the joy which arises from good works, during the seven weeks which remain—to Pentecost —giving glory to the Father, and saying, This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, through Whom 1724. The Syriac here rendered signs

of victory is ʾIωσὶς ʾIωτ. which is most likely the translation of τρόπαια νίκης. By faith, we look upon Christ crucified, and see in His cross the trophy He has erected against the great enemy whom He has subdued. We see farther in it, the glorious results of that victory, even our own deliverance from death, and our resurrection to eternal life. Conf. Gal. iii. 1. Theophilus, the predecessor of S. Cyril, employs the same figure in his first Paschal Letter, as preserved in the Latin translation of S. Jerome. Lgitur dominicum Pascha celebrantes, sanctis Scripturarum purificemur eloquii, et ad trophæa Salvatoris respicientes, cancta effendicula, quibus vitæ nostræ curriculum retardatur, auferamus e medio. Bibliotheca Vett. Patt. La Bigne, vol. iii. p. 93. ed. Paris, 1646. Vid. note k, Letter vi. p. 52. to the same, and to His Father, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Salute one another with a holy kiss. All the brethren who are with me salute you. That ye may have health in the Lord, I pray, brethren beloved.

Here endeth the eleventh Letter of holy Athanasius.

Letter 12. To Serapion

THANKS be to Divine Providence for those things which, at all times, it vouchsafes to us; for it has vouchsafed to us now also to come to the season of the festival. Having, therefore, according to custom, written the Letter respecting the festival, I have sent it to thee, our beloved; that through thee all the brethren also may be able to know the day of rejoicing. But because some Meletians, being come from Syria, have boasted that they had received what does not belong to them; I mean, that even they were reckoned in the Catholic Church; on this account, I have sent unto thee a copy of one letter of our fellow-labourers in the ministry who are of Palestine, that when it reaches thee, thou mayest know the fraud of the pretenders in this matter. For because they boasted, as I have said before, it was necessary for me to write to the Bishops who are in Syria; and immediately those of Palestine sent us a reply, having coincided in the judgment against them in the manner you may learn from the copy. That thou mayest not have occasion to peruse the letters of all the Bishops one after the other, I have sent thee [only] one, which is of like character with the rest, in order that from it, thou mayest know the purport of all of them. I know also that when they are convicted in this matter, they will incur perfect odium at the hands of all men. And thus far concerning the pretenders.

But I have further deemed it highly necessary and very urgent, to make known to your modesty—for I have written this to each one—that thou shouldest proclaim the fast of forty days to the brethren, and persuade them to fast; to the end that, while all the world is fasting, we who are in Egypt should not become a laughing-stock, as the only people who do not fast, but take our pleasure in these days. For if we do not fast, because the Letter is [only] then read, it is right that we should take away this pretext also, and that it be read before the fast of forty days, so that they may not make this an excuse for neglect of fasting. Also, when it is read, they may be able to learn respecting the fast. But, O, our beloved, whether in this way or any other, exhort and teach them to fast forty days. For it is even a disgrace that when all the world does this, those alone who are in Egypt, instead of fasting, should find their pleasure. For even I also, being grieved because men make a laughing-stock of us for this, have been constrained thus to write to thee. When thou, therefore,

receivest the letters, and hast read them and given the exhortation, write to me in return, our beloved, that I also may rejoice upon learning it.

But I have also thought it necessary to inform you of There is a similar notification of the appointment of fresh Bishops, appended to the nineteenth Letter. Theophilus, the predecessor of S. Cyril in the see of Alexandria, at the close of his first Paschal Letter, as translated by S. Jerome, imitates S. Athanasius in this respect, adopting almost his very words. Salutate invicem in osculo sancto. Salutant vos omnes qui mecum sunt fratres. Et hoc necessario scribimus, ut sciatis pro sanctis et beatis Episcopis qui in Domino dormierunt ordinatos esse; in Lemnado pro Herone Nascam. . . . His ergo scribite, et ab iis accipite pacificas juxta Ecclesiasticum mortem literas. Bibliotheca Vett. Patt. La Bigue vol. iii. p. 94. ed. Paris. 1616. There is a similar ending to his third Paschal Letter. Indeed, some such form appears to have become customary, whereby the ordaining Bishops notified to the different districts the appointment of those whom they ordained to any diocese. The Primate of Alexandria, as we know, had the sole privilege of ordaining all the suffragan Bishops. Probably the Paschal Letters, being sent annually, became, by degrees, the ordinary channel of such communication. Such was the case, as we have seen, with two out of the three Letters of Theophilus, which are extant. Valerius says, (Observat. in Socrat. H. E. lib. vii. §. 30.) Notanda est diligens cautela sanctorum patrum, qui deposito haretico sacerdote, nomen catholici the fact, that Bishops have succeeded those who have fallen asleep. In Tanis, in the stead of Elias, is Theodorus. In Arsenoitis, Silvanus instead of Calosiris. In Paralus, Nemesion is instead of Nonnus. In Bucolia is Heraclius. In Tentyra, Andronicus is instead of Saprion, his father.

episcopi qui in ejus locum substitutus fuerat, cunctis episcopis significunt, ut scilicet sciant, a quo ecclesiasticas litteras accipere, et ad quem scribere debeant—Sed et quoties mortuis episcopis ali in eorum locum fuerant ordinati, eorum nomina reliquis episcopis indicare consueverat ordinator, ut scirent ad quos scribere, et a quibus pacificas literas accipere deberent, ut discimus ex Theophii epistolis paschatibus. The Greek of what is rendered in the text, 'so that to these you may write, and from these receive the canonical Letters,' is, according to what we find in the passage of Socrates referred to above; (which passage is an extract of a Letter of the Council of Antioch, on the subject of the deposition of Paul of Samosata, and the appointment of Donnus in his stead;) ὃ πᾶς τούτους γράφητε, καὶ τὰ παρὰ τούτων κανονικὰ δεχησθε γράμματα (or, τὰς κανονικὰς ἐπιστολάς. Can. viii. Concil. Antioch.) Such Letters were called by the Latins, communicatoria litterae. The epithet εἰρηνικαὶ was also applied to them. Vid. Zonar. Observat. apud Bever. Synod. tom. i. p. 438. So in the quotation from Theophilus, given above, we find pacificas—litteras. Tertullian makes mention of such Letters. De Præscript. adv. Haret. cap. 20. Communicatio pacis et appellatio fraternitatis et contesser-

ratio hospitalitatis, quae jura non alia ratio regit, quam ejusdem sacramenti una tradition.

In the Apologia contra Ar. Athan. Op. tom. i. p. 133, we have a list of ninety-four Egyptian Bishops, among others, who were present at the Council of Sardica. As this was held , we might naturally expect to find among them some of the names of those mentioned above as recently appointed. A refer note to this list has enabled me to give, with a degree of certainty, some names which otherwise would have been more obscure, and which have been mistaken by Prof. Larsow. For a list of the Egyptian Bishopries, the reader is referred to Neale's Hist. of the Holy Eastern Church. Gen. Introd. vol. i. p. 115, 116. To the list there given must be added the names of Bucolia, Stathma, the Eastern Garyathis, the Southern Garyathis. The mention of the last two would favour the supposition that there were also Bishopries in the Western and the Northern Garyathis. The Syriac of the word given in the text 'Elias' is

This name is doubtless to be taken thus. There were two Egyptian Bishops of that name who subscribed their names at the Council of Sardica. Prof. Larsow writes it 'Ilius.' Tanis is situate in Augustannica Prima. Vid. Quatremere Memoires geogr. et histor. sur l'Egypte, tom. i. p. 281. &c. (L.) The word Távus is the LXX. rendering of □□□□□□ in the various places where it is found. Silvanus was succeeded by Andreas, as we learn from the postscript to the nineteenth Letter. The Syriac is ,□□□□□ which Prof. Larsow writes Nanos. I think it is meant for Nonnus, which was the name of an Egyptian Bishop who was present at the Synod of Tyre. Apol. contra Ar. tom. i. p. 154. § 79. Bucolia. For a dissertation on the situation of Bucolia, see the treatise by Quatremere, already referred to, (tom. i. p. 224—233.) In p. 233, he writes: La contree de l'Elearchae ou des Bucolies, telle qu'elle nous a ete decrite par les auteurs anciens, est, si je ne me trompe, parfaitement identique avec la province de Baschmour— peut etre le Baschmour s'etendoit a l'occident du bras de Damiette, le long des cotes de la mer, jusqu'au lac de Bourlos. Fabricus, in his Index Geographicus Episcopatuum orbis Christiani, mentions among the Egyptian Bishopries, 'Elearchae, in provincia Egypti secunda.'

An Egyptian Bishop of the name of Saprion was among those assembled at the Synod of Tyre. Apol. contra Ar. tom. i. p. 154. §. 79. In Thebais, Philon instead of Philon. In Maximianopolis, Herminus instead of Atras. In the lower Apollon is Sarap'on instead of Plutionk. In Aphroditon, Serenus is in the place of Theodorus. In Rhinocoruronl, Salomon. In Stathma, Arabion, and in Marmarica. In the eastern Garyathis, Andragathiusm in the place of Hierax. In the southern Garyathis, Quintusn instead of Niconl. So that to these you may write, and from these receive the canonical Letters. Salute one another with a holy kiss. All the brethren who are with me salute you. He (Athan.) wrote this from Rome. There is no twelfth Letter.

Letter 13.

Coss. Marcellinus, Probius; Pref. Longinus; Indict. XIV.; Easter-day, XIII. Kal. Maii; XXIV. Pharmuthi; Era Dioclet. 57. EVEN now, my beloved brethren, I do not shrink from notifying to you the saving feast, which occurs according to annual custom. For although, with afflictions and sorrows, the opposers of Christ have oppressed you also together with us: yet, God having comforted us by our mutual faith[c], behold, I even write to you from Rome. Keeping the feast here with the brethren, still I also keep it with you in will and in spirit; for we send up prayers in common to God, Who hath granted us not only to believe in Him, but also now to suffer for His sake. For, troubled as Vid. Letter x. p. 67. note e. The Ατλ. (οἱ χριστόμαχοι). Vid. Letter x. p. 75. note n. and p. 78. note z. [c] By that faith which we hold in common. Conf. Rom. i. 12.

S. Athan. had been obliged to leave Alexandria some time before, () having fled from the violence of Gregory the Cappadocian, on which occasion he left the city (according to the Index on the twenty-third of Phanæth (Mar. 19.). Gregory, immediately upon being constituted Bishop of Alexandria, became conspicuous by his acts of violence. S. Athan. after his withdrawal from Alexandria, remained for a short time at no great distance from the city, though it is uncertain where. It was during this period that he wrote the Encyclical Letter to the Bishops, against the illegal intrusion of Gregory into his see. He afterwards took ship

to Italy, and came to Rome. In the life of Athanasius, prefixed to the Benedictine edition, we read, (p. xxxix.) Eo anno (341.) incidit Paschatis solennitas in diem decimam nonam Aprilis; arbitramarque profectum Athanasium postremis hujus mensis dicbus, mense Maio ad Italiae oras appuisse. This Letter would, however, favour the opinion that he reached Rome earlier than May. In the Index it is stated expressly that Gregory sent no Paschal Letter either for this year, or for those immediately preceding and following. In 340, his acts of tyranny and oppression left him no leisure. In this, and the following year, his illness is there stated as the preventing cause. 'Nor did this Pope write any Festal Letter even this year, (341.) the commencement of his illness taking place in it.'—'Because Gregory was severely ill in the city, () the Pope was unable to send any Letter.' we are, because we are so

far from you, He moves us to write, that by a letter we might comfort ourselves, and provoke one another to good. For, indeed, numerous afflictions and bitter persecutions directed against the Church have been against us. For heretics, depraved in their mind, untried in the faith, rising against the truth, violently persecute the Church; and of the brethren, some are scourged, and others torn asunder by the rack; and, what is still more hard, the ill-treatment reaches even to the Bishops. Nevertheless, it is not becoming, on this account, that we should neglect the feast. So far from neglecting the commemoration of it, even for a time, we should the rather bear it in remembrance.

Now such things as seasons for feasts are not thought of by the unbelievers, because they spend all their lives in revelling and follies; and the feasts that obtain among them are an occasion of grief rather than of joy. But to us in this present life they are especially an uninterrupted passage [to heaven]—it is indeed our season. For such things as these serve for exercise and trial, so that, having approved ourselves zealous and chosen servants of Christ, we may be fellow-heirs with the saints. For thus Job: The whole world is a trial to men upon the earth. Nevertheless, they are proved in this world by afflictions, labours, and sorrows, to the end that each one also may receive of God such reward as is meet for him; as He saith by the prophet, I am the Lord, Who trieth the hearts, and searcheth the reins, to give to every one according to his ways. But he does not first know the things of a man on his being tried; for He knows them all before they come to pass: but because He is good and philanthropic, He distributes to each a due reward according to his works, so that every man may exclaim, Righteous is the judgment of God! As the prophet

saith again, The Lord trieth justice, and understandeth the reins. And further, for this cause He trieth each one of us, Conf. Heb. x. 24. Provoke unto love and to good works. Prof. Larson has translated this passage erroneously, through an oversight with respect to the word is the rendering of εἰς παροξυσμὸν in the verse quoted. Syr. 10: 10—the rendering of ἀνεμπόδιστος in Letter v. Vid. note i, p. 39. either that to those who know it not, our virtue may be discovered by means of the trials laid upon us: as was said respecting Job: Thinkest thou that I was revealed to thee for any other cause, than that thou shouldest be seen righteous? Or that, when men come to a sense of their deeds, they may know the temper of them, and may therefore either repent of their wickedness, or remain stedfast in the faith. Now the blessed Paul, when troubled by afflictions, and persecutions, and hunger and thirst, in every thing was a conqueror, through Jesus Christ, Who loved us. Through suffering, he was weak indeed in body; yet, believing and hoping, he was strong in spirit, and his strength was made perfect in weakness.

But the other saints also, who had a like confidence in God, accepted a probation such as this with gladness: as Job said, Blessed be the name of the Lord. But the

Psalmist, Search me, O Lord, and try me: prore my reins and my heart. For since, when the strength is proved, it convinceth the foolish: therefore they, perceiving the purity and the advantage resulting from the divine fire, did not draw back in trials like these. But they rather received a character from them, suffering no injury at all from the things which happened, but appearing more bright, like gold from the fire: as he said, who was tried by such exercise as this; Thou hast tried my heart; Thou hast visited me in the night-season; Thou hast prored me, and hast not found iniquity in me, so that my mouth shall not speak of the works of men. But, on the other hand, those who are lawless in their actions, so that they know nothing more than eating and drinking and dying, account trials as danger. They soon

The words here, and in the following lines, rendered 'probation,' 'prove,' &c. are all from the root 'tentavit,' 'probasvit,' and convey the idea of purification by fire, which idea is enlarged upon a few lines farther. The Syriac word answers to the Hebrew :□□□□□□ Gr. πυρόω, as in Ps. lxvi, 10. Conf. S. Greg. Nazian. Præmi in laudem virginitatis v. 600 2. There appears to be an error in the Syriac .□□□□□□ It is rendered in the text as from □□□□□□ 'signavit,' which agrees with the context. Conf. Mal. iii. 3, and 1 Pet. i. 7. 2 10. stumble at them, so that, being untried in the faith, they are given over to a reprobate mind, and do those things which are not seemly. Therefore the blessed Paul, when urging us to such exercises as these, and having before measured himself by them, says, Therefore I take pleasure in afflictions, in infirmities. And again, Exercise thyself unto godliness. For since he knew the persecutions that accompanied those who chose to live in godliness, he wished his disciples to meditate beforehand on the difficulties connected with godliness; that when trials should come, and affliction arise, they might be able to bear them easily, as having been exercised in these things. For in those things wherewith a man has been conversant in mind, there is a hidden joy which he ordinarily experiences. In this way, the blessed martyrs, since they were first conversant with trials, were quickly perfected in Christ, not at all regarding the injury of the body, while they contemplated the

expected rest. But all those who call their lands by their own names, and have wood, and hay, and stubble in their thoughts; such as these, since they are strangers to troubles, are aliens from the kingdom of heaven. Had they, however, known that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, they would have exercised themselves, after the example of 27. Paul, who said, I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. But they would easily have borne the Lam. 3, 27. afflictions which were brought upon them from time to time, if the prophetic admonition had been listened to by them, It is good for a man to take up Thy yoke in his youth; he shall sit alone and shall be silent, because he hath taken Thy yoke upon him. He will give his cheek to him who

smiteth him; he will be filled with reproaches. Because the Lord does not cast away for ever; for when He afflicteth, He is gracious, according to the multitude of His tender mercies.

For if all these things should proceed from the enemies, stripes, insults, reproaches, yet they shall avail nothing against the tender mercies of God; since from them we shall quickly recover, they being temporal things, but God being always gracious, pouring out His tender mercies on those who please [Him]. Therefore, my beloved brethren, we should not look at temporal things, but fix our attention on those which are eternal. Though affliction may come, it will have an end; though insult and persecution, yet are they nothing to the hope which is in reserve. For all present matters are trifling compared with those which are future; the sufferings of this present time not being worthy to be compared with the hope that is to come. For what can be compared with the kingdom? or what is like to everlasting life? Or what is all we could give here, compared with what we shall inherit yonder? For we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. Therefore it is not right, my beloved, to consider afflictions and persecutions, but the hopes which are laid up for us because of persecutions.

Now to this even the example of Issachar, the patriarch, may persuade, as the Scripture saith, Issachar desires that which is good, resting between the heritages; and when he 1 Serapion quotes the first part of tom. iv. p. li. (L.) this passage of Scripture in his Epastola 3 Conf. Rom. viii. 8. 2 Cor. iv. ad Monachos, in praise of the ascetic 17. life. Vid. A. Mac. Spicileg. Rom. saw that the rest was good, and the land fertile, he bowed his shoulder to labour, and became a husbandman. Being consumed by divine love, like the spouse in the Canticles, he collected from the holy Scriptures that which is profitable; for his mind was captivated not by the old alone, but by both the heritages. And further, like one expanding his wings, he beheld the rest which is in heaven, while [he looked upon] the earth as full of good deeds—rather, in truth, the heavenly—since that is always new, and never grows old. For this earth passes away, as the Lord said; but that which is ready to receive the saints is immortal. Now when Issachar, the patriarch, saw these things, he joyfully made his boast of afflictions and toils, bowing his shoulders that he might labour. And he did not contend with those who smote him, neither was he disturbed by insults; but like a man triumphing the more by these things, and the more earnestly tilling his land, he received profit from it. The Word, indeed, scattered the seed, but he watchfully cultivated it, so that it brought forth fruit, even a hundred-fold.

Now what is this, my beloved, but that we also, when the enemies are set against us, should glory in afflictions; and that when we are persecuted, we should not be discouraged, but should the rather press after the crown of the high Larsow translates the last of these words by 'heavenly,' stating in a note that the context

requires it. But I think it better to take the root as man, and to consider it an exact translation of the wise of the LXX. vers. This will not be opposed to the context. The primary and literal translation may be adhered to, without affecting the more hidden and spiritual explanation. Jarchi translates the passage figuratively of Issachar being strong to bear the yoke of the law. The Jerusalem Targum thus paraphrases the verse. 'And he saw the rest of the world to come, that it was good, and the portion of the land of Israel, that it was pleasant; therefore he inclined his shoulders to work in the law, and his brethren brought gifts unto him.' This paraphrase appears to me in substance very similar

to the comment of S. Athan, on the passage. The patriarch looked upon this world as the present portion assigned him by God; he duly estimated the blessings connected with it, notwithstanding its trials and afflictions; and he therefore willingly and cheerfully acquiesced in his lot. But he looked forward to another and better heritage to be enjoyed hereafter, and it was the prospect of this especially, that was his stay and support. The literal explanation of resting between the heritages must be sought in the particular tract of land in which the tribe was situated. Conf. S. Aug. Enarratio in Psalmum ciii. 13. (tom. iv. p. 1139. c.l. Ben.) Pennae ergo animarum virtutes, bona opera, recte facta.—Quisquis dilexerit Deum et proximum, animam habet pennatam, liberis alis, sancto amore volantem ad Dominum. Sufferings for the truth should unite us more closely to God. 109

calling in Christ Jesus our Lord? and that being insulted, we should not be disturbed, but should give our cheek to the smiter, and even bow the shoulder? For the lovers of pleasure and the lovers of enmity are tried, as saith the blessed Apostle James, when they are drawn away by their own lusts and enticed. But let us, knowing that we suffer for the truth, and that those who deny the Lord smite and persecute us, count it all joy, my brethren, according to the words of James, when we fall into trials of various temptations, knowing that the trial of our faith worketh patience. Let us even keep the feast with rejoicing, my brethren, knowing that our salvation is reserved in the time of affliction. For our Saviour did not redeem us by ease; but He abolished death by suffering for us. And respecting this, He intimated to us before, saying, In the world ye shall have tribulation. But He did not say this to every man, but to those who diligently and faithfully perform good service to Him, knowing beforehand, that they should be persecuted who would live godly to Him. But evil-doers and deceivers will wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. If therefore, like the expounders of dreams and false prophets, who professed to give signs, these ignorant men, in the same manner, being drunk, not with wine, but with their own wickedness, make a profession of priesthood, and glory in their threats, believe them not;

but since we are tried, let us humble ourselves, not being drawn away by them. For so God warned His people by Moses, saying, If there shall rise up among you a

prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and shall give signs and tokens, and the sign or the token shall come to pass which he spake to thee, saying, Let us go and serve strange gods, which ye have not known; ye shall not hearken unto the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the Lord your God trieth you, that He may know whether you will lore the Lord your God with all your heart. So we, when we are tried by these things, will not separate ourselves from the love of God. But let us also now keep the feast, my beloved, not as introducing a day of suffering, but of joy in Christ, by Whom we are fed every day. Let us be mindful of Him Who was sacrificed in the days of the Passover; for we celebrate this, because Christ the Passover was sacrificed. He Who once brought His people out of Egypt, and hath now abolished death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, will also now turn him to shame, and again grant aid to those who are troubled, and cry unto God day and night.

We begin the fast of forty days on the thirteenth of Phamenoth (9 Mar.), and the holy week of Easter on the eighteenth of Pharmuthi (Apr. 13.); and having ceased on the seventh day, being the twenty-third (Apr. 18.), and the first of the great week having dawned on the twenty-fourth of the same month Pharmuthi (Apr. 19.), let us reckon from it till Pentecost. And at all times let us sing praises, calling on Christ, being delivered from our enemies by Christ Jesus our Lord, through Whom to the Father be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All those who are here with me salute you. I pray, my beloved brethren, that ye may have health in the Lord. He (Athanasius) wrote this also from Rome. Here endeth the thirteenth Letter.

Letter 14.

Coss. Augustus Constantius III., Constans II.; Praf. the same Longinus; Indict. XV.; Easter-day III. Id. Apr.; XVI. Pharmuthi; Era Dioclet. 58. THE gladness of our feast, my brethren, is always near at hand, and never fails those who wish to celebrate it^a. For the Word is near, Who is all things on our behalf; even our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, having promised that His habitation with us should be perpetual, in virtue thereof cried, saying, Lo, I am with you all the days, [even to the end] of the world. For as He is the Shepherd, and the High Priest, and the Way and the Door, and every thing at once to us, so further, He has been revealed to us as the feast, and the holyday, according to the blessed Apostle; Our Passover, Christ, is sacrificed. He also was waited for; He, too, caused a light to shine at the prayer of the Psalmist, who said, [Thou art] my joy; deliver me from those who surround me; this being indeed true rejoicing, this being a true feast, even deliverance from wickedness, where to a man attains by altogether adopting an upright conversation, and by his mind being bent on pious obedience towards God^b. For thus also the saints all their lives long, were like men rejoicing at a feast. One found rest in praying to God, as blessed David, who rose in the night, not once but seven times. Another was celebrated for songs of praise, as the great Moses, who sang a song of praise for the victory over Pharaoh, and those task-masters. Others performed worship with unceasing cheerfulness, like the great Samuel and the blessed Elijah; who have ceased from their perfect conversation, and now keep the feast in heaven, and rejoice in their former instruction, which was by emblems, and out of types understand the truth.

But what sprinklings shall we now employ, while we celebrate the feast? Who then will thus be our guide, as we haste to this festival? None can do this, my beloved, but Him Whom ye will name with me, even our Lord Jesus Christ, Who said, I am the Way. For it is He Who, according to the blessed John, taketh away the sin of the world. He also purifies our souls, as Jeremiah the prophet says in a certain place, Stand in the ways and see, and enquire, and look which is the good path, and ye shall find in it cleansing for your souls. Of old time, the blood of the he-goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkled upon those who were unclean, were adapted only to purify the flesh; but now, through the grace of God the Word, every man

is thoroughly cleansed. Following Him, we may, even here, as on the threshold of the Jerusalem which is above, meditate beforehand on the feast which is eternal; as also, the blessed Apostles, when they together followed the Saviour, Who was their Leader, have now become teachers

of a like readiness of disposition, saying, Behold, we have 28. left all, and followed Thee. For the following of the Lord, and the feast which is of the Lord, is not accomplished by words only, but by deeds, every enactment of laws and commands involving a distinct performance. For as the great Moses, when administering the holy laws, exacted a promise from the people, respecting the practice of them; 8. so that having promised, they might not neglect them, and be accused as liars: thus also, the celebration of the feast of the Passover* moves no question, and demands no reply; but when the word is given, the obedience of it follows, for He saith, And the children of Israel shall keep the Passover; 47. intending that there should be a ready performance of the commandment, while the thing itself, at the same time, A D 342 should be rendered more easy. But respecting these matters, I have confidence in your wisdom, and your doctrinal care. Such points as these have been touched upon by us often and in various Letters.

But now, which is above all things most necessary, I wish to remind you, and myself with you, how that the command would have us not come to the Paschal feast profanely and without preparation; but with sacramental and doctrinal rites, and prescribed observances; as indeed we learn from the historical account, A man who is of another nation, or bought with money, or uncircumcised, shall not eat the Passover. Neither should it be eaten in any house; but He commands it to be done in haste; inasmuch as before we groaned and were made sad by the bondage to Pharaoh, and the commands of the task-masters. For when, in former time, the children of Israel acted in this way, they were counted worthy to receive the type. For that (the type) had respect to this feast, nor was the feast now introduced on account of the type. As also the Word of God, when desirous of this, said to His disciples, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you. The account, given us as it is, is a wonderful one; for a man might have seen them equipped as for a show or a dance, and going out with staves, and sandals, and unleavened bread. These things took place before, as it were, in shadows, and were typical. But now, the Truth is nigh unto us, the Image of the invisible God, our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Light; Who,

The argument appears to be this. Moses, as we read in Exodus, ch. xiv. v. 3—7, heard from God the terms of the covenant He would make with the children of Israel, obedience to all that God should command being imposed on them. Moses repeated these words to the Israelites, who promised obedience: 'All that the Lord hath spoken will we do.' (v. 8.) After that, the promulgation of the law takes place. The command to keep the Passover is renewed. (Levit. iv. 9.) The Israelites were

therefore bound to keep it, as well in virtue of their promise, as by their duty of obedience to God. The Syriac is here The cross which would be more correctly trans- lated 'in any part of the house.' But what is given above appears to be required by the reference. Conf. Letter v. p. 47. 'In one house, even in the Catholic Church, eating the Passover of the Lord.'

[f] I have given this as the translation of The cross not The cross. The word is rather indistinct in the Ms. but it may be meant for the former word. Prof. Larson translates this passage, 'the invisible image of God.' But it is clearly the translation of εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, (Col. i. 15.) God the Father cannot be seen, but Christ, His Only-begotten Son, hath manifested Him. Conf. John i. 18. instead of a staff, is our sceptre; instead of unleavened bread, is the bread which came down from heaven; Who, instead of sandals, hath furnished us with the preparation of the Gospel; and Who, to speak briefly, by all these hath guided us to His Father. And if enemies afflict us, through persecution, He again, in the place of Moses, will encourage with more than the words of that man, saying, *Be of good cheer; I have overcome the wicked one*h. And if also, after we have passed over the Red sea, heat should again vex us, or some bitterness of the waters befall us, again even there the Lord will appear to us, imparting to us of His sweetness, and His life-giving fountain, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink.

Why therefore do we tarry, and why do we delay, and come not with all eagerness and diligence to the feast, trusting that it is Jesus who calleth us? Who is all things for us, and was laden in ten thousand ways for our salvation; Who indeed hungered and thirsted for us, though He nourishes and gives us to drink of His saving gifts! For this is His glory, this the miracle of His divinity, that He changed our sufferings for His happiness. For, being life, He died that He might make us alive; being the Word, He became flesh, that He might, by the Word, instruct that which is flesh; and being the fountain of life, He thirsted our thirst, that thereby He might urge us to the feast, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink. At that time, Moses proclaimed the beginning of the feast, saying, This month is the beginning of months to you. But the Lord, Who came down in the end of the ages, proChrist the sum and substance of the Old Testament prophecies. 115

claimed a different day,—not as though He would abolish the law, far from it—but that He should establish the law, and be the end of the law. For Christ is the end of the law to every one that believeth in righteousness; as the blessed Paul saith, Do we make void the law by faith? by no means: we rather establish the law.

Now these things astonished even the officers who were sent by the Jews, so that wondering they said to the Pharisees, No man ever thus spake. What was it then that Jolou 7, 46. astonished those officers, or what was it which so affected the men as to make them marvel? It was nothing but the boldness and authority of our Saviour. For on former occasions of their applying to the prophetical writings, and

those skilled in the law, they perceived that they referred those who applied, not to themselves, but elsewhere. Moses, for instance, A prophet will the Lord raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; to him hearken in all that he commands you. Isaiah again, Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and ye shall call his name Emmanuel. By others also, prophecies were uttered differently, and in various ways, concerning the Lord. But by the Lord, of Himself, and of no other, were these things prophesied; to Himself He limited them all, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to Me—not to any other person, but to Me. A man may indeed hear of those concerning My coming; but he must not henceforth drink from others, but from Me. Therefore let us also, when we come to the feast, no longer come as to old shadows, for they are accomplished; neither as to common feasts; but let us hasten as to the Lord, Who is Himself the feast*, not looking upon it as an indulgence and delight of the belly, but as a manifestation of virtue. For the feasts of the heathen are full of greediness, and utter indolence, since they consider they celebrate a feast when

pensation came to an end when Christ appeared. The Christian religion was the closing of the Jewish economy, and therefore S. Paul speaks of Christians as those ἐφ' οὗ τὰ τέλη των αἰώνων κατήντησε. 1 Cor. x. 11. they are idle; and they then work the works of perdition when they feast. Our feasts, on the contrary, are the scenes of virtuous exercises, and the practice of temperance; as also the prophetic word testifies in a certain place, saying, 19. The fast of the fourth, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth [month], shall be to the house of Judah for gladness, and rejoicing, and for pleasant feasts. Since therefore this occasion for exercise is before appointed, and such a day as this is come, and the prophetic voice gone forth to celebrate the feast, let us give all diligence to this good proclamation, and like those who are opposed to each other in the race course, vie with each other in observing the purity of the fast; by watchfulness in prayers; by practice in the Scriptures; by distributing to the poor, and by reconciliation with our enemies. Let us bind up those who are scattered abroad; banish pride; and instead thereof put on lowliness of mind, being at peace with all men, and urging the brethren to love. Thus also the blessed Paul was often engaged in fastings and watchings, and was willing to be accursed for his brethren. Also, again, the blessed David, having humbled himself by fastings,

Psalm 7, 3. used boldness, saying, O Lord my God, if I have done this, if there is any iniquity in my hands, if I have repaid those who dealt evil with me, then may I fall from my enemies as a vain man. Acting thus, we shall conquer death; and receive an earnest of the kingdom of heaven. Conf. Letter vii. p. 57. 'The feast is not an indulgence in food, nor splendour of clothing, nor days of leisure.' Conf. 1 Corinth. ix. 24—27. Syr. ἐν σταδίῳ. The exhortation is, to be as ready to celebrate the feast, when the divine command is given, as were the runners in the races to start when the signal was made; and then to vie with each other in properly keeping it,

as the runners strove to surpass each other in speed. Syr. Ἀρραβών. Vid. note to Letter vi. p. 50. Conf. Eph. i. 13, 14.— 'that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest (ἀρραβών) of our inheritance. In both the other places in the We begin the holy Easter feast on the tenth of Pharmuthi (April 5.), desisting from the holy fasts on the fifteenth of the same month Pharmuthi (April 10.), on the evening of the seventh day. And let us keep the holy feast on the sixteenth of the same month Pharmuthi (April 11.); adding one by one [the days] till the holy Pentecost, passing on to which, as through a succession of feasts, let us keep the festival to the Spirit, Who is always near us, in Jesus Christ, through Whom and with Whom to the Father be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The fifteenth and sixteenth are wanting.

Letter 17.

Coss. Amantius, Albinus; Pref. Nestorius of Gaza; Indict. Easter-day III.; Easter-day, VII. Id. Apr.; XII. Pharmuthi; Moon on April 7. 19; Era Dioclet. 61. ATHANASIUS, to the Presbyters and Deacons of Alexandria, and the beloved brethren in Christ, greeting. According to custom, I give you notice respecting Easter, my beloved; that you also may notify the same to the districts of those who are at a distance, as is usual. Therefore, after this present festival, I mean this which is on the twentieth of the month Pharmuthi, the first of the Paschal week ensuing will be on the vii Id. April: or, according to the Alexandrians, on the twelfth of Pharmuthi. Give, therefore, notice in all those districts, that the first day of the Paschal week is on the vii Id. April, on the twelfth of Pharmuthi according to the Alexandrian reckoning. That ye may be in health in Christ, I pray, my beloved brethren.

It is observed here by Mr. Cureton, (who has also given the translation of this Letter), that S. Athan, gave notice at Easter , upon what day Easter was to be observed in , and not immediately after the succeeding Epiphany, as Cassian asserts to have been the custom of the Patriarch of Alexandria. (Cassian. Collat. x. cap. i. Edit. Lugduni 1606, p. 364.) The same period for forwarding the Paschal notice was observed with regard to the next Letter. In previous Epistles, we not unfrequently find reference made to Easter, as in course of celebration, at the time they were written. Thus the second com- mences: 'Again, my beloved, is Easter come, and gladness.' The fourth: 'Now again, my beloved, has God also brought us to the season of the feast.' Perhaps we should not be wrong in supposing that some of the Epistles were, in the first instance, delivered as homilies, at the places where they were written, and afterwards, with slight alterations, and the addition of the concluding parts, sent as Paschal Letters to the various dioceses. However, we know that, in consequence of the troubles of the Church, the usual period for forwarding the Letters was not always adhered to. (Vid. Letter iv. p. 31.)

Letter 18.

Coss. Constantius IV., Constans III.; Praf. Nestorius; Indict. IV.; Easter-day III. Kal. Apr.; IV. Pharmuthi; Easter-day on Mar. 30. Moon 21; Era Dioclet. 62. ATHANASIUS, to the Presbyters and Deacons of Alexandria, brethren beloved in the Lord, greeting. Ye have done well, dearly beloved brethren, that ye have given the customary notice of the holy Easter in those districts; for I have seen and acknowledged your exactness. By other letters I have also given you notice, that, when this year is finished, ye may know concerning the next. Yet now I have thought it necessary to write the same things that, since ye are exact, ye may also write with care. Therefore, after the conclusion of this feast, which is now at its termination, on the twelfth of the month Pharmuthi, which is on the vii Id. Apr.a, Easter-day is on the iii Kal. April; the fourth of Pharmuthi, according to the Alexandrians. When therefore the feast is finished, give notice again in these districts, according to the early custom, thus: The first of the Paschal week is on the iii Kal. April, which is the fourth of Pharmuthi, according to the Alexandrian reckoning. And let no man hesitate concerning the day; neither let any one contend, saying, It is requisite that Easter should be held on the twenty-seventh of the month Phamenoth; for it was discussed in the holy Synod, and all there settled[c] it to be on the iii Kal. April. I say then that it is on the fourth of the month Pharmuthi; for the week before this is much too early. Therefore let there be no dispute, but let us act as becometh us. For I have thus written to the Romans also. Give notice then as it has been notified to you, that it is on the iii Kal. April; the fourth of Pharmuthi, according to the Alexandrian reckoning.

That ye may have health in the Lord, I pray, my dearly beloved brethren. This could not have been the Synod of Sardica, as Larsow states in a note, misled by an error in the index prefixed to the Letters. The Synod of Sardica was not held till the following year, () In the index (Letter xv.) it is said, that the Council of Sardica was held in that year, () and published directions with respect to the time of Easter. The translator of the Letters appears to have confused between the Synod of Antioch and that of Sardica. At a Synod held at Antioch in , the Paschal question was discussed, (vid. Bever. Synod. tom. i. p. 430.), and this I conclude to be the Synod

to which S. Athan. refers. [c] I think the Syr. □□□□□ 'misit' is an error for □□□□□ 'confirmavit.' In Letter xix. p. 126. we find □□□□□ □□□□□

I am indebted to the kindness of J. C. Adams, Esq. M.A. Fellow of Pembroke College, for the following calculation. The 14th day of the Moon, reckoning from the time of mean New Moon, took place on Sunday the 23d. According to the rule which obtained in later times, and continued in use until the Gregorian reformation of the Calendar, the 14th day of the Ecclesiastical Moon took place on Saturday the 22d, which would make Easter-day happen on the 23d. It would seem, therefore, that the decision of the Synod referred to, brought the Ecclesiastical Moon into closer accordance with that of the heavens, than the later Calendar would have done.

Letter 19.

Coss. Rufinus, Eusebius; Pref. the same Nestorius; Indict. V.D. 347. Γ.; Easter-day, Prid. Id. Apr.; Pharmuthi XVII; Æra Easter-day Dioclet. 63; Moon 15. on Apr. 12. BLESSED is God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for such an introduction is fitting for an Epistle; and now more especially, when accompanied with thanksgiving to the Lord, in the Apostle's words, because He hath brought us from a distance, and granted us again to send openly[c] to you, as usual, the Festal Letters. For this is the season of the feast, my brethren, and it is near; being not now proclaimed by trumpets, as the history records, but made known and brought near to us by the Saviour. Who suffered on our behalf and rose again: even as Paul preached, saying, Our Passover, Christ, is sacrificed. The feast of the Passover then is ours, not that of a stranger, nor of the Jews any longer[f]. For the time of shadows is abolished, and these old things have ceased; and now the month of new things is at hand, in which every man should keep the feast, in obedience to Him who said, Observe the month of new things, and keep the Passover to the Lord thy God.

This was the year in which the Council of Sardinia was held. Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things (ἐκ τοῖς ἐποχωρίοις) in Christ.' S. Athan, is comparing the rest God had given the Church from their enemies, and the opportunity of improvement by spiritual privileges, (vid. p. 129,) with the blessings for which the Apostle thanked God in the passage quoted. He had been absent at Rome nearly thirty years. Conf. Letter i. p. 4-7. Or, 'made known and offered up.' [f] Vid. note 2, to Letter vi. p. 45. Vid. note 3, to Letter i. p. 12, and note d, to Letter v. p. 37. S. Cyril, in his 29th Paschal discourse, beautifully enlarges on the season at which the Pasch (including therein the quadragesimal fast) is kept, viz. in the spring, when all nature is joyful around us, and bursting, as it were, into new life. S. Cyril. Op. tom. vi. p. 336. Lutet. 16 S. S. Chrysostom, in allusion to the same, calls the quadragesimal fast, the spiritual spring of the soul. Ὁ τῆς νηστείας καιρὸς τὸ πνευματικὸν των ὄνχων ἴαρ. tom. 4. λυγ. α'. ἐκ ἀρχῇ τῆς τεσσαρακωστῆς, p. 615. ed. 1718-

38. With ourselves, the season gives the name to the fast. In Sax. we have Lencæen, 'the spring,' Lencæenperæen, 'the spring fast,' Lencæ. 122 The blind-

ness of the Jews with regard to their law. Even the heathen fancy they keep festival, and the Jews hypocritically feign therein. But the feast of the heathen He reproves, as the bread of mourners; and He turns His face from that of the Jews, inasmuch as they are outcasts, saying, Your new moons and your sabbaths My soul hateth. For actions not done lawfully and piously, are not of advantage, though they may be reputed to be so, but they rather argue hypocrisy in those who venture upon them. Therefore, although such persons as these fancy to themselves that they offer sacrifices, yet they hear from the Father, Your whole burnt-offerings are not acceptable, and your sacrifices do not please Me; and although ye bring fine flour, it is vanity; incense also is an abomination unto Me. For God does not need any thing; and, since there is nothing which can defile Him, He is full in regard to them, as He testifies, saying by Isaiah, I am full.

Now there was a law given respecting these things, for the instruction of the people, and to prefigure things to come; for Paul saith to the Galatians, Before faith came, we were kept guarded under the law, being shut up in the faith which should afterwards be revealed unto us; wherefore the law was our instructor in Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But the Jews knew not, neither did they understand; therefore they walked in the day-time as in darkness; feeling for, but not touching, the truth we possess, which [was contained] in the law; conforming to the letter, but not attending to the spirit. And when Moses was veiled, they looked on him, but turned away their faces from him when he was uncovered. For they knew not what they read, but erroneously substituted one thing for another. The prophet, therefore, cried against them, saying, Falsehood and faithlessness have prevailed among them. The Lord also therefore said concerning them, The strange children have dealt falsely with me; the strange children have waxen old. But how gently now does He reprove them, saying, Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me. But being faithless, they further also dealt falsely respecting the law, affirming things after their own pleasure, but not understanding them according to the Scripture; and, further, having as with hypocrisies distorted the plain text of Scripture, and this being their confidence, He is angry with them, saying by Isaiah, Who hath required these of your hands?

And by Jeremiah, since they were very bold, he threatens, Gather together your whole burntofferings with your sacrifices, and eat flesh; for I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. For they did not act as was right, neither was their zeal according to law; but they rather sought their own pleasure in such days, as the prophet accuser them; thrusting their bondsmen, and gathering themselves together for strifes and quarrels. They also smote the lowly with the fist, and did all things that tended to their own gratification.

For this cause, they continue without a feast until the end, although they make a display now of eating flesh, out of place and out of season. For, instead of the legallyappointed lamb, they have learned to sacrifice to Baal; instead of the true unleavened bread, they collect the wood, and their fathers kindle the fire, and their wives prepare the dough, that they may make cakes to the host of heaven, and pour out libations to strange gods, that they may provoke Me to anger, saith the Lord. They have the just reward of such devices; since, although they pretend to keep the Passover, yet joy and gladness is taken from their mouth, as saith Jeremiah, There hath been taken away from the cities of Judah, and the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of those who are glad, and the voice of those who rejoice; the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride. Therefore now, he who among them sacrificeth an ox, is as he who smiteth a 124 Explanation of the time and circumstances under which

MAN: and he who sacrificeth a lamb is as he who killeth a dog; he that offereth fine flour, is as [if he offered] swine's blood; he that giveth frankincense for a memorial, is as a blasphemer". Now these things will never please God, neither hath the [divine] word required them of them. But He saith, These have chosen their own ways; and their abominations are what their soul delighteth in. And what is this, my brethren? For it is right for us to investigate the saying of the prophet, and especially with regard to those who heretically devise imaginations contrary to the law. By Moses then, God gave commandment respecting sacrifices; and all the book called Leviticus, is entirely taken up with the arrangement of these matters, so that He might accept the offerer. He therefore, by the Prophets, finds fault with him who despised these things, as disobedient to the commandment, saying, I have not required these at your hands. Neither did I speak to your fathers respecting sacrifices, nor command them concerning whole burnt-offerings.

Now it has been ventured as an opinion, that the Scriptures do not agree together, or that God, Who gave the commandment, is false. But there is no disagreement whatever; far from it; neither can the Father, Who is truth, lie; for it is impossible that God should lie, as Paul affirms. But these things are plain to those who rightly consider them, and to those who receive with faith the writings of the law. Now it appears to me—may God vouchsafe, by your prayers, that the remarks I presume to make may not be far from the truth—that not at first were the commandment and the law concerning sacrifices, neither did the mind of God, Who gave the law, regard whole burnt-offerings, but those things which were pointed out and prefigured by them. For the law contained a shadow of good things to come. And, Those things were appointed until the time of reformation. Therefore, the whole law did not treat of sacrifices, though there was in the law a commandment concerning sacrifices, by their means imparting instruction beforehand, withdrawing men from idols, and bringing them near to God, teaching them to understand the

true character of the time then present. Therefore neither at the beginning, when God the law concerning sacrifices was delivered to the Jews. 125

brought the people out of Egypt, did He command them concerning sacrifices or whole burnt-offerings, nor even till they came to mount Sinai. For God is not as man, that He should have a care of these things beforehand; but His commandment was given, that they might know Him Who is truly God, and also His Word; and might disregard those which are falsely called gods, which exist not, but only attain to the outward show. Thus He would be known to them by those [signs] whereby He brought them out of the land of Egypt, causing them to pass through the Red Sea. But when they would serve Baal, and dared to offer sacrifices to those that have no existence, and forgat the miracles which were wrought in their behalf in Egypt, and thought of returning thither again; then indeed, after the law, a commandment also was given to serve as a law concerning sacrifices; so that with their mind, which at one time had meditated on those [gods] which did not exist, they might turn to Him Who is truly God; and learn not, in the first place, to sacrifice, but to turn away their faces from idols, and give heed to what God commanded.

For when He saith, I have not spoken concerning sacrifices, neither given commandment concerning whole burnt-offerings, He immediately adds, But this is the thing which I commanded them, saying, Obey My voice, and I will be to you a God, and ye shall be to Me a people, and ye shall walk in all the ways that I command you. Thus then, being before instructed and taught, they learned not to give their service to any one but the Lord. They attained to know what time the shadow should last, and not to forget the time that was at hand, in which no longer should the bullock of the herd be a sacrifice to God, nor the ram of the flock, nor the he-goat, but all these things fulfilled in a purely spiritual manner, and by constant prayer, and upright conversation, with godly words; as David sings, May my meditation be pleasing to Him. Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense, and the lifting 34. up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. The Spirit also, who is in him, commands, saying, Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay to the Lord thy cows. Offer the sacrifice of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.

Ps. 50, 23. Moses 6, 6. Mat. 9, 13. I Mat. 22, 29. 29.

Mat. 12, 34. The great Samuel also not the less pointedly reproved Saul, saying, Is not the word better than a gift? For by these things a man fulfils the law, and pleases God, as He saith, The sacrifice of praise shall glorify Me. Let a man learn what this is, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, and not condemn the adversaries. But this displeased them. They were not anxious to understand, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. And what is the end of these, the prophet before pronounced, saying, Woe unto their souls, for they have devised an evil thought, saying, let us bind the just man, because he is not pleasing to us. The end of such abandonment as this is nothing but error, as the Lord, when reproving

them, saith, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures. Afterwards when, through reproof, they should have come to their senses, they rather waxed bold, saying, We are Moses' disciples; and we know that God spake to Moses; dealing the more falsely by that very expression, and accusing themselves. For had they believed him who heard, they would not have denied the Lord, Who spake by Moses, at a time when He was near. But such was not the cunning in the Acts; for when he heard, Understandest thou what thou readest? he was not ashamed to confess his ignorance, and implored to be taught. Therefore, because he was like a learner, the grace of the Spirit was given.

But as for them [the Jews], because they persisted in their ignorance, as the proverb saith, Death came upon them. For the fool dies in his sins. Like these too, are the heretics, who, having fallen from a true conscience, dare to imagine to themselves atheism. For the fool saith in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, and become abominable in their doings. Of such as are fools in their thoughts, the actions are wicked. For, as He saith, can ye, being evil, speak good things? They were evil, because they thought wickedness. Or how can those do just acts, whose minds are set upon fraud? Or how shall he love, who is prepared beforehand to hate? How shall he be kind, who is bent upon the love of money? How shall he be chaste, who looks upon a woman to lust after her? For from the heart proceed evil thoughts, fornications, adulteries, murders. By them the fool is wrecked, as by the waves of the sea, being led away and enticed by these fleshly pleasures: for this also stands written, The whole body of fools is entirely shipwrecked. Having then associated with folly, he is afterwards caught by a tempest, and perishes; as Solomon says in the Proverbs. The fool and he who lacketh understanding shall perish together, and shall leave their wealth to strangers. Now they suffer such things, because there is not among them one sound of mind to guide them.

For where there is sagacity, there the Word, which is the pilot of souls, accompanies the vessel; for he that hath understanding shall possess government; they who are without government falling like the leaves.

Who then is it that altogether falls away, as Hymenæus and Philetus, because they entertained evil conceits respecting the resurrection, and suffered shipwreck in regard to the faith of it? Judas also, being a betrayer, fell away from the Pilot, and perished with the Jews. But the [other] disciples since they were wise, and therefore remained with the Lord, although the sea was agitated, and the ship covered with the waves, there being a storm, and the wind contrary, yet fell not away. For they awoke the Word, Who was sailing with them, and immediately the sea became smooth at the command of its Lord, and they were saved. They then together became preachers and teachers; relating the miracles of our Saviour, and also teaching us to imitate their example. These things were written on our account

and for our profit, in order that by these tokens, we may acknowledge the Lord Who wrought

appears to be an as referred to. error for I know not what passage is intended here. The word translated 'body' is literally 'flesh.' This passage is not to be found in the Proverbs. It occurs in the Psalms, The word appears to be wrongly inserted in the Ms. Conf. Letter ii. p. 18. Conf. Letter vii. p. 63 'Judas—having abandoned his Life, hanged himself.' Ps. 104,

25. 26. them. Let us therefore, in the faith of the disciples, hold converse with our Master. For the world is like the sea to us, my brethren, of which it is written, This is the great and wide sea; there go the ships; the Leviathan, which Thou has created to play in it. We are carried along then in this, as by the wind, through our own free-will; for every one directs his course according to his will, and either, under the pilotage of the Word, he enters into rest; or, laid hold on by pleasure, he suffers shipwreck, and is in peril[f] by storm. For, as in the ocean, there are tempests and waves, so in the world there are many afflictions and trials. The unbelieving, therefore, when affliction or persecution ariseth, is offended, as the Lord said. For being unconfirmed in the faith, and regarding temporal things, he cannot resist the difficulties which arise from afflictions. But as the house, built on the sand by the foolish man, so he, since he is without understanding, falls before the assault of temptations, as it were by the winds. But the saints, having their senses exercised by reason of practice, and being strong in faith, and understanding the word, do not become faint in trials; but although, from time to time, circumstances of greater trial arise against them, yet they continue faithful; and, awaking the Lord, Who is with them, they are delivered.

So, passing through water and fire, to a place where they can breathe freely, they duly keep the feast, offering up prayers, with thanksgiving, to God Who hath redeemed them. For either, being tempted, they are known, as Abraham; or, suffering, they are approved, as Job; or, being oppressed and guilcfully treated, as Joseph, they patiently endure it; or, being persecuted, they are not overtaken; but, as it is written, through God they leap over the wall of wickedness, which divideth and separateth between brethren, and turns them from the truth. After this example, the blessed Paul, when he took pleasure in infirmities, in reproach, in necessities, in persecutions, and in distresses for Christ, rejoiced, and wished all of us to rejoice, saying, Rejoice always; in every thing give thanks. 18.

□□□□□□□□□ □□□ □□□□□□□ faulty. But hold converse with [our] Master.' [c] Prof. Larsow translates these words αὐτονομία ἡμῶν (?) differently, considering the text as [c] κίνδυνον (Syr.) ποιεῖ. For what is there so consonant with the feast, as turning from wickedness, and a pure conversation, and prayer offered without ceasing to God, with thanksgiving? Therefore let us, my brethren, looking forward to celebrate the eternal joy in heaven, keep the feast here also; rejoicing at all times,

praying incessantly, and in every thing giving thanks to the Lord. I also give thanks to God, as well for those other wonders He has done, as for the various helps that have now been afforded us, in that though He hath chastened us sore, He did not deliver us over to death, but brought us from a distance, even as from the ends of the earth, and hath united us again with you. I then, while I keep the fast myself, have been anxious to give you also notice of the great feast of the Passover, so that we may go up together, as it were, to Jerusalem, and eat the Passover, not in a divided manner, but as in one house; not sodden as in water, let us divide the word of God; nor having, as it were, broken its bones, let us make void the commands of the Gospel. But, as it were, roasted with fire, with bitter herbs, being fervent in spirit, in fastings and watchings, with lying on the ground, let us keep it with penitence and thanksgiving*.

We begin the fast of forty days on the sixth day of Phamenoth (Mar. 2.); and having passed through that properly, with fasting and prayers, we may be able to attain to the holy day. For he who regards lightly the fast of forty days, as one who rashly and impurely treadeth on holy things, cannot celebrate the Easter festival. Further, let us put one another in remembrance, and stimulate one another not to be negligent, and especially that we should fast those days; so that fasts may receive us in succession, and we may duly bring the feast to a close. The fast of forty days begins then, as was before said, on the sixth of Phamenoth (Mar. 2); and the great week of the Passion on the eleventh of Pharmuthi (Apr. 6.). And let us rest from the fast on the sixteenth of it (Apr. 11.), on the seventh day, late in the evening. Let us keep the feast when the first of the week rises upon us, on the seventeenth of the month Pharmuthi (Apr. 12.). Let us then add, one after the other, the seven holy weeks of Pentecost, rejoicing and praising God, that He hath by these things made known to us beforehand, joy and rest everlasting, prepared in heaven for those of us, who truly believe in Christ Jesus our Lord; through Whom, and with Whom, be glory and dominion to the Father, with the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

Salute one another with a holy kiss. The brethren who are with me salute you. Lycos, Eudaemon p. in the stead of Plusianus a. In Antinous, Arion r, instead of Ammonius and Tyrannus s. In Oxyrynchus, Theodorus, instead of Pelagius. In Nilopolis, instead of Theon, Amatus t, and Isaac, having been reconciled to each other. In Arsenoitis, Andreas, instead of Silvanus u. In Prosopontis x, Triadelphus, instead of Serapammon. In Diosphacus y, on the river side, Theodorus, instead of Serapammon. In Saiton [Suis], Paphnutius, instead of Nemesion. In Xois, Theodorus, instead of Anubion; and there is also with him Isidorus, being reconciled to the Church. In Sethroitis z, Orion, instead of Potammon a. In Clysma, Tithonas, instead of Jacob i; and there is with him Paulus, having been reconciled to the Church.

Letter 20.

Coss. Philippus, Salia; Praefect. the same Nestorius; Indict. VI.; Easter-day III. Non. Apr.; VIII. Pharmuthi; Æra Dioelet. 64; Moon 18.

Lert us now keep the feast, my brethren; for as our Lord then gave notice to His disciples, so does He now beforehand to us; that after some days is the Passover. Therein the Jews indeed betrayed the Lord, but we celebrate His death as a feast, while we rejoice that then we obtained rest from our afflictions, and eagerly assemble ourselves together, whereas we formerly were dispersed. And whereas we were lost, we have been found; from having been far off, we are brought nigh; and from having been strangers, we have become His, Who suffered for us, and was nailed on the cross; Who bore our sins, as the prophet saith, and was afflicted for us, that He might remove from all of us grief, and sorrow, and sighing. When we thirst, He too satisfies us with the feast, standing and crying, If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink. For such is the love of the saints at all times, that they never once leave off, but offer the uninterrupted, constant sacrifice to the Lord, and continually thirst, and ask of Him to drink*; as David sang, My God, my God, early will I seek Thee; my soul thirsteth for Thee; many times my heart and flesh longeth for Thee in a barren land, without a path, and without water. Thus was I seen by Thee in the sanctuary. Isaiah the prophet also says, From the night my spirit seeketh Thee early, O God, because Thy commandments are light.

And another says, My soul fainteth for the longing it hath for Thy judgments at all times. And again he says, For Thy judgments I have hoped, and Thy law will I keep at all times. Another boldly cries out, saying, 43, 44. Mine eye is ever towards the Lord. And with him one says, The meditation of my heart is before Thee at all times. And Paul further advises, At all times give thanks; pray without ceasing. Those then who are thus continually 17. engaged, are altogether waiting for the Lord, while they say, Let us follow on to know the Lord: we shall find Him ready as the morning, and He will come to us as the early and the latter rain for the earth. For not only does He satisfy them in the morning: neither alone does He give them to drink as often as they ask; but He gives them abundantly according to His loving-kindness, vouchsafing to them, at all times, the grace of the Spirit.

And what it is they thirst for He immediately adds, saying, He that believeth on Me. For, as cold waters are pleasant to those who are thirsty. according to the proverb, so to those who believe in the 25. Lord, the coming of the Spirit is better than all refreshment and delight.

It becomes us also then in these days of the Passover, to rise early with the saints, and approach the Lord with all our soul: with purity of body, with confession and godly faith in Him; so that when we have here first drunk, and been filled with these divine waters which [flow] from Him, we may also be able to sit at table with the saints in heaven, and may share in the one voice of gladness which is there. For this, sinners having evinced no inclination, are properly cast out, with the words sounding in their ears, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? It is true that sinners also thirst, but not for 12. the grace of the Spirit; but, being inflamed with wickedness, they are altogether set on fire by pleasures, as saith the Proverb, All day long he desires evil desires. But the Prophet cries against them, saying, Wo unto those who rise 26. up early, and follow strong drink; who continue until the evening, for wine inflameth them. And since they run wild

For 1600s. I. g. 1500. in wantonness, they dare to thirst for the destruction of others. Having first drunk deceitful waters, which cannot be trusted, those things come upon them, which are stated by the Prophet; My wound, saith he, is grievous; how shall I be healed; it hath surely been to me like deceitful waters, in which there is no trust. The second, again, while they drink with those who are with them, lead astray and throw into confusion the mind [which was desirous] of truth, and turn away the simple from it. And what does he [the prophet] cry? Wo unto him who causeth his neighbour to drink turbid destruction, and maketh him drunk, that he may look upon his caverns. But those who dissemble, and steal away the truth, quiet their hearts. Having first drunk thereof, they go on to say those things which the whorish woman saith in the Proverbs, Lay hold with delight on hidden bread, and sweet stolen waters. They lay snares secretly, because they have not the freedom of virtue, nor the boldness of Wisdom, who praiseth herself in the streets, and employeth freedom of speech in the broad ways, preaching on high walls. For this reason, they are bidden to lay hold with delight, because, having chosen carelessness and pleasure, they steal the sweetness of truth, and with it disguise their own bitter waters [to escape] from the blame of their wickedness, which would be speedy and public. On this account, the wolf puts on the skin of the sheep, sepulchres deceive by their whitened exteriors. Satan, that is,

e The Syriac translator appears to have had before him the words ἀνατροπὴν θολερὰν, as some Mss. read, and as the passage is quoted in the Tomus ad Antiochenses, Athan. op. tom. i. p. 619 not ἀνατροπῇ θολερᾷ. The last word in the verse ’caverns’ (σπήλαια) arises from the similarity between the words □□□□□□□□ (nakedness) and □□□□□□□□ (caves).

Source. English translation by Henry Burgess, from *The Festal Epistles of S. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria*, translated by Henry Burgess (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1854; *A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church* 38); public domain. The text was read by machine (Mistral OCR) from a scan of the 1854 edition at the Internet Archive and has not been proofread against the printed book. SermonIndex has removed running heads and page numbers, joined words split across lines, and divided the text into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Footnotes and the editor's introduction are left out. Burgess's preface, introduction, chronological index and notes, and the indexes, are also left out; the Scripture references that the book prints in the margin are removed. Letters 8, 9, 15 and 16 are not extant in the Syriac. No original-language text is shown beside it, and no modern English version has been made.

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