Commentary on Isaiah (part 2 of 3)

Cyril of Alexandria (c. AD 376–444)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

Contents

Discourse 16 **1**

Discourse 17 **33**

Discourse 18 **55**

Discourse 19 **64**

Discourse 20 **97**

Discourse 21 **124**

Discourse 22 **147**

Discourse 23 **176**

Discourse 24 **206**

Discourse 25 **235**

Discourse 16

Lord my God, I will glorify you, and I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, an ancient, true counsel; may it be so, O Lord. In the book that has been completed, the prophet's discourse was long, and proceeding through hidden meanings, concerning both the wickedness of the devil, and the punishment and justice that would come upon him, and moreover the overthrow of the evil and opposing powers. And he added to these things the proclamation of the kingdom of Christ. For he said that the Lord will reign in Zion, and in Jerusalem, and will be glorified before the elders. Therefore, on account of all these things, the prophet becomes full of joy, and honors the accomplisher of such wondrous things with praises. For this reason, he says: O Lord my God, I will glorify you, and I will praise your name, an ancient and true counsel, and you have done wonderful things.

But since he says 'You have done' concerning things that had not yet happened at that time, he indicates that although it has not yet happened, it will certainly and in every way come to pass, by adding, 'May it be so, O Lord.' For with the eyes of the mind they beheld the time of the visitation as present, and they by no means were ignorant that it was not yet present, but as an ancient counsel, and wonderful things, he calls the mystery of the incarnation of the Only-Begotten, and the things accomplished by it for those throughout all the earth "For we were saved in Christ, who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times of the age," as the most wise Paul says: "For the mystery of Christ is not new, or recently revealed, but was predestined before the foundation of the world, and has been revealed in its own proper times. For you have made cities a heap, strong cities, for their foundations to fall; and the city of the impious shall not be built for ever. This is also of the true counsel, and of the blameless deliberations of the all-powerful God, that strong cities should be shaken, and become a heap, and, as it were, be uprooted from their foundations, and become beyond hope, from which they will never be able to recover. For it shall not, he says, be built for ever.

But we say that the cities that have been shaken are not, of course, the physical ones, that is, men those in them; But we think rather that each of the evil and

opposing powers, and above all others, Satan, has been named a city, and a strong one at that. For it is a custom for the divinely-inspired Scripture sometimes to compare the exceedingly strong to towers, and walls or even cities, just as, of course, we said before, that the blessed prophet Jeremiah was also set by God as a fortified city, and as a strong bronze wall. And when Emmanuel was revealed and shone upon the world, the unholy throng of the opposing powers was destroyed, and Satan was cast down from the very depths [alt. foundations], and he has fallen in such a way as to have fallen into a weakness without end, and at no time to expect to rise up and recover. Therefore the poor people shall bless you, and the cities of wronged men shall bless you. For you became a helper to every humble city, and a shelter to those who despaired through want; from evil men you shall deliver them; a shelter for the thirsty, and a spirit for men who are wronged. They shall bless you as faint-hearted men who are thirsty; in Zion, from the ungodly men to whom you delivered us. Israel was called to the knowledge of God through the instruction in the law, and was enriched with the things from God.

For he has been saved, and has inherited the land of promise. But the immeasurable multitude of the other nations, of those I say throughout the whole world under heaven, was entirely alien to spiritual things, and had been established from above without good things, untasting of the gifts from God, in a manner naked and unclothed, not having the divine shelter, not the covering from on high, not wealth in the mind from virtue, nor anything else of all that is full of praise, and is worthy of all wonder. But when Christ himself appeared, and delivering them from the greed of the devil, brought them to God the Father, and they were enriched with the light of truth, the participation in his glory, the greatness of the evangelical way of life, they send up songs of thanksgiving for these things to God the Father. Therefore, since, he says, O Lord, you have also made an ancient and true counsel, summing up all things in Christ, and enlightening those in darkness, and casting down the world-rulers of this age; though they were like some cities so strong, the poor people will bless you, and whole cities will glorify you. For you have become a helper to all, and a shelter for those who were unbearably grieved on account of their poverty of the ancestral goods; and you have delivered them from evil men. For there were also some in Zion who were faint-hearted in this way, just as, of course, men who were thirsty.

And perhaps through these things the prophet is showing us that. For there were, there were also in Israel those who thirsted for the coming of the Savior, and who desired to see the Savior and Redeemer of all; such a one was Simeon the just, when he took the newborn Jesus into his hands and said: ”Now you are releasing your servant, O Lord, according to your word in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples. A light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel. And indeed also the blessed Zacharias, the father of John, being filled with the Holy Spirit, glorified

God, crying out: ”Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us; to show mercy with our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant. The oath which he swore to Abraham our father: to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life. You see how the counsel of God the Father became ancient and true, and was promised to the holy fathers.

I mean that salvation was revealed to the world, the Emmanuel, who became the breath of wronged men. For they have breathed again [free] from enemies, and have been delivered from impious men, to whom they have also been delivered over. And if one should take such utterances as applying to the nations, we say that the unholy demons who formerly held power over those on the earth are called men, whose weakness is very well signified by their also being named men. It is likely, of course, that also the false teachers among them, and those called hierophants, or also poets and prose writers, and the inventors of eloquence honored among the Greeks, are called wicked men, since through their inherent eloquence they cast the deceived into the mire of destruction. But if these things were said concerning those of Israel, we say that the wicked men are those who were chosen to be leaders, I mean both Scribes and Pharisees; who, having the glory of the priesthood, and having girded themselves from this with both renown and power, took the key of knowledge. And they neither believed themselves, nor did they permit others to do this; but the people under their hand are delivered over to the teachers in the law, while the deceived are delivered over to the unclean demons, God permitting them to suffer this handing over, just as, indeed, some are also delivered to a debased mind, having shown themselves unworthy of His forbearance and help.

And the Lord Sabaoth will make for all the nations; on this mountain they will drink gladness, they will drink wine; they will anoint themselves with myrrh on this mountain. Deliver all these things to the nations. For this counsel is for all the nations. Having said before that the Lord will reign in Zion and in Jerusalem, He weaves a mystical thought as if from the likeness of things perceptible and visible; for Zion is high and a watch-tower, for Jerusalem is interpreted as a vision of peace. And both of these are in truth the Church of Christ; for it is high and conspicuous, and as if situated on a mountain. And in another way it is considered high by us, for nothing in it is lowly, and it is very much removed from earthly things. For it is written that ”The mighty ones of God of the earth have been greatly exalted. Likewise, high also are the divine and true doctrines in it. For the discourse concerning God, that is, concerning the holy and consubstantial Trinity, is lean and polished and turned toward truth alone. Again, Christ who is peace is seen in it. Therefore, he says, the Lord Sabaoth will do this, and not at all only for those of Israel, as beloved on

account of the fathers and chosen, but for all the nations, that is, for those under all of heaven. And what will he do? They will drink, he says, gladness, they will drink wine;

they will anoint themselves with myrrh on this mountain. And it seems through gladness to signify cheerfulness in hope, and it is clear that this is in Christ; for we reign with Him, and gaining things beyond mind and reason, we will be within all delight. And through the wine, to signify the mystical blessing, and the manner of the bloodless sacrifice, which we are accustomed to fulfill in the holy churches. And the myrrh would very well signify for us the anointing of the Holy Spirit. For the wise John writes: ”And you have an anointing from the Holy One; and you have no need that anyone teach you, but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things. For we are anointed with myrrh especially at the time of holy baptism, making the anointing a symbol of partaking of the Holy Spirit. But all these things, he says, deliver to the nations; for this counsel is for all the nations. For the ancient law, and the worship according to it ministered by angels was not given simply to all the nations, but to one and only, to that of the blood of Israel, But the grace in Christ, and the calling through faith, and in addition to these the sanctification through the Spirit, and the mystery itself through the counsel of God the Father has come upon all the nations. For Christ is the expectation of the nations, according to the voice of the Holy One.

Death, having grown strong, swallowed up, and again God took away every a tear from every face. He has taken away the reproach of the people from all the earth. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things. Very timely and necessarily with the tradition of the mystery, the word concerning the resurrection of the dead has also been brought in. For this reason also at the time of holy baptism, making the confession of faith, we also expect the resurrection of the flesh to be, and so we believe. Therefore death indeed prevailed over our forefather Adam because of the transgression, and like some savage and cruel beast, it leaped upon and seized him. Henceforth, then, laments and wailings and tears and mourning for the dead have prevailed over those on the earth. But it has ceased in Christ. For on the third day he came back to life, having trampled on death, and having become a way for human nature to escape corruption. For he has become the firstborn from the dead, and the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. And what is after the firstfruits and the first will certainly follow, that is, we ourselves. Therefore the suffering was turned into joy, and the sackcloth was torn; and we have girded ourselves with God-given gladness, so that we say rejoicing: ”Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O Hades, is your sting? And the sting of death is sin, it says. Therefore every tear has been taken away;

for believing that Christ will in every way and certainly raise the dead, we do not shed tears over them, nor do we descend into excessive sorrows, like the rest who

have no hope. He seems to name death itself the reproach of the people, as having its origin in the transgression against us. Or perhaps sin, through which corruption entered and the power of death has held dominion over those on the earth. But since the mystery of the resurrection is not easily acceptable to the many, and it was likely to be disbelieved on account of the great work in it, the blessed prophet added, that the mouth of the Lord has spoken. Then who would dare to say that God will speak falsely, and will not in every way and certainly carry out in truth what was promised? ”For heaven and earth, he says, will pass away, but my words will not pass away. And they will say on that day: Behold, our God, on whom we have hoped, and we have exulted, and he will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for him, and we shall exult; and we shall be glad in our salvation, because God will give rest upon this mountain. You will recognize, he says, the one who gives gladness to drink, and in addition to this also wine, and who anoints with myrrh those in the spiritual Zion;

and you will recognize that he is truly God, and from God by nature Son, and though he might appear in the form of a servant, for the salvation and life of all he has become man, and been made like in all things to those on the earth, apart from sin alone. For it is almost as if stretching out a hand, he says, they will say: Behold our God, in whom we have hoped and we have exulted in our salvation. But I think that this saying is most fittingly related to those of Israel, who, having been brought up on the Mosaic voices and not being ignorant of the predictions of the holy prophets, expected that in due time a Savior and Redeemer would come, our Lord Jesus Christ. And so, as I have already said before, Zacharias the father of John, prophesying in the Spirit, has spoken about Christ, that ”A horn of salvation has been raised for the people. And Simeon likewise, taking the holy Infant into his hands: ”My eyes, he says, have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all peoples. Therefore, recognizing the one foretold long ago, the hope of all, the Savior and Redeemer, they will say, he says: Behold our God. And they will confess that God will give rest upon this mountain. And again, suppose the mountain is said to be the Church, for rest has been given in it. For we have heard Christ saying:

”Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. For we have been unburdened through faith in him of faith the grievous and unbearable sin. And we have found rest in another way also, having been delivered from the terrors, I say, concerning the need to be punished, and to pay the penalties for transgressions. And the grace of our Savior of all, Christ, to us has not been limited to these things; but the good things in hope have also been added, and the possession of the kingdom of heaven, long and incorruptible life, and the removal of everything accustomed to cause grief. For it is written concerning the saints that ”Everlasting joy shall be upon their head. And the Moabitess shall be trodden down, in the manner they tread a threshing floor with wagons, and in harvest. And

he will stretch out his hands, in the way he himself humbled [them] to destroy. And he will humble the insolence, upon which he laid his hands. And he will humble the height of the refuge of your wall, and it will pass down to the ground. The word of the holy prophets is somehow always deep, and it travels the inward and hidden path. It is necessary then, therefore, not to think the outward appearance of the letter to be entirely and in every way true, but rather to investigate the meaning that is somehow, as it were, buried in the letter.

The Moabites, then, were neighbors to the Jews, but they were disposed most strangely toward deceit, and toward the necessity of adhering to the worship of idols. That therefore, when Christ had shone forth, and the nations had been called into his venerable and divine mystery, and had been sanctified through faith, the abominable and unclean idolatry would be entirely and in every way removed from the midst, Satan having been placed under the feet of the believers; for he has given us to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy; he teaches, saying, that the Moabitess will be trodden down, in the manner they tread a threshing floor with wagons. And we say that in these things he indicates, either the Moabite worship, that is, to take the entire example from one idolatrous country, with the word being extended, as I said, against all idolatry. Therefore, it will be trodden down, he says, just as something lying under the feet of threshers. And he will stretch out his hands, in the way he himself humbled [them] to destroy. Who will stretch out his hands? The inventor of idolatry, the one who maintains the deceit, and led man astray from God, that is, Satan. For he will stretch out his hands, that is, all his power and practical energy will be loosed; for hands are taken as a type of energy.

For just as he humbled those on the earth, so as to destroy them all, in this same manner Christ will humble his insolence, that is, the unbearable greed which he used against all, almost laying his hands on them, and through greed bringing under his own scepters those created by God for good works. Then the discourse for the prophet proceeds again. As to the Moabitess herself, that is, the profane idolatry, and he says: that the height of the refuge, the wall that is being humbled, we say is he who presides over idolatry and deceit, and as it were fortifies it, and holds it together so that it may stand. But it will fall, he says. For Christ will cast it down, and will bring it down to the ground, that is, completely, and we see through events what was foretold brought to fulfillment. For sacred precincts have fallen. and all things in the shrines have been removed. And no longer are there altars and sacrifices, and sorceries, and those practicing the mockeries of deceit. But all things have ceased because of Christ, and the light of truth has dawned upon those on the earth and the rising sun of righteousness, brightening the hearts of those who believe in him. In that day they will sing this song in the land of Judea, saying: Behold, a strong city, and he will set up our salvation as a wall and a rampart.

For when the Moabitess has been trodden down, that is, when the worship of idols has been completely abolished, according to the meaning already given, those freed from deceit, and having passed through to the light of truth, opening the eye of the mind, will recognize- they will sing, he says, to the creator of all things and Lord, Savior and Redeemer, the one through whom are all things, and in whom are all things, the one who for our sake has come down into our condition. And striking this very song and melody as if from a lyre, giving glory they will say: Behold, a strong city, and our salvation. For truly our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, the hope in him, is like some city with the strongest towers and completely impregnable. For he receives those fleeing the greed of the devil, and taking them in, he saves them. For this reason indeed he also said that, ”My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. Therefore, a strong city, and salvation, is the Savior of all, a city having a wall and a surrounding wall, that is, all security. For the cities which are very well fortified, and do not have a simple enclosure, but are strengthened in addition to the great wall by another outwork. And it is fitting again for those offering up the song to say concerning the Church of our Savior, this:

Behold, a strong city and our salvation. For the gates of Hades will not prevail against it, according to the voice of the Savior; for it is girded as with a kind of double wall by both the assistance from the holy angels, and indeed by that from above and from God who is a surrounding wall. For the strength of the holy spirits is also from him, since he himself and he alone is the Lord of all powers. But it must be known that in the holy Scriptures Judah is sometimes called Christ, as having been born from the tribe of Judah, at least according to the voice of Jacob saying: ”Judah, your brothers will praise you. Therefore, on the land of Judah is that which is sung. For the Church is the city of Christ. Open the gates, let the people enter who keep righteousness, and who keep truth, taking hold of truth, and keeping peace; for in you we have hoped, O Lord, forever. Since those throughout the whole earth have already come to know our Lord Jesus Christ and have confessed that he will be a strong city and salvation, having a wall and a surrounding wall, then, necessarily, the Holy Spirit commands the holy mystagogues, I mean, both apostles and evangelists, saying through the voice of the prophet: Open the gates; that is, widen for those who are willing the entrance through faith, the path through the blameless initiation, and let the people enter who keep righteousness, and who keep truth.

For the divine and evangelical, and saving proclamation teaches the believers the righteousness that is beyond the law, and to be steadfast in the keeping of truth. For it no longer introduces worship in types and shadows, just as indeed the old law did, but that in spirit and in truth, and this is the truth. And it takes hold of truth. For it yearns, as I said, not for the things in shadows, but for the things through Christ who is the truth. And they also keep peace. How, or in what way? For having

been received completely by Christ, and having abolished that ancient enmity; for wandering he was separated from him; he will be an unshaken worshiper. And to fulfill this the blessed Paul persuades us, writing: ”Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. For we were at war with God, worshiping creation and being held by the passions of the flesh. But we are called friends and peaceful to him alone, saying: Lord, besides you we know no other. We name your name, and in addition to this, having bound on like a crown the exceptional life and evangelical citizenship, the boasts concerning such things might reasonably be said through the voice of the saints to God, that in you we have hoped, O Lord, forever. For they will not cease from their hope in God, but rather will boast in him continually.

O great God, the eternal one, who, having humbled them, brought down those dwelling in high places; you will cast down strong cities, and you will bring them down to the ground. And the feet of the meek, and the steps of the humble will tread upon them. On matters exceedingly marveled at, it is the custom for the holy prophets to bring offerings of thanks to God who rules over all, and as it were to leap up from exceeding joy. This would be a clear demonstration of the highest genuineness for them. For they rejoice greatly seeing the glory of God widened, and those who envy it removed from the midst; I mean, of course, the unclean demons, and in addition to these, Satan; whom he also compares to strong cities, and affirmed that they dwell in high places. For there is in them always a somehow high and arrogant mindset, so that they rise up even against the hand of God, and think that having fiercely stumbled, they will be harmed in nothing, but will reign forever over those on the earth. But You, he says, are also the only God, the great, eternal one; and from the deeds themselves you have shown this; for having humbled them, you brought down those dwelling in high places. That is, you shook the strength of the proud, being high and arrogant you brought them down to the earth, and as they were strong cities, you demolished them from their foundations. For this is the meaning of ”to the ground.

And you have given them to be trodden underfoot by the feet of the meek, and the humble. And who are these again, but the genuine guardians of the Savior’s ordinances? Those who are zealous to imitate their own Master who cries out and says: ”Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me that I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. And we remember Him saying again: ”Behold, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. For the apostate dragon has been trodden down; and we have stepped on the asp and the basilisk, we who wish to dwell in the help of the Most High, and have come under the protection of the God of heaven, that is, of Christ, for he is worshiped in heaven; ”For when,” it says, ”He brings the firstborn into the world, he says: And let all the angels of God worship him. The way of the pious has

become straight, and the way of the pious has been prepared. For the way of the Lord is judgment. We have hoped in your name, and in the remembrance which our soul desired. The blessed prophet Jeremiah, makes mention of the evangelical way of life, and of righteousness in Christ, saying to the lovers of truth:

”Stand by the roads, and ask for the eternal paths of the Lord, and see which is the good way, and walk in it, and you will find purification for your souls. For the paths and ways of the Lord are the words of the holy prophets, and of the commandment through Moses, the foretelling as in shadow and types of the mystery concerning Christ. Therefore, by searching these paths we learn the good way, that is, the way of life in Christ; having walked in it with our souls, we shall find true purification through the spirit. Therefore he says the way of the pious has become straight; for how is it not straight and smooth, and having nothing steep at all, when by speaking the word of faith we are justified, and we are enriched with the cleansing through holy baptism? And in another way the path of the pious is straight. For with the enemies destroyed, and the greed of the devil overthrown and all difficulty stripped away, what is there still to resist and be able to paralyze the lovers of piety? But see how, with the way of the pious having been smoothed, he says there will be in a way an overturning of the things in types and shadows. For he adds, not simply, ”The way of the Lord is judgment”; that is, not offerings of calves, not slaughters of sheep, not cakes and incense; but rather judgment, that is, righteousness.

For it is the custom in the divinely-inspired Scripture to signify righteousness by the name of judgment. Just as, of course, the blessed David: ”The honor,” he says, ”of the king loves judgment,” that is, righteousness; for in honor from God and to men every kingdom loves righteousness. Therefore, the way of the Lord is judgment. And again he brings in, rejoicing greatly, those who will walk this straight way; for they say that, We have hoped in your name, and in the remembrance which our soul desired. For all our hope is in Christ, whom we also always remember, having this desire, that through it we have been saved. From the night my spirit rises early to you, O God, because your commandments are a light upon the earth. He calls ”night” the time before the incarnation of the Lord; and ”dawn” the prophetic foreknowledge; and ”true light” the Gospel of the sun of righteousness, Christ, which also is commanded to be learned by all the earth. For he says that learning comes not from nature, like seeing or walking, but from diligence and care. But he who has not learned will be taken from the living, and he will not see the glory of Christ. Those who say, We have hoped in your name, and in the remembrance which our soul desired, necessarily add this also.

For having taken the divine illumination into their minds, and having sent away the darkness of the ancient deceit, and seeing the mist of sin vanished, they offer up hymns of thanksgiving, as if from night, and saying they rise early from darkness, as the spiritual day dawns in them, and the morning star at last rises in their

hearts, as it is written. To such people the divine Paul also writes, and says, ”You who were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord. And indeed elsewhere also: ”For we are not of the night, nor of darkness, but sons of light, and sons of day. For the mind of believers is illumined by the evangelical decrees. For this reason also the divine David says, as to our Lord Jesus Christ, ”Your law is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths. For indeed, with a kind of mist, I say, and with shadows from the letter, the law given through the all-wise Moses was made obscure. But in the evangelical proclamations, the beauty of the truth appears naked and transparent, and it brightens the mind, pouring like light into the thoughts of the devout. Learn righteousness, you who dwell on the earth. For the impious man has ceased. Whoever does not learn righteousness on the earth will not practice truth. Let the impious man be taken away, that he may not see the glory of the Lord. Somewhere God said through the voice of a prophet: ”And all shall be taught by God.

See, then, how in these things the discourse introduces Christ himself to us as a kind of mystagogue for those from the nations who have believed. For it was necessary, it was necessary for those who had once recognized that his commandments are a light upon the earth, to receive from him the knowledge of what is profitable. ”Therefore, he says, you who dwell upon the earth, learn righteousness. And this is like that which was said through the voice of David: ”Hear these things, all you nations; give ear, all you who inhabit the world. For the law in letters has instructed only Israel according to the flesh, but our Lord Jesus Christ, having spread the net of gentleness, has caught the whole world under heaven. Rightly, therefore, he also counsels those throughout the whole earth, saying that they must learn the righteousness spoken through him, that is, the evangelical righteousness. But that disobeying the words from him is not without penalty, he adds and says: For the impious man has ceased. Whoever does not learn righteousness on the earth will not practice truth, for he will depart, he says, into ruin and perdition, and will be, as it were, extinguished. For I think this is what ”He has ceased” signifies. Anyone who does not accept the knowledge of evangelical righteousness, and whoever does not do the truth. And again in these things he calls ”truth” the power of the life in Christ, and the worship and service in spirit and in truth.

For since the law has a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, it was not truth. But Christ and his decrees would rightly be understood as righteousness and truth. I think it is necessary to say this also: Christ has become for us righteousness from the Father, and besides this, He is also truth. Learn, therefore, righteousness, he says, and truth; that is, know the true Son and the creator and Lord of all. For every impious man will be taken away and removed from the midst, that he may not see the glory of the Lord. Such is what was proclaimed by Christ himself to the peoples of the Jews: ”Amen, amen I say to you, that if you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins. And again: ”He who believes in the Son is not judged, but he who does not believe is already judged,

because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God; But he who has once been condemned, and has died in his own sins, how could he see the glory of the Lord? For he will not be with Christ, and having in no way shared in the glory from him, he will not see the inheritance of the saints. Lord, your arm is high, and they did not know it; but when they know, they will be ashamed. Jealousy will seize an uninstructed people, and now fire will devour the adversaries.

While God threatens those who do not learn righteousness, and those who do not do the truth, according to the words just now rendered by us, the prophet comes to a recollection of Israel's ignorance and disobedience. For the creator of all, God the Word, the all-powerful arm of the Father, through whom all things were brought into being, existing in the form and equality of the Father, submitted himself to a voluntary emptying, and humbled himself, as it is written, becoming man, that he might justify those on the earth, clearly through faith in himself; and he worked things beyond reason, and through the magnificence of the things done, he deemed it worthy to be known that he is both God and from God by nature, saying: "If I do not do the works of my Father, do not believe me; but if I do, even if you do not believe me, believe the works. But although they became beholders of such wonders, and hearers of his words, they remained hard and unadmonished, and rather had an unbridled mouth. For they have dared to impiously call him a Samaritan, and a drunkard and a carpenter's son, and things even more odious than these. Therefore, having foreknown these things through the torch-bearing of the Spirit, the prophet makes his address to the Father and God in heaven, and says, Lord, your arm is high, and they did not know it. For by the worth of his own pre-eminence, and as in glory befitting God, he is great and high;

and indeed the arm of the Father is also all-powerful, that is, God the Word through whom all things were made. But since he appeared in the flesh, they have been ignorant of his glory. Nevertheless, they will be ashamed, he says, if they should learn that he is clearly the life-giving Word of God. But in what way did they learn? For they killed the author of salvation, and they denied the Holy One of Israel, just as the divine Peter says. But since Christ, having broken the bonds of death, rose again on the third day, and the leaders of the Jews especially knew this, then indeed, then they were also ashamed, and fearing lest the mystery of the resurrection should somehow be proclaimed to all, they gave sufficient silver to the soldiers, as it is written, so that they might say that "His disciples came by night and stole him. But they will be ashamed in another way also. For when they see him at the end of the age coming in the glory of the Father with the angels, then they will also have unutterable shame, being sons of the bride-chamber on account of the fathers, for theirs are the promises, and the lawgiving, and the covenant, but being sent into the outer darkness. He rightly, therefore, calls them an uninstructed people, and says that jealousy will seize them, and that fire will devour the adversaries.

For since they have been sent away, and have been cast out from the hope in Christ, and have been shown to be strangers to the promises, while the Gentiles have been accepted, for this reason they are consumed with jealousy, and as if by fire being consumed, the wretched ones, that is, continue to be so by envy. Something of this sort is also written in the songs concerning those of the blood of Israel, that "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. And I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a nation; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. Lord our God, give us peace, for you have rendered all things to us; Lord our God, possess us. Lord, besides you we know no other; we name your name. It is the custom of the holy prophets to make supplications on behalf of Israel, for they were lovers of God, and very well adorned with boasts of piety. But since they have sprung from the root of Abraham and from the blood of the holy fathers, they are necessarily sad for those of the same race from Israel, seeing them perish because of their impiety toward Christ. For this reason, then, the blessed prophet Isaiah now comes forward, saying: "Lord our God, give us peace; for you have rendered all things to us.

For if you would grant us peace, he says, we shall be full of every good thing, and we have had the most perfect participation in the gifts from you. And it is necessary to see what peace they ask for; for either they ask for Christ Himself; for He is our peace, according to the Scriptures, and through Him we have been joined to the Father, through kinship, that is, the spiritual one. Or at least they say that. For those who have not yet believed, and have the indelible stain of sin, are separated from God, and are rightly considered in the rank of enemies, and they have a proud neck, and fight against the laws of the Master. But those who are obedient and well-reined, and ready for whatever pleases them, are most beloved and have peace with him. But this thing is truly God-given, and comes through generosity from above. Grant us therefore, O Master, to be at peace with you, and, with profane and abominable sin removed from our midst, to be united with you spiritually through Christ the mediator. Such is what is rightly said through the voice of Paul: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," when this has happened, we shall be a possession and an inheritance of God. For this reason it is wisely added, "Lord, possess us; besides you we know no other, we name your name.

For those who are at peace with him must be single-minded, and yoked to God alone, so as to know him alone, and not even to bear on the tongue the name of another completely falsely named God. For one must name him alone, because he alone is over us God by nature and in truth. Such a thing the law of the all-wise Moses also proclaimed to us, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve, and in his name. Amen. But the dead shall not see life, nor shall physicians raise them up. For this reason you have brought on, and destroyed,

and taken away every male of theirs. Add evils to them, Lord, add evils to all the glorious ones of the earth. Those who only know the God who is by nature and in truth, and who name his name, and who count absolutely no one with him, and who for this reason say, ”Lord, besides you we know no other,” necessarily connect this with ”The dead shall not see life,” that is, again, ”apart from you. For the creator and Lord of all, being life by nature, gives life to all things, and in him we move and have our being. But neither shall physicians, he says, raise them up; ”apart from you” obviously following this as well. For all things are from God for us, and he himself has made medicines from the earth, according to what is written.

As far, therefore, as it pertains to the letter, I say, and to the readily available and obvious meaning, the rendering of the thoughts would rightly be thus, and not otherwise. But since it is necessary to go according to the sense of the saying, and to lay bare the aim of the prophetic precision, we necessarily say this: there are some who are dead, not at all in the flesh, but rather deadened by worldly love of pleasure, and not having the holy life which is in Christ and angelic. But outside of you, he says, such men would not partake of life, that is, of the life-giving grace. And again, outside of you, those who are able to free those caught in spiritual sicknesses, who would rightly be considered spiritual physicians, could not raise any of the sick. And we say that the spiritual physicians are the holy prophets, apostles, and evangelists; who through grace from above, and the supply of the Spirit, being rich in the word that is able to heal, they treat those wounded by both sin and the wickedness of the devil. And it is likely that the prophetic word hints at something else for us; for our Lord Jesus Christ, showing himself to be of equal power and equal glory with the one who begot him, raised the dead from their tombs, and healed those in the final stages of diseases. But although he was the doer of such wondrous deeds, he was not honored by those who had seen them;

and the leaders and teachers of the Jews especially persecuted him in this way. Since, therefore, he says, outside of you the dead would not see life, for you are the only one who is able to give life, nor could a physician raise from the tombs those whom you yourself raised; and yet even after this they disbelieved, and have raged uncontrollably, they whom it was fitting, even before others, to be believers; for this reason you brought upon them, and destroyed, and took away every male of theirs. For you brought your wrath upon them, which necessarily cut down not all of Israel root and branch; for the remnant was saved; but every male of theirs, that is, the ruling order. For the male is most dominant compared to the female. And perhaps he calls males those who were, as it were, the more vigorous of the Jews, not in terms of bodily strength, but rather in knowledge of the legal commandments, such is what was said by God to one of the prophets: ”I will go to the great ones, and I will speak to them. And behold, with one accord they broke the yoke, they tore apart the bonds, that the prominent and more sacred element among the Jews is rightly declared wretched, and has drawn down upon itself a

more violent wrath, Christ himself will make clear, saying: ”Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes one, you make him a child of Gehenna twice as much as yourselves. And again: ”And woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering. Therefore, the male is rightly punished, that is, that which is in pre-eminence and honor. And as those in spiritual manliness then came to the knowledge according to the law, to whom he wishes evils to be added. For not only have they fallen away from intimacy with God by having insulted Christ, but they have also been consumed by famine, and have fallen into the calamities resulting from it, their land having been ravaged and completely overthrown. And those whom he called males, he also calls glorious, as being clearly distinguished and set above the others, on account of being crowned with the boasts of the priesthood. All their male, God-given and allied, but by evils he means the things that cause evil, that is, the wraths sent by God, famines, plagues, wars, and things like these. And by glorious, those conspicuous in evils, and renowned in powers. Lord, in tribulation we remembered you, in a small tribulation was your discipline for us. And as a woman in labor draws near to giving birth, and in her pain she cried out, so have we become for your beloved.

Moved by a very great love for God against the audacious acts of the Jews, the blessed prophet, having said, ”Add evils to all the glorious ones of the earth,” lest anyone be thought harsh and severe for not rather exhorting to pity the sinners, but for them to be in tribulation and evils, he necessarily added what naturally happens to all, I mean, the habit of remembering the all-powerful God in tribulation and necessities. For the breadth of cheerfulness sometimes relaxes them towards contempt, and, so to speak, they do not even perceive their sins, having slipped into this state of mind from too much indolence. But affliction, as it were, drives them to God, and brings them to an awareness of their transgressions. Therefore, for this reason, he says, I said, Add evils to the glorious ones of the earth, since it is common for all to remember you then especially, and to consider your things, and to be mindful, when they share in misfortunes. For we are disciplined in a little affliction, God not inflicting an unmixed or completely harsh punishment, but rather blending His anger with gentleness. Therefore, it was not of one hating sinners to ask for affliction to be brought upon them, but rather of one loving them and asking for them to be disciplined; so that since from their own choice they have not had piety as a fruit, they might at least be turned to it as if by necessity, being called to awareness by the divine wrath.

Such, I think, is that which was rightly spoken through the voice of David: ”With bit and bridle you must curb their jaws, of those who do not draw near to you. But they,

having sinned unbearably, and having treated Christ with drunken violence, will fall into affliction. But we, who are yours and are mindful of your things and speak them, have been disposed no differently toward your beloved, that is, the Son; just as, for sure, and like a woman in labor, having cried out, as it were, against those dishonoring them, and being greatly pained because of this, and making a great accusation against those who disobey him. And what they say is true. and indeed, the blessed Isaiah himself, rebuking the foul-mouthed speech of the Jews, which they made against Christ, says: ”But you,” ”come here, you lawless sons; seed of adulterers and a prostitute, in what have you reveled, and against whom have you opened your mouth, and against whom have you let loose your tongue? Are you not children of destruction, a lawless seed? And indeed, the blessed David says somewhere concerning them: ”Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bend their back forever. And very many such words have been spoken by the holy prophets against the synagogue of the Jews, because of their impiety toward Christ.

Because of your fear, O Lord, we have conceived in the womb, and have been in travail, and have brought forth a spirit of salvation, which we have brought to birth upon the earth. Those who say, out of love for God, that they have become like a woman in labor for the beloved of the Father, that is, clearly, the Son, adhering intelligently to the figure of speech, say that they have both been in labor and indeed have conceived in the womb, and have brought forth the spirit of salvation upon the earth. Such a saying would be fitting, as I said, for prophets and holy apostles and evangelists who, being enriched with the supply of the mystagogy from above and receiving, as it were, certain intelligible seeds, have brought forth for those on the earth a spirit of salvation, that is, the teaching in the spirit, which is also the cause of life for the ages. For it is the custom of divine Scripture to often call the writings of certain people ”spirit. ”And indeed, test,” it says, ”the spirits to see if they are from God. For the saving proclamation is always spoken in the Holy Spirit, or else, in a worldly spirit, whatever things fight against the truth. For indeed the divine Paul writes concerning himself and the other saints: ”But we have not received the spirit of this world, but the spirit which is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

Therefore, they call the evangelical proclamation a spirit of salvation. For it leads to unending life and to a long-lasting existence. We shall not fall, but they who dwell upon the earth shall fall. The dead shall arise, and those in the tombs shall be raised, and those in the earth shall rejoice. For the dew that is from you is a healing for them. But the land of the impious shall fall. Truly admirable is the vigilance of the saints. For they always somehow consider what seems to be opposed, in the words they might use to us. Therefore, since they said they had brought forth a spirit of salvation for those on the earth, but they see death still prevailing even after this over those on earth, as if someone were saying: What is the benefit to

us of the divine proclamations? And where is the spirit of salvation? For those on earth are falling; they necessarily bring forward the defense, and indeed they say, The dead will rise, by the grace of God, as the blessed Paul says; Our Lord Jesus Christ tasted death for everyone, but He rose on the third day, and became the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep, and the root of those who through Him are refashioned unto life, and, as it were, the beginning of human nature putting off corruption; and we have been enriched in unshakeable hopes with life eternal.

It is established that in every way and altogether the dead will rise again, and the power of death will be completely abolished; but the time is not yet present in which the resurrection is; for the time being human nature is subject to the necessity of dying. And for the time being it endures the death that has been weakened in Christ, and which at times will be weak even in us ourselves. Will that, he says, be set against our words, that is, our saving proclamations, the fact that those on earth still fall? And what is this? Absolutely nothing. For the dead will rise again, and the bodies in the earth and tombs will return to life. And what, again, might be the manner of this? The dew from you is a healing for them. And in these things they have come to call 'dew' the life-giving energy and power of the spirit, through which the blessed David said the dead would be raised. For he somewhere sings to God, and says: "For when you turn your face away, they will be troubled, and will return to their dust. You will send forth Your Spirit, and they will be created, and You will renew the face of the earth. Therefore, the life-giving dew is the Spirit from the Father through the Son, instilling incorruptibility even in the bodies from the earth.

But while those who have fallen in the earth will rise again, the land of the impious will fall, and this happened to the land of the Jews; for they have acted insolently towards Christ, and towards the holy mystagogues, although they brought forth the spirit of salvation for those on the earth. Go, my people, enter into your chambers, shut your door, hide yourself for a very little while, until the wrath of the Lord has passed by. For behold, the Lord from His holy place brings His wrath upon the inhabitants of the earth. And the earth will disclose her blood, and will no longer cover her slain. The person of God is introduced to us in these words, anointing the mind of the saints for patient suffering. For since they were about, while producing the spirit of salvation both for those of the blood of Israel and for those throughout the whole world under heaven, that is, while ministering the evangelical proclamation, to fall into terrible and unbearable trials, and to endure danger itself to soul and blood; for this very reason and quite fittingly He persuades them to love to be bold against such things, saying: Go, my people, enter into your chambers. And most cleverly and very reverently He perhaps calls the chambers the tombs in the earth; and indeed He shuts the doors for them as for those who are truly hidden, and bids them endure in secret for a short while, until the wrath of the Lord has passed by.

For it was said to the beginning of our race, that is, to Adam: ”You are earth, and to earth you shall return; and human nature was accursed because of the transgression; for this very reason it has been subjected to corruption. But the things brought on by divine wrath will be loosed, and this completely at the time of the consummation, when death is abolished, the tyranny of the devil destroyed, and sin cast into the pit. Therefore, hide yourself, He says, O my people, and endure for a short and very little while, until death, which is from the Lord’s wrath, passes by, and the time of the resurrection of all is revealed. For even if you should happen to suffer death, He says, with the wickedness of those who hate inflicting this also upon the holy mystagogues, yet the Master of all will bring punishment upon those to those who have killed the saints. For the Lord brings wrath from the Holy One upon those who dwell upon the earth. This is similar to that: ”For the Lord rained from the Lord upon Sodom fire and brimstone. Therefore the Son from the Holy [ηυμφρεδ. of the Father] Spirit will bring wrath upon those who dwell upon the earth. For as he himself somewhere says: ”The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father.

But when the time comes, in which wrath will be brought upon those who have committed unholy acts against the sanctified ones, the earth will reveal her blood, and will not hide the slain, that is, all blood that has fallen to earth, this will be made manifest, no one will be hidden, that is, he of the wronged will have truly passed away. For the Creator will remember all, and there will be absolutely no one of those unjustly slain who will not be known, and in the memory of God. In that day God will bring the holy, and the great, and the strong sword, upon the dragon, the fleeing serpent, upon the dragon, the crooked serpent, and will slay the dragon. Having stated very well that wrath would be brought upon the impious, and upon those who killed them, he said that Satan himself would also be destroyed along with his own children; yielding to whose stratagems, those who opposed the preachings from them made war on the saints. For at that time, he says, in which the earth will reveal her blood, the Father will bring the holy and sharpest and great sword, the all-powerful and invincible one, that is, the only-begotten Word, upon the dragon, the fleeing serpent; upon the dragon, the crooked serpent, and will slay the dragon. He names Satan both dragon and serpent. For he is bitter and venomous, and in addition to this, cowardly. For it is his custom always to flee. But he is terrible and a lover of evil-doing.

For he runs a crooked course like the beast, but he will be destroyed; for indeed he will henceforth be inactive, or rather he will pay the price for his unholiness, enduring the ultimate penalty, and being held in the gates of Hades, and enduring as a work of the eternal flame a long and unending punishment. In that day a beautiful vineyard, a desire to sing about it. I am a strong city, a besieged city; in vain I will water it. For it will be captured by night, and by day the wall will fall.

Having very well completed the discourse concerning those ensnared through faith, and having stated most clearly that they will be anointed with myrrh, and will drink wine on the holy mountain of our Savior of all, Christ; and we say the mountain is the Church; and having added that there will also be vengeance for those slain on account of piety, and indeed that by the holy, and great sword the apostate dragon will be utterly and entirely destroyed, he brings the discourse back to the things that happened out of ignorance to those of the blood of Israel. For at that time, he says, in which they will make faith in Christ unacceptable; I am the beautiful vineyard, of which one might say the desire is to sing; I am the strong city; for the discourse is thus composed as if from Jerusalem; I will be a besieged city.

Then the prophet introduces to us the person of God, saying, that In vain I will water it. For if Israel became, he says, a fruitful vine, according to the voice of Jeremiah, yet it produced thorns, and made the exhortation through the law useless for itself. In vain therefore has he both watered it through the old law, and even if he should still water it through the evangelical preaching, it will remain thus unprofitable. What then happened to it from this? It will be captured by night, and by day the wall will fall. For since he named it a strong city, and yet a besieged one, in accordance with the sequence of thoughts he says that it is captured, and indeed he insisted that the wall will also fall. But to be captured by night and for the wall to fall by day, seems to indicate something of this sort. For it has been taken, that is, it has been sacked, as if having come to be in mist and darkness for not enduring Christ saying, ”While you have the light, walk in the light, so that the darkness does not overtake you. But since they have continued to care little for the words from him, the wretched ones were overtaken as in darkness. For sin overpowered them. And this was then what was said to them by the voice of Christ: ”Amen I say to you, if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.

Therefore it was captured, and has remained in sins; and a wall has fallen as in the day, that is, clearly and manifestly, it has been deprived of the protection from God. The blessed prophet Isaiah says something like this also at the beginning: ”For the vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth is the man of Judah, a beloved new plant. I waited for it to make grapes, but it made thorns. Then he adds: ”And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be for plundering; and I will break down its wall, and it shall be for trampling. And I will let my vineyard go, and it shall not be pruned, nor shall it be dug, and thorns shall come up on it as on barren land, and I will command the clouds not to rain rain upon it. Do you see how true is what I said, that is, I will water her in vain. For he has no longer given the spiritual rain to those of Israel; and he broke down its hedge, and in addition to this, the wall. And by hedge, perhaps, he calls the assistance from the angels; but by wall, indeed, impregnable and firm, the protection of his own power. For mountains, it says, are round about it, and the Lord is round about his people.

And if it says, ”has fallen,” it does not in any way indicate that it was also carried away, but rather that it has been taken away. For Israel has remained without help, and completely without a share of the mercy and love from above. There is not one that has not laid hold of her. Who will set me to guard stubble in a field? Because of this enemy I have rejected her. The land of the Jews has indeed been besieged after the cross of the Savior. And those gathered from every nation, that is, the all-powerful army of the Romans, rose up manfully against the nation of the Jews. And it has been sacked in another way, spiritually, that is, and hiddenly; for it has been given for trampling to the unclean spirits. For if it has been deprived of the hedge, and the wall that saved it has been taken away, how could anyone doubt that it has become pasture for the spiritual beasts? And this was then what was said about it by the voice of David to Christ the Savior of all: ”Why have you broken down its hedge, and all who pass by the way pluck it? A boar from the wood has ravaged it; and a wild ass has fed on it. For indeed through these it signifies the manifold passions by which the mind of the Jews is held captive; the ass signifying utmost irrationality; and pleasure, indeed, the boar.

That it has therefore become easily captured by everyone wishing to ravage it, this he teaches, saying: There is not one that has not laid hold of her, for there is no hand, that is, power, either of men or of wicked spirits, which has not laid hold of her. But, O Master, someone might perhaps say; for were you not saving as your own people, were you not guarding it, and were you not the all-powerful wall. Yes, he says, I have both guarded and protected with my own grace and strength; but it was necessary to be guarded then, when it had fruit from the law. But since henceforth it was brought down to this, he says, of wretchedness and of spiritual indolence, so as to have no fruit from virtue; and it resembles bare and fruitless stubble; who will set me to guard it? For what is the benefit from security, if it has become desolate of good fruits? Who then will persuade me? For this the ”will set” indicates: to guard stubble in a field. But how it has come to this misery he explains, saying: Because of this enemy I have rejected her. In these things he points out Jerusalem, almost with a finger. And since, he says, it has become most hostile to me, for this very reason and very rightly I have rejected her.

Not another, then, to become an enemy to himself, he says, and to reject again another, but rather Jerusalem herself he shows as an enemy, and says she is rejected, having been cast out, clearly, from her spiritual intimacy with him. For he said to her: ”How often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing. Behold, your house is left to you desolate. Therefore, for this reason the Lord God has done all that he commanded. I am burned, all who dwell in her will cry out. For since she has become an enemy, he says, and has stood against the one who saves, and has warred as against an enemy with the one who calls to life, for this reason all that he commanded, that is, what he determined and willed to be, he has brought to completion. And what

are these things? To be rejected, certainly, to no longer have the spiritual rain. To endure the siege, to be in want of benevolence and protection from above. For she has been burned and brought to complete uselessness. And I am burned, all who dwell in her, he says, will cry out. And if anyone should wish to approach the matter more historically, he will find Jerusalem to have been burned down. But if in another way, the burning in these things signifies utter uselessness.

And the destruction completely cast upon the Jews, with the divine wrath all but consuming them, and showing them to be as dust and ashes. The divine prophet Jeremiah also says something like this concerning Jerusalem: ”The Lord called your name a beautiful olive tree, shady in appearance; at the sound of its pruning a fire was kindled upon it, great is the tribulation upon it. Its branches have become useless. For to depart from God and to be utterly bereft of his grace and help makes the soul of man completely useless. ”For it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,” and as Moses says, ”Our God is a consuming fire. Let us make peace with him, let us who are coming make peace, children of Jacob. Israel will bud and blossom, and the world will be filled with its fruit. Since the Jews had renounced love and faith in Christ the Savior of all, as the beloved one had spurned them, and had transferred the call to the Gentiles, and Christ was drawing in those from the ends of the earth through the holy apostles, the blessed prophet appears as a wise counselor to the peoples from everywhere, and says to them: Israel has departed, the firstborn has kicked back, he denies the faith, he has acted impiously toward the redeemer; but we who are coming, that is, we who are about to come in due time;

and we will certainly come as from darkness to light, from Hellenic ignorance to the knowledge of the one who is truly God, from sins to justification; let us make peace with him, that is, having destroyed the ancient enmity, let us be at peace with God. For with sin having been destroyed and Satan rendered powerless, and with nothing any longer hindering, that separates and divides us from Christ, let us consent to his decrees; let us follow what he may both wish and say, let us submit our neck to the Evangelical proclamations; for thus we will make peace with him. The all-wise Paul also says something of this sort to those called from the Gentiles: ”Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Having exhorted, then, those who are coming, concerning whom the blessed David also said: ”The coming generation will be told of the Lord,” he transfers his discourse to the holy apostles themselves that they will win for God the world under heaven, having understood, or rather learned through the Holy Spirit, he leaps up in a way, and says from exceedingly great joy: The children of Jacob will bud, and Israel will blossom, and will be filled the the world of his fruit. For the divine disciples were born from the blood of Jacob, who was also renamed Israel.

But since from east to west, and to all the earth their sound went out, and to the ends of the world their words, the multitude of the nations has been called to knowledge, and as the word of the prophecy says, the world was filled with his fruit. And of whom, then? Or clearly of Israel, that is, of those from the blood of Israel. For those who believed are the fruits of apostolic labors; and the divine Paul called them joy and a crown; for truly a boast and glory of the holy mystagogues are those saved through them. Shall he be smitten as he himself smote, or shall he be slain as he himself slew? Fighting and rebuking he shall send them away. The meaning of the proposed texts follows very closely what has been said; and in what manner, we will say as best we can. For we said that the children of Jacob will sprout and blossom, and the world will be filled with his fruit. But as if someone were rising up and saying: And yet Israel has acted impiously in no small measure; for he has become hard and intractable, and has killed saints, and attacked every righteous man and prophet, and has his hand filled with blood; then how will he blossom again, and, as if nothing amiss had happened, the world be filled with his fruit? To such things, then, the prophet says: Shall he be smitten as he himself smote? Or shall he be slain as he himself slew?

For, he says, he used unbridled wrath against the saints, and with unbridled impulses he slew them, as one who knew not how to pity in any way. Will therefore the fount of gentleness use against them angers of equal weight and justice of equal measure, and thus slay them as they themselves have slain the saints? Or will he rather conquer as God, and not utterly cut off the one beloved and formerly chosen for the fathers' sake? Something of this sort is what was said by God through one of the holy prophets: "What shall I do to you, Ephraim? What shall I do to you, Judah? I will make them as Admah and as Zeboim, my heart is turned within me. My repentance is stirred up. I will not act according to the anger of my wrath. I will not abandon Ephraim to be wiped out, because I am God, and not man; the Holy One in your midst. For it was necessary, it was necessary for one who is God, and not a man like us, both to excel in gentleness, and just as he is by nature beyond every created thing, so to be above and to surpass what is on earth, I mean, in regard to philanthropy. Therefore Israel shall blossom, and the world will be filled with his fruit, according to the argument already previously given.

For he will not be slain, he says, as he himself slew, nor indeed will he be smitten in an equal manner, even if he himself, sharpened by savage wrath, smote the saints. What then is the measure of the movement against them? Fighting, he says, and rebuking he shall send them away; understanding "He shall send them away" instead of, He will send them away from intimacy with himself. This the Savior has done; for he has made Israel an outcast. Both fighting and rebuking, and we should take "Fighting" as "reprimanding. For reprimanding the Jews, and indeed rebuking them, the Savior said: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her; how often I wanted to gather your children together, in the

way a bird gathers her young under her wings, and you were not willing! Behold, your house is left to you desolate. For this was nothing other than his insisting that his departure from them would not be long in coming. When this happened, Israel perished, although the remnant was saved, just as Isaiah himself says: ”And if the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant shall be saved. Were you not he who with a harsh spirit meditated to slay them with a spirit of wrath? See the prophet in these things, in a manner befitting a saint speaking with boldness, and convicting Israel that it had warred against holy ones;

and it made it a practice, that is, using a spirit that was, as it were, harsh and savage to slay them, and to unleash an untamable mindset upon them. If, therefore, he says, I were to say that he himself slew, and he himself struck, from where would the matter be a falsehood? Rather, what has been said will be revealed as true. For were you not, O Israel, the one practicing, that is, accustomed to be called, as I said, harsh in spirit, and to attack like a beast those sent from God? And if you should deny it, he says, I will bring forward as a witness the judge of all things. For Christ said somewhere to them: ”Which of the prophets did your fathers not kill? For it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem. Therefore the iniquity of Jacob shall be taken away, and this is his blessing, when I take away his sin, when they make all the stones of the altars broken in pieces like fine dust, and their trees shall not remain, and their idols are cut down like a distant forest. The blessed prophet, having rubbed in the midst of it the refutation against those who acted impiously toward the holy prophets, again takes up the sequence of thoughts, and says as from the person of God: Therefore the iniquity of Jacob will be removed. Therefore. What?

For since he will not be slain as he himself slew, nor yet will he be struck as he himself struck, since the tranquility inherent in God always conquers human pettiness, and since He does not in every way and altogether bring judgments equal to the transgressions on earth, but rather tempers His anger with gentleness. For this reason he says: The iniquity of Jacob will be removed, that is, he will obtain loving-kindness, and at the proper times He will forgive him his accusations, and will deliver him even from the charges themselves; and this is his blessing. For He promised to Abraham, saying: ”Indeed I will bless you and multiplying I will multiply your seed. But the divine Abraham would not in truth have been blessed, nor would his seed have been multiplied, if those of his blood had demanded judgments analogous to their sins. But since, although they had done nothing good, but rather had descended to the uttermost impiety, they too have been enriched with forgiveness, the substance of the blessing has been kept and has passed on to them. When therefore, he says, I take away his sin, this will be the manner of the blessing for him. And he makes clear the time when he himself will also be free from his transgressions.

For when, he says, those called through faith to the knowledge of the truly existing God campaign against the ancient error, when altars, and sacred precincts, and the swarm of idols are removed from the midst, when they consume with fire the temples crafted for lifeless idols; when they cut down their trees, and in addition to these the handmade things, just like a forest; then indeed, then God will forgive even those of Israel their transgressions. And this, I think, is what the divine Paul said clearly: ”But when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, then all Israel will be saved. For to completely burn down temples, and to cut down the groves planted beside them, and to add also the destruction of the statues themselves, would signify nothing other than this in every way, that for those who formerly wandered, and who worshipped the works of their own hands, there will be a change to the knowledge of truth, so that they come to such a love for God, as to even lay hands on what was formerly worshipped by them, and to cut down the gods of wood just like a forest. The inhabited flock shall be let loose, as a flock that is left behind, and for a long time it shall be for pasture, and there they shall rest, and after a time there shall not be in it anything green, because it has withered.

He names Israel the inhabited flock because it had very many and good shepherds, and almost, and to have as cohabitants those who know how to direct them to everything that is praiseworthy. Therefore he was not in need of good shepherds, but it will be, he says, left to itself; and what ”left to itself” is, he himself immediately clarified, saying: As a flock left behind, that is, bereft of every overseer and guardian. When this has happened, it will be laid out for long periods of time for pasture. For they will be pastured on by intelligible and most mighty beasts, that is, Satan and the evil powers with him and under him. For with no one scaring away from the human heart the attacks of evil demons, it will be easily captured, and will carelessly depart to whatever seems good to them. But if one must say something consistent with historical events, they have become pasture after the cross of the Savior, and of the Roman army. For it lodged and rested among them like a strong calf; but after a short time has passed, he says, there will not be anything green in it because it has dried up, that is, they will so devour the land that it will be revealed to be dry and no longer having pasture.

And this is a clear proof that those who ravage it will not depart from their land before they have, so to speak, eaten everything useful in it, even down to the most exceedingly worthless things, and made it their own possession. The same argument would apply, even if someone chose to say that the unclean demons have pastured on the hearts of the Jews like calves; for they devoured them to such an extent that they were perhaps even at a loss for more pasture, because nothing good was left in them any longer, which is naturally consumed by them. Women coming from a sight, come hither. For it is not a people that has understanding. Therefore he who made them will not pity them, nor will he who formed them have mercy on them. Having said that the inhabited flock will be left to itself, and that

it will become pasture, and will be set out for grazing, according to the arguments already given, since Israel was already outside the intimacy with God because of their impiety toward Christ and of the first covenant, and the customs according to the law had ceased, he commanded the holy women to announce the resurrection of our Savior, whom Matthew also mentions, saying thus: ”Now late on the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake. And when they were very afraid, the blessed angel said to them:

Do not be afraid. For I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified; he is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay, and go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. And after the angel’s words, behold, Jesus met them, saying: Greetings. And they came and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus says to them: Do not be afraid, go tell my disciples to go to Galilee, and there they will see me. Therefore, with Israel being cast off, you wise women, he says, come, and very swiftly announce the resurrection of him who killed death, and abolished corruption, and justifies sinners by faith, and frees from defilements those caught in them, of him who reshapes into newness of life those who approach him, of him who showed the new life to those on earth, that is, the evangelical life, and stopped the inactivity of the worship in the law, but illumined the truth, and made the way of worship in spirit and in truth clear to those who revere him. Come, therefore. For Israel has fallen from hope. For it is not a people that has understanding. For its heart has been hardened, and it has remained in darkness, and has been held by the mist of sin. For it was not willing to pay attention to Christ saying:

”While you have the light, walk in the light, lest darkness overtake you. But I say it is necessary to marvel at the economy of the Savior, even in the case of these all-wise women. For someone might say, I think: Were there not holy disciples, for whom it was perhaps even better, since they were ministers of the divine doctrines, and before all others, to proclaim the resurrection? For why did not they rather first see Jesus paralyzing the power of death, but he appeared to women, and bestowing upon them the dignity of apostleship, commands them to go, and to tell the disciples that Christ was raised from the dead, and they were the first to see his glory? To such things we say that the only-begotten Word of God became man, in order to heal that which was sick, and to release man from the ancient accusations. It was necessary, therefore, it was necessary to grant to women to be the first to announce the good news of the resurrection. For since the first and more ancient woman led Adam astray into transgression, ministering to the voices of the serpent, and she became the agent of death, how was it not necessary to drive away the accusations of such terrible crimes through the apostleship? ”For where sin increased,” he says, ”grace abounded all the more. The Gospel of salvation has been given to the

woman who ministered death. For ”Rejoice” was necessarily said to them by the one who imposed the curse in the beginning;

for he said to her: ”In pain you shall bring forth children. Therefore, the first things have been undone by the second, and that which was sick has been healed. Therefore, he commands them that they must preach the good news, since Christ has departed from his love for the Jews. For since they have remained senseless and ignorant, he says, he who made them would not have mercy on them, nor would they be worthy to be pitied. And it shall be in that day, the Lord will blockade from the channel of the river to Rhinokoroura. But you shall gather the sons of Israel one by one. When Christ had been raised, and had commanded the holy apostles: ”Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit; and indeed, when he had ascended into the heavens themselves, the things of wrath were brought upon those who had acted impiously against him, that is, wrath from above. For they were consumed by both iron and fire, when the hand of the Romans stirred up war against them, burning all their cities, and Jerusalem itself, and tearing down that famous temple. Therefore, the country of the Jews is bounded by the streams of the Euphrates as by east and south, and by what is called Rhinokoroura. And this is a city that borders both the land of the Egyptians and indeed that of the Palestinians.

Therefore, having named for us the borders of Judea, he affirms that the Lord will blockade all things contained within, that is, all Judea. And he has put ”will blockade” instead of ”will besiege,” and ”will afflict,” and ”will bring into extreme distress. For the blockading, or the shutting up, would signify an inescapable ill-treatment or calamity. And you will understand ”will blockade” in another way. For the mind of the Jews is as if shut up, so that they are in no way able to receive the light of the true vision of God, nor indeed to understand the mystery of Christ, just as the blessed Paul writes: ”A hardening has come upon part of Israel, and to this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart. And this, I think, is the blockading. And that this did not happen throughout the whole world under heaven, that is, to all the nations, but only to Judea and those in it, he showed clearly; not simply saying that the blockading happened, but ”from the channel of the river to Rhinokoroura. And he says that these things will happen to the peoples of the Jews who have killed the prophets, and stoned those sent from God, and in addition have killed the Son himself. Then he changes the subject in the person of our Savior of all, Christ, who is discoursing and speaking to the holy apostles, that is, to all those who from time to time minister His Gospel, and are accustomed to initiate;

You gather the sons of Israel one by one. That is, let not the word be much to those entrusted with teaching, even if Israel is not seen entering in multitude; but if anyone among them be wise, let him be called through faith, and let him come

one by one, and as one chosen. For the remnant of Israel has been saved. And so the divine disciples have very often addressed them, just as, for instance, the divine Peter: ”And now, brothers,” he says, ”I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. Repent therefore, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promises are to you, and to your children. And indeed a not insignificant multitude has been gathered in the net; however, those who came from the whole nation of the Jews were very few, and those who were saved were received as it were one by one, clearly through faith in Christ. And it shall be, in that day they will blow the great trumpet, and those who were perishing in the land of the Assyrians, and those who were perishing in Egypt will come, and they will worship the Lord on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.

It is a custom for the holy prophets to hide their word in some obscurity, and since those of Israel have become unbridled towards anger, to follow a middle path of thoughts, so that what is signified is often unclear. It says to sound the trumpet at that time, not others, as I think again, but the holy mystagogues, and to sound the trumpet not simply, but with the great trumpet, that is, using the evangelical proclamations to all but catechize and cry out something great and extraordinary to those on the earth. ”For truly their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world. For the great Moses also used a trumpet at times, but not the great one; for he was weak of voice and slow of speech, and the power of the legal proclamations was confined to the land of the Jews alone. But the divine and saving proclamation goes through every city and country, and as it were has thundered over the whole world under heaven. And something of this sort is also written in the books of Moses; ”For the God of all descended in the form of fire upon Mount Sinai. And there were smoke and hailstones, and the ethereal body was blackened with a deep darkness; but also the voice, it says, of the trumpet sounded loudly. Then he adds to these, saying: And the sounds of the trumpet grew stronger and stronger.

For in the beginning the law of the weak voice was proclaimed, but as time went on, the sounds of the trumpet became exceedingly strong. At that time, he says, therefore with the great trumpet, that is, they will proclaim the evangelical message, gathering those who have gone astray and those who have been ranked among the captives, and pulling those caught in the snares of idolatry out of the ancient deceit. For they will come, he says, those who were perishing in the land of the Assyrians, and those who were perishing in Egypt, and they will worship the Lord on the holy mountain in Jerusalem. He has mentioned two lands as being more superstitious than the others, that of the Assyrians, I say, and that of the Egyptians. But those who were perishing in them, he says, will come, having been called through faith to the knowledge of the Lord who truly is, and God, and they will worship him, no longer in the polluted sanctuaries, but on the holy mountain, that is, the Church,

which he also names Jerusalem; a mountain, because there is nothing at all low or cast to the ground in the Churches, but it is distinguished by high and lofty doctrines. And Jerusalem because it is truly a vision of peace. Woe to the crown of pride, the hirelings of Ephraim, the flower that has fallen from the of glory on the top of the fat mountain, those who are drunk without wine.

Having first declared that they will be called through faith to a knowledge of the truth, and that all who had perished, ensnared in the traps of idolatry, will worship the Lord, he transfers the discourse to the leaders of the Jews, who became the beginning and pretext of impiety against Christ for the peoples under their hand. For they did not bring them to a knowledge of the things long ago announced through both the law and the prophets, but rather, casting them into the pits of destruction, they excommunicated those who confessed that he is the Christ. For so says the divine John somewhere. Shaking, as it were, faith in him, and leading the mind of the common people away from the straight path, they called Jesus a Samaritan and a drunkard, and one born of fornication. And what is yet more impious than these things. They brought him to Pilate, and indeed they begged for him to be crucified, and they killed the author of life, as far as it was in their power, but he rose again, trampling down death; for he was life by nature as God, even though he was in the flesh. Woe therefore, he says, to the crown of pride. He calls them a crown. For they themselves were a crown, as it were, and glory of all Israel, being distinguished by the boasts of the priesthood, and having obtained the dignity of leadership.

But they have not remained in the glories and pre-eminences assigned to them, but rather have fallen away, having become a crown of pride. For they are clothed with dishonor and blame, and having become liable to charges of impiety, they have withered like a flower. For they themselves have also become hired men of Ephraim. And by Ephraim he means Judas, because he was from the tribe of Ephraim. Therefore, the leaders of the synagogue of the Jews hired him to serve their own bloody deeds and to hand over the Teacher. Which indeed was done. Woe therefore to the crown of pride, he says, that is, to the leaders, who also hired Ephraim, that is, the one from the tribe of Ephraim. And for this reason they have become as a flower fallen from glory. For just as it is glory for flowers to be seen free from withering and in the beauty of their own nature, in this same way, I think, it might be understood also in our own case. For as long as we are in those things in which it is fitting for us to be, we guard very well the unharmed beauty of our own soul; but when our mind has been turned aside to what is not fitting, we shall be a flower fallen from its proper glory. This indeed is what the Scribes and Pharisees suffered, sharpening their judgment, and words, and undertakings, and everything outrageous against Christ.

But where was the flower that fell from glory, and in what manner was it allotted? On the top of the fat mountain. And he calls Israel a fat mountain; fat, because it was fattened with good cheer; and a mountain, because it was set on high by God, in a glorious sense, I mean. For he himself says somewhere concerning those of Israel: ”I have begotten and exalted a son. And it is a custom in the divine Scripture to sometimes compare the mother of the Jews, I mean Jerusalem, to a mountain. Therefore, they lay as a flower on the top of the mountain, that is, above all, and over all as leaders, having obtained rule over the others by the decrees of the law. And these were the ones who were drunk without wine. For their vine was of the vine of Sodom, and their shoot from Gomorrah; their grape is a grape of gall, a cluster of bitterness for them, and the incurable wrath of dragons. For they were made drunk, not by drinking this perceptible wine, but the drunkenness from unmixed wrath and madness, and introducing the darkness of diabolical perversity into their own minds. Behold, the wrath of the Lord is strong and harsh, like hail coming down, having no shelter, coming down with force, like a great flood of water dragging a country to the ground, he will make a resting place with his hands and feet, and the crown of pride, the hired men of Ephraim.

In what way the terrible things will happen to them, and that they will pay the penalty for their impiety towards Christ, having fallen into the harsh and savage wrath of the one who judges justly, the prophetic word intimates to us through these things. For it will come, it will come, he says, the harsh and irresistible wrath of the Lord against you, and it will come in such a way as if hail were coming down upon those having no shelter, coming down with violence, that is, unbearably, but rather intensely and as if someone were slinging it down, and bringing it fiercely upon them. So it will come like hail, he says, or also like a great multitude of water dragging a country. And this too is irresistible. For of a river, let us say, or a torrent rushing down most violently, what will there be to stand against it, and to be able to hold out, and not to give way to the rush of the waters? So it will come then as water flooding the whole land, and it is clear that it means the land of the Jews. And the onslaught will be so harsh as to make a rest for the land. But what kind of rest, then, and what sort? For the hands and for the feet. And such will be the meaning of what has been said.

For those who have practiced swimming, if perhaps the condition of the waters should be calm and, as it were, gentle, by drawing in and stretching out their feet and hands, and by laboring moderately, escape the danger of drowning. But when the rush of the waters has an altogether unapproachable assault, the one caught in it ceases from swimming altogether and completely, and seems to be released from labor, but is finally drowned, as by necessity and force, having become completely submerged. Therefore, the word in a way laughs and speaks ironically, saying that the water makes a rest for the land, and a rest for the hands and for the feet. For it is as if it might say, Let no one labor in vain to resist the calamity that is

about to come against all. For it will come so violently, that the matter will be altogether unassailable and completely useless for those wishing to labor. For no one will swim through, but he will be carried down, even unwillingly, wherever the dragging water might carry him, that is, the most violent and unbreakable hand of the Roman army. Then indeed, then will be trampled, that is, the crown of insolence of those who have spoken will lie underfoot, the hirelings of Ephraim. And the flower that has fallen from the hope of glory shall be, on the top of the high mountain as the first-ripe fig, which he who sees it, before he takes it into his hand, will want to swallow it down.

What the flower that has fallen from the hope of glory is, and what indeed this might signify, its lying and being seen on the top of the high mountain, has become known through what was said just now. For the flower, conspicuous as if on a mountain, you will very well understand to be either Israel, or rather those who were chosen to lead. But it will be, he says, as a first-ripe fig. For when the fruits on a fig tree are about to ripen, if one happens to ripen before the others, and becomes thus edible, the one who has seen it eagerly jumps at it, and is eager to swallow it down, and perhaps in his fiery impulses for this he even blames his hand for delaying to stretch out for the object of his appetite, and widening his mouth, he leaps at the branches. Thus, he says, will Israel be to those who seize him. For he has been swallowed, as I said, by the Romans, and has become sweet food for those who captured him. In that day the Lord of Sabaoth will be the crown of hope, the woven crown of glory for the remnant of my people. They will be left in a spirit of judgment for judgment, and strength hindering [a hindrance] to destroy. What and how it will happen to the Lord-slayers, the word has clarified for us in these things; and it now adds the explanation concerning those who have believed; for Israel has not been completely destroyed.

But the remnant has been saved, according to the prophet’s voice. For no small number has believed in Christ, of which the choir of the holy apostles has become a kind of beginning and first fruit. At that very time, therefore, he says, the Lord of Sabaoth will be the crown of hope, the woven crown of glory to my people who have been left. For the Lord of hosts himself will crown those who have believed with hope and glory, and with hope, clearly, of the good things to come, and with glory, because they will reign with him, and having come into possession of the highest rewards, they will be both objects of envy and gazed upon. For what will be equal in renown to those who hope to receive the crown of the kingdom in Christ? To these the prophet Isaiah himself says elsewhere: And you will be a crown of beauty, and a diadem of royalty in the hand of your God. For with unending glory Christ will crown those who believe in him, and he enriches them also with the richest hope. And my people who have been left, he says, will be partakers of such things, that is, the remnant from the Jews; the other people clearly being admitted along with them, that is, the gentiles who, having great thoughts on Christ, pray and have

cried out to the Father and God in heaven: Lord, you have crowned us as with a shield of good will.

For when God the Father was well-pleased, Christ was shown to be and became for us an unbreakable shield, setting himself forth against the darts of the evil one on our behalf, and he has kept his own people unwounded and unconquered by his depravities. Something of this sort, as I suppose, he indicates when speaking about the people who have been left, that is, those justified in faith: They will be left in a spirit of judgment for judgment, and preventing strength from being taken away. For of old, once and for all, so to speak, Satan destroyed the race on earth, having cast them into the pits of sin. ”For there was none who did good, not even one, but all turned aside together, they became worthless,” according to the voice of the Psalmist. But when the only-begotten Word of God became man, he judged our judgment, he has judged, as it were, between us and Satan who had taken advantage, and he has condemned him to destruction, and has removed him from those on earth as a destroyer and a manslayer, and thus has saved the lost, that is, us. Teaching this he says, Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. And yet he says clearly, ”God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

How then does he say that it is the judgment of this world? For we are those who long ago cried out through the voice of the prophets: ”Arise, Lord, and attend to my judgment, my God and my Lord, for my cause. Because a just judgment has been made for us, we say in thanksgiving, ”I will give thanks to you, Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds, I will sing praise to your name, Most High. And for what reason? Because you have executed my judgment and my cause. You sat on the throne, judging with righteousness, you rebuked nations, and the ungodly perished; for the hosts of demons were rebuked, and with them the ungodly one perished, that is, Satan. They will be left, therefore, that is, they will be saved by a spirit of judgment; for he has judged and justified, as I said, for judgment and strength, that is, by right judgment and power, clearly that which is befitting of God, preventing those who believe in him from being destroyed. For these are led astray by wine; they went astray because of strong drink, priest and prophet are out of their minds because of wine; they have been shaken from the drunkenness of strong drink; they went astray. This is a vision. He points out in a certain way those who have slipped, and through such long disobedience have offended God.

For such people, he says, have gone astray, having drunk wine and strong drink, not perceptible or bodily, but rather having chosen darkness in their mind, which the all-terrible dragon instills in those accustomed to be negligent. For the divine Paul writes that the god of this age has blinded the minds of the faithful, so that the light

of the Gospel of the glory of God might not shine. Therefore, he quite rightly calls wine and strong drink the darkness instilled in the souls of men by the depravity of the devil. And And he is astonished, as it were, not because the most ignorant multitude of the common herd alone appears to have suffered this, but because, in addition to them, priest and prophet were driven out of their minds by wine. And again by ”wine” he means the intoxicating drink from ignorance. And it is amazing that one might see a priest and a prophet having suffered this along with the others. For those whom it was fitting to be able to guide all the others toward the pursuit of what is advantageous and to show the path of salvation, these, perhaps even before the others, received the darkness, so as to be shaken, and to be carried about by every wind, and this from intelligible drunkenness. And one might say the matter has become like some vision, that is, amazement or astonishment.

And by ”prophet” in these matters he means not entirely the true one from God, but rather him who, as it were, fabricates for himself the prophetic reputation; concerning whom he says through the voice of Ezekiel: Woe, those who prophesy from their own heart, and not from the mouth of the Lord. And they are slandered also through the voice of Isaiah; for he says somewhere concerning Jerusalem, Her rulers judged for gifts, her prophets divined for silver. A curse will devour this counsel; for this counsel is for the sake of greed. Saying that priest and prophet alike have gone astray, and indeed have been driven from a sound mind by the wine from the vine of Sodom, and the intelligible intoxicating drink, and adding that this is a vision, that is, an astonishment, and a kind of amazement, he immediately shows both the cause of being astonished, and the accusations for the priests’ ecstasy and drunkenness. For this reason, then, he says, A curse will devour this counsel. For the plot of the Jews has truly become accursed, I mean that against our Savior of all, Jesus Christ. For God the Father first sent the holy prophets, and they killed them. Then after them He sent the beloved to receive the fruits of His vineyard, according to the parable in the Gospels. But those in charge of the vineyard, the most ungrateful farmers, although understanding that he is the son and the master of the place, said, it says, among themselves: This is the heir;

come, let us kill him, and let us have his inheritance for ourselves. Accursed, therefore, it says, is such a counsel. And the blessed David mentions this, saying at one time, that ”Why did the nations rage, and the peoples meditate empty things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord, and against his Christ. And at another time again, concerning those who have committed such transgressions: You will cast them down, and you will not build them up, because they have turned evils against you, they devised a counsel, which they shall not be able to establish. For as far as the power of their attempts went, they killed the son, thinking that they themselves would possess the master’s inheritance; but he came to life again as God, and he destroyed the evil men evilly, the wicked and ungrateful farmers, and he has given the place to others, clearly

to the holy apostles and evangelists, and to the teachers of the holy Churches. Accursed, therefore, is the counsel of the Jews, for it has come about for the sake of greed. For it is truly greed for the servants to want to rise up against the master, and to have made their own inheritance that of which they had been appointed farmers, although having sufficient wages, the privileges of the priesthood, and the honors from being set over the others. To whom have we announced evils? and to whom have we announced a message?

It is the custom for the holy prophets, and for all the God-inspired Scripture, through two things to press and impel man to choose to live rightly. For either with the terrors of punishment, as if shattering the hardened mind, they drive it toward what is better, or with the promises of rewards they make them bolder concerning the need to suffer patiently for the valiant deeds of piety; such as that through the voice of Isaiah to the Jews, ”And if you are willing and you listen to me, you will eat the good things of the earth; but if you are not willing, and do not listen to me, a sword will devour you. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things. Therefore, it virtually points out that unruly Israel dishonored the words of the holy prophets, saying: To whom have we announced a message? for behold, behold to whom? it says, instead of, we have ministered to a hard and disobedient and foolish people, and having conveyed the words from above from God, we announced to it evils, that is, the punishments, the threats, which will by all means and in every way be brought down upon the head of those accustomed to disobey. We announced a message, that is, we preached the good things prepared by God for those accustomed to do good. But stubborn Israel has benefited not at all, being fixed in transgression, and greatly afflicted with deafness. Therefore, when it says, ”to whom?

it indicates one who is in no way worthy; for indeed, after such a clear prediction of the holy prophets, they were no less relentless and wicked, and having their heart full of all perversity. And they have become swift ministers of diabolical bitterness; for they handed over to the cross the Savior and Redeemer of all, I mean Christ, through whom and with whom to the Father be glory with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

Discourse 17

Those weaned from milk, those drawn from the breast, expect tribulation upon tribulation, hope upon hope, yet a little while, yet a little while, through mockery of lips, through another tongue. Our first discourse ended with, ”To whom have we announced evils? and to whom have we announced a message? And interpreting the meaning of the aforementioned, we say that the person of the holy prophets was introduced, rebuking in a way those of the blood of Israel, as having encountered their words in vain, having benefited not at all, although both evils and, indeed, a message had been foretold to them. And we affirm that evils are the punishments prepared for those accustomed to transgress, and the message the honors upon good hopes. Since, therefore, those of the blood of Israel have benefited not at all, even though the prophets announced to them the things from God, I mean both threats and promises of good things to come, ”To whom,” it says, ”have we announced evils? and to whom have we announced a message? But with the holy prophets having fallen silent, as it were, and having brought their discourse to this point, God of all himself addresses the saints, saying: ”Those weaned from milk, those drawn from the breast, expect tribulation upon tribulation, hope upon hope. For the unadmonished, it says, and those greatly afflicted with stubbornness, were justly cast out, and having become without a share of salvation in Christ, they will go to destruction.

But you, for your part, who are called through faith to the knowledge of truth, who, like from some breast and milk, have been weaned from the pedagogy in the law; you who once received food fit for infants, and had a more unlearned mind, but have now advanced to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and have passed over to the food fitting for the perfect, and have not remained unskilled in the word of righteousness, direct your own hearts to the reception of the new proclamation of the evangelical way of life of the ordinances through Christ. Be strong for endurance, and if frequent and successive tribulation should come upon you from the arising of temptations, and the cruelty of persecutors assails you, endure for a little while, and for a little while expect the tribulations, so that you may be rich in hope, I mean that which is beyond human understanding. ”For eye, it says, has not known, and ear has not heard, and it

has not entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love him. Then it shows what the first tribulation against them will be. For ”through mockery,” it says, ”of lips, and through another tongue. And such is the meaning of the prophecy.

For in the Acts of the holy apostles it is written that, ”On the day of Pentecost they were all together gathered in the same place, and behold there came from heaven a sound like the rushing of a mighty wind. Then he says: ”There appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them, and they began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. For Christ had commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, until they should be clothed with power from on high. Then having come down they were speaking to those from Israel, and to all those from other lands in the tongues given to them by God, ”and they were amazed as they listened, and indeed they said, Are not all these who are speaking Judeans? And how is it that we each hear them speaking in our own language? But others were saying,” he says, ”that they are full of new wine,” that is, they are drunk; this, I think, is the ”contempt of lips, by another tongue. For they were speaking in other tongues, as the all-powerful God had also foretold this. For ”with men of other tongues,” he says, ”and with the lips of others I will speak to this people, and not even so will they believe.

But although they should have received the sign for full conviction, having considered the prophecy made about it by God, they did not do this, but reproaching them for being drunk, they remained in disobedience. That they will speak to this people, saying to it: This is the rest for the one who drinks, and this is the ruin, and they would not listen. Somewhere God, indignant at the madness of the Jews, said: Behold, I am bringing a famine upon the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. And from east to west they will run to and fro seeking the word of the Lord, and they shall not find it. Therefore a spiritual famine has been brought upon those of Israel, and since they did not receive through faith the bread of life that came down from heaven and gives life to the world, for this very reason and quite fittingly they have come to be in want of the food given by God; ”For man,” he says, ”shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And they have acted insolently toward the Savior and Redeemer of all; but since He is good, even though they had acted impiously in an intolerable way, He called them to repentance through the holy apostles.

For the blessed Peter addressed them, that indeed they denied the Holy and Righteous One, and killed the Author of life, and asked for a murderer to be granted to them. Yet he also added this, ”And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. Repent therefore, and let every one of you be

baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promises are for you, and for your children. Therefore, he says, those who have been weaned from the breast and from milk, those who have been called to apostleship. And having become ministers of the new proclamations, they will speak to this people, showing clearly what rest there will be for the one who drinks, and what sort of ruin, that is, what is profitable, and the opposite. And he would not listen. Whence, I think, one of the saints, being moved, said to them: ”You stiff-necked and disobedient in heart, you always resist the Holy Spirit. For consider how, although they had acted impiously in an intolerable way, they had the holy apostles as teachers, bringing them to repentance and instilling in them the knowledge of what is profitable; but they were arrogant, and very much hardened, and had immoderately turned aside to the disobedient and intractable way. And the word of the Lord God will be to them, tribulation upon tribulation, hope upon hope. To whom will it be?

To the holy apostles and evangelists, evidently, who, ministering the divine proclamation, went about under heaven, catching in their net those who had gone astray, bringing to Christ through faith those who formerly said to the wood, ’You are my father,’ and to the stone, ’You gave me birth.’ Yet not without sweat did they accomplish the course of their own mission, but being afflicted, being mistreated, and enduring the plots of the godless. Therefore the oracle of the Lord became for them affliction upon affliction, and not only this, but also hope upon hope. For having endured the struggles for piety towards Christ, they will have long, or rather even endless, hopes, and they will be crowned with the wreath of incorruptibility, reigning together with Christ. Yet a little while, yet a little while, that they may go, and fall backward, and be endangered, and be broken, and be taken. He sharpens them for courage, and anoints the holy mystagogues for endurance. For they proclaimed to those of Israel, and preached to them the word of salvation. But they leaped upon them like untamed beasts, they brought them into councils, and accusing them of the genuineness of their love for Christ as something utterly monstrous, they used bitter reproaches against them, and after torturing them and tearing them with lashes from whips, they would say: ”Did we not strictly command you not to speak to anyone in this name? And behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching.

And attacking them in other ways, and savagely plotting against them, they became the cause of their affliction and toils. Therefore the God of all weaves for them a lasting comfort, and reveals beforehand the imminent destruction of their persecutors, saying: Yet a little while, yet a little while. For the time will not be long, he says, for them to fall backward, and be broken, and be endangered, and indeed be captured and go to destruction. And these things, we say, happened to the peoples of the Jews both spiritually and bodily, that is, perceptibly. For they have been endangered and have perished in two ways, first being consumed by

war and sieges. Second, having become sweet prey for Satan himself, and having drawn down upon their own heads destruction from their impiety. Therefore hear the word of the Lord, you afflicted men, and rulers of this people in Jerusalem, because you have said: We have made a covenant with hades, and compacts with death. If a rushing storm should pass by, it will not come to us; we have made falsehood our hope, and by falsehood we shall be protected. For since, he says, the things that will come upon you are unbearable, and a bitter and inescapable justice will await those who are said to be impious to the end; for this reason hear the word of the Lord. For it was possible to turn away from evil, by applying their minds to the apostolic proclamations, and by assenting without neglect to what Christ might say.

Hear therefore the word of the Lord, you afflicted men, and rulers of this people in Jerusalem. And he calls those of Israel afflicted, because they were burdened by the condemning law. For the law brings about wrath, and anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. Therefore also the most wise Paul writes to those who after the faith, clearly that in Christ, wish to return to the shadows of the law and says: ”Our mouth is open to you, O Corinthians, our heart is enlarged, you are not restricted in us, but you are restricted in your own affections, but for the same reward I speak as to children, be enlarged yourselves, do not become unequally yoked with unbelievers. Therefore they would be afflicted who are still lying under the command of Moses and are oppressed in a certain way, having the burden of the law in their mind and heart. He has therefore addressed both rulers and peoples. Then he inserts in between a certain saying of the Jews, impiously devised by them out of madness and as it were out of desperation. And what this is, it is necessary for me to say: for the God of all, being long-suffering and patient, did not immediately bring punishment upon the offenders, but postponed his wrath, frightening them with terrors and by the foretelling of evils to come, sometimes driving them to repentance.

In this way, indeed, we will often find him saying through the holy prophets, ”Behold, it is coming,” and, ”yet a little while,” Yet a little while, and the, ‘a very, very little while. But the insolent and arrogant, although it was necessary to correct their past faults with subsequent actions, made the Lord’s gentleness a pretext for laughter. For as soon as they heard the prophet saying, ’Yet a little, yet a little, a very, very little while;’ they immediately said to one another, ’Long times will lie between the prophet’s words, and the manifestation of the things foretold. We will be dead, and the divine wrath will leap upon those after us.’ And so God said to the prophet Ezekiel, ”Son of man, the sons of your people say: The vision that he sees is for many days, and he prophesies of times that are far off. Therefore say, As I live, says the Lord Adonai, none of my words which I shall speak shall be delayed any longer. For I will speak a word and I will do it, says the Lord Adonai. He reproaches, therefore, those of Israel, as being accustomed to despise, and all

but saying: We have made a covenant with hades, and with death agreements. And what are these? When the rushing tempest passes by, it will not come upon us.

For it is almost as if, he says, even if they do not say it with their voice, yet they have cried out by their actions, that 'We have made agreements with hades, for it will take us; and even if the storm should happen to come, that is, the danger threatened to be against us, it will not come upon us. For we have made a lie our hope, and by a lie we will be hidden.' For those who fashioned for themselves what seemed good to them, and say that 'We will die before the storm,' that is, before the calamities, how did they not make a lie their hope? For it was not in their power to be able to escape and to precede by death the assault of the things threatened, but rather it lay in the authority of the divine and ineffable power and pre-eminence. Therefore thus says the Lord: Behold, I am laying in the foundations of Zion a precious stone, a chosen, cornerstone, honored, for its foundations; and he who believes in him shall not be put to shame. And I will make judgment for a hope, and my mercy for a balance. These things must be connected to the preceding, casting aside the things inserted in between; For therefore, he says, hear the word of the Lord, you afflicted men, and rulers of this people in Jerusalem. And what indeed has he commanded them to hear?

Behold, I am laying in the foundations of Zion a precious stone, a chosen, cornerstone, honored, for its foundations, and he who believes in him shall not be put to shame. He calls, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ a chosen, precious and honored stone, excelling in the glory and pre-eminence of his divinity. And that he himself has become the foundation and support and unshaken base for the spiritual Zion, that is, the Church, he makes clear by saying that he was cast into the foundations by the Father. And he says he is a cornerstone, as through one faith binding together for spiritual unity the two peoples, the one from Israel, I say, and indeed the one from the gentiles; for in some way in the corners of buildings two walls always come together, and being fitted together with one another are bound together into unity. But he who believes, he says, in him, shall not be put to shame. But see how he in a way releases those who are pressed, and for the afflicted he makes wide the freedom of the evangelical way of life. For, O afflicted ones, he says, behold, I place the chosen stone in the foundations of Zion. And what is the benefit from this? He who believes in him will not be put to shame.

And through this he persuades them to release their neck from the burden of the law, and to depart from the foolish and powerless shadow, and rather to choose the grace that is through faith, and to seize the righteousness in Christ which has no toil. And I will place, he says, judgment for a hope, and my mercy for a balance. For as the Savior himself says: "The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Understanding this, the blessed Paul writes and says that "we must all appear before the judgment

seat of Christ, that each one may receive each one according to the things done in the body, whether good or bad. We expect, therefore, that the judgment will be, and that we will be shown mercy as is fitting for each one, and clearly in proportion to what has been rightly accomplished. For this, I think, is what is meant by mercy coming from our judge by measures, that is, according to the standard of justice, and as it were a reckoning that balances with good works. And you who trust in vain, you liars, that a tempest will not pass over you, lest it take away your covenant with death, and your hope with Hades, will it not remain? If a rushing tempest should come, you will be for it to be trampled underfoot. When it passes by, it will take you.

Early, early it will pass by in the morning, and at night there will be a wicked hope. I said that when the holy prophets foretold the future to those of the blood of Israel, and pointed out to them the divine wrath as if it were all but present already, being puffed up into strange follies they both reasoned and said, that even if these things should happen, nevertheless it will be a postponement of times, and the end of the things foretold will not be present immediately, but the time of our life will be spent, and the terrible things will be after us. And saying and thinking these things, they seemed to be making covenants, so to speak, with death, and a sort of hope with Hades. For this reason he says to them: You who trust in vain, you liars, that a tempest will not pass you by. Fear lest it also take away your covenant with death, and your hope with Hades not remain. For the Creator of all things knows, he knows hearts and minds, and the power of the movements in the mind. When therefore having such a hope it says: Lest perhaps, having known what is in you, he may take away from you this covenant with death? And in what way will he take it away? For if the things from wrath should come, that is, the tempest, not some others after you, but you yourselves will become a thing to be trampled.

And it will take you early, early, that is, not in the distant future, but as it were at dawn and tomorrow. There will be no rest from evils at all, but by day and by night there will be a wicked hope, that is, you will be consumed at all times by the expectation of terrible things. For when God wishes to inflict evil, who will turn aside the assault of calamity? or who will fight against the divine wrath? Learn to hear, you who are in distress: We are not able to fight. And we ourselves are weak, for us to be gathered together. As a mountain of the impious he shall rise up, and he shall be in the valley of Gibeon. With wrath he will do his works, a work of bitterness; and he will use wrath strangely, and his bitterness is strange. Being exceedingly good, the God of all wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For this reason, admonishing the weak and bringing back to a straight and unerring path those who have neglected their own soul, he comes through every manner and word. For sometimes he terrifies them beforehand toward what is better with threats of punishments and with fears from his wrath, and sometimes he lures them toward what is profitable with promises of good things.

Having threatened, therefore, and having foretold both that they will in every way and altogether be captured by the tempest, that is, by the calamity that is all but upon them, and that at all times they will be in wicked hopes, he graciously gives a word of exhortation and does not permit them to despair. Just like one of the most wise and skillful physicians, who treat the ailing members of the body, sometimes with a harsh medicine, and with exceedingly strong remedies they check the advance of the passions toward what is worse, and sometimes with moderate and, as it were, very gentle ones, enchanting them, so to speak, they soothe them very well. Having threatened, therefore, he admonishes, and commands them to submit their mind to the evangelical proclamations, saying: Learn to hear, you who are in distress. Then, he says, We are not able to fight. And he also recalls the things that happened from time to time in the valley of Gibeon. And the rendering of the words has been made very obscurely, and the very composition itself the style. And I think it necessary to tell the things from history. For in this way what is being shown will become clear to those who love learning.

When, then, Joshua the son of Nun was general and leader of those from Israel, and was descending intolerably upon the lands of the nations, and very many had perished, those from Gibeon, fearing to suffer the same things—this was one of the cities of the foreigners—ran to him, and speaking falsely they were at first undetected, and so they were received. But when after this it was known who they were and from where, they became water-carriers and wood-cutters for the congregation. When the kings of the nations learned this—and there were five of them—they marched against Gibeon, accusing them because they had fled to those from Israel. And since those from Gibeon were in dire straits, and considered resistance impossible for themselves, they begged to be saved by the hand of Joshua. And he, helping those who had once come under his power, set himself against the generals of the foreigners. Then what happened at that time by the hand of God, the Holy Scripture will teach. For it is as follows: ”And Joshua came upon them suddenly, for he had marched all day from Gilgal. And the Lord threw them into a panic before the sons of Israel, and He crushed them with a great crushing at Gibeon, and they pursued them on the road of the ascent of Beth-horon, and they struck them down as far as Azekah and as far as Makkedah.

And as they fled from before the sons of Israel on the descent of Beth-horon, the Lord cast down hailstones upon them from heaven as far as Azekah; and more died from the hailstones than the sons of Israel killed with the sword in the war. It receives, therefore, from what happened to the ancients, an image and type of the future help from Israel from God who knows how to save, if they should choose to obey the words of our Savior. For you, he says, who are in distress, that is, who have passed through much pain, who are, as it were, afflicted by losses and by fears of things to come, learn to listen, you too call upon Jesus for help, say just as those from Gibeon indeed said: We cannot fight, and we are too weak to gather,

clearly, for resistance against the approaching enemies. And what, they say, will this be? You will know, he says, that even if an attack of impious men should be brought against you like a mountain, what happened in the valley of Gibeon will happen to them. For against those who war against you He will do His works with wrath, and works of bitterness, that is, of anger. And who then, if not clearly God who defends? And his wrath he will use in a strange way, and his bitterness will be strange. For a strange and unaccustomed wrath, he says, marches against those who persecute you.

And heaven will war against them from on high and from above, pouring down like some hail the things from unmitigated wrath. He says something like this also through the voice of the psalmist: ”If my people had listened to me, if Israel had walked in my ways, I would soon have humbled their enemies, and laid my hand on those who afflict them. And you, be not glad, nor let your bonds be strong; because I have heard from the Lord of Sabaoth of things finished and decided, which he will do upon all the earth. Again the person of the blessed prophet is introduced, enjoining and saying to the leaders of the Jews, that it will be entirely and in every way necessary for them neither to rejoice, that is, not to exult in their audacious acts against Christ, but rather to be gloomy, and to weep over their own impieties, nor indeed to tighten the bonds of the law upon the peoples under their hand, but rather to allow those who believe in Christ to be outside the ancient commandment, and having left behind the things in shadows and types, to accept worship in spirit and in truth. For God is spirit, and He must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. But that the law was like a bond, justifying no one; for it perfected nothing; against- binding, as if for punishment, those who were weak, and had been convicted of being guilty of transgressions, one would not doubt.

Whence I think also that the blessed prophet David very rightly advises those of Israel to come swiftly to the grace that is through faith, saying: ”Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yoke from us. For the teachers of the Jews were, they were, wickedly burdening those yoked under them, and placing upon them a yoke hard to bear, that is, clearly, the yoke of the legal commandments, and binding them as if with certain unbreakable chains. For this reason the prophet says to them: Let not your bonds be strong, because I have heard from the Lord Sabaoth things that are finished and cut short, which he will do upon all the earth. And what are these things that are finished and cut short? The evangelical proclamation, the grace through faith, the justification in Christ, the sanctification through the Spirit. For the law was not cut short, nor was it finished. For it perfected, as I said, nothing. But the teachings in it were as if in cycles, and in long periods of the letter. But the saving proclamation has a most perfect and shortened way; for it brings one through faith to righteousness and sanctification. And the law was given only to those of Israel, with Moses ministering. But grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, and no longer only to those of Israel, but to those throughout the whole

world under heaven. For the divine Moses addressed those of Israel, saying thus: Hear, O Israel;

but our Lord Jesus Christ through the lyre of the psalmist: ”Hear,” he says, ”these things, all you nations; give ear, all you who dwell in the world. Give ear, and hear my voice; attend, and hear my words. In these things again the person of the Savior himself is introduced, as it were charming those of Israel, and persuading them very clearly to accept the word of the evangelical proclamations, and his voices, not to cast them aside after the commandment through Moses. And that one must not approach the divine and evangelical things carelessly, nor indeed negligently, he shows by saying: Attend, and hear my words. For there is need of attention, and indeed of obedience for those who have come to this point of good reasonings, so as to seek to fill the breadth of their own mind with the instruction that is beyond the law, that is, clearly, the one through Christ. For that, once he was revealed, for some to lay claim to the worship according to the law is precarious and harmful, Paul will confirm by speaking to those who, after faith in him and the cleansing through holy baptism, out of very great folly returned to the things of Moses, that is, the things in the law: ”You who are justified by the law have been severed from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. For we through faith await the hope of righteousness. But it is likely that something else is also hinted at by Christ’s saying: Attend and hear my words.

For if indeed you wish, he says, to apply a keen mind to the shadows of the law, and to deem the types worthy of due attention, you will certainly hear my words. For I am written in types, and the power of my oracles has introduced nothing foreign, if indeed the law is understood spiritually. ”For if you believed,” he says, ”Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me. Does the one who plows intend to plow all day? Or to prepare seed before working the earth? Is it not when he has leveled its surface, that he then sows a little black cumin and cumin? And again he sows wheat and barley, and spelt in your borders. The riddle is very deep, and the meaning of the things set forth is altogether hard to see; but I will speak as I am able, and as far as is possible. The wretched Jews were rejecting the word of the Savior, and their pretext was that they loved to hold fast to the commandment through Moses. For they thought that they are perhaps also pious, pretending to be of those in types, but scorning as it were the beauty of the truth. For this reason they also persecuted Jesus, as one who was diverting the power of the legal commandment somewhere else, and leading them away to another worship, I mean, the evangelical one. He takes, therefore, the example from the agriculture they had at hand, and says: Will he that ploweth plow all day?

And what he wants to show, is of this sort. The hearts of the idolaters are hard and unyielding, and like some wild fallow land. They need, therefore, like a plow, the word that opens them up, that is, of catechesis; so that they might receive the seed

from above and from heaven; and so at last they might bear fruit for God, the desire and readiness for everything that is good. Something like this happened to those from Israel. For they were in Egypt worshiping the gods there, but they were called through the all-wise Moses; and a law was also given to them, able to cut through their constricted hearts like a plow, and their fallow mind. But it was necessary not only for them to be called to the beginnings of spiritual agriculture, but, when our Savior of all, Christ, had already shone forth, to bear fruit for God also the power of worship in the spirit. Therefore, since, as I said, they were rejecting the word through Christ, preferring the things of Moses, for this reason and very appropriately he changes them from this way of thinking, saying: Will he that ploweth plow all day? Or when opening up, he says, the unplowed, wild, and thorn-bearing land, so that it might be ready for the reception of seeds, does he plow forever? But he who wishes to work the land, he says, will he prepare seed before he takes this to mind?

Is it not when he has smoothed its surface that he then sows a little black cumin, and cumin? And again he sows wheat, and barley and spelt in your borders. For it was necessary, it was necessary, he says, for the heart of those being instructed to be smoothed beforehand through the commandment in types , and for its surface to be prepared like some piece of land, so that it might be seen to be most ready to be able at last to be suitable for bearing fruit. But the farmer, he says, even if he levels the surface of the land, does not immediately or at first make the sowing of the harder seeds, but whatever are for the time being small, and weak, that is, black cumin and cumin; and when the land has already been trained for fruit-bearing, then indeed then he sows, he says, also wheat and barley and spelt. For this is the way of skilled farming in your borders. The law, therefore, became for all almost a smoother-beforehand and like a most skillful farmer, sowing among those being instructed, as it were, black cumin and cumin, the small things and those as in shadows, and whatever seeds, by and of themselves alone, are by no means edible, but seek in every way combination with others, in order that they might be seen as useful also.

For if indeed it should be added to wheat and barley, that is, to breads of wheat or barley, then it seems somehow to be also most useful. Of such a kind somehow is also the power of the worship according to the law. For if it did not seem to be brought together through spiritual interpretation with the more solid food, that is, the evangelical, alone and by itself it would have nothing beneficial. And you will be disciplined by the judgment of God, and you will rejoice. For the black cumin is not cleansed with harshness, nor does a cart wheel turn over the cumin, but the black cumin is beaten out with a rod, and the cumin will be eaten with bread; for I will not be angry with you forever, nor will the voice of my bitterness trample you down. And these wonders came forth from God Sabaoth. Since the law is powerless, he says, for the cleansing of sins, the shadow has been removed, the things in types

have been shown to be useless, and a judgment that gives life, and is truly most beneficial, has been brought in. And what is this? For since it was not possible for man to be justified in the law, he has appeared to us who the only-begotten Word of God, having proposed a perfected and abbreviated matter, that is, justification by faith.

You therefore, he says, O Israel, having placed your obedient neck under Christ, the Savior of all, you will be instructed by the judgment from Him, that is, to learn the way of salvation from Him. For thus you will be in gladness. And since He has once made His statement about the black cumin and the cumin, He takes something useful from them, and says: The black cumin is not cleaned with harshness, and so forth. For Israel was guilty of transgressions, and was found to have been negligent in the observance of the law itself. For God of all said: ”This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. Would he not then have paid the penalty, and quite rightly, for negligence concerning the law? Yes, he says. But the purpose of the lawgiver is philanthropic. For just as the black cumin, he says, is not cleaned harshly, nor does a wagon wheel turn upon the cumin, threshing, that is, and grinding it, as is indeed done with wheat, but is rather cleaned or beaten out with a rod; so will the lawgiver deal with those who have sinned against the law, not demanding harsh punishments, but rather with a rod, and with measured movements cleansing them. And adding that the cumin will be eaten with bread, he has shown that the outward appearance of the legal worship by itself alone is useless for profit.

But it will be useful and necessary if it is joined to the solid food, that is, to the gospel decrees. Indeed, interpreting the riddle, I mean, concerning the cumin and the black cumin; and what he would mean by indicating that the black cumin is beaten out with a rod, he adds and says: For I will not be angry with you forever, nor will the voice of my bitterness trample you. For I will not be implacably wrathful, he says, nor will I pronounce the ultimate sentence against you, nor will I render a bitter judgment upon you, so that it becomes a trampling by the things that happen from wrath. And that He has come to the height of forbearance, even in this, again the God of all appears, He further demonstrates by saying: And these wonders came forth from the Lord of Sabaoth. For it is truly a wonder, and no unmarvelous sign, that Israel, being in so many faults, is pitied, and obtains forgiveness for innumerable charges, as God takes pity. Take counsel, exalt a vain exhortation. Promising them amnesty for the things in which they have acted insolently, and having stated very well that He will not be too bitter towards them, He commands them to take up good counsel; but He accuses them, because, thinking a vain exhortation to be something great and lofty, they are carried beyond what is reasonable. And what is this exhortation, considered great among them, but which is futile? That one, surely.

For they were saying, We will make a covenant with Hades and agreements with death; if an overwhelming tempest comes, it will not come to us; we have made falsehood our hope, and by falsehood we shall be covered. But those who were pondering these things, and having a vain hope, and thinking that they would die before the terrible things, heard clearly: If an overwhelming tempest comes, you will be a trampling for it. When it passes, it will take you. Woe to the city of Ariel, which David fought. Gather produce year after year. For you will eat with Moab; for I will afflict Ariel, and her strength, and her wealth, will be, And I will surround you, as David did; and I will cast a rampart about you, and I will set up towers about you, and your words will be brought low to the earth, and your words will sink into the earth. And your voice will be like those who speak from the earth, and your voice will grow faint to the ground. He takes something of the things that historically happened in the time of the reign of the blessed David, and he does this almost for the purpose of showing the things dared against Christ by the synagogue of the Jews. For types of the the things that happened to the more ancient ones as in shadows are of true things. Therefore the present Jerusalem was once called Jebus. The blessed David besieged it.

And for what reason, we shall know from the Holy Scriptures themselves. For it is thus, in the second of the books of Kings: ”And David and all his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusite who inhabited the land, and it was said to David, ’David shall not enter here;’ because the blind and the lame rose up, saying, ’He shall not enter here.’ And David captured the stronghold of Zion. This is the city of David. And David said on that day, ’Whoever strikes a Jebusite, let him attack with the dagger the blind and the lame who war against the soul of David.’ ” Therefore, the blind and the lame from Jerusalem, that is, from Jebus, resisted the blessed David, and having done this they perished miserably. For he captured it; but the inhabitants of Jerusalem, lame and blind, resisted the Savior of all, Christ, at the time of His advent; for they did not know how to walk uprightly. But neither did they receive the divine light into their mind, those not accepting the faith, especially the scribes and Pharisees. And so He said through the voice of David: ”Strange children lied to me, strange children grew old and went lame from their paths. And Paul also writes to them, saying: ”Therefore lift up the drooping hands and the weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. And that they were also blind, the Savior himself will confirm, saying:

”For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind. For the Gentiles received their sight, although they once did not see. But the peoples of the Jews have been blinded, although they saw the mystery of Christ, which came to them in the initiation through the Law. He therefore laments for Jerusalem, and says: Woe to the city Ariel, against which David warred. And he calls it Ariel, using the name that was customary among the

people. For Ariel is interpreted, lion of God. And since Jerusalem made irresistible assaults against all other regions and nations, conquering through God, and, in the manner of a lion, seizing and tearing to pieces those who rose up against her, she obtained such a name. Woe, therefore, he says, O wretched city; which once like a lioness roared against the nations, but after this fell into such bitter and incurable misfortunes. For David warred against it long ago, and the one born of his seed after him, that is, Christ. Then he says to them: Gather produce year after year; for you will eat with Moab. For in two whole years, traveling throughout all Judea, our Lord Jesus Christ used all-wise teachings, and set before them the divine and evangelical proclamation. Therefore, he says, since the time is at hand, and grants the ability to gather spiritual food, and to store it up as in a storeroom, into your mind and heart, do not be sluggish about this.

But rather, having cast aside all hesitation, gather eagerly. For you will eat with Moab; the land of the Moabites was once most superstitious, and there was no one at all in it who was willing to worship the God who is by nature and truly is. Therefore, under the name of one idolatrous country he includes the whole company of those who are in error, and says, that ”For you shall eat with Moab. For the Gentiles have also been called in, and the evangelical and saving proclamation has become a common food both for those of the blood of Israel, and for those themselves who were once in error. Then he adds and says, ”For I will afflict Ariel,” and you will connect this with the first part. For he said, ”Woe, city of Ariel. Then, having inserted in the middle matters of counsel, he returns to his subject, and says: I said, ”Woe, city of Ariel”; for I will afflict it, and its strength and its wealth will be for me, that is, I all her wealth, and all her strength I will take; and this you will understand both perceptibly and spiritually. For their earthly wealth has been emptied out, clearly seized by those besieging her. Her once great and renowned strength has also been shattered, for they have been conquered by the hand of the Romans.

And in addition to this they have become stripped of the boasts that come from virtue, and being sick with a poverty of every good thing, they have cast away along with the others also the wealth of the wisdom in the law. But I say that ”I will surround you with a rampart, I will set up towers against you,” indicates the siege that took place against Jerusalem after the Savior’s cross. But since the Pharisees became boasters, and uttered terrible and arrogant words against Christ. For they were saying: ”We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he is from. For this reason he says, that Your words will be brought low to the ground. And it is not the words themselves that will in truth suffer this, but those who dared to speak them will be cast down, who were formerly accustomed to speaking burdensome and arrogant things, having been subjected to the evils of the war. They will have a small and very weak voice, and they will speak thus, just like those who speak from the earth, that is, the necromancers,

who whenever they pretend to bring up a soul, they whisper something faint and chirping with difficulty, as if the soul itself were speaking gently and from the earth. And the wealth of the ungodly shall be as dust from a wheel, and as chaff carried away, and it shall be as a moment, suddenly, from the Lord of Sabaoth.

He calls ungodly those who acted insolently toward Christ, and handed the Redeemer over to the cross, and dared to subject the author of salvation to death, even if He came to life again as God in the flesh. He says that this wealth will depart like dust, and will fly away like chaff from a wheel; and not over a long period of time, but in a short one, and as it were in a moment. And that the event will happen from the Lord of Sabaoth, he has necessarily indicated, so that no empty hope might delude them into expecting that they will also escape. For there will be a visitation with thunder and earthquake, and a great voice; a rushing tempest, and a flame of devouring fire. What ”From the Lord of Sabaoth” might mean, he makes clear by saying that there will be a certain visitation upon them. For God the Father will in no way overlook the charges of impiety against the Son. But He will bring on, he says, the assault of the war like some thunder, and earthquake, tempest, and a flame of devouring fire. And the wealth of all the nations shall be as one who dreams in sleep, as many as have campaigned against Jerusalem, and all who have been gathered against her, and who afflict her; and they will be as those in a sleep who are hungry and eating, and upon waking their dream is vain.

And as a thirsty man dreams that he is drinking and upon waking is still thirsty, and his soul hoped in vain, so shall be the wealth of all the nations, as many as have campaigned against Mount Zion. By saying that the wealth of the ungodly will be as dust, and as chaff from a wheel, obviously of those who acted insolently toward Christ, he insists that it will not become a safe and sure possession even for those who plundered it. For they will be thus enriched, he says, as if some who in a night vision thought they had become very rich, but had gained absolutely nothing. For upon becoming awake, they will recognize the deceit of their dreams, and what they had considered to be true, this they will surely find to be a shadow, and an illusion. One can see something of this sort happen also in the case of those possessed perhaps by hunger or by thirst; for the nature of the body necessarily desires its own things; and when sleep has at some time charmed the mind, nature is no less in desires for what it might wish for. From this, I suppose, like some vapors and subtle phantoms of the thing run around the mind, but the illusion will be completely vain and unprofitable, when sleep finally from the eyes of his return. So let it be, he says, the wealth of all the nations, as many as have campaigned against Mount Zion.

But when or how these things came to pass, let it be omitted to say. Be ye faint, and be ye astonished, and be drunk, but not with strong drink, nor with wine, because the Lord has given you to drink a spirit of deep sleep, and he will close their eyes,

and of their prophets, and of their rulers, who see the carved things. He speaks again to the despisers of the divine ordinances, and to those who have made it a practice to count for nothing the divine and heavenly proclamation, I mean the evangelical one. For although it was possible for them, and very readily, to profit from the grace of salvation through Christ, they lead on the well-reined neck of their mind. Therefore, the wretched ones did not do this, but being stubborn and thinking great things of themselves, they openly said: ”We are disciples of Moses; we know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he is from. But they heard Christ saying clearly: ”I am the light of the world. And again: ”While you have the light, walk in the light, so that the darkness does not overtake you. But since, although hearing such venerable words, they became in no way better or wiser than themselves; but they were henceforth found to be hard and unbending.

Then indeed, at that time and very fittingly, they were overtaken by the darkness, and they have been enfeebled in a way, and have been driven out of their right mind, and as if drunk from wine, they have been easily shaken towards anything whatever that is out of place. Signifying something of this sort, he says to them: Be ye faint, and be ye astonished, and be drunk, but not with strong drink, nor with wine. For he knows, he knows how to intoxicate the mind, not in every way and entirely the perceptible wine, that is, the intoxicating mixture, that is, strong drink. But calamities do this more vigorously, and a certain hardening from divine wrath happening to the mind, for this, I think, he teaches by saying: And he will close their eyes, and of their prophets, and of their rulers who see the carved things. For those of old, he says, who were made wise through the instruction of the law, and who still contemplated the beauty of the truth as in dim shadows, and who understood in part the words of the holy prophets, will be deprived of this very thing. For he will close the eyes of their mind, although they formerly saw the carved things [venerable, hidden, now carved]. And this will be suffered, he says, by ruler and prophet, that is, by leader and priest. For they called prophets those who were busy with the things of the holy prophets, the things of the prophets.

And there were some among the Jews, instructors and teachers having a reputation for knowledge of the law, such as Gamaliel, of course, about whom there was much talk among them. And all these words will be to you as the words of this sealed book, which if they give it to a man who knows letters, saying: Read this, he will say: I cannot read, for it is sealed. And this book will be given into the hands of a man who does not know letters, and one will say to him: Read this, and he will say: I do not know letters. Somewhere our Lord Jesus Christ said to the Jews: ”You search the Scriptures, because in them you think you have eternal life. And these are they which testify of me, and you are not willing to come to me, that you may have life. Therefore, those of Israel have labored in vain, up and down, always reciting the commandment through Moses and pretending indeed to gather from

the legal writings into their mind and heart a not ignoble understanding, yet not seeking Christ, although the law speaks His mystery. for again: ”If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. Therefore, since the word of the law was not of much account among them, or rather, they have killed the one proclaimed beforehand through it, and having disregarded the honor due to Moses, it was sealed in a way by God, just as the divinely-inspired Scripture is one book.

For the whole is one and has been spoken by the one Holy Spirit; but in what way has it been sealed? For neither are those who are able to read and who know letters able to understand any of the things in it, nor indeed if one does not know letters will he know any of the things hidden in it; but the law will be sealed for all in a like manner, so that the power of its concepts is altogether incomprehensible, even to those who know the letter. And this was then what was sung through the voice of David to God; ”Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their back always. And the Lord said: This people draws near to me with their mouth, and with their lips they honor me, but their heart is far from me. But in vain they worship me, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men. For the Jews, pretending to see the depth of the legal commandments, and having on their tongue the command long ago ordained for the fathers, have measured the power of their worship of God by this alone. For they did nothing at all of what was decreed, but having dishonored as it were the will of the lawgiver, they turned to the teaching and commandments of men.

For innovating for themselves some vain traditions, they thought they were both lovers of God and good, but they were convicted by the facts themselves of having foolishly leapt away from the love of God. Therefore, as far as having the law on their tongue, they considered themselves to be near God, but by not enduring to fulfill it, they were convicted of departing, and of being somewhere outside of it. For that they were more attached to the commandments of men, would become quite clear from this; ”For the Scribes and the Pharisees once approached the Savior, saying: Why do your disciples transgress the commandment of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread. And to this the Lord said: Why do you also transgress the commandment of God? For God said: Honor your father and your mother; and he who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death. But you say: Whoever says to his father or mother, It is a gift, by which you might be profited by me, he shall not honor his father or his mother; and you have made void the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition. And he added to this the saying before you; for he said that, ”You hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honors me with their lips.

Therefore, since having dishonored the tutor, and having considered the law from God of no account, they turned to the teachings and commandments of men, for this

very reason, and quite rightly, the book of divinely-inspired Scripture was sealed. For it was not fitting to enrich with understanding through the divinely-inspired Scripture those who despised it. Therefore, behold, I will proceed to remove this people, and I will remove them, and I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will hide the understanding of the prudent. For the people of the Jews were removed, as it were, in many ways, I think. For it was called God's inheritance, both his portion and his measuring-line; but it was, as it were, removed. For it is no longer called his inheritance, but has become a portion for foxes, and has been given to Satan and to the unclean spirits for food, and it was removed also from thinking rightly, to a reprobate mind, from glory to dishonor, from strength to weakness, from being wise to extreme foolishness. For I will destroy, he says, the wisdom of the wise, and I will hide the understanding of the prudent. For the Scribes and the Pharisees seemed to be wise and very learned, having the reputation of legal learning, but the understanding of the wise has been hidden by God, and well-nigh restrained, that is, the law, or rather the divinely-inspired Scripture. Woe to those who make a plan deeply, and not by the Lord;

who make a plan in secret, and their works will be in the dark, and they will say: Who has seen us? and who will know us or what we do? When penalty and justice the God of all defines certain things, he immediately brings forward the causes of the matter, and makes clear the accusations of those who have suffered, so that he might be seen as just, punishing all things in justice. He said, therefore, that the peoples of the Jews will be completely without understanding, with the law being sealed and all understanding among them removed, to remain blind, spiritually, that is. What, therefore, are the accusations, and for what reasons it happened that they stumbled in this, he makes clear at once. For very many were their plots against Christ, and displeasing to God. For this, I think, is the meaning of, not by the Lord; and indeed they thought they were plotting secretly among themselves, and undertaking bitter enterprises, so as to say, perhaps, Who has seen us, or who will know what we are doing? But they were ignorant that a plan, and a bitter thought of man, and the power of enterprises could not escape the divine and pure mind, even if one were to do anything in darkness and secretly. For they hired the traitor Judas, practically saying: Let us bind the just one, because he is useless to us.

And indeed they delivered him to the cross, and as far as it was in their power, they killed the author of life; but when he was raised again from the dead, they wickedly attacked him and secretly did things out of an unholy and envious mind. For knowing that he had been raised, they gave sufficient silver to the soldiers who were guards of the tomb, so that they would say that his disciples came by night secretly and stole him. Woe, therefore, he says, to those who are accustomed to make such plans, not by the Lord, but rather as in Beelzebul. Will you not be regarded as the potter's clay? Shall the thing formed say to him who formed it:

You did not form me? or the thing made to him who made it, You did not make me with understanding? Having said that I will remove this people, he shows in these words that he will accomplish the matter in every way and entirely and very effortlessly, saying that they will be remolded into whatever the creator wishes, just as, indeed, things crafted by the hands of a potter. The prophet Jeremiah was also taught something similar again; ”Arise, he says, and go down to the potter’s house, and there you will hear my words. And I went down to the potter’s house, and behold, he was doing a work on the stones, and the vessel which he was making fell from his hands;

and he made it again another vessel, as it seemed good in his sight to make it, and the Lord said to me: Am I not able to do to you as this potter, O house of Israel? Behold, as the potter’s clay you are in my hands. For the craftsman and creator of all things easily remolds what has been made by him, to whatever he may choose. Is it not yet a little while, and Lebanon will be changed into Carmel, and Carmel will be regarded as a forest? Saying that they will be like potter’s clay, and will be remolded for the worse; because of the very great sin that is in them, he shows clearly in what way the matter will be, and in a way clarifies what seems to have been said obscurely. Lebanon is a mountain of Phoenicia, and all the people who lived in it and around it were among the most superstitious, and similarly Carmel was a very large mountain in the land of the Jews, in which it is said that Elijah the Tishbite also dwelt. Therefore, by the mountains, or the regions in which the mountains are, he wishes to signify those who dwell in them, and he says that Lebanon will be removed, that is, it will be changed, and it will be as Mount Carmel. And Mount Carmel as Lebanon, that is, those who once worshipped idols will recognize the God who is worshipped in Judea, and will be counted in the rank of the firstborn Israel.

But those of the seed of Israel will become like those who inhabit Lebanon and were once in error. For Israel has been cast out from intimacy with God because of their impiety toward Christ. But the nations were received and sanctified through the Spirit of the divine na- of... have become partakers. Therefore, Lebanon, he says, will be transformed like Mount Carmel, and Mount Carmel will be reckoned as a forest, that is, as a material of wild woods, whose end is for burning. Or also in another way. For those who devastated it have become like woodcutters to those from Israel, and this, I think, the prophet Zechariah shows by saying: ”Open, O Lebanon, your doors, and let fire devour your cedars. Let the pine wail, because the cedar has fallen. Wail, you oaks of Bashan, for the dense forest has been cut down. See then, that he also compares Judea to Lebanon, as differing in nothing from those who were formerly in it, that is, from the wanderers. And he calls the pine and the cedar, and indeed also the oak, those who have fallen in it. For being high, and lifted up, they have been consumed as by the fire of divine wrath. And in that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of the darkness, and out

of the mist. The eyes of the blind shall see, and the poor shall rejoice through the Lord in gladness, and the hopeless of the nations shall be filled with gladness.

It shows most clearly the calling of the nations through what is set before us. And it is possible to see the nature of things happening as if by inversion. For he said that the book of the law would be sealed, that is, of all the divinely inspired Scripture, and the knowledge of the divine oracles would be hidden from the mind of the Jews; so that the one who knows letters would say, I cannot read it, for it is sealed, and the one who does not know letters would say, I do not know letters, but that the nations will be called to the knowledge of God and will receive the light of the evangelical preachings into their mind and heart, and they will also understand the law through Moses, although they were once deaf and unable to hear, and living as it were in mist and darkness, which makes it clear that they were in ignorance and error. And he says they will rejoice, not in any other things of this life, but in the Lord, that is, in Christ. For being poor, and having no good things in mind, but being in want of every virtue, and having no hope; for they were without God in the world, according to what is written; they will be filled with gladness. For they will be free from sin and full of holiness, and superior to death, and full of the hopes from God, partakers of everlasting gladness.

The lawless one has failed, and the proud one has perished, and those who transgress for evil have been utterly destroyed, and those who make men sin by a word; and they will make a stumbling block for all who reprove in the gates, and they turned aside the just for unjust things. As those from Israel were removed from the midst, and cast out from fellowship with God, even if not entirely; for the remnant was saved according to the prophet’s voice; he says that the lawless and the proud one have failed. For they were lawless as not having kept the law itself, but turning rather to the teachings and commandments of men. And exceedingly proud and terribly arrogant, as having dishonored Christ. For at one time they said: ”Is not this the carpenter’s son, whose father and mother we know? How then does he say that he has come down from heaven? And at another time: ”Abraham died, and the prophets died, and you say, If anyone hears my word, he shall never see death. Who do you make yourself to be? And indeed elsewhere one might see the Scribes and Pharisees saying most impiously: ”He has a demon and is mad; why do you listen to him? Therefore, those who always transgressed were utterly destroyed on account of their great evil and the magnitude of the perversity that was in them. These were the ones who made men sin by a word;

for by leading the people under their hand away from reverence for the law, as I said, they prepared them to sin, persuading them to keep their own word, that is, their own commandments; and preparing them to consider these things as law; and what is yet more than these more unholily, they made those who reproved them in the gates a stumbling block. For the holy prophets, conveying the words

from above and from God, at times reproved those of Israel, and this with boldness and not secretly, but as it were in the gates. But those who were appointed to lead the flocks under their hand, and who were obliged to instruct in everything useful those who were straying from the right and blameless path, made the beneficial reproofs a stumbling block, calling them perhaps deceivers and false speakers. For their aim was always to pervert the power of the just in unjust matters. For this, I think, is what is meant by, They perverted the just in unjust things, as for instance the law saying, ”Honor your father and your mother,” and, ”He who speaks evil of father, or mother, let him be put to death. They themselves taught those born of them to say to their parents: Whatever benefit you might have received from me is a gift. And if they should say this, he shall not honor his father, or his mother. Let it be lawful, he says, not to honor a father, or a mother. For Christ reproached them for this, saying:

You have made void the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition. Therefore thus says the Lord, concerning the house of Jacob, whom he set apart from Abraham: Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall Israel now change his countenance; but when their children see my works, for my sake they shall sanctify my name, and they shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. Everywhere in the prophecy the word becomes sober, and foresees the wickedness of those accustomed to finding fault. For he said, that the lawless man has failed, the proud man has perished; they who act lawlessly for wickedness have been destroyed. But since it was likely that some, out of excessive ignorance, would think that God had spoken falsely, since Israel had not utterly perished, but, as I said, the remnant had been saved; for this reason he also very usefully remembers the hope preserved for Israel in the last times of the age. They too shall be called through the faith in Christ, and shall run after the nations. For when, he says, the fullness of the nations has come in, then all Israel will be saved. What then does he say: Therefore thus says the Lord, concerning the house of Jacob whom he set apart from Abraham? For Israel was chosen from all the nations, and like a special inheritance for God, the race of Abraham and Jacob was reckoned.

But not now will they be ashamed, he says, nor will they now change their countenance, that is, they will not immediately, when they have acted impiously toward Christ, having come to the knowledge of their own sin, be ashamed and, as it were, depart, so as to no longer be seen as such. For this, I think, is what it means to change one’s countenance; but as time goes on, when those born of them see my works, that is, when they behold the whole world under heaven called, and those throughout all the earth believing in me; when they see the power of the devil shaken, that ancient and profane error having been clearly destroyed, and the precincts of idols burned at the same time, then they will sanctify my name, that is, they too will consider me holy; and they will sanctify as being in truth the Holy One of Jacob, and the God of Israel. For so they will fear me. And the fear of

God is always somehow the path to salvation. For it is written, that ”The fear of the Lord makes life. And those who are wandering in spirit shall know understanding, and the murmurers shall learn to obey, and the stammering tongues shall learn to speak peace. For having sanctified the name of the Savior of us all, Christ, and having firmly believed that he is the Holy One of Jacob and the God of Israel, they will know understanding;

although they were once held by a spirit of error, and had the law sealed up; and those who always murmur will learn to obey. For the Jewish crowds murmured against Christ, at one time saying: ”You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham? and at another time in addition to this, not refraining from persecuting him” and to writing down the truth for him as the substance of the charge. For the Savior of all called himself the Son of God the Father, and showing the shadow of the law to be nothing, he set forth the beauty of worship in spirit. But they persecuted him, Not only, it says, because he broke the Sabbath, but he also called God his own father, making himself equal to God. Those therefore who murmur will learn to obey, it says, and the stammering tongues will learn to speak peace. For the tongues of those accustomed to not speaking correctly about Christ were stammering, but they will learn, it says, to speak his things and to utter things for peace rather, no longer turning away to their former arrogance, but rather submitting to him the neck of their mind. To speak peace to Jesus is if one says, The Lord is our God, possess us, besides you we know no other, we name your name. Woe, apostate children, thus says the Lord You have made a plan not through me, and covenants not through my spirit, to add sin to sins;

you who proceed to go down into Egypt; but you did not ask me, to be helped by Pharaoh, and to be sheltered by the Egyptians. For the shelter of Pharaoh will be a shame to you, and a reproach to those who trust in Egypt, because there are rulers in Tanis, wicked messengers; in vain will they labor for a people who will not profit them, neither for help, nor for benefit, but for shame and reproach. He again bewails those of Israel as having become lovers of sin and apostates, being exceedingly wicked and devising bitter things, not through God. For it is not lawful to take counsel with God, for those who wish to agree on any wicked matter. But everyone who is pious and good, and a lover of righteousness, will take counsel with God and will proceed to what must be done. For it is written, that The thoughts of the righteous are judgments. He therefore accuses the outcast Israel, as having introduced a mind discordant with God against Christ. For they were deliberating while meeting in council, and indeed they said: What are we doing, because this man does many signs? If we let him go on like this, the Romans will come and take away both your city and your country. But another one of those ranked among the leaders said, You know nothing, that it is expedient that one man should die, and that the whole nation should not perish.

The Lord teaches this very thing more clearly, saying in the Gospel parables, that The householder who planted the vineyard sent his servants to collect the fruits, but the husbandmen killed them. And the charges of their impiety did not stop there; for having also seen the son sent by the father after the servants, they said, it says, among themselves, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and let us have his inheritance for ourselves. Apostates, therefore, are the introducers of such bitter and unholy counsels, who add sin to sins; for they killed, as I said, holy prophets; then also after them the heir himself, that is, the son. That their mind has long since been inclined toward apostasy from God, he tries to confirm, saying: Those who proceed to go down into Egypt; but they did not ask me, to be helped by Pharaoh, and to be sheltered by the Egyptians, he interjected the phrase, But they did not ask me. And the sequence of the thoughts is in this manner: Woe, he says, to those who go down into Egypt to be helped by Pharaoh, and to find shelter from the Egyptians. For when war and battle had been announced to them and the king of Assyria had moved his arms against the land of the Jews, they ran ahead to the Egyptians, and called for their aid, although they should have been propitiating God, and rubbing away by their conversion to better things, the offenses by which they had stumbled against him.

For being rich in his benevolence, they would not have been subjected to those of the with the feet of those warring, the experience of those who have already arrived will confirm. For whom have they not conquered? whom have they not overcome through God? But considering it as nothing to be saved by him, but rather determining that the omnipotent right hand was unable to save some, they sought aid from men. But this matter, he says, will be to them for shame and reproach. For there are in Tanis, he says, leaders, evil messengers. For those from Israel went down to Egypt, and they thought, as I just said, that the aid of the leaders in Tanis, that is, the kings, would suffice for them. But some came even there, reporting to the rulers of the country evil and unbearable things, for the Assyrian had advanced against the Egyptians, after the war against the Tyrians. Therefore in vain, he says, will those from Israel labor, running down to a people, who will in no way be able to help them. For it will be for them neither sufficient for aid, nor indeed able to deliver from the impending evils, but for shame, and reproach. For it always follows for those who have turned their own heart away from hope in God, that they completely and in every way fall into every evil. And the blessed David speaks truly, saying: ”It is good to hope in the Lord, rather than to trust in man.

He hides and delivers from every evil those who love him, and are zealous to cleave to him.”

Discourse 18

As one who has seen some of the things that will be at times in the land of the Jews. And now the prophet makes the narration to us. But I say that we must again call to mind the history, upon which his word came. For thus the meaning of the things set forth will be clear as in a mirror to those who read. Therefore, when Jechoniah the son of Eliakim was reigning over the land of the Jews; then Israel having much inclined toward apostasy from God, and being devoted to the worship of idols; and greatly provoking against itself the God of all; very many were the words to them through the voice of Jeremiah calling them to repentance, and advising them very prudently, to wipe away the blame from having gone astray, but rather to thrust off the charges of extreme impiety by turning to what is better, and returning to the truth. But they were hard and unadmonishable, and shaking off the words of the holy prophets, they prepared them to experience events. Therefore, God, who is all-powerful, being sharpened against them, raised up Nebuchadnezzar, who both took Judea, and having burned down the cities and villages in it, he also appointed Zedekiah. And when he too rebelled, the Assyrian, being grieved, campaigned again against Jerusalem; and indeed, having taken it, and having burned down the divine temple itself, he returned to his own land.

Then indeed, therefore, those who were left behind, and saved, and able to escape the sword of the Babylonians, went down with their whole households into Egypt; although God did not permit them to do this, but said most clearly through the voice of Jeremiah: Do not go down to Egypt. But since they remained no less disobedient, they perished in Egypt. For Nebuchadnezzar took it also, and along with those from Israel he destroyed the Egyptians. This, then, is the cause and occasion of the vision, and as it were, the whole circumstance. But it is necessary, I think, for us to go through each point, as far as possible. In affliction, and in distress a lion, and a lion’s cub from there, and asps and the offspring of flying asps, who carried their wealth on donkeys and camels to a nation that will not profit them for help, but for shame, and reproach. Will the Egyptians help you with vain and empty things? Announce to them, that your comfort is in vain. this. The divine Jesus, that is, the son of Nave, bequeathed the land of the promise to those of the blood of Israel. They say that the tribe of Judah especially was allotted

the parts of the land of the Jews toward the east and the south, with the desert lying beside them, which transports those who wish to the land of the Egyptians. Therefore, in a time of affliction and distress, that is, when Nebuchadnezzar was besieging, pressing upon, and oppressing the cities of Judea:

a lion and a lion's cub from there. And perhaps he calls lions those who were allotted to lead, and who were most powerful, and were in weaknesses against the others that were not small. And cubs, perhaps, those from them; and again, an asp and offspring of asps, others who were bitter and venomous, and reared in unmitigated evil. And if he should say, of flying ones, you will understand those who proceed easily and swiftly to anything whatsoever that is out of place. Confessedly all are wicked and exceedingly bitter who have departed from the love for God, and who say to the wood, 'You are my father,' and to the stone, 'You have begotten me;' and who attach reverence to the works of their own hands; these therefore, by donkeys and camels, were carrying away the wealth that remained to them to a nation that will not help them for assistance, but for shame and reproach. For the thing was completely unprofitable to them, and the exhortation became vain, that is, what they thought to be a comfort to them. For they perished along with, as I said, those of the Egyptians who inhabit the country, since Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed it by force. Therefore, it is a terrible thing to offend God, even if he brings wrath upon some. For every thought of theirs is rash. But He will save the whole; in no way those against whom it should happen. "For who will turn back the high hand? according to what is written.

Now therefore sit down and write these things on a tablet, and in a book, that these things shall be for days of times, and forever. That it is a disobedient people, false sons, who did not wish to hear the law of God; who say to the prophets, 'Do not report to us,' and to those who see visions, 'Do not speak to us, but speak to us and report to us another deceit, and turn us away from this way; take from us this path, and take from us the oracle of the Holy One of Israel.' Since the events were to happen at the proper times, he commanded them to be written, and he orders them to be noted down. For it will happen, he says, in days of times; and they will be deemed worthy of remembrance forever. And the word is true. For there will always be characteristics of prophets, even until the very consummation of the present age. 'Therefore, one must note it down,' he says, 'for they are a disobedient people.' Indeed, the matter will be for their benefit. For if they should disobey the holy prophets who would be at that time, it is very likely that they would be shamed by the fact that these things were foretold also through you.

But he calls them false, as I think, again, because they did not keep for God what is genuine in regard to piety, but falsified the promise which they had made at the times when God, who rules over all of us, was defining laws for them through Moses on Mount Sinai. For we shall find that they clearly said, 'All that the Lord

God has said, we will do, and we will hear.' Therefore, when the law enjoined and said, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve. And you shall not make for yourself an idol," they made the commandment of no account; for they have worshipped idols. For this reason he very rightly calls them false sons. And somewhere David also sings and says, "The enemies of the Lord have lied to him; and indeed also as from the person of Christ, "Alien sons," he says, "have lied to me. But the cause of such a disease for them was that they neither deemed the law worthy of any respect, but also dishonored the very words of the holy prophets. And this he teaches, saying, 'Who did not wish to hear the law of God; who say to the prophets, "Do not report to us," and to those who see visions' they see: Do not speak to us, speak other things to us, and announce to us another delusion, and turn us away from this way, and take away from us the oracle of the Holy One of Israel.

For against many and very many holy prophets, bitter men rose up, shouting and saying these things, those from Israel. One could see it very clearly, when Jeremiah was exhorting them, "do not go down to Egypt," to this they themselves said falsely, "The Lord has not sent you, but the son of Neriah sets you against us," and so on. Because you have disobeyed these words, and hoped in falsehood, and because you murmured, and trusted in this word; therefore this sin will be to you like a wall falling immediately of a strong city that has been captured, whose fall has immediately come; and its fall will be like the shattering of an earthenware vessel, from pottery into fine pieces so that you cannot find among them a sherd in which you might carry fire, and in which you might draw a little water. That in every way and altogether it will result for them in a very difficult end to choose to disobey the admonitions of the holy prophets; and to place their hope in falsehood, and to attempt to thoughtlessly hold fast to what comes into their mind, he attempts to teach. For since you have rebuked the words of the prophets, calling them a delusion, and saying impiously: "Take away from us the oracle of the Lord," for this very reason this sin will fall upon us like the wall of a captured city, and this immediately, that is, not in the distant future;

and I speak of a city so shattered, as if even an earthenware vessel were to be broken into fine pieces, so that each of the fragments is completely useless, so that no one can carry fire anywhere in it, nor indeed gather a small collection of water. And through these things he intimates, that so great a punishment will come upon those who have disobeyed and disaster will leap upon them, as to bring them down to the utmost misery. And that there is found among them absolutely no one who has remained outside of reaching the very end of evils. Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel: When you turn and groan, then you will be saved, and you will know where you were, because you trusted in vain things. Having threatened them with the utmost punishment of all, and having usefully terrified them beforehand with the terrors of things to come, he immediately shows both the cause of His wrath

itself, and the way of salvation. For the Creator is good and loves mankind, and as he himself somewhere says through the voice of Ezekiel, ”He does not desire the death of him who dies, as much as that he should turn from his wicked way, and live. Therefore Israel is punished as having completely fled from the love of God, and having been added to the worship of idols, yet he allows one who chooses to repent, to be brought out of evil.

For when, he says, you turn away as from a corrupt and defiled way, I mean, from the necessity of worshipping creation, and of offering reverence to wood and stone, then you will be saved, and in addition to this you will learn then what state of mind you were in, or rather, of ignorance, trusting in vain things. For if they are not able to help themselves, how could they grant assistance to others? For what is more inert than an idol? For they are lifeless matter, and nothing else; the gods of those who are led astray. Your strength became vain, and you were not willing to hear. but you said: ”We will flee on horses; for this reason you will flee, ”and we will be on swift riders; for this reason those who pursue you will be swift. At the voice of one, a thousand will flee, and at the voice of many, many will flee, until you are left like a mast on a mountain, and as one bearing a standard on a hill. For although through experience you have found it unprofitable, the hope, I say, in those thought to be gods, and seeing their strength to be vain, you have remained no less disobedient, he says. For hearing not to go down into Egypt, but to honor with faith the one promising to save, you were not willing to hear, but you said, ”We will flee on horses, and we will be on swift riders.

For you thought, that it is sufficient for your salvation to flee from Judaea. But Light, he says, will be those who pursue you, that is, winged and swift, and so terrible and fearful in your eyes, and to this point of cowardice will the mind of the disobedient go, that when only one of the enemy shouts, a thousand will be turned to flight. And if indeed even five should overtake the phalanx of the Jews, many will flee; and they will endure their suffering so conspicuously, as to become a spectacle, and by no one at all unknown, but seen just as if one were to raise a mast upon a mountain, or even a banner on a hill. He says a banner and a mast are a piece of wood raised on the hills or mounds bearing certain signs, by which those chosen to lead signify to the armies either that they have conquered, and that the affairs of battle are going well for them perhaps, or that they should gather to them, in order that they might hear some of the holy things. And again God will wait to have compassion on you; and for this reason he will be exalted to have mercy on you, because the Lord your God is a judge. And where will you leave your glory? Again he has kept hope for those of Israel. For the remnant has been saved.

For not root and branch, he says, will the beloved go to destruction, nor will God forget to have compassion, as the blessed David says, but his name will be glorified and exalted, when he has mercy on you. But you will say, that ‘And yet how was it

not the part of a good person to not inflict punishment at all? But it is consequent to understand that, in addition to being good, he is also a judge. And it is the work of one who judges rightly and impartially to measure out punishments in proportion to the faults of each. And it is again the part of a good person to also refashion with a gentle nod for the better those who have been punished. But you, he says, where will you leave your glory? But instead of, you will leave, it says, it will be left. For at times the divinely-inspired Scripture is indifferent about the words. Therefore it reproaches them because they have made of no account their own glory, which is to be and to be called of God, for they were his inheritance. For they have abandoned it, falling into what is more shameful, and worshiping the works of their own hands, and disobeying the holy prophets, and despising even salvation from God itself, and having honored a false and senseless hope placed in men. For they have gone down, as I said, into that of the Egyptians.

Blessed are all they that abide in him, because a holy people will dwell in Zion, and Jerusalem wept with weeping: Have mercy on me. He will have mercy on you; when he saw the voice of your cry, he heard you. Having named the Savior God of all the glory of Israel, he shows that not willing to depart from him, but rather to be attached to him through obedience and submission in everything whatsoever, renders them in every way and altogether blessed. And that at the time of the coming of our Savior, many of the blood of Abraham will repent, and being justified by faith, and freed from all sin , they will be enriched with sanctification through the Spirit, he teaches by saying, that a holy people will dwell in Zion. For with weeping, he says, Jerusalem wept, Have mercy on me. And since the God of all knows to be eager for philanthropy and most ready to pity, He will have mercy on you, he says, and he will be an observer of your cry; for at the same time he is seen repenting, and he has without delay granted the grace of forgetting injuries. Therefore, as far as it depended on the will of the Master of all, all would have been saved through faith in Christ. But since they did not accept the Redeemer, for this reason they have been given over to destruction. For they themselves chose this rather.

And the Lord will give you the bread of affliction and scant water, and those who lead you astray will no longer approach you; for your eyes will see those who lead you astray, and your ears will hear the words of those who led you astray from behind, who say: This is the way, let us walk in it, whether to the right, or to the left. Our Lord Jesus Christ has become for us the power of the bread of life. For he said clearly: ”I am the bread that came down from heaven, and gives life to the world. But let it be and water, not sensible and material, but rather divine and spiritual. For it is called a river of peace, and a torrent of delight, and we say this as the blessed David sings and says to God the Father concerning those justified in faith: that ”With you is the fountain of life, and you will give them to drink of the torrent of your delight. Christ, therefore, is the life-giving bread and water; but

he is found with sweat, and with labor. For indeed, the great and excellent good things would not become attainable to those who recline and live in luxury, but if to those who are accustomed to regard as nothing the sweats and labors for this very thing he so sought to learn the mystery of Christ. And the divine David singing and saying:

”If I go up on the couch of my bed, if I give sleep to my eyes, and slumber to my eyelids, and rest to my temples, until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling for the God of Jacob. Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah, we found it in the fields of the wood. For Emmanuel was born in Bethlehem, which is Ephrathah. The God of all therefore promises to those from Israel returning to him to give bread of affliction, and scant water, that is, he will grant the life in Christ and the knowledge concerning him, which anyone might gather and lock away in the treasuries of his own mind, not reclining into luxuries, not having a dissolute conduct of life, nor indeed walking the wide and spacious road, but rather entering through the narrow gate that leads to life. Therefore, he says, if you should take this bread, then you will also be secure, not easily led into error, nor readily carried away by the words of those who deceive. For you will see them, and you will hear their words. For formerly, being unable to discern the things from them, he was placed on a level with those who do not see at all, nor indeed hear the words of those accustomed to deceive; but having taken the bread you will surely see them, and you will understand very well what sort of character they have; how they simply differ, and say:

This is the way, let us walk in it, whether to the right, or to the left; for there was no distinction of the one who is naturally unjust and of the one who is not so, but, as it were, the words of all carried one away unreflectingly to anything whatsoever. And you will remove the idols covered with silver, and covered with gold; you will make them fine, and winnow them as the water of a menstruous woman, and you will cast them out as dung. It would be fitting, I think, for this also to be accomplished, for both those called from the nations through faith to the knowledge of truth, and also for those of the blood of Israel. It does no harm to apply the saying also to those who come from Hellenic error, ”The Lord will give you bread of affliction and scant water; and those who lead you astray will no longer come near you. The wretched Jews had wicked teachers, I mean the Scribes and Pharisees, who wished to carry them off to anything whatsoever that seemed good to them, leading them away from the commandment of Moses, and persuading them to heed the teachings and commandments of men. And besides these things, Israel was condemned as having gone into such madness as to choose to worship lifeless idols.

But the children of the Hellenes had unholy teachers, who, having a sensual and demonic wisdom, proclaimed to the world a countless crowd of demons, and to worship the creation, rather than the creator. So then, having received the bread

of life and the life-giving water, both these and those were freed from their ancient teachers, or rather from those who led them astray, and having condemned the deceit they took away the idols. For they have been justified through faith, having all but said farewell to Satan and the unclean spirits, and loathing and fleeing those formerly considered high among them, I mean the falsely-named gods, as something utterly hated and ending in extreme impurity. For what could be more abominable than dung and the water of a menstruous woman? Then there will be rain for the to the seed of your land, and the bread of the produce of your land will be abundance and rich. And your cattle will be fed on that day in a fat and spacious place. Your bulls and your oxen and those who work the land will eat mixed chaff with winnowed barley. The saying is fashioned as from those who are accustomed to farm, who whenever they are enriched by the abundant supply of waters poured down from above and from heaven, then they certainly have much fruitfulness, and for a life-giving breadth, and they cut the grass itself from the field for the cattle;

but the meaning of the things set forth is again transformed from sensible things into a spiritual contemplation. For when, he says, the bread of affliction and the scant water should be given to you by God, when you see those who deceive you, and turn your mind away from them, when you take away the idols, and receive the illumination of the true knowledge of God, then you will also be in spiritual fruitfulness. For there will be rain for the seed of your land. And by rain he means the spiritual comfort through the Spirit, which enriches the hearts of those who worship God, and indeed makes them fruitful. For David sings concerning those justified in the faith in Christ: ”You will set apart, O God, a willing rain for your inheritance,” that is, the evangelical and saving proclamation, and the comfort through the Holy Spirit, as I said. And somewhere the prophet Isaiah also said, as from the person of God, concerning those of Israel, which was a vineyard: And I will command the clouds not to rain rain upon it. Therefore there will be rain, he says, for the seed of your land. But also the bread of the produce of your land will be abundance and rich, that is, the fruit of your works will be for a benefit. For it will be brought to fruition, and will be fat and much. For Malachi the prophet addressed those of Israel who had apostatized, saying:

”Because your calf, Samaria, was a deceiver, because they sowed what is wind-blasted, and their ruin shall receive them. A handful having no strength to make flour. But again another of the saints rebukes some and says: And you did not remember the Lord your helper; for this reason you will plant an unfaithful plant. For the fruit of the unholy is fruitless, and their labors are useless, and the outcome of their undertakings has nothing beneficial. Yet indeed the fruits are dear to God, for which the divine Paul very rightly prays, saying: ”May the God of righteousness increase your seed and multiply the produce of your righteousness. And to these things the prophet adds, that the cattle also will be allotted a fat and spacious place; and by cattle I think he perhaps means those of little understanding, and the more

simple, who are slow in mind, but having been once called to the knowledge of God through faith will find spiritual food, and will be allotted to a fat place, that is, the divinely inspired Scripture, which is truly spaciousness. For it is broad and great and running toward piety. But the bulls, or the oxen that work the land, he says will eat mixed chaff with winnowed barley, that is, they will be in spiritual abundance. And being filled with solid teachings they will work the land. And by bulls, as I think, he means in these things those who minister the divine proclamation and preach the gospel with much power.

And the all-wise Paul will again confirm this for us, having understood the legal command spiritually. For he said, that ”It is written, You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing. And he adds, ”Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Or does he say it entirely for our sake? Therefore as from the best food of calves he shapes spiritual things, and allows us to understand, that for the chosen, and those who render the worshipers of Christ as a kind of fruitful earth, the all-good and solid food will be set before them. For it was necessary, it was necessary for the leaders of the peoples to have first enjoyed the good things through the spirit, so that they might be able to benefit the ones yoked under - And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every lofty hill, flowing water in that day, when many shall perish, and when towers shall fall. And you will understand this spiritually. For he calls the holy evangelists and apostles hills and mountains, and all the others who after them have become caretakers of the holy Churches, and celebrants of the divine mysteries, who think of nothing earthly, but are as if lifted up on high. For it is written that the mighty ones of God of the earth have been greatly exalted, and they pour forth the divine and heavenly word from their own mind as from a spring, having themselves been first enriched from above with grace.

And this water is abundant, for the mountains are many, and the hills just as many, and the stream from them is sweet and plentiful everywhere. But in that day, he says, this also shall be. And he again calls the time of the coming of our Savior ”a day”; in which those of whom the account speaks were revealed, but many have perished and towers have been cast down, that is, the leaders of the Jews, both Scribes and Pharisees. For though they were exalted above all others through the glory of the priesthood, and the dignity of leadership, they have acted impiously toward Christ, and have killed the one who made them high, and in addition to this have led astray the peoples under their hand. And other towers have also fallen, the arrogant hordes of unholy spirits. And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, in the day when the Lord shall heal the affliction of his people, and he shall heal the pain of your wound. Some of the exegetes wish that the meaning of the preceding words should be applied to the time of the consummation of the age. For then, they say, with an increase of light, the elements themselves, which are by nature luminous, will be so. But we

will find the holy Scripture saying, that ”Then the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.

And the stars also will fall as leaves fall from a fig tree. Therefore, setting aside the need to understand it thus, we rather say this. For he does not say that there will be an addition of light to the elements. But rather he calls ”moon” those who live in the light of the moon, and are, as it were, spuriously and moderately illuminated. These would be those who are accustomed to live according to human nature, by innate and our own unaided reason, not yet having been enriched with illumination from above, such as those who have not yet known the God who exists by nature and in truth, but who remain as in night, yet having a moderate ray of light, which God implanted in human nature from its very constitution. These, having received the light of the true knowledge of God, no longer remain as in night, having a small and lunar light, but from then on see the sun’s ray as in the day. But those who are as in the day and as if illumined by the sun, because they know the God who is by nature, will receive a manifold illumination upon this. Such were the experts in the law, having as it were in their mind the reflection of a solar ray, I mean, in respect to knowing the Creator and Lord of all. The Lord your God, the Lord is one. Yet they did not accurately understand the law.

But when Christ shone upon them, their knowledge progressing for the better, and the law henceforth being contemplated spiritually, the light of the sun that was in them will be almost sevenfold. For the sun of righteousness, being the God of all and understood as such, is also all wisdom itself. And he shone through the law upon those of Israel. For he brought them out as from an ancient mist of the error in Egypt. And he prepared them to understand and confess that he alone is the God and Lord of all. But these things will be, he says, when the Lord heals the affliction of his people, and will heal the pain of your error. For we were afflicted, and in the pain of a wound; for the fear of being punished hung over both Greeks and Jews; Christ will heal. And we were in a way some with our minds paralyzed, and our intellect inactive and weakened for the works of righteousness. But we have not remained in these things. For the God of all granted the cure, and He has shown us to be freed from the ancient disease and exceedingly strong for every one of His pleasing works, and justified by faith in Christ; through whom and with whom to God the Father be glory with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

Discourse 19

Behold, the name of the Lord comes after a long time, burning is his wrath with glory; the word of his lips, a word full of wrath; and the wrath of his anger will devour like fire. And his spirit like rushing water in a ravine will come up to the neck, and it will be divided to trouble the nations with vain delusion, and vain delusion will pursue them, and it will seize them by their face. Having said very well that the light of the sun will be sevenfold for those who believe in Christ, at that time, when he will heal the affliction of his people, he usefully adds that the divine wrath will also be against Satan who afflicted them, and the demons with him. For their tyranny against us was not to come unceasingly, nor their strength unshaken, especially when Christ, the Savior of all, shone upon the human race. But the word of the prophecy has become not, as it were, naked and unclothed, but rather overshadowed and profound. For it is framed as concerning the Assyrians, who sacked Jerusalem, and took all of Judea, and holding beloved Israel captive, they returned to their own land, all but gloating over the divine glory, and thinking that they had conquered those who worship Him even against God’s will.

And so the Rabshakeh addressed those on the wall, saying, ”Let not Hezekiah deceive you, saying, ’The God of Israel will deliver you from my hand.’ [Did the gods of the nations, each delivering his own country, deliver it from my hand?]” Therefore, having boasted and babbled much against the ineffable glory, those of whom the discourse speaks would be caught. And when Israel had completed the seventieth year in captivity and in slavery among them, the God of all delivered and saved them again. For He brought them back to Judea, led at that time by Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, who was from the tribe of Judah, and indeed also by Jesus the high priest. Therefore, the power of the prophecy seems in a way to make mention of that which pertains to the manifest events that happened to the Chaldeans and to Babylon. But the true meanings of what was said have come to be about the spiritual Assyrian, that is, Satan, to whom it was said by God: As a garment stained with blood will not be clean, so you also will not be clean, because you have destroyed my land, and you have killed my people, you will not remain for eternal time, you evil seed.

Prepare your children to be slaughtered for the sins of your father, so that they may not rise up and inherit the land and fill the land with war, and I will rise up against them, says the Lord of Sabaoth, and I will destroy their name, and remnant, and seed. Therefore, after a long time the name of the Lord will come, he says. And if one should choose to understand it historically, after seventy years God had mercy on Israel. But if indeed one should travel the inner and hidden path of the meanings, he will receive in his mind that the inventor of sin has spent a very long time placing the yoke of his own wickedness on all those on the earth, so as to make them his own worshippers and to bind them in the snares of sin. But after a long time the only-begotten Word of God appeared to us, and has become the burning wrath with glory, and the oracle of his lips an oracle full of anger. For Cyrus, son of Cambyses, with God urging him on and rousing him to battle, marched against the land of the Chaldeans, and took by force the land of the Babylonians, and he became like anger and fire to them, for he, as it were, devoured all, and having an unbearable assault, he appeared to those there like water dragging through a ravine, and filled all the nations of the Chaldeans with tumult and confusion, justly condemned for vain deceit.

For they thought, as I said, that they had prevailed over Judea even with God unwilling. Therefore the vain deceit overtook them. For things from unmixed wrath were brought upon them from God, and they perished by their own impieties; one might see the primeval-evil dragon having suffered this very thing. For the oracle of the Lord became to him an oracle full of anger. For they were commanded to depart into the abyss, both he and the evil powers with him. And they have been consumed as if by fire, and as if dragged down by much water by the power of the spirit into the lowest recesses. For these also were thrown into confusion by vain deceit. For he said, ”I will seize the whole inhabited earth in my hand as a nest, and as abandoned eggs I will take them up, and there is no one who will escape me or speak against me. And he thought that he was truly God, and having transferred to himself the glory fitting only for the Creator of all, he thought he could perpetually rule over those on the earth. Therefore they were confounded, condemned for vain deceit, and were overtaken by it. For judgment, and wrath, and punishment were brought upon them, and for this reason. Must you always rejoice and always enter my holy places as if celebrating a feast, and as if rejoicing enter with a flute to the mountain of the Lord, to the God of Israel?

I said that having conquered the land of the Jews, the Babylonians danced over the captives, and perhaps mocking the divine temple itself, they behaved most unholily. But they themselves were also captured; and in what manner, is not unclear. O Assyrians, therefore, he says, must you not rejoice at all times over my worshippers, and make it an occasion for a festival, with no one preventing you from entering my holy places, and with flute and lyre? And this, indeed, historically. But if it should be said with respect to Satan and those who think his thoughts, you will understand

something of this sort: For long ages he rejoiced, exalting himself over the ineffable glory, and crushing saints, and savagely opposing the workers of righteousness, and attempting, as it were, to defile the holy things of God, making the matter both a feast and a delight, and gloating over those who were oppressed. But the wretch has fallen from such things, with Christ having pushed him down beyond expectation, and having driven away his tyranny over us. Therefore all his delight and gladness has ceased; he has stopped his dance against us, and the nature of things has changed to the complete opposite. For we on the one hand have made our delight and enjoyment the salvation through Christ, and the justification in faith, and the sanctification through the Spirit. But he who has failed to rule is in unceasing despair, and laments the overthrow of his own dominion.

For by the voice of the Lord the Assyrians will be defeated, by the blow with which he might strike them. And it will be for him round about from whence was their hope of help, on which he himself relied; they will fight him with flutes and lyres out of a reversal. The phrase, 'by the voice of the Lord,' he says, means 'at the Lord's command.' For indeed the Assyrians were defeated, and they came under the blow brought upon them, with Cyrus and the Persians and Medes ravaging, as I said, and having taken them by force and by the will of God. But before these things, they had in them * the hope of being able to succeed in easily overpowering whatever lands and peoples they might choose. Therefore, he says, those very ones, on whom the Babylonians had the hope of assistance, their affairs having undergone almost a change, and a reversal to the complete opposite, with lyre and flutes, that is, both rejoicing and celebrating they will war against him. This would be seen to have happened in the case of Satan and the herd of unclean spirits. For they had in this world countless, or rather even innumerable worshippers, but through the voice of the Lord, that is, through the preaching of Christ, they have come under a blow and have been defeated, and those whom they expected to have as helpers for themselves, these unexpectedly having undergone the change to the complete opposite.

For they have been called through faith and have made war on them. For temples have been torn down, hills have been shaken, and a multitude of unclean demons have been consumed by fire, and having condemned the one who formerly held power, they have acknowledged God who is by nature and truly King and Lord. And they have made it of great importance to practice the truly approved and excellent life through all virtue, casting living in wickedness as far away as possible. For will you not be required before many days? Has it been prepared for you also to reign? A deep ravine, wood lying ready, fire, and much wood. The wrath of the Lord, like a ravine burning with brimstone. Saying that the Assyrian will be warred against by those from whom it was likely to expect to be helped rather, and that he will suffer things beyond all evil, he necessarily adds these things as well. For since He is seen to have been forbearing with them for a long time, and with difficulty has

inflicted the punishments on those who have committed unbearable sins, he makes a defense, in a way, and says: For will you not be required before many days? For the God of all is forbearing, and lavishes his goodness on those who sin, if perhaps somehow their minds might be changed toward better things, and having chosen to repent, they might escape the punishment owed to them.

But with none of these things having happened, finally He brings the things from wrath, not doing this before many days, but as finally at the right time and as it were when it has come to its measure, which is most fitting to the serenity and love for mankind of the God who rules all. Therefore, O Assyrian, he says, I have been good to you, and long-suffering. For will you not be required before many days? And it is clear that he means the punishments for which you have acted insolently against my people. Such is that which was said to the blessed Abraham: ”For the sins of the Amorites are not yet filled up until now. But also the blessed prophet Zechariah says that he saw women, winged like a hoopoe, carrying away the measure, and sin sitting in the middle as in the form of a woman. For the lawgiver measures out the punishments in proportion to the sins of each one. But you thought, O Assyrian, he says, that it was prepared for you also to reign perpetually, that is, to be able to rule and to have unshakeable dominion over all? But you were mistaken about the truth; for you will rather inherit a deep ravine, and wood lying ready, and fire. For thus will the wrath of the Lord be upon you and upon your people. And I would say, that these things would be most fittingly said also to Satan himself.

For he had taken advantage of the whole earth * Christ shone forth. But when God and Lord appeared to us, he was driven away like some very fierce beast from the flock of the faithful, and he departed also to Hades, there to inherit fire and flames. For the wrath of the Lord will be for him like a ravine burning with brimstone. Therefore he was not called to account before many days, but with the time finally calling him to this; for it was not prepared for him also to reign perpetually, just as indeed it was for the Savior of all, Christ; to whom indeed before you it would be fitting that what was said through the voice of David be said: ”Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. Woe, to those who go down to Egypt for help, who trust in horses, and chariots; for they are many and upon horses, a very great multitude. And they were not trusting in the Holy One of Israel, and they did not seek God. And He himself wisely brought evils upon them, and his word shall not be set at nought, and he will rise up against the houses of evil men, and against their vain hope. An Egyptian man and not God, flesh of horses, and there is no help.

The prophet, having learned what was going to happen to the Assyrians from time to time, and that when the Persians and Medes were ravaging their country they would be utterly destroyed, God obviously having raised up Cyrus against them, comes to the remembrance of the disobedience of those from Israel. For the Baby-

lonian took Judea, and the holy city itself, I mean Jerusalem, and carried Israel away captive, and then God gave mercy to those who were left behind in Judea. But since they wished to migrate to the Egyptians, fearing lest perhaps war from the Assyrians might be brought upon them again, he who is able to save commanded, through the voice of Jeremiah, that they should not go down to Egypt. But since they were disobedient even after this, and thought that the help of men would rather save them, they have fallen in Egypt, and all have utterly perished. Therefore the prophet pronounces them wretched; For woe, he says, to those who go down to Egypt for help. For they did not rather trust in the all-powerful God, but in horses and chariots; for there were very many in Egypt. But the God of all, being wise, brought evils upon them, and his word shall not be set at nought. For he said through the voice of Jeremiah to them the things that are written below. Therefore they will rise up against the houses of evil men, obviously of those who have fled to Egypt, and against their vain hope.

For they chose as a helper, he says, an Egyptian man, and not God, the flesh of horses. But the prophet speaks most emphatically, convicting the ignorance of those from Israel. For what is a horse but only flesh? And what is the power of flesh, which is so weak and subject to corruption? The prophet Jeremiah says something like this: ”Cursed is he who has his hope in man, and will make the flesh of his arm his strength, and his heart departs from the Lord. ”For it is truly good to hope in the Lord, rather than to hope in man. And the Lord will bring his hand upon them; and the helpers will grow weary, and all will perish together. For since the Egyptians, raising their boastful and arrogant brow, received those from Israel, and thought that the power of their falsely-named gods was superior to the God of the Hebrews, they themselves also have been given over to the Babylonians; for they have taken possession of the country, and those from Israel who were caught there have perished together with its inhabitants. For this reason he says the Lord will bring his hand upon them, and that they will utterly and completely grow weary, that is, they will grow weak, those who promise them invincible help, and all will perish together. For thus the Lord said to me:

In the way that a lion roars, or a lion’s cub over the prey which it has taken, and cries out over it, until the mountains are filled with its voice, and they were defeated, and the multitude was terrified by its wrath; so will the Lord come down to wage war upon Mount Zion, upon its mountains. As flying birds, so will the Lord defend Jerusalem, and he will deliver, and preserve, and save. The prophet has interjected the rebuke in between, the one, I say, against those who go down to Egypt, and indeed against those who chose to have an Egyptian man as a helper, and not God. And he said that they will perish together with those who promise to defend them. Then again he brings the discourse back to the beginning; for having said that the Assyrians will inherit a deep ravine, he clearly relates beforehand that God will also help those who worship him, and will contend for those

throughout Judea, and he will thus leap upon those who wish to wrong her, just as a lion indeed over its prey, roaring something great and extraordinary at those who resist. For they say that this beast, when hunger rouses it to necessity, leaps upon either herds of cattle, or other livestock, terrifying them beforehand with a dreadful and most fearsome roar, and an unbearable to make the attack upon the shepherds. Thus, it says, the Lord will descend to make war against Mount Zion, that is, Jerusalem, against its mountains.

As birds flying, so will the Lord defend Jerusalem. For birds hatch their young in the mountains, and build nests in the thickets of plants. But if another bird or a serpent should wish to snatch away the young, their mother fights terribly for them, and makes clear the power of her innate affection, flying around and chirping and, so to speak, making the greatest possible overthrow of the one wishing to harm them. Thus, it says, the Lord of all will defend Jerusalem, and will deliver, and will preserve, and will save. These things happened when Babylon was sacked, and when Cyrus released Israel from captivity. For they returned, while Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, who was of the tribe of Judah, was administering the kingdom among them, and Jesus the son of Jozadak, the high priest, was serving as priest. And when they wished to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, some of their neighbors rose up, wanting to prevent them; but no one prevailed, as God strengthened Israel. Such also has been for us the power of the help of our Savior. For he who was considered to be the god of this age took all as captives; but Christ sprang upon him like a lion, or a lion's whelp, and destroyed him with the word of his power. He is the Lord of Sabaoth. And he campaigned against Mount Zion, that is, he championed the spiritual Zion, which is the Church of the living God, and has strongly saved it as his own nest.

For the father of sin said with exceeding great arrogance: I will seize the whole world in my hand as a nest; and I will take it as abandoned eggs, and there is no one who will escape me, or speak against me. But the Savior and Lord of all gathered those who believed in him, in the way a bird gathers its young under its wings, and has placed them beyond all plotting. For he delivered, and made the whole earth his own, and has saved the world under heaven. Return, you who devise a deep and lawless plan. As God says that he will campaign against Mount Zion, and will leap upon those who wrong Israel, that is, those who believe in him, in the manner of a most mighty lion, and adding that he will also defend, and will preserve, and will save; again the prophet cries out against those who do not endure to believe, that the right hand of God is all-powerful, and will easily save those whom he would choose from their enemies. Therefore, he says, O you who are sick with such a shameful and most abominable unbelief, who have abandoned the God of all, and unwisely collect help from men, and have honored, I know not how, the lawless and ridiculous thought concerning this, return to God, devise better things, and you too say: "Lord, the God of hosts, blessed is the man who hopes in you.

For in that day men will cast away their handmade silver and gold things, which their hands made, and Assyria will fall. Not the sword of a hero, nor the sword of a man shall devour him, and he will flee, but not from the face of the sword. And the young men will be for defeat, for they will be surrounded by a rock, as by a palisade, and will be defeated; and he who flees will be captured. And now the discourse returns to its proposed purpose. For, it says, the Lord will defend Jerusalem, that is, he will champion his own Church, which is his city. And he will deliver those who believe in him, and will make them his own, and will count them as his own inheritance, and in addition to this will also save them. In what way? For they will rid themselves of profane and abominable idolatry, and will no longer worship the works of their own hands, whether they be gold and silver, or have been sumptuously made in some other way. For before the [coming] of the Savior of a sojourn, the human race was terrified concerning these things, and some have worshipped creation, and to the elements of the world they have assigned the glory due to God, just as the prophet says: Their silver, and their gold they have made for themselves idols. But when Christ shone forth, the whole earth became free from such shameful and abominable crimes.

For sacred precincts, and altars, and things made by hand have been taken down, and the ancient error of Satan, which defiled the whole earth, has been put out of the way. Therefore, with the things made by hand having been destroyed, he says, the inventor of this error will also be destroyed along with it, that is, Satan, the spiritual Assur, or the Assyrian. For he shall fall, not struck by the sword of a man, and he shall be wretched, for he shall depart to Hades together with the other evil powers. For this he hints to us, saying: But the young men shall be for a defeat, that is, The strong and those who rule by greed over those on earth, shall be defeated and shall fall. How or in what way? For they shall be encompassed by a rock as by a rampart. By ”rock” in these words he names for us the unbreakable and indestructible power of the Savior. Therefore, being taken by the divine power, as by some rock, and as by a rampart, or an entrenchment, and enclosure, they will yield the victory, and no one of them could escape. For he will be captured in every way and entirely, even if one should choose to do this. For this, I think, is what is signified by, He who flees will be captured.

Who then of them, therefore, will be saved, if they are to be encompassed by the rock as by a rampart, and absolutely no place for flight will be given to them? And the power of the Savior has accomplished these things, having overthrown Assur, that is, Satan, and having brought down with him the evil powers with him, and having encompassed them as with a rampart, and rendered them ineffective, and imprisoned them in the recesses of Hades to be punished. Thus says the Lord: Blessed is he who has seed in Zion, and kindred in Jerusalem. For behold, a righteous king shall reign, and rulers shall rule with judgment. And the man shall be hiding his words; and he shall be hidden as when water is borne along, and he

shall appear in Zion, as a glorious river borne along, in a thirsty land. Openly in these words the blessed prophet proclaims the mystery of the economy of the Only-begotten in the flesh. For he says that those who at that time inhabited Zion will be blessed; it is clear, however, that he means the spiritual Zion, which is the Church of the living God. For they are truly blessed, and concerning this the Savior himself will assure us, saying to those who believed in him: ”Amen, amen, I say to you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. Therefore, those who have, he says, an intimacy through the spirit with our Lord Jesus Christ, and have borne fruit in the spiritual Zion, and have had kindred in Jerusalem—and this is no other than Zion—have become thrice-blessed and in every good thing. And we too have had kindred, that is, according to the spirit, the holy mystagogues. For behold, a righteous king shall reign, and rulers shall rule with judgment. For Christ has reigned over us, who is righteous and blameless, and the arbiter of all righteousness, and the introducer of things beyond the law. And rulers also ruled with judgment. But the phrase, with judgment, he says, means secretly. And yet the righteous king will be a man and a brother in all things to those on the earth; for he is truly God. For the Word became flesh, according to the Scriptures. And he shall be hiding his words. For our Lord Jesus Christ spoke very many things in parables, who also through the voice of David had cried out beforehand this very thing, saying: ”I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation. And he says not only this, but also he will be hidden, as from rushing water. Again, it is the custom in the sacred Writings to compare the assault of temptations to rushing water, or to river streams pouring violently over the land.

Therefore, when temptations rise up against them, he says, and are like rushing water, he himself will be hidden, that is, he will be proof against the plots of those who tempt him. And David also said somewhere concerning him, that ”An enemy shall not prevail against him, and a son of iniquity shall not continue to afflict him. For the Jewish people plotted many times, incited to this by those who were then their appointed leaders, I mean the Scribes and Pharisees. But it was not possible for Christ to suffer unwillingly any of the things that are accustomed to cause pain. For they were stoning him, but he, as the blessed evangelist says, passed through their midst, and so went away, that is, without being concerned. And he will be to those in Zion like a glorious rushing river in a thirsty land. For to those from the Gentiles who have been called to the knowledge of him, being thirsty, and not having the word that knows how to save, he has become like a river pouring forth with a rich stream, and in addition to this, glorious, that is, renowned. For many others have also been called rivers. And indeed the blessed David, comparing to rivers the holy mystagogues and those who from above, from heaven, give the word

to drink to those who accept the faith, said: ”The rivers have lifted up, O Lord, the rivers have lifted up their voices. For the voices of the holy apostles were heard afar.

But none of them is so glorious as, of course, the torrent of delight, that is, Christ. For we say that from him has been given to all the others the aptitude to be able to initiate into the mysteries and to send the life-giving word of God into the souls of the believers. And they will no longer trust in men, but they will give their ears to hear; and the heart of the weak will pay attention to hear, and the stammering tongues will quickly learn to speak peace, and your servants will no longer say, Be silent. For the fool will speak foolish things, and his heart will understand vain things, to accomplish iniquities, and to speak error against the Lord, to corrupt hungry souls, and to make thirsty souls empty, For the counsel of the wicked will devise iniquities, and to destroy the humble with unjust words, and to scatter the words of the humble in judgment. But the pious have devised prudent things, and this counsel abides. The meaning of the preceding would fit very well both those called from the Gentiles through faith, and those from the blood of Israel. For the ones who had worshipped falsely named gods, having put their trust in men who had among them a reputation for seeming wisdom, and the assumption of the highest renown, were carried away into a strange and counterfeit mind. For they have been led astray and have said to the wood, ’You are my father,’ and to the stone, ’You have begotten me’;

and they inscribed as gods those who are not gods. The Jews, on the other hand, paying attention to their appointed leaders, did not accept the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. For those who were experts in the sacred Writings thought that what they themselves had planned was better, and they were not ignorant of what was pleasing to God and what was most beneficial to the people under their charge. Therefore, they will no longer, he says, be trusting in men, but they will offer their ears to the necessity of hearkening to the word of the Savior, and the heart of the weak, having at last been strengthened for understanding, will pay attention to hear, and the stammering tongues, that is, those that once did not know how to speak correctly; for stammering is, as it were, the inability to speak anything for the glory of God, but to spend words on the praise of the falsely named; they will learn, he says, to speak peace. To speak peace is nothing other than to have Christ and his things on the tongue; for he himself is our peace according to the Scriptures. And stammering for those of Israel is the not enduring to speak the mystery of Christ, but to always be speaking of the law, and the shadows in it, and * of teachers. But these too will cease, he says, and all their speech will be about Christ. That they will not endure the ancient teachers, he has indicated by saying:

And they will no longer say to the fool, ”Rule. For admittedly, the wise among the Greeks are fools; for the wisdom of the world has been made foolish. Fools

also are the guides and teachers of the Jews, not having recognized what was described through the shadow in the law, and not understanding the words of the holy prophets. Therefore they will no longer say to the fool, ”Rule,” nor indeed will the servants of the fools say to those taught by them, ”Be silent. For the wise in the world have spoken by Beelzebul, and have become inventors of perverse, and cold, and in addition to this, also unholy doctrines. But if anyone should choose to oppose their nonsense, and, as having become absurd, to reject them as counterfeit, some of those accustomed to serve them jump up, and shout to be silent, wishing their voices to be uncontradicted. For they say that when the disciples of Pythagoras spoke things at times both cold and ridiculous, and which were disbelieved by many, it was their custom to say this: ”He himself said it,” that is, ”Be silent, and give faith to the founder of the dogma even without examination. Therefore, your servants will no longer say, he says, ”Be silent. For the fool will surely speak foolish things, and his heart will understand vain things, having one purpose, to accomplish lawless things, and to speak error against the Lord.

For it is error and nothing else, the myths among the Greeks composed against the glory of God, to corrupt hungry souls, and to make thirsty souls empty. For sometimes some become disciples, then approaching them without examination they profit absolutely nothing, but are shown rather, although having hungered and thirsted, that what is surely necessary for them to learn is useful for the salvation of the soul; but the counsel, he says, of the wicked will devise lawless things, and it looks to this, to destroy souls with unjust words, and to scatter the words of the humble in judgment. For the lovers of worldly wisdom, and the champions of perverted doctrines, campaign against the teaching of the holy mystagogues, whom he also names humble, and they make every effort to scatter their words, although they have come about in judgment, that is, not carelessly, but rather with discernment, and in wisdom from above, and from God. For this, I think, he teaches by adding, But the pious have devised wise things, and this counsel remains. For the elegant babbling of the wise in the world has ceased. For the counsel of the pious has prevailed, that is, the learning, or the preaching. And we say that the pious are those who minister the divine and evangelical word to those throughout all the earth. Rich women, arise, and hear my voice; daughters, in hope hear my words, Remember the days of a year in pain with hope.

It is the custom of the divine and God-inspired Scripture to apply the persona of women very often to either cities, or even to villages, and also, when one is a metropolis, to call the others her daughters, just as, indeed, the divine David says concerning both Zion, that is Jerusalem, and the surrounding regions: ”Zion heard and was glad, and the daughters of Judea rejoiced; for in some way the smaller cities under her are always about the mother who is leader of all. Therefore, in these things the person of the Savior Himself is brought before us, counseling the cities of Judea and saying: Rich women, arise, and hear my voice. Therefore, he

exhorts them to choose to honor obedience, and to accept the words from him, that is, clearly, the saving and evangelical preaching; but he calls them rich now most usefully, since they were still populous, and had a countless multitude of inhabitants, except that they would not for long be desolate and most poor, as far as having none of the inhabitants, unless by his chose to submit the neck of their own mind to the divine decrees. O women, therefore, he says, O daughters, hear my words in hope, that is, not without reward rather, but in bright hope. What then is commanded? Remember, he says, the days of a year in which Christ appeared, and preached clearly in the cities and villages throughout all Judea. For He Himself said through the voice of Isaiah:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me; he has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are bruised, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Arise therefore, he says, that is, be watchful, and having taken up a good hope in your mind, remember the days of the year in which, as I said, the proclamation from the Savior of us all, Christ, was made. He commands them to do this not feebly nor yet carelessly, but as with haste and with care; for in this way good things are achieved. The vintage has perished, the seedtime has ceased, it shall no longer come. Be amazed, be grieved, you who are confident; strip yourselves, be naked, gird your loins, and beat upon your breasts. For the desirable field, and for the fruit of the vine, thorn and grass shall come up on the land of my people, and from every house gladness shall be taken away. A rich city, forsaken houses, they will abandon the wealth of the city and the desirable houses. And the villages shall be caves forever, a gladness for wild donkeys, and pastures for shepherds. He shows in these words that for those of Israel it would not be without penalty, but rather would be the cause of all torment and disaster, not to be willing to accept the word from Christ.

For the cities throughout all Judea were about to be devastated, as the Roman hand burned them all, so that they were seen empty of men, and the choicest of the fields were laid waste, and those who had barely been able to escape went into exile, and fell from home and wealth, and the once populous city or village became a haunt for wild beasts. But if anyone should wish also to accept a spiritual interpretation of the preceding, he will understand this: Vintage, as I think, and seedtime he calls the power of spiritual fruitfulness, by which we are well-pleasing to God, not producing the manifold sin as a thorn, but being honored by God as rich and fruitful earth. The wretched Jews, therefore, have fallen from spiritual fruitfulness; and the spiritual vineyard has become thorn-bearing earth. "For he waited, he says, for it to produce grapes, but it produced thorns. And it was also said through the voice of the prophet concerning Israel, that they sowed what was wind-blasted, and their destruction will await it. "A stalk having no strength to make meal. The vintage, therefore, he says, has perished, that is, You will no longer be called a

vineyard. For none of the ripe fruits is yours. The seedtime has ceased; you will not be a land bearing fair offspring nor a nurse of cultivated fruits. For this reason and very fittingly, be amazed, that is, be astonished and wonder. Be grieved, you who are confident.

For you who formerly were high-minded, he says, in God, when you see your heart destitute of all good, then indeed, then be grieved. Strip yourselves, be naked, gird your loins, and beat upon your breasts. For the desirable field and the fruit of the vine. The cause of the lamentation, he says, is the perishing and complete disappearance of a desirable field and a wondrous vineyard. And through this he signifies Israel. And he also makes it clear in another way, and says, that On the land of my people thorn and grass shall come up. For, as I said, Israel was laid waste. For He gave up his vineyard, and commanded the clouds not to rain upon it. And it has become a gladness for wild donkeys, and pastures for evil shepherds, that is, of unclean spirits. Thus also the blessed David, fashioning his words as about the vineyard of Israel to the Savior and God of all; ”You brought a vine, he says, out of Egypt, you cast out the nations, and planted it. Then he adds, saying; Why have you broken down its hedge, and all who pass by the way pluck it? The boar from the wood has wasted it, and a solitary wild beast has devoured it. For just as owners neglect uncultivated lands, and they have no care, even if every kind of harm is brought upon them; so also our virtue-loving God abandons a soul, and shows it bare of all care, if it should become barren of fruits for good works.

Until a Spirit from on high comes upon you. And Chermel shall be a desert, and Chermel shall be reckoned as a forest. And judgment will rest in the wilderness, and righteousness will dwell in Carmel. And the works of righteousness will be peace, and righteousness will hold fast rest, and they will be confident forever; and his people will dwell in a city of peace, and will live in confidence, and will rest with riches. He also makes clear the time, during which the disobedient race from Israel will be barren of spiritual fruitfulness. For he transfers the word to, I say, those who have honored our Lord Jesus Christ with obedience, and have been cleansed through faith in him, and have come to be in participation of the Holy Spirit. For, he says, the things foretold will come to pass, and Israel will be laid waste because of its unruliness, until a Spirit from on high comes upon you. For as we have read in the Acts of the holy apostles; ”They were all gathered together in one place, around the days of holy Pentecost. And behold, suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were gathered; and there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and they sat upon each one of them, and they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

When, therefore, he says, the Spirit of God from above and from on high comes upon you who believe, then Chermel will be desolate. But Chermel, or Carmel,

is a very large mountain in Judea, and covered with thick woods. He therefore compares both Jerusalem itself, and all the surrounding country to Chermel, as it has an innumerable multitude of inhabitants. But it will be, he says, desolate and will be reckoned as a forest. And by forest he means the wild wood, which is useful for burning. For the untamed trees are cut down, and they are food for the flame. When Chermel is cut down, and reckoned as wild wood, judgment will rest in the wilderness. And he enigmatically calls the land of the nations ”wilderness,” which the prophet Isaiah himself mentions elsewhere, saying; ”Be glad, you thirsty wilderness. Let the wilderness rejoice, and blossom as the lily. But it is compared to a wilderness because of being fruitless and, as it were, stripped bare, and there being absolutely nothing standing in it. But this too has become rich. It has also appeared most fruitful with trees spiritually, because Christ dwelt in it. And so he spoke again through the voice of the prophet Isaiah; ”And I will make water in the wilderness, I will put rivers, in the dry land, the cedar, and box-tree, and myrtle, and cypress, and white poplar.

For by these are signified the souls that are well-pleasing through faith in him, and are raised to the height that comes from various and manifold virtue. Judgment, therefore, he says, will rest in the wilderness, and righteousness will dwell in Carmel, which is to say, good will be practiced in both the wilderness and in Carmel. But Chermel and Carmel are not one thing and another, but one mountain is signified by both. How then will it be desolate and be reckoned as a forest, and righteousness will dwell in it? We say that Israel has not completely fallen from its kinship with God, but the remnant has been saved, and those from them who have believed are gathered together with those from the nations. And Christ has dwelt in these and in those, who is righteousness and judgment. For we have been justified in him, with sin being abolished and Satan being destroyed by a just and right judgment. What then will Christ, who is righteousness, accomplish by dwelling in the desert? He makes it clear, saying: And the works of righteousness will be peace. ”For our Lord Jesus Christ, having come,” as Paul says, ”preached peace to those who are far off, and peace to those who are near,” that is, to both Greeks and Jews; and righteousness has established rest among us. For having made peace with God, and having destroyed the enmity, we are in cities of rest, and of delight for ages.

And we have become trusting in him forever, and we have dwelt in the city of peace, that is, the Church of the living God. For in it dwells Christ, who is peace, and we have rested with wealth. For those who were formerly in want of every good thing and of all virtue, who were without God in the world and had no hope, are now rich through Christ, and we shall be even more so, having received a most abundant increase of the gifts from above and from God. But if the hail comes down, it will not come upon you. And those who dwell in the thickets will be as confident as those in the plain. Since the Jews had acted impiously toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and

had killed him with a power that reached unholy reasonings and undertakings, a most violent hail, that is, the things from divine wrath, was brought down upon the whole land. For it was given over to desolation, was captured, and was sacked, and they were scattered to every wind according to the voice of the prophet. When, therefore, the hail is brought down, he says, that is, the things from divine wrath, it will not come upon you who have believed and who dwell in the city of peace, nor will it destroy the fruits of our righteousness, nor will it ruin our good labors, but those who dwell in the thickets and those in the plain will be trusting in equal measure; and what is this?

For the land adorned with thick woods is somehow rough and not easy to plow. But the level and smooth land is suitable for those accustomed to farm, for the generation of edible seeds. Therefore, with God's assent, all things will be in fruitfulness, and the land that was formerly rough will be shown to be a nurse of cultivated seeds. For all things bear fruit through Christ, that is, intelligibly and spiritually. And no one sows on thorns. But having broken new ground according to the voice of the prophet, let us sow for righteousness, living no longer according to the flesh and love of pleasure, but rather conducting our lives according to the gospel. Blessed are those who sow beside all waters, where the ox and the donkey tread. The discourse having been diverted to the works of farming and the fruitfulness in the fields, he persists in the metaphor, and calls blessed those who sow beside water, where the ox and the donkey tread. For the divinely-inspired Scripture calls water the divine and heavenly word for us, and the mystagogue of the saints. For they too speak in the Spirit. And the Savior himself will confirm it, saying: "It is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. For since the word of God is life-giving, for this reason it is also very fittingly compared to water. For water is life-giving, and the cause of all fruitfulness.

Having therefore the intelligible supply of such waters, we are accustomed to cultivate the things that lead to virtue. And we are eager to sweat at the labors of piety; in these waters the ox and donkey tread; that is, both the people from the Jews, and indeed also from the Gentiles. For God has justified the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. And as Paul says: "Having broken down the middle wall of the partition, and having abolished the law of commandments in ordinances, he created the two into one new man, making peace. And he reconciled them to God, having placed one yoke on both, and having joined them in one mind, through faith and love and sanctification. And he compares that from the Jews to an ox nation; for the ox is a clean animal according to the Law; and it was offered up as a fragrant aroma to God. But the donkey is unclean. And so, having commanded the firstborn of the beasts to be offered to God; "For you shall sanctify to me, he says, every firstborn that opens the womb... ..... "of a donkey you shall exchange for a sheep; nevertheless, even if the people from the nations were unclean, perhaps because they had gone astray, they were still sanctified

through faith. For in Christ he has been justified, he has washed off the filth of ancient accusations through holy baptism, and mixed, as I said, with those from Israel, he has been brought under the yokes of our Savior.

Woe to those who afflict you; but no one makes you afflicted, and he who rejects you does not reject. Those who reject will be captured, and handed over, and as a moth on a garment, so they will be defeated. He calls blessed those who sow beside all waters, where the ox and the donkey tread. And we were saying that by these are signified both those from the Jews, and indeed those from the nations called through faith to the knowledge of Christ. But it was likely for some to reason, and indeed to say: Then how are such ones blessed, when those who mind the things of the world persecute them, and always surround them with unbearable circumstances, and often bring them even to death itself? Therefore the discourse sobers up for the exhortation of those who have believed and says: Woe to those who afflict you, but no one makes you afflicted. For to suffer for Christ's sake is glorious for the saints, but for those who inflict the persecutions, the matter is a cause of destruction. They therefore show themselves to be afflicted, and not rather those who have suffered, if indeed those who suffer with him will also reign with Christ. But even if someone should reject you, he says, this one also rejects himself. For those accustomed to doing this will be captured, that is, they will not escape the things from divine wrath;

and they will be, by the judgments brought upon them, as if for consumption, just as surely as a garment by a moth. Therefore, the labor for the saints, as I said, is a cause of eternal good things. But to choose to harm those who are dedicated to God is not without penalty for those who do this. Rather, it will be a pretext for the last judgment of all. Lord, have mercy on us, for in you we have trusted. The seed of the disobedient has come to destruction. But our salvation is in a time of affliction. When God has addressed the saints: Woe to those who afflict you; but no one makes you afflicted; they themselves, out of exceeding great joy, almost leaping, say: that every labor of those who choose to disobey will be useless, and that, suffering from great barrenness, they will proceed to destruction, but the manifestation of the salvation to be given to them will certainly be at the proper times. For all their power is in Christ. And even if they should seem to be weak at all at any time, I mean, in being persecuted by enemies, yet then indeed especially He who knows how to save shows the magnitude of His gentleness towards them, and of His help from above. Therefore, in a time of affliction is the salvation for the holy mystagogues especially. And the all-wise Paul will show this by writing: "For when I am weak, then I am strong.

And indeed, the Savior of all also [said] to him: "My grace is sufficient for you. For my power is made perfect in weakness. Through the voice of your fear the peoples were driven out. From your fear and from your exaltation they were scattered

among the nations; But now your spoils shall be gathered, of small and great. In the way that one gathers locusts, so shall they mock you. That for those from Israel who choose completely and in every way to disobey, and do not accept faith in Christ, it will come to pass that they suffer the most shameful things of all; and so on the one hand the Law through Moses cried out, but no less do the words through the holy prophets also make it plain. And indeed Christ himself also said: ”When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will say to the mountains: Cover us, and to the hills: Fall on us. Through the voice, therefore, he says, of your fear, that is, the voice that terrifies into fear, peoples were astonished, and the phrase, they were astonished, is instead of, they were amazed, he says. And they have suffered amazement. In what way? From, I think, the greatness of the calamity. For the unbearable of evils puts one out of his mind, and renders the one who has suffered it, as it were, senseless.

But if someone should choose to understand the phrase, they were astonished, also in another way, the word would signify, instead of, they have gone outside of the land that bore them. And so they were scattered into all the nations. And up to this point is the voice of the holy prophets, but the person of God is introduced immediately saying to them, that is to those who are amazed and scattered, that Now your spoils shall be gathered, of the small and the great. For not for long, he says, will you be delivered to your enemies, nor will what is threatened be delayed. But rather you will be plundered at once, small and great. And those who ravage you will gather you, as if someone in the fields should gather a multitude of locusts, not accomplishing the task with labor, but rather without toil, and as if in sport. And one might say that Israel has suffered this very thing, being spiritually delivered to Satan, and to the unclean spirits, as to certain enemies for plunder, and to be mocked like locusts. Holy is God who dwells in the heights. Zion was filled with judgment and righteousness. In the law they will be delivered up, in treasures is our salvation, there is wisdom, and knowledge, and piety towards the Lord; these are the treasures of righteousness.

The saints cry out again, and with fitting doxologies they hasten to honor the Savior of all, God, who dwells in the heights, that is, either in the heavens, or also in rational creatures whose style it might be, as in an intelligible magnitude of manifold virtue. Therefore, they glorify God, amazed at Zion, that is, the Church of Christ, seeing it filled with judgment and righteousness. For the earthly Jerusalem is deprived of so glorious a renown. For it in no way accepted the righteousness from God the Father, that is, Christ. But the Church from the nations, the intelligible and truer Zion, has become full of judgment and righteousness; and judgment in these things denotes the righteous judgment upon each matter. For it is the custom for the saints to live rationally, and lawfully, and to be gladdened by the evangelical ordinances. Then they marvel at those from Israel, as having the law, although it was given by God for assistance, yet having perished through it. For

as the blessed Paul writes, ”Not knowing the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For the law was in shadows, established until the time of reformation.

But when the new preaching shone forth, and the truth was brought in, it was necessary, surely, for the types to cease, and for the shadow to become ineffective, but contentious Israel, although wishing to agree with the law, and insisting on the commandments of Moses, and thinking to be pious through this, has been delivered to its enemies. For it was not right to dishonor the truth with such long-standing disobediences. Therefore, in the law they will be delivered up. But for us who from the nations have believed, even the law spoken long ago through angels with Moses as mediator was found a treasure of salvation. For there, that is, in it is both wisdom and knowledge, and piety towards the Lord. For the law of Moses has proclaimed the mystery of Christ, and we will find the power of the evangelical way of life as in shadows, directing our slender understanding to what has been written. And indeed the Savior said to the people of the Jews, ”If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. Therefore the law is a treasure of righteousness for those who do not pay attention to the shadow, but rather look through it, and are eager to investigate the beauty of the truth. Behold, in your fear they themselves will be afraid; those whom you feared will be afraid of you; angels will be sent asking for peace, bitterly weeping, begging for peace.

For their ways will be made desolate, the fear of the nations has ceased, and the covenant with them is taken away, and you will not reckon them as men. Again in these things, the Lord of hosts is seen encouraging the holy mystagogues; and freeing them from all fear, and revealing beforehand the breadth of the good things that will be theirs. For the wretched Jews were persecuting the holy apostles; on the one hand summoning them to the council, and on the other beating them with rods, and counting as a written and powerful indictment against them their piety toward Christ, and their zeal and eagerness for the divine proclamation. For they were saying, ”We strictly charged you not to speak to anyone in this name. And behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching. And we will find the holy apostles themselves fearing the assault of the Jews, but falling down before the all-holy God, and saying: ”And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness. Behold therefore, he says, they will rather fear you, and not you them; those whom you feared will be afraid of you. And in due time they will send angels asking for peace, and weeping bitterly. For their ways will be made desolate, that is, they will not prosper, having chosen to fight against God, and resisting the Lord’s commands. For long ago Israel, I mean at the beginnings of the divine proclamation, was unbearable to the holy mystagogues.

But when the multitude of the believers became beyond number, in every city and country their folly was then conquered, and they are under the feet of the believers, defeated and weeping, and considering it sufficient for their contentment to be thought worthy of at least peace with them. This, I think, is the meaning of the prophecy. For, he says, the fear of the nations, that is, of the Jews, has ceased, and the covenant with them is taken away. For they have become strangers to intimacy with God, and aliens to the promises; because ”Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel, nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s seed; but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as seed,” that is, those of the faith in Christ. For the forefather Abraham was justified through faith. The covenant with them having been taken away, therefore, he says, you will not reckon them as men, that is, you will consider them worthy of no account. The land mourned, Lebanon was ashamed, Sharon became a marsh. Galilee and Carmel will be manifest. Lebanon is a mountain in Phoenicia, among the most conspicuous, very well covered with cedars and other kinds of trees. It is the custom in the divinely-inspired Scripture to compare the synagogue of the Jews to this mountain, since it has a multitude of inhabitants beyond number, just as indeed it says to it through the voice of another prophet. Open, O Lebanon, your gates.

Therefore the land mourned, and not simply all of it, but only the land of the Jews, which suffered devastation by the Romans. Perhaps also being forsaken by God, and banished from his good pleasure. And Lebanon was ashamed, that is, Jerusalem. For she who was once illustrious and renowned, and fortified by favors from above, and having an invincible strength against all, has fallen under the feet of enemies, has been burned, and laid waste, and has been deprived of the mercy from God, Sharon has become a marsh. There is a place in Judea, whose name is Saronas, having indeed well-plowed fields, and being exceedingly suitable for the need of farming. But the land, he says, so fruitful and most fertile has become a marsh, that is, overgrown with a great abundance of thorns having sprung up in it. And again, from the likeness of the more manifest things, it admits a spiritual contemplation. For Israel was laid waste, as it were; and she who was once the nurse of cultivated fruits, and like a good and rich land, that is, that of the The synagogue of the Jews has become thorn-bearing. ”For I waited, he says, to make grapes, but it made thorns. But these things will happen to the Jews, for they have acted impiously toward Christ. But Galilee, and Carmel will be manifest, that is, apparent, and conspicuous to all everywhere. And by Galilee he means the land of the nations, that is, the nations.

And perhaps the Church from the nations, which he also deems worthy to compare to Carmel. For Carmel is a mountain both thick with woods and high. And such in a way is the Church of Christ. For very many who have been nourished in her have a God-loving mind, and full of every good, raised on high, and removed from earthly affairs. For it is written that the mighty ones of the earth of God were

greatly exalted. And it is a custom for the divinely-inspired Scripture to compare the Church to mountains. Now I will arise, says the Lord, now I will be glorified, now I will be exalted. Now you will see, now you will perceive; the strength of your spirit will be in vain, fire will consume you; and the nations will be burned, as a thorn in a field thrown down, and burned. The only-begotten Word of God, existing in the form and equality of God the Father, as from Him by nature, and ineffably begotten, emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and having been made in the likeness of men, humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

But since, after enduring the cross for the life of all, He came to life again as God, then indeed He inflicted the fitting penalty on those who had driven to this point of impiety, so as not only to disobey Him, though He was calling them to life, but also to dare to surround Him with insults and torments, and even with death itself. For they also perished badly there, with their cities being burned. And when the land was completely ravaged, then indeed they learned the glory of the one who had suffered, and having slipped into such terrible and inescapable misfortunes, they barely knew that their impious acts were not unholily committed against one of the prophets, but against the Savior and Redeemer of all. Since the divine wrath was about to fall upon them very soon: Now I will arise, he says, says the Lord. For having borne evils as God before the precious cross, having already suffered the things upon it, He all but rises up against His enemies. And He was glorified and exalted, having delivered to destruction those who had fought against Him to the end, and having called the nations through faith, and having illumined with intellectual and divine light those formerly in darkness; and having the mist from ignorance in their mind, and heart. Now therefore I will be glorified, now you will see, now you will perceive, for the strength of your spirit will be in vain, that is, it will come to nothing.

For I will overcome you, even against your will, and you will be food for fire, just as a thorn in a field burned, and thrown down. For they were consumed, as I said, having fallen into the movements of divine wrath, all but an all-consuming flame. For as the blessed Moses says: ”Our God is a consuming fire. Those who are far off will hear what I have done, those who are near will know my strength. The lawless in Zion have departed, for trembling will seize the impious. Our Lord Jesus Christ was sent from God the Father to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. For theirs were the promises, the lawgiving, and the covenant, and the fathers, and He continued making Himself manifest to those throughout all Judaea; both by using teachings that were beyond the law, and by astounding them with signs from God that were beyond reason. But the matter became completely unprofitable for the Jews on account of the great awkwardness of their mind. For the Lord was teaching; but the Scribes and Pharisees, rebuking those who were listening, would say: ”He has a demon, and is mad; why do you listen to him? He rebuked wicked and

unclean spirits, and this with authority, as God; but they, truly slandering such a supernatural and ineffable power, dared to say: This man does not cast out demons, except by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons. Therefore they have been rejected, and very rightly so, having no share in the hope in him.

But the nations have been initiated, and they have received the saving and evangelical proclamation. This, I think, he teaches by saying: Those from afar shall hear what I have done. For insofar as it pertains to being instructed in the law, Israel was near; but the nations had stood aloof from intimacy with God, clearly a spiritual intimacy, having worshipped creation rather than the Creator; But these, he says, shall hear what I have done, since Israel was unwilling to hear. Those who are near shall know my strength. For Israel has not utterly perished; indeed, very many of them have believed, being, as it were, near to God. Because they had already received instruction in the law, they have come to know the strength of Christ. For they have believed that he has worked wonders as God. But these, he says, shall know. But the lawless in Zion have apostatized and have become entirely outside the hope of the saints. Trembling will also seize them, although they are exceedingly impious. For the experience of the calamities brought upon them will be sufficient for them to be afraid, and to dread hereafter the insolence from them. Who will tell you that a fire is burning? Who will tell you of the eternal place? In these things, he shows that those who are impious toward Christ will fall into a harsh and inescapable punishment, becoming food for fire at the time of judgment. For he himself also said somewhere:

”Truly, I say to you, whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; but whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. Therefore, he says, to those who are hard-hearted and have chosen to disobey, he will announce the eternal place, and that a fire has been prepared and is kindled, and this continuously. For as the prophet himself says again somewhere concerning those who have died in their own trespasses: ”Their worm will not die, and their fire will not be quenched, and they will be a sight for all flesh. Walking in righteousness, speaking the straight way, hating lawlessness and injustice, and shaking his hands from bribes, making his ears heavy so that he does not hear a judgment of blood, shutting his eyes so that he does not see injustice; he will dwell in a high cave of a strong rock; bread will be given to him, and his water will be sure. You will see a king with glory, and your eyes will see a land far off, your soul will meditate on fear. That some, therefore, fortified by their impieties against Christ, will go down to Hades to be punished and will fall into the unquenchable flame, he has very well declared. And he usefully adds, by which he makes it clear, who would be the ones who ought to partake of eternal life, and who will delight in due season in the gifts from him, which are clearly divine and spiritual.

For the one, he says, who walks in righteousness, that is, the one who has honored the works of righteousness and has practiced an excellent life, and the one who speaks the straight way, that is, the one who has on his tongue everything that leads to what is straight, and the one who hates injustice, and anyone who is above the love of money and an enemy of bribery, and who turns his hearing away from a judgment of blood, and turns away his eyes so that he might not see any unjust things, he will dwell in a high cave of a strong rock. For he will be in safety, he says, and as if having an unshakeable dwelling in a rock, he will find permanence in all desirable things. And it is likely, indeed, that through these things the Lord our Jesus Christ has been named a rock for us, in whom the Church is understood as a kind of cave or sheepfold, having a safe and unshakable permanence in well-being; ”For you are Peter,” says the Savior, ”and on this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. To the one, therefore, he says, who dwells in such a rock, bread will be given, and sure water will be supplied.

For to those who dwell in the Church, the bread of life is given, Christ, from God the Father, and indeed also faithful water, that of holy baptism, clearly making faithful and steadfast those who are deemed worthy of it. For the grace of holy baptism is given to those who have been cleansed through holy baptism. But you who have received a king with glory, you will see, he says, that is, Christ. And you will see a land from afar, for you have not yet seen the land about which the Savior says: ”Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. With the eyes of the mind we behold it as if still from afar. For this reason indeed we are accustomed to meditate on the fear of God, so that we may be in it and together with the other saints, being filled with the gifts through Christ, we glorify him. Where are the scholars? Where are the counselors? where is he who counts the people assembling, small and great? Whom they did not counsel, nor did he know a deep-voiced one, so that a despised people might not hear; and there is no understanding for the one who hears. Having set forth clearly the rewards of those who have chosen to be pious, he turns again to the need to grieve, rightly reproaching the teachers of the Jews as having sinned out of folly, when they could have prospered through grace from above, and had a God-loving zeal for virtue by accepting the faith;

but the wretched ones did not do this, but rather slipping, they were caught in more shameful things in many ways. And yet, though they were accustomed to speak the law, and to busy themselves with the voices of the holy prophets, thus, to know the God-Logos who had appeared to them in human form, and had shone upon those on earth, they were ignorant of him, or perhaps, having understood the mystery, they became bitter. For when they recognized the Son sent from God the Father after the servants, they said: ”This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us have his inheritance for ourselves. And indeed they did kill him, as far as their undertakings had power, even if he was not held by the gates of Hades. Inciting against him the people under their hand, who cried out to Pilate himself, saying:

”Away with him, away with him, crucify him! And for this reason, being guilty of the highest impieties, and weighed down by the charge of deicide, they became strangers to the hope in Christ, and lost their intimacy with God and slipped into incurable calamities. Therefore he says to them: Where are the scholars? instead of, In what evils have they ended up? And by scholars he means the scribes. Where are the counselors? And who might these be? Again, those appointed for sacred ministry about whom the law of Moses says, that ”The lips of a priest shall keep judgment, and they shall seek the law from his mouth.

For by the admonitions of the priests, the people under their hand are instructed. Where then are the counselors? Where is he who counts the people assembling, small and great? Here, consider it signified to me again scribes and priests, or rather Pharisees, who heaped up against Christ the people under their hand, and made a conspiracy of peoples small and great; who also, surrounding Pilate’s praetorium, demanded, he says, that the murderer Barabbas be released to them, but that the one condemned for no wrongdoing at all be crucified, I mean, Christ. For he committed no sin. Matthew and Mark, the blessed evangelists, remember this. For when Pilate said that they should rather release to them at the feast Jesus, who had committed no offense, Matthew says that the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas, but to destroy Jesus. And Mark himself, as I said, says this very clearly. Where then is he who counts the people assembling, small and great, whom they did not counsel, nor did he know a deep-voiced one, so that a despised people might not hear, and there is no understanding for the one who hears. And the arrangement of the words is indeed very difficult, and the meaning in them is difficult to behold. But I will speak as is possible. For where, he says, is he who numbers the gathered people, small and great, which people they did not advise?

For the great populace, it seems, was ignorant that the one cried against was Christ, the Son of God, and they did this because those who knew, that is, the leaders, did not rather advise it to embrace faith in him. For the people, he says, did not know the deep-voiced one, that is, Christ. And he calls him deep-voiced, because his words were hidden, and as in riddles and parables. And so he is introduced through the lyre of the psalmist, saying thus: ”I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world. And he also spoke to the Jews in parables. Therefore they did not advise the people, he says, nor did they know the deep-voiced one. But they did not advise, so that a depraved people would not listen. For if they had advised, a depraved people would not have listened. But rather, blessed are those who have recognized the Redeemer. But there was not, he says, understanding in the one who heard. For the Jews, being without understanding, did not test the voices of their leaders, nor did they discern whether they were ever advising good things, or doing the opposite. Behold Zion the city, our Salvation, your eyes shall see Jerusalem, a rich city, tents which shall

not be shaken, the stakes of its tent for all time, nor shall its ropes be broken, for the name of the Lord is great for you. A place shall be yours, rivers and canals broad, and spacious.

Between the words of God which he has made against the foolish Jewish scribes and those giving unholy counsel, the persona of the lovers of truth is again introduced, who have recognized the appearance of Christ and are saying: Either the Church on earth, or that is, the beautiful city above in the heavens, the nurse of the saints. So whether one should name the Church on earth, or should receive that other one into the mind, the thing signified by both will be one. For those who have been in the one below will, in due time, also be in that one above and in the heavens. Therefore, since out of great joy they, so to speak, leap for joy, having recognized Zion, in which is our salvation, that is, Christ, and point it out to one another, immediately the divine word takes up their voices, and says: Your eyes shall see Jerusalem, a rich city; and it speaks as from the likeness of the ancient tent in the wilderness. And it calls Zion rich, and that the tent will be unshakable. For it affirms this, having unbreakable ropes, and stakes fixed forever. For the Church is founded, and has an unshakable permanence for well-being; ”For the gates of Hades,” he says, ”will not prevail against it. And it gives the reason why it will be such, and says to those who have believed in Christ, that the name of the Lord is great for you.

For to those who have not embraced the faith, the name of Christ is not great and glorified. But among us who have believed, it is great and exalted. For we worship him as God, as truly the Son of the Father, as the Word become man for the salvation of all things. This ever-abiding tent, therefore, he says, shall be a place for you. For we have made the Church of Christ a city, as it were, a type of the one above. And in it there will be rivers and canals broad and spacious. And by these he signifies the holy evangelists, the apostles, those who from time to time are leaders of the Churches, who, like a river’s stream, water the minds of the faithful, overflowing them with the words from God, and sending upon them abundant consolation, that is, clearly, the consolation through the Holy Spirit. But all these rivers and canals receive the one from on high, that is, clearly, Christ, concerning whom it is written: ”The streams of the river make glad the city of God. And somewhere he also says He Himself through the voice of a prophet concerning His own worshippers: ”Behold, I will turn toward them like a river of peace, and like a torrent overflowing with the glory of the nations. You shall not go this way, nor shall a galley with oars pass by. For my God is great. The Lord will not pass me by. The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our ruler;

He will save us. The discourse has again shifted to the person of the believers. For since he made mention of rivers and canals, for this reason, and very appropriately, he speaks as if about a ship. And what then this means, I will try to make

clear. For before the coming of our Savior, Satan plundered the inhabited world, with no one rebuking him. But since we have been redeemed through Christ, and dwelling in the holy tabernacle, I mean the Church, we luxuriate in the evangelical and apostolic words, we have grown bold against him who was formerly strong in oppressing, and that Christ will keep our hearts, not allowing the inventor of lawlessness to trample upon them; wherefore we who have believed say to him: You shall not go this way, nor shall a galley with oars pass by, that is, we shall no longer be accessible to your oppressions; nor will you be found in these rivers, like some galley with oars. But perhaps someone might say: From where have you taken courage to say this? Yes, he says, we have courage. For my God is great, and He will not pass me by; that is, he will not pass through me, as Satan formerly did. I will not be subject to his feet; For the Lord is our judge. The Lord is our ruler, the Lord is our king, the Lord Himself will save us. For of old, he himself was that most perverse and cruel ruler of ours.

But since we have submitted to the evangelical and saving yoke, we have had as judge, ruler, king, and Lord, the Son, and He will save us. But the prophet Isaiah himself teaches this in another way, speaking both about the Church of God, and about those who have been justified in the faith that is in Christ: There will be a clean way, and it will be called a holy way, and there will be no unclean way there, nor will there be a lion there, nor any of the evil beasts, nor shall any go up there. But the redeemed by the Lord will walk in it. Your ropes were broken, because he did not prevail. Your mast has leaned over, it will not slacken the sails, it will not raise a sign, until it be given up for plunder. Having mentioned a ship, and having named a tabernacle, he again takes up the divine digression; and he says, as if to the Synagogue of the Jews, that is, the tabernacle, that Your ropes were broken, because he did not prevail. For of Zion, the rich city, he says the ropes will not be broken for all time. For our Lord Jesus Christ has founded, as I said, His own Church upon a rock; but the ropes of the Jewish tabernacle were broken, as it were, for they did not prevail.

And just as when a violent wind pours down, the sails of a ship are stretched tight, and are by no means slackened because the wind does not permit it, but it suffers shipwreck; so, he says, your mast has also leaned over, and will not slacken the sails. Therefore he makes the declaration of what has happened to the Synagogue of the Jews from the image of those who are sailing. But neither will it raise a sign, he says. But it will remain thus until it be given up for plunder. Behold, he uses this example also, signifying to us in many ways the things that have happened to them. For it is the custom for those who have been victorious in war to raise a sign, that is, to set up a trophy. But those who are defeated do not raise a sign. Therefore, he says, it will not raise a sign, that is, it will not overcome its enemies, but will rather be weak, until it be given up for plunder. And through all these things he signifies that it will both lie under the feet of Satan, and will suffer shipwreck, and will never

overcome his perversity, unlike those who inhabit the unshakable tabernacle; but it will rather be for plunder for him. Therefore many who are lame will take spoil, and he will not say: I am weary, the people who dwell in them; for their sin has been forgiven them.

Jews indeed for, although they had obtained the ability to walk upright from the tutelage in the law, they have been given as spoil to Satan. But those from the gentiles, although having a lame mind, for they had been led astray and did not know how to go on straight paths, will make spoil. For they will gain the things from God, conquering Satan. And that also having sent away the grievous burden of sin, they will have spiritual rest, he makes clear, saying: The people dwelling in them shall not say, I am weary; for their sin has been forgiven them. For those of the blood of Israel, since their sin was indeed laid upon them; for they in no way accepted the justifying grace, are reasonably given as spoil, and as it were captives to the inventor of sin. But those who have become better than to be accused on account of sin, for it has been taken away by Christ who cleanses, will be within all gladness, and they will be freed from all toil, having sent away what causes grief. The blessed David also mentions these things, saying: ”Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Although the one accustomed to sin says that, ”My iniquities are gone over my head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. And it was unbearable and lawless [ρυμφρ. λεγιτ ὁ νόμος] . And so Christ said:

”Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Draw near, nations, and listen, rulers. Let the earth hear, and those in it; the inhabited world, and the people in it. Because the wrath of the Lord is upon all the nations, and his anger upon their number, to destroy them, and to deliver them to the slaughter. And their wounded will be cast out? and the dead, and their stench will ascend, and the mountains will be soaked with their blood. And the heaven will be rolled up like a scroll, and all the stars will fall like leaves from a vine, and as figs fall from a fig tree. My sword has been made drunk in heaven. Having spoken very well of the Synagogue of the Jews falling into shipwreck, and that it will be delivered to those who ravage it for spoil and capture; and having added to these the calling of the gentiles; For many lame, he says, will make spoil; he makes the instruction necessary for those who once had a lame mind, but have learned to walk upright through faith in Christ. He therefore calls to mind the coming judgment upon all, both small and great. For this reason he says to the nations as though they were still standing far off: Draw near, nations, and listen, rulers. And he has put ”draw near” instead of ”approach”.

For as long as they are perchance in error, and worship creation rather than the creator, they stand somewhere far from God. But when the cause is removed, on account of which they are said to be far off, they are brought near to God, and are

considered to be near, having become partakers of him, through the partaking of the Holy Spirit. Approach, therefore, he says, both nations and rulers. And let the earth also hear, and those in it, the inhabited world, and the people in it. And what is it that is being indicated? For wrath, he says, is hanging over all those in it, and not simply or indiscriminately; but it will come rather upon those, who have had their sin unforgiven, and the filth from sin ingrained in their own souls. And that they will perish, and will be delivered, as it were, to destruction and slaughter, and will defile the whole place, as in the case of destroyed bodies, he forms the figure of speech. For the mountains, he says, will be soaked with their blood. Then, making the time of this clear, he brings the consummation of the world into the midst, and says, The heaven will be rolled up like a scroll, and the stars will fall like leaves. For as the Savior's disciple said concerning the last day: "Because in it the heavens will pass away with a rushing noise, and the elements, being scorched, will be dissolved, the earth and the works in it will all be burned up.

And new heavens, and a new earth according to the promises we await Him. Therefore, that the heaven will be rolled up, and that the stars will fall, would signify the renewal of this universe. That creation will be set free, the divine Paul also said, from the slavery of corruption, into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. Adding that, "My sword has been made drunk in heaven," he gives us to understand that the assault of divine wrath will not come only against those on earth, but will indeed run against the unclean spirits themselves, whom it is the custom of the Holy Writings to name "world-rulers of darkness," and "spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. For they will be punished and, as it were, they will satisfy with the justice they undergo, the sword of God, having tyrannized for long ages, and having destroyed, as far as was in their power, the whole world under heaven; and paying the penalties for such terrible impieties. Behold, it will come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of destruction with judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made thick with the fat of lambs, and with the fat of bulls, and of rams. From the universal judgment he brings the discourse down to the punishment brought upon the Idumeans, on account of their impiety toward Christ. Yet he calls Judea "Idumea"; having altered it slightly, so that he might seem also to be mocking it.

For Esau, who was born of Isaac, having sold his birthright for a single meal, is rightly called Edom, that is, earthly; for such was the mindset in him. From him, then, those from him are called, that is, Idumeans. For they too are earthly, they might be thought to have an earthy mindset, as I say from the interpretation of the name. Therefore he calls Judea Idumea, as not knowing how to mind the things above, but rather having settled in earthly matters, and having a carnal mindset. Behold, therefore, the sword made drunk in heaven, he says, will now come down upon Judea, or Idumea, and upon the people of destruction, yet with judgment. What other people of destruction could there be but Israel? For it was unwilling

to honor the Redeemer by faith. Yet the sword is with judgment, that is, with righteous judgment; for not simply, or indiscriminately, and as it were utterly, has Israel perished, but the remnant has been saved through faith, that is, faith in Christ. For not a few from Judea have also been called, and have believed in Christ. But upon those who have disobeyed the sword of the Lord was filled with blood, that is, the wrath, all but slaughtering, and striking down, as it were, certain rams, and stout and fat bulls, to whom it might fittingly be said by us: ”Come now, you rich, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming upon you. And we will add to these words this:

”You have lived in luxury and self-indulgence on the earth; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. For such have the leaders of the Jews become, grazing, as it were, in a fat and spacious place on the fruit-offerings from the people; and being fattened, as it were, by the honors from all. But like rams and bulls they have fallen, the wretches, having fallen upon the sword of the Lord. For there is a sacrifice for the Lord in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in Idumea; and the stout ones will fall with them, and the rams, and the bulls, and the earth will be made drunk with blood, and will be filled with their fat. Bozrah is interpreted as distress, and fortification, and good news, and indeed also flesh. Therefore he names Idumea also Bozrah, so that you may understand it as fleshly, or as distressed, that is, besieged; or good news, for Christ preached the good news in it. And I would add, that it is also a fortification; for the Lord was round about it, and round about his people, as it is written. But in this, he says, is a sacrifice to the Lord. For they have been sacrificed by the swords of the besiegers, and not ascending to God as a fragrant aroma, but to the satisfaction of the sword that strikes them.

That not only in Idumea will be spent multitude, but indeed also of the notables among them, a very great and pitiful fall will occur, he hints enigmatically, saying, that the stout ones, and the rams, and the bulls will fall with them, and that the earth will be drunk with their blood, and will be filled with their fat. For as in the case of bulls and rams thrown to the ground, and sending forth a great pouring of blood from being consumed, and all but watering it, he says such things. For it is the day of the Lord’s judgment, and the year of the retribution of the judgment of Zion. And its ravines shall be turned into pitch, and its land into brimstone; and its land shall be burning, like pitch, night and day, and it shall not be quenched for eternal time, and its smoke shall go up. It shall be desolate for generations, and birds and hedgehogs, and ibises, and ravens shall dwell in it. And a measuring line of a desolate geometry shall be cast over it, and onocentaurs shall dwell in it. More clearly in these things he allows to be understood what he said through riddles. For he names Zion, for which he says a day of judgment and a year of retribution have come, during which, their whole land having been, so to speak, sprinkled with pitch and brimstone, they will be consumed by a savage fire, and will have unquenchable flames;

and by the rising smoke, perhaps, it is consistent to understand the report, as it were, of the suffering, signifying even to those far off the magnitude of the disaster brought upon them. He says it will be desolate for generations, and he speaks of the things that happen to desolate cities. For he says that birds, and hedgehogs, and ibises and ravens will make their lairs in it, and indeed that it will be measured out as a desert, with onocentaurs dwelling in it. By onocentaurs he means the wild asses, for whom it is a favorite pastime to make their dwelling in completely desolate places. And by hedgehogs he means those of the mice that are clothed in spines. But if someone should choose to receive also the innermost interpretation of these things, we say that desolate and, as it were, isolated minds of men, because the God of all does not dwell in them through the Spirit, will be apportioned to the evil beasts, and the unclean spirits will lodge in them, in the form, I say, of the named hedgehogs and ravens and wild asses. Her princes shall be no more, for her kings, and her rulers, and her great ones, shall be for destruction. By saying ”stout ones” and ”rams” and ”bulls” in the preceding, [he means] the leaders of the Jews, that is, those who had obtained conspicuous glory, either in the manner of the priesthood, or by being in great wealth and distinction;

he names them ”rulers” in these verses, making the declaration concerning them clearer. Those, therefore, who once were their kings, he says, and the rulers and the great ones shall be no more. For they will no longer revel in powers over all, nor indeed will they raise a haughty brow, indulging in such exalted honors; but they will be thrust from the thrones of authority; and having slipped from royalty, as it were, and been cast out from ruling, they will go away to destruction, together with the others destroyed by them. For they became an occasion for destruction for those under their hand. And the God of all will teach this, saying: ”Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard, they have polluted my portion. They have made my desirable portion a trackless wilderness. It has become a ruin of destruction. And thorny plants shall spring up in their cities, and in its strongholds; and it shall be a habitation of sirens, and a court for ostriches. And demons shall meet with onocentaurs, and they shall cry one to another; there onocentaurs will rest. For they have found rest for themselves; there the hedgehog has made its nest. Again in another way he attempts to make clear for us the things that happen in deserts. For as long as the cities are populous, none of the wild plants grows in them; and the… that rejoice in deserts also depart of wild beasts.

But when they become depopulated and deprived of their inhabitants, then the land will be found like some wasteland, full of thorns, a dwelling place for sparrows, especially for sirens. By sirens he means those winged creatures that send forth a mournful voice at night, and all but wail aloud, which are quiet during the day, and dwell in the desolate places of the lands; but they make their flights mostly in darkness, like the owl, and similar creatures. And by demons and onocentaurs meeting one another, and indeed crying out, one to another, he hints at the, as

it were, unmitigated desolation of the cities. For evil spirits are said to inhabit quiet places. And those wild beasts that make much of being away from humans, and are trained to wildness by natural laws, also take up their lodging there most gladly. And the earth saved her children with safety; there hinds met, and saw one another's faces. They passed by in number, and not one of them perished; another did not seek her companion, because the Lord commanded them, and his spirit gathered them. And he will cast lots for them, and his hand has divided it for them to pasture; you shall inherit it for eternal time, for generations of generations they will rest upon it. Saying that the land of the Jews would be given over to utter desolation, and be completely deprived of the mercy from above and from God; and of love, he again remembers those who were saved in it.

And these would be the remnant, that is, those through faith. And concerning them he says here, that "The earth has saved her children with safety. For the believers from Israel have become sons of the land of the Jews, having found safety and, as it were, an unshakable tower for help in our Lord Jesus Christ. And from the children who have been saved, the divine disciples have become in a way hinds. And they are compared to hinds very fittingly. For this animal is a snake-killer, and is accustomed to frequent springs of water. And such are all who are raised to the lot of piety towards God, being well-suited for the destruction of the spiritual dragon, by overthrowing his glory and rendering the son of his inherent wickedness inert and ineffective. But they also indulge in the spiritual springs of waters, that is, in the provisions of spiritual goods, which all but water the mind, rendering it fruitful for God. There therefore, he says, that is, among those who were saved, hinds met one another. They marveled at one another. For this, I think, is what "They saw one another's faces" means. And not one of them was in danger, for this again is what "They passed by in number, and not one of them perished, one did not seek the other" means. Who then is the one who saved them? "The Lord commanded them, and his spirit gathered them," and he commanded to make disciples of all nations;

and to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. "And he will cast lots for them, and his hand has divided for them to pasture for eternal time. For lots, as it were, have been assigned to the holy apostles, among whom each was to preach. And so the divine Peter was appointed to the circumcision. And the Spirit declared, saying: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them; and they became apostles of the Gentiles. Therefore his hand divided lots for them, so that they might pasture for eternal time. For since he made mention of hinds, he necessarily added "to pasture"; for they all but fed upon the lands, delighting in those called through faith to the knowledge of truth, and this is their lot. And so the divine Paul addressed those saved through him, saying: "My joy and crown. And that their boast in these things will be kept for them unendingly by God, he makes clear by saying, "They will rest upon it. Upon

what? Clearly, upon the inheritance assigned to them by God. But to commemorate one must also [hear] the blessed David singing about them, that ”The voice of the Lord strengthens the hinds, and will lay bare the thickets. For the multitude of the nations, greater than number, were shown by God as thickets, as it were, for spiritual hinds, which they browsed spiritually, luxuriating in the gentleness of the believers. Be glad, O thirsty desert;

let the desert rejoice, and blossom as a lily. The deserts of the Jordan shall blossom and be glad; and the glory of Lebanon is given to it, and the honor of Carmel, and my people shall see the glory of the Lord, and the majesty of our God. It is the custom of the divinely-inspired Scripture to call the Church of the gentiles desert and barren, which once was in this state, having neither the spiritual bridegroom from heaven, I mean Christ, but also being in want of every good thing, and being as it were a nurse of thorns, both thirsty and waterless. But since Christ has been in her; (for He was received through faith and she has been enriched with the divine stream from Him; for He is a fountain of life, and a torrent of delight; and He it was who said through one of the holy prophets: ”Behold, I am turning upon them like a river of peace, and like a torrent flooding the glory of the gentiles;”) she is no longer barren and desolate; but rather she has many children and is under a bridegroom, and spiritually flourishing. Let the one who was formerly thirsty, then, rejoice, he says; and let her blossom like a lily, having at once both a flourishing and a fragrant quality. For she has become the fragrance of Christ, and Paul will confirm it, writing that ”We are the sweet aroma of Christ to God. But ’the deserts of the Jordan,’ he says, means the desert around it.

For not to the disobedient of Israel, but to us from the gentiles, or also to those of them who have believed, has the stream of the Jordan been given, and it is with us; for we are baptized in it, and, as I said, the holy spring has become ours. To this desert, therefore, he says, which was once thirsty, but has now obtained the renowned Jordan, has been given the glory of Lebanon, and the honor of Carmel. But Lebanon and Carmel are very often said to be Jerusalem, and the divine temple itself. But the glory formerly befitting the holy city and the divine temple has been given to the Church of the gentiles, and in her we have beheld the glory of the Lord, and the majesty of God. The Jews for their part approached the Lord as a mere man, and as one having no advantage over others; but we have beheld the height of his glory. For we know Him to be God, who for our sake became man according to the economy, and thus is God. Be strong, you weak hands and feeble knees. Comfort those of faint heart; be strong, do not be afraid. Behold, our God renders judgment and will repay. He himself will come and save us. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be clear.

A fitting mystagogy, and a spiritual exhortation for those of the gentiles called to the knowledge of Christ, is the saying, Be strong, you weak hands and feeble knees. For to those still wandering, the hands are idle, and the knees are feeble. And he does not say such things entirely about the parts of the body, but we shall find those in deceit and error to be spiritually sick. For neither is a work of piety to be found among them, nor strength of knees, that is, of mind, for those traveling the pure way of righteousness. But be strong, he says, so that they might also be able to run to God. But you, as ones appointed to the sacred ministry of the divine preaching, comfort the weak, say clearly to the faint-hearted: Be strong, do not be afraid. For the mind is not strong in those who do not know God; for they fear, as it were, the assaults of the passions, and Satan who long tyrannized over them, and in addition to this, death. But behold, he says, God, that is, the Savior is not far off, who will repay with judgment. For he will condemn the ruler of this age, and will deliver the oppressed from slavery under him. For he will come, he will come and save us. What then? He will come then to those upon the earth, the eyes of the blind will be opened.

For those who once worshipped the creation rather than the Creator, will make that very creation, which once led them astray, a certain guide, as it were, leading them well to the knowledge of the Maker. For from the beauty of created things, their author is contemplated by analogy; and as Paul says, ”For his invisible attributes, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, both his eternal power and divinity. Therefore the eyes of those who were once blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf will hear. For those who once shook off the words about God, and strove to make the sacred instruction of the saints unacceptable, will gladly receive it. And the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the stammerers will be clear. For those of old, he says, not knowing how to walk straight, but having their minds, as it were, paralyzed, will leap up like deer, that is, they will be swift of foot and of good repute; spiritually, that is, and in addition to this, also serpent-slayers, and knowing how to speak well. For they will speak the things of God rather, no longer saying to the wood: ”You are my father; and to the stone: You gave me birth. But it should be known that Christ also fulfilled these things physically, astounding Judea with his ineffable divine signs. Because water has broken out in the desert, and a ravine in the thirsty land.

And the waterless land will become marshes, and in the thirsty land, a spring of water; there will be the joy of birds, a haunt of reeds, and marshes. He has commanded the thirsty desert to rejoice; then he immediately adds the cause of the joy. For water has broken out in it, he says. And the word, has broken out, is well-used, so that the abundance of the supply might be signified by it. And he says ravine, instead of river; and when this has happened, what was once waterless will then be turned into marshes. And it will have a spring of water, either the holy Jordan,

or rather Christ himself, the Savior of all; for he is a spring of life, and a well of living water. Upon them has come the gathering and joy of birds. And by birds in these things he means those who have flown up from earthly affairs, and who have become lofty through virtue, choosing to think on things above; these rejoice in Christ as in a spring, who made the desert a haunt of reeds, and marshes. For the well-wooded places are always wont to be crowned with marshes. But the Church from the nations, having been enriched by the stream from heaven, and watered by the divine gifts, and having reveled in the teachings of the saints, is a nurse of marshes, and of reeds, that is, of those who have flourished in Christ unto a blameless life through sanctification.

There shall be a clean way, and it shall be called a holy way, and no unclean person shall pass over it, nor shall there be an unclean way there; but the dispersed shall walk on it, and they shall not go astray. And there shall be no lion there, nor shall any of the evil beasts go up on it, nor shall it be found there, but the redeemed through the Lord shall walk on it, and the gathered shall return, and they shall come from Zion with joy, and everlasting joy shall be over their head. For on their head shall be praise and exultation, and joy shall overtake them, pain and groaning and grief have fled away. He calls the power of the evangelical way of life a clean way, or in other words, the purification through the Spirit. For it wipes away the stain ingrained in the souls of men, and frees them from transgressions, and shows them to be superior to all filth. Therefore it has rightly been called a holy and clean way, but inaccessible to those not yet purified. For no one lives according to the Gospel without first having been enriched with the purification through holy baptism; therefore, none of the unbelievers. For these unclean ones will walk, he says, on it. But rather the dispersed will walk, that is, those whom Satan scattered, and it refers to the nations, and they will not go astray.

For long ago they were led astray, having worshipped wood and stones, and going on crooked paths. But now they will learn the straight and pure path that leads to a holy life. And that, having become free from the rapacity of the devil, they will live such a glorious life, he clarifies, saying that ‘Neither lion, nor indeed any other of the evil beasts will be there,’ that is, on the pure way. For of old, like some savage beast, the inventor of sin, along with the unholy spirits, leaped upon those on earth; but he was weakened in Christ, and has been driven away from the flock of believers, and by Christ was scared away from his rapacity against them. Therefore, on this pure way, those redeemed through Christ, and gathered together through faith into one accord, will walk, and leaving the old path, they will turn away and come to Zion, that is, the Church, having unutterable gladness on earth and in heaven. For they will glorify the God who saved them. Exultation and gladness, and every form of delight in Christ, will overtake them, and they will be completely without taste of sorrow and groaning. For those who are called with such glorious hopes, who will be heirs of eternal life, and who are about to be

enriched with the boasts of glory from above, and who expect to reign with Christ himself, what sorrow will they share? or what groan will they admit? the God of all;

the evil beasts will be consumed and will perish. For they will rejoice rather, as being in every way and entirely in all that is good.

Discourse 20

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

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

it will go into his hand. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt, and all who trust in him. The gates being evidently shut, and the most warlike people standing by the walls, performing the duty of ambassadors, the chosen men of the king, and the leaders among the priests, went out to Rabshakeh.

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

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

He completely cuts off the hope in the Egyptians, all but saying that those who trust in it are already ranked among servants. For they will be easily captured, he says, having trusted in horse and rider. Then he utters something bitter and, as it were, from his inherent wickedness, affirming that the battle against Judea is

not undertaken without the Lord. For if indeed, he says, as you yourselves say, the God among you is great and most mighty, and champions the land, how have we come up against it? For if we have overcome the strength of the defender, he is not great, but rather small and weak. But if he is great and powerful, we are not hindered wishing to ravage Judea; we did not come up against it without the Lord. And Eliakim, and Somnas the scribe, and Joah said to him: Speak to your servants in Syriac, for we hear; and do not speak to us in Judean. And why do you speak in the ears of the people on the wall? And Rabshakeh said to them: Has my lord sent me to your master, or to you, to speak these words? Is it not to the men sitting on the wall, so that they may also eat? The common folk are always somehow easily terrified, and far too ready for despair, especially when war is at hand, and when slaughter is expected, and conflagrations throughout the city.

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

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

their own fields, and he soothes, as it were, the terror of captivity, and conceals the harshness of the matter with deceitful words, adding, 'Until I come, and take you to a land like your own land.' For he compares the land of the Assyrians to the land of the Judeans, all but saying:

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

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

And Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, the steward, and Shebna the scribe of the host, and Joah the recorder came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and they reported to him the words of Rabshakeh. And it came to pass, when King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes, and put on sackcloth, and went up into the house of the Lord. At

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

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

Those prominent in the priesthood and crowned by law with the highest honors, along with the others, he commanded not to be in sacred garments and those more fitting for the liturgy, but rather to go clothed in sackcloth, that is, in garments of mourning, to the blessed prophet Isaiah, and to report that a day of affliction and reproach had befallen them. For, it says, God all but reproaches those dwelling in the holy city, as having neglected the gentleness according to the law; and he rebukes them for having sinned, and thus brings upon them things from his wrath. And they clearly affirmed that their affairs had come to such a state as to make Israel resemble a woman giving birth, but who has come to her last extremity for being unable to bear the child. And he wishes that the God of all would, through the mediation of the prophet, listen to the words of Rabshakeh, which he has heard by himself. For nothing of existing things escapes his notice, as many had already

been destroyed in other cities, and their houses burned. Pray, he says, for these who are left. Hezekiah is exceedingly pious, calling upon him who is honored by God, clearly the prophet, to become a helper. It is therefore beneficial to fall down before God through the leading saints. For on their account he grants his favor, and often pities even the tear of those who are accustomed to be slothful. And Isaiah said to them: Thus you shall say to your lord:

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

For this reason and very appropriately he frees them from terrors, and does not allow them to be dismayed by cold and old-womanish words and by barbaric foul-mouthedness, but rather he strengthens them for a much-desired hope, saying that the arrogant tyrant would be carried back to his own land unwillingly, by a malevolent spirit terrifying and driving him unbearably into fears for his own kingdom, and that he would fall by the sword, having been in no danger at all in a foreign land, nor yet having boasted in the slaughters of his enemies, nor being rich in the splendid rewards of valor against his foes; but while spending his time in his own land, he has fallen there in his own land, this happening contrary to hope and unexpectedly. For where one would think he would be spending his time freed from terrors, there he has fallen, and by those from whom it was likely he would be saved while in danger. And who these were we shall know from what follows. And Rabshakeh returned, and found the king besieging Libnah; and the king of the Assyrians heard that Tirhakah king of the Ethiopians had come out to besiege him; and when he heard it, he returned and sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying: Thus you shall say to Hezekiah king of Judah: Let not your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying: Jerusalem will not be given over- lem into the hands of the king of the Assyrians.

Or have you not heard what the kings of the Assyrians have done, they have destroyed all the land? Did the gods of the nations rescue them, whom my fathers destroyed, both Gaza and Haran, and Rezeph, which are in the country of Teman, Where are the kings of Hamath, and Arphad, and of the city of Sepharvaim, of

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

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

And he confesses that even if some are called kings on earth, nevertheless the one who is king by nature and in truth, and who has all things under his feet, would be himself and alone the creator of earth and heaven, and who by his nod established the things that once were not. And he exhorts him to hear and to look, that is, not to overlook and to pass by such bitter blasphemies; but to punish the sinner with justice. For he has reproached the living God, he says, that is, the one who is in no way like those of the nations, to whom that man, comparing him, impiously grew insolent. For truly the kings of the Assyrians have laid waste the whole world,

and their land, and have cast their idols into the fire. For they were not gods, but the works of men's hands, wood and stone, and they destroyed them. But you, O Lord our God, save us from their hands, so that every kingdom of the earth may know that you alone are God. I have heard, he says, the barbarian saying: "Did the gods of the nations, each one, deliver his own land from my hand? And if someone should say this, I approve and I am persuaded. For they have conquered all the earth, and have burned the cities, the falsely named gods being able to offer no help; for they have saved no one.

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

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

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

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

For the Persians and Assyrians, attributing to their own powers the ability to accomplish everything, in their running through the lands, they would bridge rivers, and they would often carry on, being so numerous, as to be able to exhaust springs, and gatherings of waters, and sometimes not even rivers would suffice for the thirsty men and horses together. And the Greek chroniclers, as many as have made mention of the Persians in their own writings, say that they also bridged the Hellespont itself; and even if a river, they say, was found in the midst of their passing through either a country or a city, the tyrant would command, saying: 'Let it be consumed by drinking.' Therefore, the God of all remembers the arrogance of the Persians,

and rebukes those accustomed to boasting. Then after this he shows that they were not rather able to succeed, in those things wherein they have thought so arrogantly; but rather his decree, brought against the transgressors, created in them the reputation of being able. Have you not heard of old what I have done? From ancient days I ordained it, and now I have commanded it to lay waste fortified nations, and those who dwell in fortified cities. I have lifted my hands, and they withered, and became as a dry flower on the rooftops, and as grass. Do you not blush, he says, attributing to your own powers all these things which you think you have accomplished?

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

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

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

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

Therefore in the third year, he says, let there be at last a respite, and for farmers what is sufficient and for vineyard keepers, if they should choose to plant them; peace evidently awarding it and security. And that those who have been saved and left over from the war will be in a firm state of good cheer, he indicates by saying, as of plants, that they will stretch a root downwards, and will cast seed upwards. And that they will dwell securely, and firmly, and outside of all fear, the having a root in the depth gives one to understand. And that the matter of prosperity

will be extended to them even to the end, the making of seed above allows one to understand. And he adds, that the zeal of the Lord of Sabaoth will do these things. For since the Assyrian has blasphemed, and comparing him to the falsely named gods, dared to say, God will not deliver Jerusalem from my hand? All these things it will happen, he says, when the Almighty has been moved to zeal. But if one applies against Sennacherib the saying, "Eat this year what you have sown, and in the second year what is left over," we say that those who are accustomed to wage war, either on countries or cities, when the siege is at times delayed and the battle for them extends over time, they also take up farming, so that they might have provisions.

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

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

Adrammelech and Sarasar his sons struck him with swords; but they escaped to Armenia, and Achordan his son reigned in his place.

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

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

”Do not engage in word-wrangling, which is useless for anything; and again, ”A heretical man, after a first and second admonition, reject, knowing that such a one has been perverted. For to those who have once completely inclined to deceit and trickery, and are held fast by falsehood, even the word of those who are accustomed

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

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

King Hezekiah, therefore, had fallen into a sickness, and indeed the evil had come to its end; for he was in extreme danger through the voice of the prophet, who says that he will die, and that it is fitting for him to set his house in order. And this was not from one who was ignorant that he would live and escape the terrible danger of the sickness by mercy from Him, but from one who was calling and inciting him to prayer, so that by asking he might receive the mercy from Him. For He pities those who are loved, and grants to the genuine the finding of the things they long for, and accepts the words of their supplications. Which indeed has been done. For Hezekiah prayed, saying: Remember, Lord, how I have walked before you in truth, with a true heart, and have done what is pleasing in your sight. The confidence

of the just is good; for they all but ask for a requital for what has been done and the fruits of their genuineness. And the God of all things is delighted with those who have lived lawfully, and readily assents to those who maintain an exceptional life, when He sees them weeping and weaving toil with their prayer. And the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying: Go and say to Hezekiah: Thus says the God of David your father: I have heard the voice of your prayer, and I have seen your tears;

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

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

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

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

Raising songs of thanksgiving, he promises to imitate the things which birds are accustomed to utter well, and to make his hymns unceasing. He says that by raising the eyes of his mind to God, he has been saved, and has escaped both the anguish of his soul, and death itself. For you have raised up my life, he says, I both lived and you preserved mine, so that it might not perish, and you have cast all my sins behind me. This is not the attitude of one sick with arrogance, but of one who has already come to know his own nature, and who knows precisely that we are all liable for many sins, and if God did not wish to save by mercy, no one will boast of having a pure heart, nor will he dare to say he is clean from sin. Therefore, in the blessings which might come to us from God, let him be glorified by us as one who

has forgotten those things for which it was fitting to be justly punished. For wise, he says, are those who know themselves. For those in Hades will not praise you, nor will the dead bless you, nor will those in Hades hope for your mercy. The living will bless you, in the way that I also do. For from this day I will beget children, who will declare your righteousness, O Lord of the of my salvation, and I will not cease blessing you with a psaltery all the days of my life.

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

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

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

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

But he, although it was necessary to make a brilliant narration to those who had arrived from Babylon of the timely assistance of the all-powerful God, and the magnificent work of the paradoxes, so that, marveling even more greatly at the divine excellence and the invincible authority of the Master of all, through the words by which they were initiated by him, they might return to their own land, having been enriched with the knowledge of God; for it was thus possible also to benefit others by proclaiming what they had learned; this he did not do, but was rather carried away into human vainglory, and he does not manage his own glory from the things

for which he was honored by God, but from the wealth of the kingdom, and up to these things he defines for himself the power of his inherent good repute. For he showed them, it says, the house of Nechotha; and Nechotha is interpreted as of the spices, and of the stacte, and of the myrrh, and of the silver and of the gold, and all the houses of the vessels of the gaza, that is, of the abundance. For gaza is said to be a Persian word, and it signifies wealth, or abundance. And Isaiah the prophet came to king Hezekiah, and said to him: What do these men say, and from where have they come to you? And Hezekiah said: From a land far away they have come to me, from Babylon. And Isaiah said: What have they seen in your house?

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

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

is, eunuchs. What then, and for what useful purpose, was this matter of such a prediction?

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

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

And in the time of the reign of Cyrus he was released from captivity and returned to Judea, and rebuilt the temple, and they dwelt not divided, until the coming of our Savior. Since Therefore, having made mention of the final capt- ivity, when the

Babylonians, having come [or, having] with all that was in the treas- uries of the kings of Judea, returned to their own land, he necess- arily makes the prediction of the consolation that came after this, that is, clearly, the one through Christ, to those who minister the divine Gospel, commanding, and saying: ”Comfort, comfort my people, says God. For a consol- ation for salvation, especially first for those of Israel, was the com- ing of Christ, and the oracles through him, as he says cle- arly: ”I was not sent except to the lost she- ep of the house of Israel. O therefore, he says, you priests, O ministers of the new things, and of the oracles through Christ, speak to the heart of Jerusalem, that is, make the word of consola- tion acceptable to those who hear. For the law was burdensome to all, teaching both shadows and types; not instilling into the mind and heart the instruc- tion concerning necessary things for the hearers, but, as it were, it with difficulty placed a certain external knowledge, which is in letters only.

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

”You are our epistle, known and re- ad by all men, being made manifest that you are an epistle of Christ ministered by us, writ- ten not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of a fleshly heart. But it seems to some that instead of the minis- ters of the divine proclamation, the holy angels have been named priests in these things; for whom it would indeed be most fitting to be able to speak in hearts. Comfort her, therefore. What then should you say? that the God of all has ceased from the wrath that was upon them. ”Her humiliation is accomplished. For sufficiently, he says, has she been hum- bled, and her sin is pardoned. ”For she has received from the Lord’s hand double for her sins. Did not God then punish beyond what was due, and did he not imp- ose penalties equal to the crimes, but far beyond them, and as it were, double? Then how is the matter

not incre- dible? And how will he speak the truth, saying: The Lord will not take vengeance twice for the same thing in affliction? how then must one understand what is said? for it is as if a child-loving father and one having the greatest compassion, having afflicted a sinning son (of the sons? a little, thinks perhaps that the emotion shown towards him was even beyond measure; and the cause of this is fondness, and the disposition owed to children from a father;

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

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

But if it should happen somehow that the high and steep places sink, and the hollow and deep places are filled up, then indeed, then in every way and altogether the

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

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

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

him to see the salvation of God, except only by choosing to think, and to do the things that seem good and are pleasing to him, he makes it clear.

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

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

And by adding "Behold," he does not allow hope to be stretched out to a long time for the arrival, but shows the Redeemer as being about to come after a short while, or rather, as having somehow already come to the very door. For he has commanded them to stretch out their hand, as it were, and to reveal with a finger the one who was foretold. And that it will not be like one of the holy prophets nor

indeed in the measure of supplicants, but in despotic authority, and in power and lordship most befitting God, he made clear by saying, ”He comes with strength, and his arm with dominion. For the divine prophets used to beseech that something might come from God, and indeed that it might be for the peoples under their hand. But the Savior and Lord of all, not lifting up a prayer, nor indeed receiving anything by request and then giving it, but as a true Son, has distributed the good things from the Father with the dignity befitting one who is free to those who have believed in him, and he worked all things using his own power and indeed authority. And that the mystery of the economy will not be fruitless for the one who became as we are, and endured the cross, and death on it, he shows by saying: ”Behold his reward is with him, and his work before him,” and he calls ”reward” the fruit of having died according to the flesh.

For he said, ”Truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it brings forth more fruit. And again: ”If I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself. For as Paul says: ”He endured the cross, despising the shame. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The divine David also, having foreknown this in spirit, sings and says to him: ”All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord. Therefore the economy is not without reward nor fruitless. And it followed and happened as if in his eyes as he shepherded his own flocks, and with his arm, that is, with his strength, gathered the lambs. For those who believed in him were created anew for a newness of life like newborn and young sheep, having clearly received the rebirth from above and through the Spirit. Therefore they long for the spiritual milk, being nourished as infants at first, but advancing also to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Therefore the lambs were shepherded, and some who were with young, that is, those having in the womb, were also comforted.

For the Gentiles would rightly be understood as lambs just appeared and newly born. And one might say that those having in the womb are those already travailing with the word concerning him, as from the legal teachings and prophetic proclamations. For Christ has saved not only those from the Gentiles, but also those of the blood of Israel, to whom he says he was especially sent, who are also comforted, confirming by faith the accurate knowledge of the mystery that has come to them. Who has measured the water in the hollow of his hand, and the heaven with a span, and all the earth with a handful? Who has weighed the mountains with a scale, and the valleys with a balance? Who has known the mind of the Lord, and who has been his counselor, who will instruct him? Or with whom did he take counsel, and who instructed him? Or who showed him judgment? or who showed him the way of understanding? Through things unattainable and impossible for all men, or

rather, perhaps, even for the powers above and in heaven, he attempts to show the transcendent and incomprehensible nature of the wisdom in God. For the mystery of Christ has been wondered at, and in ineffable words is the reason of the economy seen. And it seems to me that it is opportune to use the words of Paul and say: ”O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

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

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

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

Discourse 21

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

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

if all things were offered to Him for a whole burnt offering, they too should be cast behind the glory of God.

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

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

For it was not when the only-begotten Word of God, having become like us, a man, shone upon those on the earth, that for the first time in the final accusations the error came to be. But the charge of idolatry was ancient, as I said. For the choir of saints has not ceased to decry it, and to show it to be abominable, and to make manifest the Creator and Lord of all. He who holds the circle of the earth, and its

inhabitants are as locusts. He who establishes the heaven as a vault, and spreads it out as a tent to dwell in. From from the beauty of the created things, their Creator is analogously perceived, at least by those who are of a sound mind. For it is possible for the wise to be able to perceive, and very easily, who indeed, and how great is the maker and craftsman of this universe, from the excellence and the ineffable and God-befitting economy, by which creation, not being, came to be, and having come to be, is preserved, being held together by the power of the one who made it for well-being and existence. For to what could he be likened? says the Lord.

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

You are my God, and to the stone, You have begotten me, but also most foolishly to deify men who have become distinguished on the earth. And so Sennacherib, having returned from Judea to his own land, was said to worship his own patriarch. For they offered sacrifices also to the dead, and calling them heroes, they registered them as gods. It was necessary, therefore, since the multitude of idols was clearly discredited, to proceed to this very argument, to persuade the deceived to consider human things as absolutely nothing; but even if some of those on earth have become illustrious and admirable at times, or sit on the highest and royal thrones, or have been deemed worthy of other preeminence at times, in no way to think that they are gods, but rather to understand that, both the ability to have power and to rule are given to some from nowhere else except from God. And that the matter is free from all difficulty for the all-powerful God, he shows clearly, saying that rulers are given to rule as nothing by him. And he leads up to something even greater and says, He made the earth as nothing. And that it lies in the power of God whether any memory is preserved or not of those who have become illus-

trious and distinguished on earth, he declares, saying: For they shall not sow, nor shall they plant.

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

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

Lift up your eyes on high, see the firmament, the choir of the stars, consider who has shown all these things, who is it that brings forth his host by number, that is, clearly, of heaven. And he calls the stars the host of heaven, which he says he knows in himself, not only as seen in their multitude, but indeed also each one, and as it were by name. This is worthy of God, and exceptional; and so the prophet makes much of this matter in his wonder, and says to him: From your great glory,

and in the dominion of your strength nothing has escaped you. For as the sacred Scripture says, The drops of rain are numbered by him. For nothing at all would escape the ineffable wisdom, the mind that knows all things. For you should not say, Jacob, and what has Israel spoken? My way is hidden from God, and my God has taken away my judgment, and has departed. Having stated very well that those who are wandering will be called in due season and, being enriched in mind and heart with the light of truth, will acknowledge the creator and artificer of all things, and that they will be wise and sagacious, and from the beauty of created things will behold in proportion the one who by ineffable power brought this whole universe into existence, and having woven for them a sufficient initiation through the things already said before, he transfers his discourse to those from the blood of Jacob, that is, Israel.

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

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

the law, and departed; as one who is surely somehow ignorant of the one who watches in God, he says such things: Let it be, he says, even if you did not know now, if you have not heard? that is, if you would not hear? It is as if he were to say: I accept the pretense economically. You did not know, unless you were to learn, that is, without hearing. Hear therefore, an eternal God.

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

For the commandment was given through Moses; and for what things then, and for what reason Paul will teach, saying that ”The law entered in, that the trespass might abound. And again: ”For the Scripture has confined all under disobedience, that he might have mercy on all. Therefore the indicator of sin was appointed, and as it were a conviction of the weakness of all, so that, since it does not know how to justify sinners, but rather condemns them, finally the grace of the generosity through Christ is necessarily introduced, justifying the ungodly, and freeing from their trespasses those held fast by them. Therefore, there is no searching out of the understanding of God who manages all things wisely, who both pre-appointed the law for the conviction of sin, and sent the Son from heaven, that he might justify by faith those in sins. Giving strength to the hungry, and to those who are not in pain, sorrow. For the younger men shall hunger, and the young men shall grow weary, and the chosen shall be without strength. But they that wait for God shall renew their strength, they shall grow wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not hunger. Understand for me then in a general sense, that the eternal God, the God who made the ends of the earth, is himself the one who gives strength to the hungry. For indeed God, being also eternal, has never been in need of food.

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

But those who knew through the instruction in the law how to do good, and who once fulfilled the given commandment, but these, he says, will hunger, and will labor, that is, they will be without strength for anything good. For if a famine of the divine words befalls some, it certainly reveals them to be weakened, and paralyzed, and knowing how to trample on nothing good. But that the nation of Israel was destroyed by famine, with those who believed in our Lord Jesus Christ having been delivered from the evil, God proclaims beforehand, and long ago speaking through one of the prophets: ”Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will bring a famine upon the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord; and they shall run to and fro from the east to the west seeking the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. For how were they not to become strengthless and to labor, and to be destroyed by an intellectual famine, clearly because they did not accept Christ, although he said clearly: ”I am the living bread, who came down from heaven, and gives life to the world; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever? And since through much folly, although it was possible to partake, they did not eat the bread of life, they are wasted by famine, while the Gentiles feast.

For it is true that, as Solomon says, ”The Lord will not let the righteous soul suffer hunger, but he will overthrow the life of the ungodly. But these things the Jews happened to suffer. For they acted impiously against the author of life. But those who wait for God, that is, those who serve Christ, and think his thoughts, and are zealous to do right, will renew their strength. For they have not remained in those weaknesses in which they were once wandering, and yoked to Satan, and to worldly

pleasures, but they will have another, Christ clearly supplying them with the ability to prevail over every loathsome pleasure, and to be borne out of the snares of sin. For it is written: ”The Lord is my strength and my song. They will be renewed thus, he says, as if eagles also. And the blessed David will teach this, saying: ”Your youth will be renewed like an eagle’s. And they will run, and not grow weary. For zealous and youthful they will traverse the paths of piety toward God, with Christ giving them life-giving things, and not allowing them to grow weary. For he fills the hearts of those who love him with strength from above, so that even if it should happen to fall into temptations and labors, while practicing virtue, they become stronger than to be weary, knowing well that patience is much to be prayed for, and if it is in some, it surely shows them to be fully approved.

”For patience works proof, and proof hope, and hope does not put to shame those who are accustomed to live thus. The blessed David encourages to manliness, that is clearly, in all good things, saying: ”Be of good courage, and let your heart be strengthened, all you who hope in the Lord. Be renewed to me, O islands. For the rulers will exchange their strength; let them draw near, and speak together, then let them announce judgment. The islands are understood in different ways. For there are many in the seas, and sometimes cities are also called thus, and villages having a wide circle of unplowed and untilled land around them; they say that those of the Idumaeans and Moabites are such, as lying in the desert. And these were impious idolaters, and not far from the land of the Jews. We say, therefore, that wishing to signify the reception of the Gentiles, and as from the midst transferring the power of the matter to the whole, he addresses the cities of those who are wandering, saying: Be renewed to me, O islands, that is, having cast away from your own hearts the oldness and rottenness from wandering and sinning, be renewed through repentance. Take counsel for better things, receive the grace that renews unto newness of life, that is, clearly, the one through Christ.

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

them reveal such wonders. For certainly not like the first, that is, the teachers of the Jews, have the disciples of our Savior become. But as in another power, a spiritual one clearly, they were much better, and incomparably superior in their boasts according to virtue. Let these rulers, therefore, draw near, and speak together.

But you will understand 'let them draw near' in terms of time. For if the time should reveal them, they will speak together. It is as if he should say: All will say the same thing to those being initiated. For as speaking from one spirit they do not contend with one another's words, but rather they will make the proclamation concerning the divine dogmas in harmony, and will announce the hidden mystery of Christ. For this, I think, is the meaning of, Then let them announce judgment. For since those of Israel called the law through Moses 'judgment,' for this very reason and quite fittingly, contrasting with it the evangelical and saving proclamation, he calls it 'judgment' through these words. For the truly just judgment, and the power of the legislation pleasing to God, is not revealed more in the shadow according to the law, but in the preaching of the holy mystagogues, the new rulers. Who, having learned the judgment from Christ, that is, the will of God the Father, have announced this to us in the same words. Who has raised up righteousness from the east, has called it to follow his feet, and it shall go? It is not fitting to marvel at the God who has dominion over all things from the mere and only magnificence in His works, but also through the ways in which He does good, He makes a demonstration of the serenity within Him.

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

"If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me. But if I do, even if you do not believe Me, believe My works. Following then everywhere the will of the

Father, or rather being Himself the will of the Father, He addressed the Jewish people saying: ”You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. And even if I do judge, My judgment is just, because I seek not My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. Do you see then how He, as it were, walks in the footsteps of the Father. Therefore He also said: ”I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me; and, ”He who has seen Me has seen My Father. He will set before the nations, and He will astonish kings. And He will cast their swords to the ground, and their bows as discarded twigs. And He will pursue them, and the path of His feet will pass in peace. Who worked, and did these things? He called her, who calls her from ancient generations. For before the coming of our Savior, those on the earth, differing in nothing from irrational beasts, appeared to be living with great ignorance, and were possessed by ignorance and darkness, and had been enslaved to the world-rulers of this age, and having submitted the neck of their own mind to the desires of the devil, they were being carried down the paths of wickedness to destruction. But Christ shone upon them.

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

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

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

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

And since the nations have seen Christ and the righteousness that came to us from him, and all have seen his glory with the eyes of the mind, they have feared, he says, those from the ends of the earth to the ends, that is, those throughout the whole world. And they were gathered and drew near, no longer remaining far off, and as if being alienated through sin, but as if having become near through spiritual kinship, and brought together into one faith and unanimity. For I think this is what it means, that ”They drew near, and came together. But having tasted of the Lord, and understood that he is good, and having marveled at the beauty of the truth, they have not kept the gift for themselves alone, but indeed doing good, each one has also fittingly judged to help his brother and friend, he says. And he will say: A craftsman grew strong, and a smith striking with a hammer, forging at the same time. At one time he will say: It is a good joining. They strengthened it with nails, they will set it up, and it will not be moved. He makes the manner of the help clear. For each of those who have judged to help his neighbor and brother, having been initiated, he says, and having known the truth, will also admonish others, saying: A craftsman grew strong and a smith striking with a hammer, forging at the same time. But in what way did he grow strong?

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

You are my servant, I have chosen you, and I have not forsaken you. Do not be afraid. For I am with you. Do not wander. For I am your God who has strengthened you, and I have helped you, and I have secured you with my righteous right hand. Having initiated very well those from the nations, and having prepared them to know that he is both God and the creator of all things, and that all things are subject to him and to his divine commands, and came to be in the beginning, and having been brought into being are fixed in goodness, and have an unshaken permanence, he then necessarily encourages the ministers of the evangelical ordinances, through whom they were to deliver the word of instruction to those from the nations. And he declares them wise and most daring, and brings to remembrance the virtue of the holy fathers, and he wishes them to know the love shown to them. For this reason he says: But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, whom I have loved. But Jacob and Israel, and the seed of Abraham the beloved, would be none other than those of Israel who have believed in Christ, of whom, as it were, a kind of first-fruits the divine disciples have become. And that the fathers had become chosen and beloved he says, all but saying:

You who are from a noble root, and one so honored and beloved by me, you who are of the blood of Abraham, emulate the renown of your paternal virtue, and become imitators of their love for God. Indeed he says that he took hold of Abraham, and called him from the ends of the earth, that is, from its high places, because from afar and from the land of the Chaldeans he was summoned to Judea. For he heard God saying: "Go out from your land, and from your kindred, and from the house of your father, and come to the land that I will show you. Then he says as if concerning all of Israel, that I said to you: You are my servant. For he has been named firstborn.

And he became chosen, as I said, and was not forsaken by God. He heard: Do not be afraid, and in addition, Do not wander. For I am your God who has strengthened you. For he was taught through the law that God is one, and the Lord is one, and that one must worship him alone, and that he has been helped by him and through his right hand, which is his creative power, that is, the Son. And he has become secure in himself, and superior to every plot. For he has conquered nations, and has inherited their land. Behold, all those who oppose you will be turned back and put to shame.

For they will be as if they were not, and all your adversaries will perish. You will seek them, and you will not find the men who acted insolently toward you. For they will be as if they were not, and those who war against you will not be, because I am your God who holds your right hand, who says to you: Do not be afraid, worm Jacob, few in number Israel. I have helped you, says God, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, and praised forever. This is also a fulfillment of what was said above. For you, Israel, my servant, he says, and Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, whom I have loved. Behold, they will be put to shame, and turned back, all who oppose you. For there have been very many at various times, who have unholily plotted against the holy initiators, and who have attempted to bring forth in opposition to the salvific proclamations the things from their own wickedness. But they have become as nothing, and the adversaries of piety have perished. For to act against the ministers of the divine proclamation would be nothing other than to fight against the dogmas of piety. Therefore they will not be, he says, but you will seek them, and you will not find those who have acted insolently toward you. For they will be as if they were not. And this is what is sung through the voice of the blessed David:

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

few in number, and I do not mean the whole nation, but those taken by him for the apostolate.

But the one saving them was great, strong, and mighty for aid, having an invincible hand. For when God redeems, who is able to do harm? Behold, I have made you like the wheels of a cart, threshing, new, like a saw. And you will thresh mountains, and grind down hills, and make them like dust, and you will winnow, and the wind will take them up, and a whirlwind will scatter them. The children of the Egyptians, having brought sheaves from the fields to the threshing floor, then letting oxen upon them, and leading them around in a circle, grind down the ears of grain with their hooves. And they separate and divide the grain from the chaff, those indeed in other cities and countries using carts and saw-toothed wheels. This very thing they have practiced to accomplish. Behold, therefore, he says, O Israel, I have made you like the threshing wheels of a cart, new, saw-toothed. And what is being threshed? Is it then ears of grain and wheat, and the things mixed together from the fields onto the threshing floor? By no means, but mountains, and hills. And who might such as these be in turn? First, the wicked and opposing powers. For the Savior of all has given us to tread upon snakes, and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy.

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

”For not all who are from Israel, these are Israel, nor because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children, but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. And that it was a custom to rejoice and be glad with the holy apostles over those who were accustomed to prosper, clearly through faith in Christ, Paul will also make clear when writing to them and saying: ”My joy and my crown. And I for my part would say that each of the holy disciples was disposed in the same manner, and very rightly. For the cause of the highest gladness for them was the conversion

of those who had gone astray, and the restoration to the better of those who did not know the truth. Therefore you will rejoice in the saints, Israel. And who these are he points out, saying: The poor and needy will rejoice, that is, the Gentiles. For they were in need of every good thing, and completely without a share in the gifts from God. For those who are completely ignorant of him must necessarily lack the boasts of virtue. Therefore the poor and the needy will rejoice. How, or in what way? For they will seek water, and there will be none, he says, and their tongue has become parched from thirst. The phrase, ”they will seek,” in these words, he says, is used instead of, ”they sought. But since they did not find it, their tongue was parched with thirst.

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

This is what the Gentiles once bore for fruit, but to those who had long been thirsty he says: I will open rivers on the mountains, that is, holy men who have been enriched with the divine word from above, and who pour it out like river streams for the thirsty, and as it were, gush forth. So that the desert, once its appearance is changed, appears as marshes, and forests, and the thirsty land as in aqueducts. And aqueducts, in turn, would be the mystagogues who have appeared from time to time in every country and city, and the teachers of the Churches; who, just as from the springs and rivers of the divinely-inspired Scripture, having taken the word into their mind and heart, transfer it to others, like certain aqueducts watering the most flourishing gardens. And in what manner the desert will be changed into marshes, and of what kind of trees it will be the nurse, he teaches, saying: ”I will put in the waterless land the cedar, and the box-tree, and the myrtle, and the cypress, and the white poplar. And all these are fragrant and incorruptible woods. And to the saints belongs both fragrance, spiritually through a holy way of life, and the fact

of not being corrupted by being given over loosely to worldly desires, but standing firm and steadfast, God rooting and sustaining them with his help. For the Lord upholds the righteous, as it is written.

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

By judgment he means, either the punishment due to them, or the shame, and disgrace. For by a holy vote of God, and by a just judgment they would be punished as having deceived the world under heaven, and having introduced counsels that are not true. For they taught those on the earth to say to the wood, ”You are my father, and to the stone, You have begotten me. For this reason he also says their counsels have drawn near, that is, have come to an end, with God shaking off the error, and scattering the mist from ignorance, and not by one of those among them, we mean of course the falsely named, but by the Lord, and God in truth, and the king of Jacob, that is, of those of the blood of Israel. And through these things he brings to remembrance the signs that have happened, at the redemption of those from Israel, through which the power of his inherent God-befitting authority, or incomparable excellence, is very well discerned. Let them draw near, and announce to you what will happen, or what the former things were; tell us, and we will apply our mind, and we will know, what the last things are, and the things to come. Tell us, announce the things to come at the last, and we will know that you are gods. Do good, and do evil, and we will marvel, and we will see at the same time, that from where are you, and from where is your work;

from the earth they have chosen you as an abomination. It is a proper and extraordinary characteristic of the divine and ineffable glory to know all things, and to be

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

but he afflicts and subjects to punishments those who are accustomed to despise him, and do not endure to do good. But one could see nothing of this in those things made of stones. For what does lifeless matter know? Or how could they do good to someone, or be able to do evil, things that are not even able to defend themselves, but have received from others even just to stand and be seen? Let them come, then, he says, those who are thought by you to be gods; let them announce what will happen, let them say the former things, and the last things, and the things to come. For then, he says, we will know that you are gods. But you are not able, he says, to announce it. Therefore, at least do good and do evil. But if you are able to do none of these things, then we will see, that is, it is easy to see, from where you are, and from where your work is; for you are an abomination made from the earth. For the idol would be, let’s say, from wood, or stone of a bright and choice, that is, of another material; but all these things are from the earth. But I think one must marvel at the worshippers of idols, if they have not even learned that from them, namely, where their affairs will ever end.

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

the Gentiles. For in relation to the land of the Jews, which is most southern, the land of the Gentiles is more northerly, and it has obtained the region toward the sun's rays. Therefore, the one from the north, and from the rising of the sun, would be the people from the Gentiles, who are called by the name of Christ. For we have been named Christians, and we are.

For he has acquired us with His own blood, and we have been bought with a price, and we are not our own. For one died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised. Therefore we say to our own Savior and Redeemer: "Lord, besides you we know no other, we call upon your name. We are therefore called by his name, and this was what was spoken through the voice of the prophet: But to those who serve me a new name shall be called, which shall be blessed upon the earth. But it seems, he says, that 'the one from the rising of the sun' means Christ, because it is written concerning him: "Behold a man, whose name is the East. And again, as God the Father says concerning him: "Who has raised up righteousness from the east? "For Christ has become for us righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption besides. Let the rulers come, and as the potter's clay, and as a potter treading clay, you will be trodden down. For who will announce the things from the beginning, that we may know also the things to come? And we will say that he is true. There is no one who foretells, nor one who hears your words. For with God's assent, the multitude of idols was about to be burned down, and to be thrown aside like clay under the feet of the believers.

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

But those who formerly honored the sayings from them have been called to the knowledge of the truth, and this he teaches by saying: ”Nor indeed the one who hears your words. I will give a beginning to Zion, and I will summon Jerusalem to the way. For from the nations, behold, there is no one, and from their idols, there was no one announcing; and if I ask them, From where are you? they will not answer me; for they are the ones who make you, and in vain those who lead you astray. He promises again the manifestation of the Savior, through whom the world under heaven has been saved, and the multitude of those who were wandering has been called to the knowledge of truth. For so that we might have the guide, the one who knows how and is able to lead us to the way of salvation, the only-begotten Word of God became man, being by nature a king; inasmuch as He is also understood as God and from God the Father, who indeed rules over all things, and has creation lying under his feet; He is said to have been appointed king over us. For it is written concerning Him: ”Behold, a righteous king will reign, and rulers will rule with judgment. For Christ has reigned over the world under heaven, and He makes this clear to us by saying: ”All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

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

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

He will shine forth, and will not be crushed, until he establishes judgment on the earth; and in his name the nations and peoples will hope. He foretold, saying, 'I will give a beginning to Zion,' and he clearly shows what kind this is. For he has been appointed over the spiritual Zion, that is, over the Church, as ruler and guide, not ascending to the beginning of the matter at that time, when he is also said to have been brought to this. For the Word from the Virgin was and is always king, and Lord of all things. But since He became man, He makes the measure of humanity his own. For thus it was true, and was to be believed by us without doubt, that He became like us.

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

but insofar as he appeared as a man according to the economy. He has been anointed, therefore, to bring forth judgment to the nations. And by judgment he means in these things just judgment. For he has justified them by condemning the avaricious Satan. And he himself taught us this, saying: "Now is the judgment of this world. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. For he condemned to destruction the one who had taken advantage, as I said, of the world under heaven, but by a holy judgment he has saved those who were deceived. But he will not cry, he says, nor lift up, nor shall his voice be heard outside. For the Savior and Lord of all sojourned with great humility and without ostentation, and as it were silently, wronging no one; but in silence and tranquility, so as not to break a bruised reed, nor to quench a smoldering flax, that is, not to set his foot even on the most insignificant and those accustomed to suffering harm very readily. What then will he do, and what will he accomplish for the nations? He will bring forth judgment unto truth. In these things he seems to be calling it the law. For it is written concerning Israel,

and of God who rules all things, that there he gave him ordinances and judgment; and again, Judgment and justice in Jacob you have made.

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

For having recognized that he is truly God, even if he appeared in the flesh, they will make him their hope, and as the Psalmist says: ”In his name they shall rejoice all the day. For we are called Christians, and in him we have all hope. Thus says the Lord who made the heaven, and established it, who made the earth firm, and the things in it, and gives breath to the people upon it, and spirit to those who walk on it: I the Lord God have called you in righteousness, and will take hold of your hand, and will strengthen you. And I have given you for a covenant of the people, for a light to the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out from bonds those who are bound, and from the prison house those who sit in deep darkness. False prophets and false seers, very many have there been at times in Israel. And it happened for this reason that even those sent from God, and true prophets, were disbelieved, and accustomed to speaking in the Holy Spirit. And the paradox is this, that Christ Himself was reviled, as neither sent from God, nor truly being holy, and performing wonders in the excellence of divinity. And so the teachers of the Jews, although seeing Him performing miracles, at one time said that He cast out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons; at another time they would say to one another:

If this man were from God, he would not break the Sabbath. And in response to these things, Christ often tried to make a defense and to assure them that he was not like those who were merely and only in the appearance of having been sent from God. For He said: ”The thief comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to

destroy. I am come that they might have life. And again: ”I am come in my Father’s name. Therefore, that He might also have the Father in heaven as a witness, He said both usefully and necessarily through the holy prophets, that I am the Lord God who fixed the heaven, who showed the earth to be most firm and unshaken, the living and life-giving, and giving breath to all. I, the God and Lord of all, have called you in righteousness. For He did not become a deserter, he says, like those false prophets who speak from their own heart, and not from the mouth of the Lord; but I have called you, that is, according to my good pleasure I have brought you forth in righteousness. I will take hold of your hand, and I will strengthen you; instead of, I will work with you, and I will show all things powerful. And we do not say that the Father knows the Son to be weak and feeble, nor indeed in need of assistance.

For He is the Lord of hosts, and the invincible right hand of the Father, through whom all things were brought into existence. But again He makes the statements, as to one of us, in that He appeared as a man, and seems somehow on account of His humanity to be strengthened by the Father. For thus it is said that He raised Him, and gave glory to Him, and showed Him to be superior to the plot of those who murdered Him. For if He humbled Himself, and willingly descended into emptying, it is altogether necessary that the measure of the emptying be seen, and the humility be understood through the events themselves. But see how, speaking as of a man the words, I will take hold of your hand, and I will strengthen you, He immediately shows that He is God by nature and truly Son, and light from light. For I have given you, He says, for a covenant of the race, for a light to the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind. For the only-begotten Word of God came into this world with flesh, and to those of the race, that is, of the blood of Israel; for from them He appeared according to the flesh, being born of a woman; He has given the new covenant, which was long ago foretold through the voice of prophets. He has also become a light to the Gentiles. And this is also worthy of God.

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

Paul says: ”For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many, and lords many; but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him;

and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. Since to us great and has introduced himself as the bringer to completion of wonderful things, He says he will not bestow his glory upon lifeless idols, nor indeed to any other of created things, that is, the virtues befitting God, but will keep them for himself alone. For it was fitting that the glory of the Godhead should not belong to any other, or to one essentially different from them, but to the ineffable and transcendent nature itself and alone. But though saying he would bestow his glory upon no one, he has given it to the Son; for he has been glorified, just as the Father is also worshipped both in heaven and on earth. How then has he given it, as to one not different from them, according to the principle of consubstantiality, even if each were set apart in his own hypostasis? For the nature of the most high Godhead is one, in three distinct hypostases, understood and worshipped by those accustomed to think rightly. Saying: The things from the beginning, behold, have come. And new things, which I will announce, and before announcing them, they have been revealed to us; he does not permit the word of the Savior to be disbelieved by us in any respect at all. For just as, he says, the things spoken from the beginning concerning his advent were brought to completion, so also will come forth into truth;

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

Discourse 22

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

And I say new, which reforms man into a newness of holy life, and through an evangelical way of life renders him an acceptable and true worshipper; ”For God, he says, is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. Therefore he has been set as a covenant of the race, and for a light to the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, and to bring out from bonds those who are bound. For the arch-evil Satan darkened the hearts of the nations; ”For they became futile in their thinking, and professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed animals, and of reptiles. But the true light, that is, Christ, rose for us as a spiritual morning star, and as the sun of righteousness, spreading the ray of the true knowledge of God, the one from he scattered the darkness of diabolical deception that had come upon those on earth; he freed from bonds those who were caught in inescapable chains of their own transgressions. That therefore those who of old worshipped the creation rather than the Creator, those who had darkness in their minds, those who were persuaded to worship the

works of their own hands, those who were far from God, will be called through faith in Christ, and will come to know the King and Lord of all, the word of the prophecy shows very well.

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

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

Who then are they who command his name to be glorified from the end of the earth, who establish singers for him, and persuade them to lead the chorus, and call them together into a spiritual company, those who go down to the sea, and sail on it, the islands, and those who dwell in them? He is referring, as I think, to the holy apostles. For they did not preach Jesus and the grace through him in

Judea alone, but also crossing the sea they evangelized the lands of the gentiles. Indeed they reached as far as Illyricum, and beyond, so that even the islands in the sea did not remain without hearing the sacred proclamations, nor yet those who inhabited them. And historically you might approach what has been said in this way. But you will understand, if you please, the words of the prophecy also in another way. For the God-inspired Scripture often compares this world to the sea, that is, human life, according to what is sung in the Psalms: ”This sea, great and wide; there are creeping things, of which there is no number, living things small with great. He maintains that our life resembles the sea, perhaps because of the instability of the things in it, and the up and the down, and the great confusion. But those sail through such a sea who are not submerged by it, but swimming up, as it were, and freeing themselves from worldly distractions.

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

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

these things—so to speak, raises his voice on high, and says: ”Be glad, O wilderness, and her villages, the courts, and the inhabitants of Kedar; the inhabitants of Petra will rejoice. And this matter is a great and admirable demonstration of the power and pre-eminence of our Savior, who easily softened such hard and unadmonished hearts, and persuaded them on the one hand to depart from the ancient deceit, and on the other hand to choose the better things, and to conform to the truth.

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

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

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

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

In this way, we say, the holy martyrs also became zealous, who became stronger than Satan, and have fought against his power, for the sake of piety toward Christ. For they have kept the faith, and the genuineness of their love for him; Therefore he will stir up zeal, it says, and will cry out against his enemies with strength; putting ”will cry out” instead of ”will shout. And this cry is most fitting for the victors, dancing in a way over the vanquished. Then he says: I have been silent, shall I also be silent forever, and restrain myself? I have been patient like a woman in labor. From this one might see very well that at that time, when the multitude of nations was in error, with Satan plundering them, and blackening them with the darkness of sin, and carrying them away also from even knowing who the God of

all is by nature and in truth, the God who is above all wished to help them; but he delayed the matter, and clearly persevered, waiting for the fitting time for his aids; and this was when his only-begotten Word was incarnate and became man. For then, then he waged war against those who had conquered us, and rescued us from their wickedness, and he took hold of and saved us, and brought us under his own yokes. Therefore, in the past time, when those on earth were being plundered, and Satan was devouring everyone like a lion; I have been silent, he says;

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

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

God therefore promises to turn such rivers into islands, that is, to show them to be dry and waterless, and to make the marshes as if dry, which indeed has happened. For henceforth the fine speech of their eloquence is ineffective. And absolutely no one adheres to them, but kicking away, as it were, the unsound and profane, and the old-womanish little myths of those who lead astray, those who were once led astray seize upon the wisdom that is in Christ. For Paul writes: ”Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? Therefore we say the rivers turned into islands are the words of the wise among the Greeks that contribute to Hellenic deceit. Or rather, in what has been said before, we have granted that other islands are the Churches of Christ, which receive those who are sailing—intellectually, that is, and spiritually—and who put in at safe anchorages, as it were, with the teachers in them, escaping the wicked spirit that always storms upon those who go down to the sea in ships and do business in great waters. The sea, as I said, must be compared to the surge of this life of ours, and the turmoil of earthly affairs. And the marshes are also dried up, that is, the pastures of the things once under the hand of Satan, so that henceforth they might be under the Chief Shepherd of all, I mean, Christ.

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

those who knew nothing of good things have been shown to be experts in all virtue, and curators of the studies that lead to piety. The crooked things have become straight for them, that is, the difficult and impassable things have become passable, and fit for horses, level and cleared. Something of this sort is also hinted at in the preachings of John the Baptist. For every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough

way into smooth paths. For hills and hollows show that the road is uneven. But when there is no bank, nor indeed a hollow, the road is surely straight and easy to travel, and free from all difficulty. The blessed prophet Isaiah himself also says this somewhere else: ”For the way of the pious,” he says, ”has become straight, and the way of the pious has been prepared. For truly the way of the evangelical life is not rough and difficult to travel, but rather smooth, and as it were level for those who love the excellent life. He promises, therefore, these words, or rather the God brings promises to completion, and does not abandon them, that is, is with them always, according to, ”Behold, I am with you all the days, until the end of the age. But they shall be turned back. Be utterly ashamed, you who trust in graven images, who say to the molten images, ”You are our gods.

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

”For when,” he says, ”the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding it, it returns to the place from which it came out. And when it comes, it finds it empty and swept. Then it takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. For they had served the gods of the Egyptians, but the demon was cast out when they were called to the knowledge of God, I say, through the law; but they have fallen sick with the slander of having gone astray, and even more grievously, when, knowing the God by nature, they became apostates, honoring gods who are not gods. Be utterly ashamed, then, he says, you who trust in graven images, and attach the revered name of the divinity that is above all, that is, the glory, to things hewn by hand and made by hand. You who are deaf, hear, and you who are blind, look up to see. And who is deaf, but my

children? and who are blind, but those who rule over them? And the servants of God were blinded. You have seen many times, and you have not kept watch; your ears were open, and you did not hear. He very rightly calls deaf and blind those who have served idols. For as the all-wise Paul writes:

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

For although they saw the glory of God, and had passed through long experience, they turned to apostasy. For they did not wish to obey God, who said clearly: ”You shall have no other gods but me. But since, being knowledgeable of my ordinances, they, along with those under their yoke, went off to apostasy, he is, as it were, astonished, saying: ”The servants of God were blinded. And what was the occasion of their blindness? Willingly, he says, you were led astray to this. For although it was possible for you who had seen many times to be on your guard, and for you who knew how to hear, that is, to understand the things written, you did not guard against suffering the sentence, nor indeed did you practice well-doing, widening, as it were, your hearing to the sacred laws. Therefore, the accusations against the Jews are without excuse. For although it was possible for them to know the truth, having received the law as a guide to this, they have become equal to those who have no eyes and whose ears are set uselessly on their head, because of their unwillingness to listen to the sacred laws. The Lord God wished that he might be justified, and might magnify praise. I delivered them, he says, from the greed of the Egyptians; I freed them, contrary to expectation, who were serving strangers; I instructed them through the law toward the knowledge of God; I gave them Moses as a director of good order.

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

For since, he says, they have become blind and deaf, having rejected the worship of God, they kindled reverence for wood and stones. Therefore I saw this, and the people became plundered and ravaged. For when God visits the crimes of the intolerably impious, then he also brings punishments that are in proportion to the accusations. Therefore the people were ravaged, and became plunder for their enemies; and for what reason? For the snare was in the storehouses everywhere, and in the houses at the same time they hid them. But whom? Molten gods, clearly. For the leaders of the Jews, feigning piety, and submitting their neck to the lawful ordinances as far as outward appearance was concerned, hid the disease of apostasy in their mind and heart, worshipping gods that are not; and shutting these up in the storehouses of their own homes they made offerings of sacrifices secretly. For it is written in Ezekiel: ”Son of man, dig. And I dug indeed in the wall. And I saw, he says, and behold every likeness of reptile and beast, and all the idols of the house of Israel inscribed on it all around. And he said to me: Have you seen, Son of man, are the things which each one does in his secret chamber a small thing to the house of Israel? See, then, how each of them, having in his secret chamber the snare that was set for him, that is, idolatry lying there, feigned reverence for the laws. For this reason he says:

They became plunder, and there was no one to deliver them, a spoil, and there was no one who said, ’Give it back.’ For when God did not defend them, who delivered them from so heavy and incurable a disaster? and when He did not rebuke the plunderers, who would have said to them, ’Give it back’? For God no longer sought them as His own inheritance, but rather gave them over as having become estranged from him by their turning to those who are not gods. And by these things

he seems to indicate the time of captivity, which those of Israel endured, having fallen into the hands of enemies. For until the seventieth year there was no one to deliver them, nor to say to the plunderers, 'Give it back.' And very providentially, after the calling of the nations was mentioned, the reasons for which those of Israel were cast out from their fellowship with God have been clearly stated, so that God might be seen everywhere to have used a just decree. For it was necessary, necessary for those who honored impiety towards God to be outside of his forbearance and love; but for those who out of ignorance were caught in the pits of sin, and who fell into the devil's hand, to be pitied by the Creator of all, being called to the knowledge of him, and to the light of truth.

For this, somewhere, he is also found saying through the all-wise Moses: 'They have made me jealous with what is no god, they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will provoke them to anger.' And the divine Psalmist also says somewhere that, "They provoked him to anger with their carved images, and with their practices they made him jealous ; and the Lord God saw, and looked upon them, and utterly despised Israel. And if it is necessary to apply some spiritual contemplation to what has been said, let us be on guard against having a diabolical snare in our mind and heart, and the wicked idols in the fantasies of our thoughts, which call us to licentiousness and to perverse pleasures, so that we may not belong to Satan, and a spoil for demons. For it is written that, "If the spirit of the ruler rise up against you, leave not your place; for yielding pacifies great offenses. Who among you will give ear to these things? listen to the things that are coming. It is the custom of the divinely inspired Scripture to speak of 'hearkening,' in the sense of not receiving the word on necessary matters carelessly or negligently, but rather soberly, so as to have what was announced stored up in the mind and heart. Such as what is said through the voice of the Psalmist:

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

of his wrath, and war prevailed against them, and those who burned them round about; and they did not know, each one of them, nor did they take it to heart.

He seems to name both Jacob and Israel very emphatically in these words. And what we might understand the power of the emphasis to be, we will state briefly. For at times those from Israel served the Egyptians; but they were redeemed by God with Moses mediating, but with a mighty hand and a high arm, as it is written. For with countless and unbearable plagues he afflicted the oppressors. But when they ran out of the land of the Egyptians, they crossed the sea on foot, they ate the bread of angels, they drank water from a rock, they were brought into the land of promise, they conquered kingdoms, they prevailed over their enemies, they had a terrible and irresistible hand and on this account, renowned glory. And their weapon was the God of all, who stopped the course of the sun and moon over Gibeon, and sent hailstones from heaven upon the foreigners, and raised his own people to the summit of all glory. Who then, he says, has given the renowned Israel, the enviable Jacob, the unconquered by enemies, the strong and most warlike, and the one always accustomed to conquer, over to plunder, and to the spoilers? How did he who knew not how to be conquered grow weak? How was he brought under, and come under the feet of his adversaries, he who was high above all, and raised an unbreakable horn?

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

But as for those who, having even come to suffer because of human failings, if they should not perceive the things brought upon them, such people would be far from all good hope. And that those from Israel became liable to such charges, one might observe from Jeremiah saying to the God of all: ”O Lord, your eyes look for faithful-

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

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

Therefore He does not allow them to be withered away by cheerfulness forever, nor indeed does He make His turning away endless, but He removes all fear, and gives courage, that one will obtain every good thing, as God transfers the nature of their affairs to that which is incomparably better. For I have redeemed you, he says; and in what manner the all-wise Paul will make clear when he says concerning the Savior of us all, Christ, that it pleased God the Father to sum up all things in him, both the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth. For in him is the redemption of all, both the forgiveness and amnesty of past things, and the manner of spiritual kinship, I mean that toward him, accomplished through sanctification, bringing us up into the communion of God the Father. For this reason he says: I have called you by your name; and what is it? that is, You are mine. For we are said to be of Christ, and this is the good name that has been called upon us. But it

must be known that it is also stated in another Scripture: I have called you by my name; however, by positing and saying, You are mine, he dissolved the alienation, which those held fast by sins are accustomed to endure. For they are not of God, although He has dominion over all, but the disposition toward evil things removes them from kinship with him.

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

For it had been founded on the rock, and the rock is Christ. I have made Egypt and Ethiopia your exchange, and Syene for you, since you became honored in my sight. You were glorified, and I have loved you, and I will give many men for you, and rulers for your head. Do not fear, because I am with you. The meaning of the things set forth is quite hard to reach, but I will make the narration as possible with God guiding, for He Himself gives wisdom and knowledge. Therefore, before Christ, who is the true light, shone upon the world, the whole earth had gone astray, and was darkened by the deep and most intense shadow of ignorance, and there were very many forms of worship everywhere, according to regions and nations. But more superstitious than the others were the Chaldeans, and the Phoenicians, and all who possess the land of the Egyptians, as far as Syene and Ethiopia. For they dwell in a land bordering that of the Egyptians. But the chosen lot of God was Israel alone, and the portion of the Lord, according to what is written. But since they have acted impiously toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and have become slayers of the Lord, they have no longer remained God’s lot at all; but they have slipped from their kinship with Him, and the Gentiles have been received, and have become the exchange for Israel; even those who were formerly the most superstitious of all others, and had in this an indelible stain.

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

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

for with God present, evil things will be out of the way, and every kind of good cheer and delight or rather joy is brought in to us in its place. I will bring your seed from the east, and gather you from the west. I will say to the North, Bring; and to the South, Do not hinder; bring my sons from a land far off, and my daughters from the ends of the earth, all who are called by my name. He appeared to those on earth in a form like ours, That is, the only-begotten Word of God, having become man, in order that He might drive together Greeks and Jews, who through many and various slips had been brought down into apostasy, I mean, from the Creator of all things, to the true and blameless knowledge of God, and might gather them into

spiritual unity through faith and sanctification, with the intimacy with Him being well accomplished, He might then declare them to be worthy, and thus might join them through Himself to God, even the Father. For that Christ became incarnate also for this reason, it is not at all difficult to perceive through the holy evangelical Scriptures. For Lazarus was miraculously brought back to life from the dead; but the multitude of the unholy Jews, or the God-hated workshop of the Pharisees, were sitting in council and said: ”What are we doing? For this man performs many signs.

If we let him go on like this, the Romans will come and take away both our nation and our country. But one of them, Caiaphas, said to them: You know nothing at all, that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish. Then to these things the divine evangelist immediately added: ”He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who were scattered abroad. For as far as it concerned the creation of man in the beginning, and the purpose for him of the one who brought him into existence, all were his children. But Satan, as I said, scattered all into manifold sin, and beguiled them away from intimacy with him, bringing them down into error; but Christ gathered all together. For he came to seek that which was lost. This, to be sure, is also signified by the preceding words. For he promises to the assembly gathered from both gentiles and Jews, that is, the church, to gather all from east to west, and from the North, and Libs, that is, the South, so that from this you might understand [it means] from every region under heaven. For east and west, north and south, would certainly signify this very thing to us; saying:

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

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

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

For you do not simply receive the words of prophecy, O you people; the time for the events has not yet arrived; however, all the nations will in every way and entirely be gathered together in due time. For ’were gathered’, instead of ’shall be gathered’, he says, as this is the custom in the divinely-inspired Scripture. For it sometimes sets down things that will in every way and entirely happen as if they have already

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

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

I have proclaimed future events in due time, through holy men, and I have as witnesses of my foreknowledge of the future those who ministered to my words. But who would testify for the demons, or for the lifeless idols, that they had spoken such a thing through them? For there are very many orators and poets among the Greeks, but absolutely none of them said, as from their own gods, that these things would happen to them in due time; nor indeed would one find any of the wise men among the Greeks who had foretold that Satan would in due time be cast out from the glory he had acquired for himself through greed, or that the world under heaven would be enlightened through faith in Christ, and the nations would be called to the knowledge of him, or that the darkness of idolatry would depart, and the truth would prevail under heaven. Let them, therefore, bring forth their witnesses, and show that they spoke the truth. And if this should happen, let them hear them,

that is, let them follow them, and agree that the herd of demons also abounds in the knowledge of future things. But there is no one who has testified for them, nor indeed a messenger of future things. Therefore, those who considered them to be gods have admittedly been deceived; for they are profane, and impostors and buffoons.

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

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

For I alone am the one who saves, and this I proclaimed to you long ago, and what was spoken I brought to completion. For I saved in Christ; I reproached, and

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

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

Through the things just said to us, having woven a not ignoble exhortation for those called from the nations to the knowledge of him, and having shown that he alone has the knowledge of things in the beginning, and in the middle, and at the end, and indeed that besides him there is absolutely no other who is able to save, and through these things having established in them a firm faith, he shifts his words to those of the blood of Israel, and attempts to assure them that he is all-powerful, and a worker of wonders, and that the natures of things yield to his commands; and the very elements of the world serve him, and whatever he himself may wish, this is indeed accomplished in every way, with no one standing in the way. For it was necessary, it was necessary for those of Israel to have the greatest possible enlightenment and exhortations and reminders that would establish them

in steadfastness of mind, since they had slipped into what is not lawful, and having inclined to other gods, they have sacrificed to idols, and to the host of heaven, as it is written; therefore, he makes for them the prediction of things to come, and reveals beforehand the misfortunes of the Babylonians, very artfully, showing that they themselves will be captives by them; but also proclaiming beforehand that they will suffer the most shameful things of all on account of them, as I said.

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

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

themselves were also resettled into remote and impassable lands, having sailed across the so-called Caspian Sea.

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

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

For being God by nature, and the Only-Begotten who shone forth from God the Father, He came to an emptying, and took the form of a servant, in order that, having freed those lying under the tyranny of the devil, He might bring them under His own scepters. The saying, therefore, in these things, mentions a partial redemption that will come in due time, which is given only to those of the blood of

Israel, and a universal, and most general one, clearly through Christ, by which God the Father has saved those throughout the whole world. Thus says the Lord: Who makes a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty water, who brings out chariots, and horse and a strong host. But they lay down to sleep, and they will not rise again; they were extinguished like a quenched flax. Good and profitable things, even if spoken many times by both God and men, would in no way be troublesome to the sound-minded, but rather necessary for salvation. For this reason also the all-wise Paul writes to some: ”To say the same things to you is not troublesome to me, but for you it is safe.

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

For Pharaoh pursued those of the blood of Israel with chariots and horses, and using the irresistible hand of his allies, yet in no way did he conquer, or harm the redeemed. For they lay down to sleep, it says, and they will not rise again, but they were extinguished like a quenched flax. For they were drowned in the waters, and have perished together with their horses, and like easily flammable flax they have been consumed by the divine wrath, and they were effortlessly extinguished, that is, they have passed into nothingness, and as it were have been reduced to ashes. For flax is indeed ready for destruction by fire, but it is also extinguished by the touch of a hand, and a most inactive travails with flame. But if someone should say, Since they pursued Israel by the private will of the ruler of the land of the Egyptians, how is the God of all said to have led out the horses, and chariots, and the army under them? We say that it was said to Pharaoh by the God who rules over all: ”For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show in you my power, and that my name might be declared in all the earth. And let these things, then, be said again historically.

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

Just as in the things before, he briefly set forth for their knowledge the future redemption for those of Israel, which was partial, but leading the narrative of events up to what is better, he made mention of the salvation through Christ as incomparable, saying he would show our king, Israel; so also here, having usefully made mention of both the Red Sea, and the streams of the Jordan, and the crossing of those from Israel, he returns again to the mystery of Christ. For this reason he says: Remember not the former things, and consider not the things of old. For the introduction of things incomparably superior sometimes gives the lesser thing to oblivion, and the brilliant things somehow blunt those that are not so by nature, even if they come first in time. Such a thing also the all-wise Paul says, that ”Now we know in part; but when that which is perfect has come, that which is in part will be done away. For great and beyond all speech are the things accomplished by God through the all-wise Moses, but transcendent and sublime are those through the might and pre-eminence of our Savior. For through him, and by him, the multitude of nations throughout the whole world has been saved. For this reason, he all but commands to forget the former things. But the mind should rather apply itself [alt. be fixed upon] to those things that are incomparably superior, and have a brilliant glory. I will make, therefore, he says, a way in the wilderness.

And indeed, in these things the wilderness is understood as the multitude of the nations, formerly dry and fruitless, and as it were, thorn-bearing, because there was in it absolutely no one who was pious, and well-pleasing, and who knew how to do good wisely. For as the psalmist says: ”They have all gone out of the way, they have together become unprofitable, and there was none among them that does good, no, not one. In this wilderness, therefore, a way has appeared, leading those

who come through it to the true knowledge of God, and to a holy and undefiled life, and to all knowledge of every good thing. And we say that this way is either the divine and evangelical and saving proclamation, or perhaps even Christ himself. For we have heard him saying clearly: ”I am the way. But not only has a way come to be in the wilderness, but rivers also have been shown forth, able to inebriate those in it with intelligible and soul-profiting streams. And we say that also these ministers of the evangelical and apostolic decrees, of whom the divine David also makes mention, saying: ”The rivers have lifted up their voices. For as he himself somewhere says again: ”Their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.

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

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

have I desired the fat of your sacrifices. But in your sins, and transgressions and injustices and such like things I have stood over you. Through the things already examined before, that is, read before, he made the prediction of the covenant in Christ and of the gifts from him.

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

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

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

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

and again, that ”I will declare my iniquity, and I will be sorry for my sin. I therefore, He says, will not remember the accusations. But you remember, and let us be judged; But you confess, and have a firm amnesty. For it is written that, ”A righteous man is his own accuser in the first instance. And again; ”Do not be ashamed to confess your sins. The arrogant Pharisee did not keep such a commandment, whom the Savior portrays praying in the synagogue in the evangelical parables,

then being very sick with ignorance, and saying from a vain conceit: ”God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, or even as this tax collector; I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess. This man did not bear to speak of his own sins. He is condemned therefore as a boaster and a liar, for no one is clean from filth, and we all stumble in many things. But the tax collector knew and confessed his own sins. For he stood beating his breast, and saying: ”God, be merciful to me a sinner. He was justified therefore, having confessed his failings, and not hiding the filth of the abomination that was in him, so that he might be cleansed. Your first fathers, and your princes have transgressed against me. And the princes have defiled my holy things; and I have given Jacob to destruction, and Israel to reproach. Having said:

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

Therefore, those who are placed in the rank of fathers, he says, and who were allotted to rule you, have transgressed against me. And in saying, ”against me,” he shows that the things committed by them improperly and unholily were not done against one of us, but against the very glory of the God who is above all. I mean something like this: for when someone wrongs some of his neighbors, either by encircling them with greed and arrogance, or in some other way, he sins indeed, but against a fellow human being, and not at all against God. But he who rejects the worship due to him, and subjecting himself to the deceits of demons and worshipping them, raises himself against God, and as far as it is in him, he removes him from the thrones of the Godhead, and tries to shake him from the pre-eminence and glory that befit him alone. The people of Israel have done this at times. For they

have worshipped idols, and indeed, having bid farewell to the sacred ordinances, they were willing to raise a stiff and haughty neck to God. He therefore accuses them, and says: The priests did not say, Where is the Lord? And those who held to the law did not know me, and the prophets were impious against me. And again: Why do you speak to me? All of you have transgressed, and all of you you have acted impiously against me, says the Lord Almighty. The rulers, therefore, he says, have defiled my holy things.

For they have dared to erect the pillars of demons not only in Jerusalem, but they would even be caught having impiously done this in the divine temple itself. For the God of all said concerning the synagogue of the Jews: Why has the beloved wrought abomination in my house? calling an abomination the statue and image skillfully made in the form of God. But holy things are defiled in another way as well, if the things commanded to be performed reverently and holily for the glory of God are despised by some, and if some consider the transgression of his divine law as nothing. Therefore, since your fathers, he says, have transgressed against me, and the rulers have defiled my holy things, I have given this to the enemies so as to destroy Jacob, and with reproaches for these things I have clothed Israel. But now hear, my servant Jacob, and Israel whom I have chosen. Having recalled the former things, and having stated very well the reasons for which the apostate Israel was given over to destruction and reproach; he again promises them forgiveness, and wishes to renew them to a complete and blameless obedience. Having passed over, as it were, the time of ignorance, during which the one who had become a lover of God, the one having the law, has been exposed, he again sets another time for them, saying Now; I say that this is like, ”Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

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

Discourse 23

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

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

being itself, and the cause of existence for those who once were not. And by saying to the sinners, 'He will yet help,' he gives courage that although they are entangled in many and inescapable charges, a remnant of gentleness and love for mankind has been preserved.

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

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

For water is life-giving, and brings up plants and grasses to growth, and it imitates in some way the energy of the Holy Spirit, through whom all things hold together and are maintained in well-being and the intelligible creation is enriched with an increase in every good thing whatsoever, and as it were leaps up, going toward spiritual growth. And that the promise of water to those who walk through a waterless

place signifies the life-giving power and energy of the Holy Spirit, the intelligible consolation through him, the following will make clear. For I will put, he says, my Spirit upon your seed, and my blessings upon your children. And we say that the seed and children of the holy apostles are those who through them have been called to the knowledge of the truth, and to the spiritual rebirth, by which they beget them not from corruptible seed, but through the living and abiding word of God, and through the energy of the Holy Spirit himself. For the divine Paul writes to those called through him, and says: ”For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you have not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel. And we will find them everywhere calling those who believed in him through them, children. Therefore I will put, he says, my Spirit upon your seed, and my blessings upon your children. And we say that blessings are those things supplied by God to the saints, the manifold variety of spiritual gifts.

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

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

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

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

he himself therefore has come into being from no one, but he is the one who is and who will be. For this is his name, and an eternal memorial for generations of generations. Therefore, neither was there another God before him, nor will there be any after him. For there is one God by nature, and no other besides him. And the exhortation is exceedingly useful for those who denied him, and from too much foolishness have slipped into thinking that there are many gods. That no one is like him or another to be reckoned with him, he demonstrates by saying: ”Who is like me? Which then of the gods supposed by you, that is, foolishly so named, will be according to my glory and power? From what great work then have you believed them to be gods? Let someone stand, if indeed he is like me. Let someone prepare one having a nature of equal weight, either in strength or glory. Let them call whomever they may choose of the falsely named gods, from when I made man for eternity. For I created, he says, the heavens, and the things in them, having innumerable flocks of holy spirits worshipping and serving me, but from when I have made man upon the earth, and in the things that follow, that is, for eternity, let someone show me one like me. And saying again, ”From when I made man,” he shows himself to be the creator, but the falsely named gods to be nothing at all.

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

Therefore, the word initiates those carried away from the true vision of God, and who have assented to lifeless idols, and say to the wood, ”You are my father,” and to the stone, ”You gave me birth. You are witnesses, if there is a God besides me. He brings them back again to the memory of the power and authority shown to them, which would befit the one who is truly God by nature and Lord of all, when they were delivered from the land of the Egyptians. For at that time creation itself was armed with the Master, and of the He rose up against the wickedness of those who were oppressing them, for things were accomplished by changes of the elements [perhaps: changes]. For the water was changed into blood, and a deep darkness stretched out for three days. And the sky cast down hail upon them, and gnats and frogs, and dog-flies, and the death of the firstborn was brought upon them, and they passed through the midst of the sea. And when they entered the land of promise, they conquered many nations, stronger than their own strength, and they became terrible and hard to encounter for the neighboring nations, and for those yet far off they were looked upon and renowned.

Therefore, others would not know better, but you yourselves, your own affairs, who it was who achieved these things, and who it was who has creation as an ally in your affairs, who it was who crushed the powers of enemies, and crowns you with courage against all; you are the witnesses of my excellence, if you choose to think rightly, and you will not need other instructors. For the gods among the Egyptians were very many, and their shrines were full of statues. And likewise very many were those among the Amorites, Hivites and Perizzites, and the other nations; but none of them is seen to have been sufficient for the salvation of their own people; rather, you have even crushed the worshipped ones together with their worshippers. For it was divinely decreed through Moses that you shall tear down their altars, and

you shall break their pillars, and you shall burn the carved images of the gods with fire. Therefore, if you choose to speak the truth, you bear witness to me, whether there is a God besides me. For if anyone has risen up against my powers, and has conquered, let him be considered a god among you. But if, being nothing, they have been exposed, and have become the work of fire through you, you have known by experience itself, he says, that there is no God besides me, the true God. And at that time those who formed and carved did not hear;

all who make their desired things are vain, which will not profit them; but they who form a god, and carve useless things, shall be ashamed, and all who came to be were withered, and deaf from among men. Through these things he shows that the crimes of the apostates are terrible and very difficult, if, having such full assurance that there is no other besides him who is God by nature and in truth; and being convinced, as it were, by the very things accomplished that he alone is God, they slipped into this folly, so that even when the law itself clearly proclaimed to them and said: ”You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him only, and you shall not make for yourself an idol, nor any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth; you made obeying him of no account; but rather you turned godlessly to the need to form and shape the gods from wood and stones. Such people are indeed vain, and very rightly so, going to this for none of the necessary things, but rather making their own desired things, for they have become lovers of vanity. For what profit is there from stone and wood? Therefore, the making of an idol would clearly be considered the fruit of a foolish counsel and the work of cold thoughts. Yet he declares beforehand that the matter is not without penalty, saying:

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

And yet, having known by experience the God who is by nature and truly, then to send up to stones and wood the glory most fitting for Him and Him alone, how could

they not be considered foolish, and heartless, and having a heart filled with stupor to the point of madness, and indeed to differ little from the things fashioned by their own hands? Let them all be gathered, and let them stand together, and let them be confounded, and let them be ashamed together, because the carpenter sharpened the iron, with an adze he worked it, and with a drill he bored it. He worked it with the arm of his strength, and he will hunger, and grow weak, and will not drink water. Not one by one, rather, but, if they should choose, he says that the worshippers of idols, gathered in a multitude, will be confounded by their own evil counsels, and to solve what is proposed, and what then this is, he immediately adds, saying: He sharpened, he says, the carpenter, the iron. And he mentions also the instruments by which the making is done, so that he may show them worshipping the art of the stonemason, and not the wood itself. For if it were a god, it would not have needed art, and some kind of skill; but it would have been a God even so.

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

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

burned half of it in the fire, and baked bread on its coals, and having roasted meat he ate, and the rest of it he made into an abomination, and they worship it.

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

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

He is almost struck with amazement, saying, that he burned half of it in the fire, and has spent it on his own needs. This, on the one hand, preparing food, and accepting the parts of the gods for the baking of bread. Then he has fallen into such senselessness as to worship the remnant of what was needed, and to pray and say: ”Deliver me, for you are my god. Therefore, then, their heart is ashes and nothing else, and they have been deceived, and no one could deliver the souls of

those who have fallen into this, except that God alone, if He should choose, who makes all things, and transforms, and enlightens what is darkened, and turns back what has strayed. But there is indeed what is useless and vain in the gods carved by hand, for they are deaf and senseless matter. But see, that is, understand, and you will not say that a lie is in my right hand. For all things concerning them, he says, are falsehoods, both names and glory. But in my right hand, that is, in the Son; for the Son is named the right hand of the Father everywhere in the divinely-inspired Scripture; nothing false would be found, but also if He should be called God, He is true God; and if Lord, He does not have the title as something adopted, but is rather by nature master of all;

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

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

to the Galatians: ”My little children, for whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you. Indeed, Christ is formed in us, as the Holy Spirit imparts to us a certain divine formation, through sanctification and righteousness.

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

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

For that he says ”I have blotted out” instead of ”I will blot out,” the following very well shows. For, he says, ”Return to me, and I will redeem you. For how has he

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

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

For he dwells in our hearts through faith, but the apostles and evangelists might be understood as nearer foundations, and closer than in our case, having been both eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, and having become a foundation of faith. For, having recognized that we must follow their traditions, we will keep our faith in Christ straight and unperverted. For it was said somewhere by him to the divine Peter (when wisely and blamelessly confessing his faith in him he said: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God): ”You are Peter, and upon this rock I will found my Church,” saying, I think, ”rock” for the unshakeable faith of the disciple. And it has been said somewhere also through the voice of the Psalmist: ”His foundations are

in the holy mountains. And the holy apostles and evangelists are very well likened to holy mountains, whose knowledge is established like a foundation for those after them, not allowing those who have been netted by them to fall away into what is unapproved in faith. Therefore the foundations of the earth sound the trumpet; but observe the care. For Moses was of a feeble voice and slow of speech. For the law was not widely heard, except by those only in Judea. Sound the trumpet, however, those who are ambassadors for Christ. ”For their sound went forth into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world. And he commanded the mountains to shout for joy;

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

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

the womb: I am the Lord who accomplishes all things. I stretched out the heaven alone, and established the earth. Who else will frustrate the signs of ventriloquists, and divinations from the heart?

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

”He established the earth upon its own security. And He who has ascended to this power, or rather He who is all power, will surely bring to completion whatever He wishes to do, with no one preventing him. But He says that He alone stretches out the heaven, not setting aside the only-begotten God the Word from His own substance, through whom are all things, and in whom are all things; but that absolutely none of the falsely-named gods worked together with the God over all. For those who do not exist at all, how could they be accepted as workers, or rather, to say, as co-workers with God the creator? Therefore we do not say that the contrast in these things is made with respect to the Son who is by nature and begotten of Him, but that the stretching out of the heaven, or the earth having unshakable foundations, was not the result of another god. Having shown, therefore, through these things His own glory, and His incomparable preeminence, and the greatness of His power, He clearly shows and relates in what follows what things He will be the accomplisher of at the proper times. For who else, he says, will scatter the signs of ventriloquists, and divinations from the heart? For before Christ, the Savior of us all, shone upon us from heaven, the rapacity of the devil’s tyranny was extended over all, and a deep darkness consumed all upon the earth.

For there were, there were in both country and city, altars and sacred precincts, and a swarm of statues, and an unnumbered multitude of falsely-named gods, and

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

or perhaps also those who were held in repute as wise among them, and were keen in understanding, and possessed a powerful style of speech, and were excellent in eloquence, and were not incapable of being able, by their eloquence, to embellish falsehood. We say that such men have been turned back; since their wisdom has finally been shown to be useless and unprofitable, which is both psychical and earthly, demonic. And the all-wise Paul also says that the wisdom of the world has been made foolish, clearly by God. But when the wise have been turned away, he says, and all their counsel has been shown to be completely unintelligent and foolish, God the Father established the words of His own Son, that is, the evangelical and saving decree, which Christ Himself spoke to us. And He proved the counsel of His angels to be true. For angels could be understood as those who are ambassadors for Christ, and who proclaim to the world. And their counsel was good, and an exhortation to all everywhere to depart from ancient accusations, to be strengthened for good works, and to hold fast to better things, and to know the God who is by nature and in truth, and to the to submit one’s neck to his laws, and so to run towards salvation and life. Therefore, the words from them are full of all truth; but the things of the Greeks have been made foolish, not having the beauty of the truth;

for all things among them are false, both prophecy, and understanding, and the multitude of supposed gods, which is unknown even to those who are deceived. Who says of Jerusalem, ‘You shall be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, ‘You shall be built,’ and her desolate places shall spring up. And so follows the, ”I am,” that is, Jerusalem, the one who redeems you, who accomplishes all things, and who stretched out the heaven. I am, therefore, he says, the one who says of Jerusalem, ”You shall be inhabited. For the Babylonians indeed captured it by force, having

ravaged the entire land of the Jews. But they were redeemed by God, and they threw off the yoke of captivity, when the one who burned down Babylon permitted this to be done, I mean Cyrus the son of Cambyses; and indeed having returned to Judea, they rebuilt both the cities and the temple, and have dwelt in peace. Most skillfully, therefore, the prophetic word, by saying that Jerusalem will be built, gives the hearers to understand that it will be captured in due time, and destroyed. And he makes the prediction of the things that will happen to them not from the painful things, but rather from those things at which it was likely to rejoice greatly; along with coming to thoughts, as I said, of the more somber things. Therefore, when God commands Jerusalem to be built, the word of prophecy indicates that it had certainly been captured before.

But if someone should wish to engage in even deeper contemplations, we say that the truer Judea, that is clearly the Church, whose inhabitants and citizens might be understood as those who bear the circumcision in spirit. Though once desolate, He who commanded this to happen made it populous, that is, clearly, God in Christ, and her desolate places have sprung up. For she was found full of spiritual trees, and as it were most abounding in good trees, and having the lofty heads of saints. For it is a custom for the divinely inspired Scripture at times to liken the choir of saints to plants and trees. For the God of all things said through the voice of saints, that ”I will put in the waterless land the cedar, and boxwood, and myrtle, and cypress, and white poplar. And it has also been said through the voice of the Psalmist concerning the saints to God, at one time, that ”The trees of the plain shall be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon which you have planted; and at another time again: ”Then all the trees of the forest shall rejoice, before the face of the Lord, because he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his truth. And we do not say at all that rejoicing belongs to insensible trees, but the matter would be more fitting for saints, whom he says rejoice when Christ shines upon the world.

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

temple. That therefore the land of the Babylonians, although very populous, was about to be utterly desolated, he indicates, saying: I am he who says to the to the abyss: You will be made desolate. For in these things he called the multitude of the Babylonians, greater than number, an abyss;

and its rivers, the nations flowing into it, which were both its neighbors, and possessing the bordering lands, were called by them for aid. And it is again a custom for the divine Scripture to compare the multitudes of the nations to rivers and seas and waters. For indeed the divine Psalmist said concerning both our Savior of all, Christ, and the multitude of the nations, which has been caught by his words: ”The voice of the Lord is upon the waters, the God of glory has thundered, the Lord. For indeed the voice of the Lord, that is, the evangelical and saving proclamation, was brought against all the nations, when it, so to speak, thundered down upon them. For the sacred and saving proclamation resounded, as it were, throughout the whole world under heaven. And again it is written: ”The rivers have lifted up their voices. For we say that in these verses the holy apostles are called rivers, whose voices, that is, their teachings, have become known to all everywhere. And it is said somewhere also concerning Babylon itself, and Nineveh, that its waters are a pool of water. Therefore it was God who said to the abyss: You will be made desolate, and I will dry up your rivers. And he was likewise the one who told Cyrus to be wise, that is, to do everything with understanding, and to fulfill all things that seemed good to him.

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

Thus says the Lord God to my anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, that nations might hearken before him, and I will break the strength of kings, I will open doors before him, and cities will not be shut. I will go before him, and I will level mountains, I will break bronze doors, and I will shatter iron bars. And I

will give you dark, hidden, unseen treasures; I will open them to you, so that you may know that I am the Lord God who calls you by your name, the God of Israel. For the sake of Jacob my servant, and Israel my chosen one, I will call you by my name [ῃυλγ. your], and I will receive you. But you have not known me, that I am the Lord God, and there is no God besides me. But you did not know me. So that those from the rising of the sun, and those from the west, may know that there is none besides me. I am the Lord God, and there is no other. I am the one who prepared light and made darkness, the one who makes peace and creates evils. I am the Lord God who does all these things.

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

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

death, hid themselves by sinking into every cave and cleft of the rocks like snakes, but were not strong enough to escape notice.

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

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

”I gave them into your hands, but you did not show them mercy. But that Cyrus, bold and all-powerful, and employing the cruelty befitting those who were suffering, attacked the arrogance of the Babylonians according to the will of God, we shall know when He says, through the voice of Jeremiah, as to Cyrus: ”Go up against her bitterly, and against those who dwell in her, and avenge with the sword, and destroy,

says the Lord, and do according to all that I command you. And in addition to these things: ”The Lord has opened his treasury, and has brought forth the vessels of his wrath, for the Lord has a work in the land of the Chaldeans, for her times have come. Open her storehouses, search her as a cave, and utterly destroy her. Let there be no remnant of her, dry up all her fruits, let them go down to slaughter. Woe to them, for their day has come, and the time of their vengeance. And the prophet Isaiah himself also said somewhere, as from the person of God to the Babylonians: ”Behold, I am stirring up against you the Medes, who do not reckon silver, nor have need of gold. They will shatter the bows of the young men, and they will not have mercy on your children, nor will their eyes spare your children,” that is, of the Medes. Let the heaven rejoice from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;

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

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

have the brilliant and admirable dwelling place, both angels and archangels, and those beyond them, both thrones and authorities, and rational powers, and the attendants of the highest seats.

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

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

For he has become for us mercy and righteousness from God the Father; since it is true that in him we have received mercy, and have been justified, having received the remission of our old accusations, that is, that from him we have received the righteousness that is able to bring us to the attainment of every good,

through which we have also been saved. But if the earth is commanded to bring forth righteousness, let no one be troubled, considering that the Psalmist also says somewhere about God the Father, and about Emmanuel himself: ”He has wrought righteousness in the midst of the earth. For Christ did not bring down his flesh to us from above and out of heaven, but rather was born according to the flesh from a woman, who was one of those on earth. Therefore, when it is said that he became the fruit and sprout of the earth, you will understand, as I said, that he was born according to the flesh from a woman taken for this ministry, although she was one of those from the earth. I am the Lord God who created you; what better thing have I fashioned as the clay of a potter? He gives the reason, as it were, in these words, why the Son, being God by nature, emptied himself, and chose also to suffer for of us, and to deem those on earth worthy of so great a sparing love, as to give His own soul as a ransom;

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

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

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

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

Therefore, having once been wild and, as it were, uncultivated, the hearts of all of us, using the law of Moses as a plow, I have prepared, and cutting them like a farmer, I make them beautiful for the casting of good seeds. But the sower of every good thing is my Son. Receive, therefore, what is from him, and do not wish to continually cherish and love the plowing law. For it plowed, as I said, not so that you might have this; for what benefit is there from this? but so that you might bring forth the fruits of truth. And since we have been intellectually re-formed in Christ, that is, we have been transformed, some from Hellenic error to the knowledge of the truth, and to a holy life, through Christ the Savior of us all; and others from circumcision to the acceptance of evangelical teachings, and to a newness of worship, no longer having the harshness of the types, but rather the spiritual having the most beautiful splendor shining forth; and it was granted to us and to them, having been enriched with the regeneration through water and spirit in Christ; likewise, to the Jewish peoples the grace upon these very things was both rejected and unacceptable; for they acted against, as I said, the ordinances from Christ; For this reason he says: Shall the clay say to the potter: What are you doing, because you are not working, nor do you have hands? The one who says to the father: What will you beget?

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

What then did Christ say to these things? "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? It is necessary, therefore, to yield to what God might say. He himself knows the way of his own works, and the things crafted by him are not to be meddled with, and it is fitting for us to honor with undoubting faith the things that are beyond our understanding. But it must be known that the prophet Jeremiah was also sent to the house of the potter, to see him at work; and when the clay had fallen apart, and was re-fashioned into another vessel, God said to him: "Shall I not be able, like this potter, to do with you, O house of Israel? Behold, as the clay of the potter, so are you in my hands. And that we are intellectually re-fashioned into a holy and all-beautiful life, Paul will make clear, saying: "But we all, with unveiled face, reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit; through whom we are also born again, having a seed no longer corruptible, but through the living and abiding word of God. For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, who made the things to come: Ask me concerning my daughters, and concerning my sons, and command me concerning the works of my hands.

I made the earth, and man upon it. I by my hand established the heaven. I commanded all the stars. Of the In these words, a rendering of a higher meaning is seen to have been made. And the sense of the verses is as follows: For if the clay, he says, ever rebuked the potter, and accused the hand of the one who formed it as somehow unskilled or rather slow; if anyone of those not yet being or having been born, but expected to be born, meddled with what sort of children his own father would be the begetter of; ask me, you also, who will be my sons and daughters in

due time; how it might happen, and in what manner you will be sons and daughters to me. Command me also concerning the works of my hands. And 'command,' he says, instead of 'give orders,' and as to one who does not know the way of things to be done, do not hesitate to give your opinion to God. Therefore, worthy of admiration and very rightly so is the all-wise Paul for having written thus: "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? For the wisdom that is the artisan of all things needs absolutely nothing in what pertains to herself. Nor would anything concerning us be difficult or impossible for her.

For she can do all things, possessing the all-powerful; or rather, she is all power. For the God of all is the Lord of hosts, and He alone knows the way of His own works. Therefore, His ways are not to be meddled with, and the things beyond mind and reason are unattainable for human thoughts, but are known to Him. And so we believe that the spiritual regeneration through water and spirit is given to those who have recognized the appearance of Christ. When Christ wished to make the grace clear to Nicodemus, He explained the way of the matter; but he, understanding nothing of what was said, declared the words of the Savior impossible. And He, having this mind, urged him to receive the wonder by faith, saying: "That which we know we speak, and that which we have seen we testify. Therefore, if we do not understand the way of the divine works, freeing our mind from all doubt, let us say to God: I know that you can do all things, and nothing is impossible for you; let us not ask Him concerning His daughters and His sons. Nor indeed let us command, that is, give orders to Him concerning the works of His hands; but as clay to the potter let us yield ourselves to be worked as seems good to Him. For He effortlessly changes our affairs to whatever He wishes, and refashions the mind from baser things to the better, and places in us a new heart, having uprooted the first one.

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

and in whom are all things. For by the word of the Lord, he says, the heavens were made firm. He Himself commanded all the stars, that is, He ordained, how each of them should be. For the sun is set to rule the day, and the moon the night. But as the Psalmist says:

”The sun knew its setting. The God of all made darkness, and it was night. And so again the divine David sings, and says: ”Yours is the day, and yours is the night. You have prepared the sun and the moon. Therefore each of these traverses its appointed course with an orderly motion and in measured intervals of hours. Likewise also the rest of the stars according to the law given to them by God, rise in their seasons and set. To them He gave command, being God by nature and Lord, the creator of all things. I have raised him up a king with righteousness. All his ways are straight. He shall build my city, and he shall bring back the captivity of my people, not with a ransom, nor with gifts, said the Lord of Sabaoth. Some might perhaps say that these things were said about Cyrus son of Cambyses, because he both released Israel and freed them from the bonds of captivity, and founded the temple in Jerusalem; but the contemplation of what follows will establish rather the power of the thoughts, not on him rather, but on the Savior of us all, Christ, who was raised up with righteousness. For God being Lord shone upon us, as God the Father was pleased to sum up all things in him, things in the heavens and things on the earth. Therefore He was raised with a righteousness that is not adopted or learned, but being himself the very essence of righteousness.

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

for he dwells in the saints, and we have become temples of the living God, having Christ in ourselves through participation in the Holy Spirit. Therefore He has

founded the Church, being himself the foundation, upon which we also are built, as costly and precious stones for a holy temple, for a dwelling place of God in the spirit. And the Church is altogether unshaken, having Christ as the foundation, and an unshakable base; ”For behold, I lay, he says, the foundations of Zion, a chosen stone, a cornerstone, precious, and he who believes in him will not be put to shame. He therefore who founded the Church, also brought back the captivity of his people. For us on the earth, being tyrannized over by both Satan and sin, he has saved and delivered, and has brought under his own yokes; yet not with a ransom, nor with gifts; for as his disciple says, ”We were not redeemed with corruptible things, silver or gold, from our futile way of life handed down from our fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. For He gave His own blood for us, and we are not our own, but belong to Him who bought and saved us. Therefore, and very rightly, those who transgress the noble rule of the orthodox faith are accused by the voice of the saints, as denying the Master who bought them. Thus says the Lord of Sabaoth:

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

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

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

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

For this is what the name of servitude signifies when applied to God. They will follow behind you bound in handcuffs. For they will walk, he says, in your footsteps, guided by the evangelical laws in each of their actions, and they will travel the path of the exceptional life bound in handcuffs, that is, by the bonds of love, and the chains of ineffable love for God, so as to be able to say: ”Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? These will worship you, he says, and in you they will pray, for God is in you, and there is no God except you. For you are God, and we did not know, the God of Israel, a savior. For to Christ, the Savior of all, every knee bows, and every tongue confesses, and to him comes every end of prayer. For in Christ we ask for our requests from God the Father, and in him we pray, confessing that God is also in him, and there is no God except him. For so he taught us to think, saying to the divine disciple (this was Philip): ”Have I been with you for so long, and you have not known me, Philip? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and

the Father is in me? He who has seen me has seen the Father. I and the Father are one.

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

That is, you will understand Israel not at all as only according to the flesh, but also as anyone else who is able to see God. For Israel is interpreted as 'a mind seeing God.' And he sees God with the eyes of the mind, the one who sees the character of God the Father, that is, the Son, at whom, he says, those who oppose him will be put to shame, and will also go away in shame. For those who did not accept faith in him, but fought against God, as indeed the Jews also did, will all be put to shame, defeated by the invincible hand, yet in no way harming his glory, but drawing down destruction on their own heads, they will be for shame and reproach. For they will be a spectacle for all flesh, according to the voice of the prophet. Be ye renewed unto me, O islands. Israel is saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation. They shall not be ashamed, nor shall they be confounded unto the age, says the Lord Almighty. He again broadens the prophecy of the calling and conversion of the nations; and he does not stop only at the Egyptians, the merchants of Ethiopia, and the Sabaeans themselves; but indeed, that those who are throughout all the earth will be called, and there will be a showing forth of holy Churches everywhere, he has declared in these things.

For the all-powerful word of God addressed the Churches, as it were, to be renewed to him, which indeed he deigns to call islands. For just as the islands in this sea are always struck by the assaults of the waves, yet remain unshaken, and also receive ships when they are in danger, and save them from the waves, offering them a waveless bay; so the Churches of Christ, lie as it were in the very midst of life's turmoil and confusion, and they endure innumerable temptations, yet they have in

Christ that which is unshakable. They house those fleeing the useless and empty confusion of the affairs of this world, and those who are, as it were, storm-tossed by both Satan and sin. They must therefore be compared to islands. For this is what the divine word intends in these things. Be renewed therefore to me, he says, O islands. Indeed, the name of the Church signifies the multitude of those who have believed in Christ, both priests and laity, shepherds and teachers, and those yoked under their authority, but all these were renewed in Christ, clearly at the times when God, being Lord, shone upon us. For then, then we were renewed to newness of life, of morals and of ways, and also of worship. For we have cast off the oldness that comes from sin, and we have become a new creation in Christ, being instructed by his laws, towards a glorious and desirable way of life.

And indeed the all-wise Paul writes to those called through faith and says, at one time, that ”Put off the old man, with his passions and desires, and put on the new, who is being renewed in the image of his creator; and at another time, ”Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. And he says that our old man has been crucified with him, so that we may put on the new through the way of life and life in Christ. We are renewed in the manner of worship, those who are of the Jewish orders, leaving behind shadows and types. For they will no longer use sacrifices of oxen and incense, but spiritual, and immaterial, and as it were in the order of the most well-ordered incenses; while those drawn from the multitude of the nations will be transferred to better things, and incomparably superior. For they will no longer have the ancient darkness in their mind, but having welcomed the divine and intelligible light, they will be holy and true worshippers. For they will cease from worshipping creation with deaf and senseless materials;

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

come, being trodden down in Christ, through whom and with whom to the Father be glory and power with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

Discourse 24

Thus says the Lord who made heaven, he who established the earth, and made it, he set its boundaries. He did not make it in vain, but to be inhabited. I am the Lord, and there is no other. I have not spoken in secret, nor in a dark place of the earth. I did not say to the seed of Jacob, Seek in vain. I am the Lord who speaks righteousness, and announcing truth. Having proclaimed beforehand the arrival of our Savior of all, Christ, and having marked out the season of salvation, in which all, having abandoned the darkness of ancient ignorance, will cross over to the light of the true knowledge of God, he makes a necessary exhortation in these things to both Jews and Greeks adding the clear things through which they will know very plainly, that he himself is God and creator of all things, and that there is no other besides him. For this reason he says: Thus says the Lord, and not simply Lord, for there are very many both in heaven and on earth, who have received the name by misuse; but he himself who is by nature and in truth that which he is also called, and as one who has his glory from his accomplishments, not a counterfeit one. For this, he says, is the Lord who made the heaven; a mighty thing for a demonstration of the highest renown and of all-powerful preeminence, to make the heaven and establish the earth, and to found it.

For he himself defined it, that is, what was once hidden in the abysses, invisible and unformed, he rendered visible and wrought. For he defined it; for he said according to the faith of the books of Moses: ”Let the water be gathered together into one collection, and let the dry land appear. So then, it appeared out of the waters, and being submerged and entirely inactive, he set it apart in its place, placing bolts and gates upon the abysses, and separating it very well from the waters. That he produced it usefully and necessarily for this purpose, not that it might only be seen, but that it might have inhabitants—clearly those formed from it, just as, indeed, he also previously clarified concerning heaven, that it has the holy angels, saying: He did not make it in vain, but to be inhabited. Therefore it was shown to be a vehicle and as a kind of house for those who tread upon it, that is, for us. But if we were brought into existence by him, how is it not true to say that we came to be entirely for this reason, that we might worship him and him alone, and recognizing him as the creator of all things, offer up hymns of thanksgiving? I therefore am, and there

is no other. For if he is the one who made the heaven, and established the earth, and did not make it in vain, but to be inhabited, what other could be thought to be God besides him?

Or who could equal him in power and glory? Or who at all is near or close by a little? How is not the whole nature of created things overcome by such great and all-surpassing glory, strength, and wisdom? There is no one. Therefore, he alone, and no other besides him at all, could be thought to be God by nature and in truth. But yes, someone might sometimes say: Who has known his purpose? Or who is able to say whether he ever wishes others to be crowned with the glory and title of God, or, that is, himself and himself alone? Therefore, he makes his defense and says: I have not spoken in secret, nor in a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, "Seek vain things. Laws, he says, I ordained for them concerning these things, not speaking in a corner, nor striving to be hidden, but clearly and openly. For the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai in the form of fire; there was darkness and storm and smoke, and the piercing sound of trumpets. For all the people stood by while Moses mediated, and laws were announced by God, not urging Israel to seek something vain, that is, an idol, or, a falsely-named worship, but commandments restraining them from the contrary. For it was said to him: "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve, and you shall have no other gods besides me.

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

But Emmanuel appeared, who leads forth those who are bound in manliness, and he endured death in the flesh for our sake, so that, as the evangelist says, he might gather into one the scattered children of God. For what Satan scattered, leaping

on them like a cruel and savage wolf, these things Christ, the good shepherd, who laid down his own soul for the sheep, gathered together. Therefore he indicates this very thing, saying: Be gathered, that is, be bound together by one faith, and unanimity. Be gathered to the God who rules over all through sanctification and righteousness; come near, you who are still far off and separated by sin, and by being brought into a most shameful and abominable disposition of mind. But we say that those who have been led astray have departed from God, who will also be near through faith in Christ. For the all-wise Paul addressed those who ran to this: ”But now you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. And again concerning him, that ”Coming, he preached peace to us who were far off, and to those who were near. For this reason it was said through the holy prophets to those still far off: ”Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Come then, he says, and take counsel together, you who are saved from the nations.

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

Let them hear the lyre of the Psalmist mocking them and crying out: ”May those who make them become like them, and all who trust in them. If they will declare, let them draw near, that they may know together, who made these things heard from the beginning. Then it was announced to you: I am God, and there is no other besides me; a just God and a Savior there is none besides me. Turn to me, and you will be saved, you who are from the end of the earth. Setting terrible and various snares for those on the earth, and digging the pits of destruction, the sinners demons, both unholily plundering the glory of divinity, and binding it upon their own heads, the all-daring ones were zealous to establish the workshops of their own deceit. And pretending to know the future, and to be able to announce it

to those willing to learn, they have indeed continued to plunder for a time. Indeed, oracles throughout countries and cities, and false prophecies were everywhere, and divinations by omens, and a multitude of impostors speaking from their own heart, according to what is written, oracle-mongers, and necromancers, and those who speak from the earth, and ventriloquists and diviners by barley meal, and in short the world was filled with liars and impostors. Therefore, there was among them no true knowledge of future things, but falsehoods, and buffoonery and deceit, and guile, and nothing else. For this reason, the God of all says:

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

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

turned back; that to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue will swear by God, saying: Righteousness and glory will come to him.

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

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

while for those who love him from a sincere heart, it is to receive glory in him and to be distinguished in righteousness. And these would not be in any way at all Israel according to the flesh, but rather the seed of the sons of Israel. But making the

meaning of the preceding things clearer, we say this. For the only-begotten Word of God shone forth to those on the earth, in a form like ours, that is, having become flesh, according to the Scriptures; and he came proclaiming release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, setting at liberty those who are oppressed, and healing the brokenhearted, and proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord. But although it was necessary for the Jews especially to bring faith to him, since they indeed had the law as a tutor and the holy prophets as mystagogues, this they have not done, but they leapt away from him, as it were, and have become full of confusion, having the sin that puts them to shame irremovably. Therefore it is true that, All who separate themselves from the Lord shall be ashamed. For they heard him say, ”Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. But those who have recognized his appearing have been justified through faith, and have gained a long and unending glory, having been shown to be partakers of the Holy Spirit, and having been enriched with the splendid dignity of adoption as sons.

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

Therefore, when He shone upon the world, the long-standing, great and accursed mist of sin was dispelled, which Satan had instilled in the minds of all, so that they might not see the light of truth. And the tyranny of the demons has ceased, and the games of idolatry. Therefore, necessarily, as I said, the discourse concerning these things was introduced to us, and it says that Bel has fallen. This is an idol especially of the Babylonians, but honored also in other cities. And they say that Bel is the Kronos of whom the atheistic Greeks tell myths, whom they also say is cruel and bloodthirsty, and a lover of manslaughter. For it has been recorded in Greek histories that on one day some people sacrificed three hundred foreigners to him, celebrating a festival that was foul and hateful to God and men. And indeed

the God of all, being indignant at such terrible impieties, says somewhere through one of the holy prophets to those accustomed to do such things: Sacrifice men; for the calves have run out. For he says that the unclean demons have arrived at such a point of misanthropy and savagery as to thirst insatiably for human blood, and to delight in the destruction of those who are captured. For perhaps a lowing calf upon the altar does not seem pleasing to them, nor incense and sheep; but they yearn more for the slaughter of men.

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

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

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

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

He therefore calls them the remnant, all but crying out that they will be consumed by the war, and will be prey to barbaric cruelty, unless they cease from such outlandish practices. But that stubbornness is in the souls of the Jews, and the study of the law has become for them an unprofitable thing, he shows by saying: Who are carried from the womb, and taught from childhood even to old age. For from infancy and up to old age, though studying the sacred and divine Scriptures, they have benefited nothing; but as if they had been deemed worthy of no admonition at all, they went away to apostasy from God. But even if a long time was spent by you,

he says, in unprofitable studies, and seeing that you are most ignorant, I will not cease from my innate gentleness; and I make myself thus clear to you by saying: I am, that is, I live and I exist; not as having a beginning of generation or knowing how to come to an end, but is always the same and unchanging, and until you grow old, I will be the same. For old age does not come upon me as upon you, but I am living and all-powerful. And I, for my part, brought upon you the calamities of war with a holy decree, calling to justice those who had insulted my glory. But I will relent, that is, I will release, and through amnesty I will reclaim you who have toiled.

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

To whom then have you likened me, he says, who by nature am distinct from all things, and raised high with incomparable superiorities, and beyond every created thing, the creator of all things, at once both king and Lord? And it is likely, I suppose, that God also wishes to make something else clear, saying to those who have gone astray: To whom have you likened me? See, contrive something, you who have gone astray. For, he says, by contributing gold and silver, then hiring a goldsmith, they fashion the form of either a man, or a woman, or rather a beast, so to speak, or a domestic animal, and the name God is immediately given by them to the thing fashioned. Understand, therefore, he says, to what have you likened me? For it is either to a man or a woman, or even to beasts or irrational animals. Then how is this matter not beyond all impiety? Devise something for a defense; absolve your sins. But you would not find the helpful argument for this. For bringing down the nature that is above all things to beasts and cattle, what arguments then will you use that are sufficient for being able to escape the accusations? And that the

making of idols attempts to teach nothing other than vulgarity of thoughts; for this reason he also speaks very sparsely.

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

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

For I am he says, the one who has the knowledge of all things, both announcing a thing before it happens, and bringing what has been promised to fulfillment. And I affirm this, that whatever I have purposed has been accomplished, and nothing of what seems good to me would ever fail. And this is a very great thing for the demonstration of invincible and God-befitting strength. For men, although they

have obtained the highest honors and possess dynasties to the end, propose some goal, and plan to accomplish something, but what they have considered does not in every way and entirely go smoothly for them. For very many things fall in between, and their frustration is hard to meet; But God of all things, if he should wish to do something, what could stand against it, and oppose it? For what the holy God wills, who will scatter? And his high hand, who will turn back? Therefore, for a proof that he is God by nature and truly, it might be said reasonably by him, 'All my counsel shall stand, and all that I have purposed, I will do. Then to this he says, 'Calling a bird from the east, and from a land far off concerning what I have purposed'; and to this will also follow, 'I am. Now, the bird called from the east, and from a land far off, we say is the Babylonian, who, having burned the whole land of the Jews, took Jerusalem and shook the temple in it;

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

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

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

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

And it seems that with the promises of partial salvation, he also interweaves the declaration of that which is universal and most general. For he saved from the land of the Chaldeans those who were carried off to it as captives, and one might say, I think, that this is a partial assistance, but the most general is that through Christ, which he had long ago promised to reveal not long after. For I have brought near, he says, my righteousness, and the salvation from me I will not delay. And we say that this is like, ”Yet a little while, and he who is coming will come, and will not delay. And salvation has been given in Zion to Israel for a glorification. And in these things he names the spiritual Zion, that is, the Church of Christ, in which we all who belong to the spiritual Israel receive his salvation in glory. For just as a Jew is not one according to the flesh only, but if someone has also been deemed worthy of the circumcision in the spirit; so also Israel is not only those who have come from the blood of Israel, but also all who have had a mind that sees God, who also have been appointed as children, and according to the promise of Abraham, and we say that these are the truer Israel. Come down, sit on the ground, virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground [there is no throne;

enter into the darkness], daughter of the Chaldeans, for you shall no longer be called tender and delicate. Take the millstone, grind meal, uncover your veil, expose your gray hairs, bare your legs, cross the rivers. Your shame will be uncovered; your reproaches will appear. I will take what is just from you. Having said

that I have given salvation to Israel for a glorification, and that from the having promised them redemption from captivity, he then remembers and clearly narrates, in what way she was captured and has been plundered, and as if on a tablet he depicts the condition of the captives. For just as he had previously announced to the land of the Jews the devastation from the war of the Babylonians, going through each detail meticulously, and saying: ”Because the daughters of Zion were exalted, and walked with a high neck, and with winks of their eyes, and in the gait of their feet, at once dragging their tunics, and at once playing with their feet, and God will humble the ruling daughters of Zion; and the Lord will reveal their form in that day, and the Lord will take away the glory of their clothing, and their ornaments, and their braided hair, and the fringes,” and the things that follow these; then he adds to these: ”And instead of a sweet smell there will be dust, and instead of a girdle you will be girded with a rope, and instead of the golden ornament of the head you will have baldness because of your works;

and instead of the purple-bordered tunic you will gird yourself with sackcloth; so also now what the daughters of the Babylonians, that is, their inhabitants, will suffer, with the Persians and Medes dragging them about, he shows, saying: Come down, sit upon the ground, which would imply, be humbled, although long grievously sick with arrogance. Come down, therefore, from the mountain and high mindset to humility, from glory to dishonor, from luxury to misery, from immeasurable wealth to utter poverty, from freedom to slavery, and in a word from all the sweetest things to the worse and most wretched. Sit in darkness, that is, the darkness from incurable calamity. For a sharp grief poured over the soul enslaves the mind, and the assault of unexpected toils, and fear falling like a burden. And that the time of her ancient prosperity has passed, he shows by saying: No longer shall you be called delicate and luxurious. For the women of the Chaldeans, it is not unlikely, had a luxurious lifestyle, and were lovers of adornment, and held the art of hairdressing in no small account; because they say that even their military experts prided themselves on gold and stones, and hastened to distinguish themselves with no unremarkable adornment, even in battles themselves. You will no longer be called luxurious, therefore, he says, but you will rather endure, and not willingly, the misery of servitude; you will grind meal, you will be seen bare of the coverings of your head;

that is, with your hair flowing unkempt everywhere, although formerly it was bound up in various ways. Uncover your grey hairs, and this would be a clear sign that the captors have come to such cruelty as not even to spare an old woman. Hike up your lower legs, cross rivers. Your shame will be uncovered, your reproaches will appear. For those who have once fallen into captivity, and are carried away from their native land to that of the victors, must cross the intervening rivers on foot, clearly by hiking up their garments, and no longer bearing in their eyes the modesty befitting females; but as if by necessity also exposing to many the secret

parts of the body. And one might say that her shame was seen and her reproaches appeared in another way, as she was captured once and for all, and came to be in abominable circumstances, although formerly she was luxurious and prided herself on unending prosperity. Then he says, that I will take what is just from you, that is, what you ought to suffer, this I will take from you. And what this is, he has foretold through another of the holy prophets, saying: ”As she has done, do, I will do to her. And again: ”As you have done, so shall it be to you; your recompense shall be returned upon your own head. And it is said elsewhere concerning everyone who is accustomed to sinning: ”Woe to the lawless one, evil things will happen to him according to his works.

No longer will I deliver you to men, said the Lord Sabaoth who redeems you; the Holy One of Israel is His name. Another word is inserted in between, and as if to Israel, and God promises the things at no time under to fall into the hand of enemies, for he would pity them as having paid punishments equal to their sins against him, or rather even punished beyond this. For he said somewhere concerning it: ”Priests, speak to the heart of Jerusalem, comfort her, because her humiliation is accomplished, her sin is forgiven, because she has received from the Lord’s hand her sins. Therefore, He who delivered you, he says, the Lord Sabaoth, whose name is also the Holy One of Israel, said, You shall no longer be given over to wicked and unmerciful men, meaning, of course, to those who formerly conquered, since God was angered, and left Israel destitute of compassion and love, seeing them turn to apostasy and uncontrollably proceeding to do what is forbidden by his divine laws. Sit down, contrite, enter into darkness, daughter of the Chaldeans; you shall no longer be called the Strength of a kingdom. I was provoked against my people, you defiled my inheritance. I gave them into your hands, but you did not give them mercy, you made the yoke of the elder very heavy, and you said: I will be a ruler forever. You did not consider these things in your heart, nor did you remember your latter end.

He shows himself everywhere using a just decree, and bringing upon certain ones who might sin, balanced punishments. For the crimes of the Babylonians were very many, and he describes them with very great cruelty and inhumanity, and also shows her to be arrogant, and unwisely trusting in her own powers, so as to even think that the change for the worse would in no way ever befall her. Therefore when, he says, you endure the capture, then sit down contrite. But ”contrite,” he says, means, having understood, even if at last, and especially in yourself; but accept dizziness from darkness. For he said that irreparable evils pour down a kind of darkness on the mind, and like dust fall upon souls. Therefore, he says, you will no longer be called the Strength of a kingdom. For Babylon was so named, since it had a multitude beyond number, and a most warlike hand, and sufficient for resistance, if indeed there were any who resisted, and went out against those who held power among them. Then what was the pretext for the Babylonians to

have inflicted upon them the things brought on by divine wrath, he makes clear, saying: I was provoked against my people, you defiled my inheritance. I gave them into your hands, but you did not give them mercy. He appears to say something similar also through the voice of Zechariah:

”I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, and with great anger I am angry with the nations that attack, because I was a little angry, but they joined in for evil. For at times God disciplines out of love, and some who have become unadmonished and have set a proud neck against him, he brings through toils to obedience, either by bringing the hands of enemies against them, or by inflicting them with other griefs somehow. For just as fire or iron often heals incurable wounds, since they do not endure the measure of medicines, in the very same way, I think, our God who loves virtue, when he sees a soul going with unrestrained impulses against rocks, and clinging tightly to the ways of wickedness, he heals it with bitter toils. But there are those who, having been appointed in the role of punishers, use terrible and unrestrained angers, and are carried beyond what is reasonable, unbearably burdening those who have come under them. Therefore, the matter is very difficult, and God is provoked by those accustomed to do this. We must therefore abstain from evil, and if any should suffer punishments, with God disciplining them, let us look to what is gentle, knowing well that the discipliner is greatly provoked, if the things of justice are brought upon them by us beyond measure. Therefore, he says, you did not pity the old man, and you captured them not by your own strength, but rather because I gave them.

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

For pretending to have precise knowledge of future events, they prophesied to the rulers of the land nothing gloomy, but rather those things by which it was likely that the hearers would be delighted. It is necessary, therefore, to understand that, even when Cyrus was threatening them with his attack and already bringing on the assaults of the enemy, they were certainly present in their midst, speaking falsely and saying that they would very soon overcome him, and they would prevail very effortlessly, and they would destroy their enemies, and would dance over the fallen. But they said these things. But now hear, you delicate one. And through these things he disparages the lifestyle of the Babylonians, as being rather weak and dissolute. For they were delicate, anointing themselves with the most fragrant perfumes, using embroidered robes, and honoring the splendor that comes from adornment, so that among them the art of hairdressing was held in esteem, and there was also a rivalry of beauty. Therefore, for this reason she has been called delicate. And he also calls her seated, instead of, reigning over, the neighbors, clearly, or rather, even over the nations yet far away. And she was also confident, that is, taking courage in the immeasurable multitude of her warriors, so as to even say: I am, and there is no other. For she thought that besides her there would be absolutely no other. But she was mistaken in her hope, and has missed the truth. For Cyrus has risen up against them, leading the Persians and Medes;

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

Know therefore, O Babylon, he says, that the wisdom of the magi, that is, of the false prophets, and of the enchanters, and your fornication in addition to these will be a shame to you For you have fallen under the hand of your enemies, having taken courage in these things, from which it is possible to derive no benefit, except only to be put to shame for having had a vain hope in them. And he calls the fornication of the Babylonians in these things, not at all the physical kind, but rather the incontinent and unbridled apostasy from God. For it was a land of carved

images, and it was carried away, as it were, with full sails by the deceits of demons. And you said in your heart: I am, and there is no other; and there shall come upon destruction upon you, and you will not know it; a pit, and you will fall into it. And misery will come upon you, and you will not be able to be cleansed; and destruction will come upon you suddenly, and you will not know it. He writes again of her arrogance, and how she has completely turned her heart away from knowing how to love, as if nothing among men is fixed, but the existence or not of those on earth depends on divine decrees.

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

Stand now in your incantations, and in the multitude of your sorceries, which you have learned from your youth, if you will be able to be helped. You have grown weary in your counsels. Let the astrologers of heaven stand up and save you, those who gaze at the stars; let them declare to you what is about to come upon you. Behold, they will all be burned up like stubble in a fire, and they will not deliver their soul from the flame, for you have coals of fire, sit upon them; these will be your help, you have labored in change from your youth; a man has gone astray on his own, but for you there will be no salvation. He laughs and, as it were, scoffs at the superstition of the magicians, their empty toy, and he declares their practice to be utterly useless. For when the warriors are gathered, he says, and Cyrus is against you, and the phalanx of the enemies is overwhelming your arrows, the shields will be weak, and the power of archery will avail nothing, when the riders of the horses fall like hoplites and foot soldiers. Stand in your incantations, and in the multitude of your sorceries, which you have learned from your youth, if you will be able to be helped. Raise up, he says, against the besiegers the magicians, those who know well the frigid sayings of the tactics of incantations; but you will not be able, he says. You have grown weary in your counsels.

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

You have labored in your changing from your youth. Again, 'you have labored' must be taken to mean 'you have become weak'. For having apostatized from God and gone over to worthlessness, by yielding to the deceptions of demons, and this from your youth, you have become weak and easily captured. For you were not rich in the assistance from the only one who knows how to save, who is indeed the Lord of hosts. And he adds to this, that A person wandered on their own, but for you there will be no salvation; which is as if he were to say: Many people have wandered in a human way, offending God with moderate apostasies, either by stooping to the things of the flesh, or perhaps by being sick with some other passion. But you have advanced to such a point of unholiness, that no way of salvation is left for you; for judgment follows unrestrained deviations. Hear these things, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and have come forth out of Judah, who swear by the name of the Lord God of Israel, making mention of it, but not with truth, nor with righteousness, and holding fast to the name of the holy city, and bracing themselves upon the God of Israel; the Lord of Sabaoth is his name. The former things I declared of old; and they went forth out of my mouth, and they were heard. Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass.

Having completed the discourse concerning the Babylonians, he again transfers the force of the admonition to those of the blood of Israel, seeing that they had completely declined, and had been carried off into apostasy as if with loose reins. For after the death of Hezekiah, Manasseh his son, who administered the thrones of the kingdom, became a most impious man, and was completely carried away by the deceptions of demons; and he advanced to such a point of evil, wickedness, and unholy enterprises, that he filled the holy city with altars and images, and

even set up an abomination in the divine temple itself, that is, an image made in the place of God. At any rate, the God of all accused Jerusalem in these matters, saying thus: ”Why has the beloved wrought abomination in my house? Shall vows and holy flesh take away your wickedness from you, or shall you escape by these things? And again at another time. that: ”According to the number of your cities were your gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem you set up altars to burn incense to Baal. Why do you speak to me? You have all transgressed, and you have all been impious against me, says the Lord. Indeed, when Jeremiah fell down and offered up supplications on behalf of Israel, God said:

And you, do not pray for this people, and do not ask for them to be pitied, and do not approach me for them in supplication and prayer, because I will not listen. Do you not see what these are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? Their sons gather wood, and their fathers kindle a fire, and their women knead dough to make cakes for the host of heaven; and they have poured out drink offerings to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger. For as I said before, Manasseh the son of Hezekiah served the host of heaven, and was willing to esteem sorcerers and false prophets, enchanters and diviners, of every account, and he sacrificed some of his own children to idols. Therefore, the God of all wished to bring back Israel, who had slipped into such wickedness and impiety, to the light of truth with frequent admonitions. For this reason, he graciously gave them a very frequent word of exhortation, so that, opening the eye of their mind and freeing it from a demonic mist, they might at least late and with difficulty be strong enough to see who is the Creator and Master of all. For this reason, he says: Hear these things, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and who have come forth out of Judah.

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

when accepting the need for oaths," not rather on true and just matters, but on those things falsified by the law;

then also holding fast to the holy city, and relying on the God of Israel. For they wished to raise a high brow as inhabiting a holy city, and one called God's. For they heard in the divine temple the priests chanting about Jeru- salem: "Glorious things have been spoken of you, O city of God. The Lord himself also mentions this, saying, that one should not swear by one's own head, because they cannot make one hair white or black; nor by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great king. For they swore by Jerusalem, calling it, as I said, the city of God. And they also relied on him, saying their strength was the Lord of hosts. But it was necessary for those who then supposed this not to defile the city of God with altars and sacrifices, and being restrain- ed by the deceits of demons, nor to provoke against themselves the one in whom they trusted, but rather to please him with good endeavors, and offering to him, as a kind of sacrifice, that which is steadfast in piety. But hear these things, he says; and what things are these? The former things I have already declar- ed, they went forth from my mouth, and they were heard. Suddenly I acted, and it came to pass.

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

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

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

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

In the words of Jeremiah the prophet we find that when those from Babylon had once taken the holy city, and laid waste all of Judea, and carried Israel away captive, the remaining women wished to go down to Egypt with those who had been saved from Israel, but when the prophet resisted, persuading them to remain at home, and explaining the reason, they in turn cried out to them, saying: ”Because we stopped sacrificing to the queen of heaven, all these evils have come upon us. For they thought, although they had suffered the capture, that having offended the falsely named gods, and being deprived of their help, they had fallen under the feet of their enemies. For this reason the prophet Jeremiah also said to God: ”O Lord, your eyes are upon faithfulness; you have scourged them, and they did not feel pain; you have consumed them, and they were not willing to receive correction. Since I, therefore, He says, made the events audible to you before they came to pass, do not say again, ’My idols have done them for me.’ What did they do? To be captured, clearly, by the calamities of war; you were not led away captive by their wrath, nor, when they withheld their help, did they bring upon you an inescapable judgment. For they are graven and molten things. Nor indeed, He says, should

you say to yourself, 'The idols commanded me,' that is, they threatened, or rather, they foretold that I would suffer such evils.

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

I showed you my wrath, for my name's sake, and I will bring my glories upon you, so that I might not utterly destroy you. For it was necessary for my wrath to be shown to Israel who had been contemptuous, and had driven all wickedness to its end, and deemed the honor due to God as altogether of no account, but so that they might see again the greatness of his inherent love for mankind, the wonders were added to the grim things, so that they might not be utterly destroyed. For he saved them from the hand of enemies, and when they had fallen into the net of justice, he rescued them again, and he loosed them from the snares of captivity, so that he might not utterly destroy Israel. Behold then, I have sold you, he says, not for silver, that is, not for the sake of money. For I did not ask for any such things from you, nor have I been in need of anything earthly, or of the slaughter of calves, or sheep, or goats; but because you sinned, and were neglectful concerning the honor and glory owed to me from you. Nevertheless, even so I rescued you, he says, from the furnace of poverty; for he had been enslaved to the Babylonians. And it certainly follows the evils of slavery to lie in want of every good thing. For my own sake I will do it for you, because my name is profaned.

For those who had taken them supposed that, although God was willing to save them and was their protector, they still had conquered, and had taken advantage of the one being helped against His will. Therefore, my name is profaned, he says, since they have such opinions about me. But I will not give my glory to any other. And the glory of God is to save, and to have mercy, and to be able to rule over all,

and to be able to fulfill without effort whatever he should choose to accomplish. Hear me, Jacob, and Israel whom I call. I am the first, and I am forever; and my hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand established the heaven. He brings them again to the remembrance of the honor and glory given to them, and in addition of the forbearance and love. For they have been deemed worthy of the highest rewards, they who also from all the nations have been called alone to intimacy with him, and have become his portion and inheritance. And so the divine Moses once addressed those of Israel, saying thus: ”Behold, the heaven of heaven is the Lord’s your God, and the Lord has chosen you out of all the nations to be his people;

and again, ”When the Most High divided the nations, as he scattered the sons of Adam, he set the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the angels of God, and the people of Jacob became the Lord’s portion, Israel the measure of his inheritance. It was necessary, therefore, it was necessary for those so honored, who had obtained a glorious and chosen name, who were appointed as God’s inheritance, and who were enriched by being among the chosen, not to turn aside to anything that is not lawful, nor to choose to grieve their benefactor with relentless rebellions, who is the giver of all honor to them, and the provider of such choice and most desired good things. But taking none of these things to mind, the wretched ones were ensnared in the mire of idolatry, and leaving the true God, they have worshipped the elements of the world. Nevertheless, even so he has compassion on them again; for he calls them to right feeling, crying out, Hear me, and what was better to choose in the beginning to fulfill, so that they might have unshaken prosperity, this he commanded them to accomplish at least late, so that they might set their foot outside of judgment, and be loosed from the bonds of the servitude brought upon them. But since they worshipped the host of heaven, and leaving the Creator, for those things brought into being by him they kindled reverence, he initiates them again. For as the blessed Paul said:

”For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need again that one teach you, what are the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. That therefore he is ”the one who is,” and is before all things, and has an unending existence, being God by nature, he shows by saying: I am the first, and I am for ever. For who could be conceived as before the first? For just as no beginning could be conceived before that which is truly the first beginning; so no one else could be conceived as first before the first. Therefore, the God of all things is forever and before all things and for endless ages. For he who has no beginning, to what end will he ever come? And these things concern the divine glory. But the swarm of falsely named gods, that is, the elements of the world, could neither be conceived as first, nor can they remain the same and in a like manner forever. For the stars, the sun and moon, and in addition to these, heaven itself, were brought into being, having received a beginning and a

genesis, and they will one day run to the end of their being; and one could observe nothing in them which is not completely and in every way subordinate to the glory of the divine and incorruptible nature.

That the word on this matter would not err from the truth, he showed immediately by saying: My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand has established the heaven. Then how shall that which was made compete as an equal with its craftsman, and contend with the glory of its creator? Therefore, he shows that it is most absurd, or rather, even containing an indictment of all impiety, to choose to worship creation rather than the Creator, and, abandoning the one who is forever and first, to assign the name and reality of true Godhead to things made in time, and to grant this to their own skillful works. For they worshiped what their fingers have made, according to what is written. But God the Father calls the Son his own hand and right hand. For thus we will find him called in many places in the divinely-inspired Scripture. And indeed the divine Moses said: ”Your right hand, O Lord, is glorified in strength, your right hand, O Lord, has shattered enemies. And the blessed David: ”Let your hand be strengthened, let your right hand be exalted. I will call them, and they will stand together, and all shall be gathered together, and they will hear. Who has declared these things to them?

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

Loving you I have done your will against Babylon, to take away the seed of the Chaldeans. I have spoken, I have called, I brought him, and I made his way prosperous. Draw near to me, and hear these things; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; when it came to be, I was there, and now the Lord has sent me, and his Spirit his. He does not permit them again to be carried away to untrue

suspicions. For it was indeed very likely, since they had an untutored mind, and one all too easily led into apostasy and susceptible to the snares of deceit, that they should think and say that they suffered what befell them in the war perhaps from the wrath of the falsely-named gods—with the worship proper and due to them having been neglected, and their sacrifices no longer being offered—and that these gods, taking pity again, had measured out to those who suffered such things what came from their wrath; and there is nothing improbable in this reasoning. For we have shown before that, when Jerusalem had been sacked, and all of Judea burned along with the temple, the women who were left said that these things happened to them because they had ceased sacrificing to the queen of the.

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

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

God had spoken concerning him in the holy prophets, that he would come in due time, and would take the land of the Chaldeans by force, and that he himself would release Israel;

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

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

But, O Master, one of the blood of Israel might say, I suppose, you have redeemed and saved, you have delivered from fire and justice, from yoke and bondage, from a barbarian’s hand, as one who is all-powerful, clearly, and accomplishing whatever you choose with mere nods. Then how have we, who are under your care and love,

always boasting in you as our helper, been brought down to this misery, so as to fall under the feet of enemies, and for those who are free from free parents to serve contrary to what is fitting? What then does God say to these things? I have shown you so that you might find the way, in which you shall walk in it. I have laid down a law for you, he says, the definer of what must be done, one that knows how to direct toward anything whatsoever of the things most pleasing to me, a guide to righteousness, a teacher of piety, leading to a straight path, through which if you had wished to act, you would have arrived at being a genuine and true servant, and very well crowned with boasts from virtues. But you have gone outside the straight path, and leaving the highway, as it were, you have turned aside to what is not lawful; you have served the host of heaven, you have sacrificed to idols, you have worshiped gods that are not, you have forgotten the Creator, you have considered the given law as nothing.

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

With no one raising a sword, nor the hand of the enemy destroying anyone, you would have been populous and innumerable, so as to be compared to sand and dust-your children. But since you have acted insolently toward God, and have offended not moderately, having lapsed into every sort of transgression, you were contracted to a small number, and you do not have the widely spreading increase of your race into a multitude, nevertheless, even now you shall not be utterly destroyed. For the remnant of Israel has been preserved everywhere. And God said that he would nowhere fall root and branch, because of the promise given to the fathers. Then he says, that, Go out from Babylon, fleeing from the Chaldeans. This is a royal command, releasing Israel from captivity. For just as those who hold power over earthly affairs, and manage the thrones of the kingdom, sometimes grant release from their exile to those under their power, signifying the matter with a

philanthropic nod and voice; so also the God of all granted a philanthropic nod to those who had suffered, and clearly says, ”Go out,” so that they might know the Redeemer and the provider of all good cheer to them. Proclaim a voice of gladness, and let this be heard. Proclaim it to the end of the earth. Say: The Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob, and if they thirst, He will lead them through the desert, rocks will be split and waters will flow, and my people will drink.

There is no rejoicing for the wicked, says the Lord. Confessedly, all things that God does are wonderful. But those things that surpass the others, and have obtained the highest glory of His works, if they remain hidden, they wrong those who happen to be deprived of knowing them, but when they are known, they are of no small benefit. For from these it is possible to see both His ineffable glory, and His pre-eminence over all, and His exceedingly strong hand, and His all-powerful glory. For He redeemed Israel from Egypt. But in order that He might be seen as a worker of great things, so that His glory might become manifest to those throughout all the earth, Pharaoh was brought into the middle like some vessel, so that by resisting the words spoken through Moses, he might call God to the necessity of finally making His own glory manifest to all, and to show the greatness of His immeasurable power. For it was said to him: ”For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show My power in you, and that My name might be declared in all the earth. And those things happened to them of old, but they were for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. It was necessary, then, it was necessary that the redemption from Babylon of those of Israel should not be kept silent, but rather be proclaimed, as it were, to those everywhere. For this reason he also says:

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

For if they should go through a desert, he says, and then be in need of drink and in want of water, that ancient sign will be shown to them; for water will be brought forth from a rock; and yet one would not find that this happened as those of Israel were going up to Judea from Babylon. But it was said, as I have stated, providentially, so that they might know that God He who was of old, is also now, able to use equal power and rivaling wonders, and having unchangeable strength, he cries out and issues, as it were, a general law. For there is no joy for the impious, says the Lord. And this is true. For somehow the face of the ungodly is always downcast, as their heart is likely smitten, and their mind is burdened by the rebukes of conscience. For he expects not crowns, nor the honor of praise, but rather fire and justice, which have been prepared for transgressors. Or perhaps this saying might also be fitting for the Babylonians. For they were rejoicing as if they had conquered the people of God, and they thought that having prevailed over His right hand, they had taken possession of Judea. But they were mistaken about the truth. For the former, because they were caught transgressing, were outside of His clemency;

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

Discourse 25

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

”The Lord has reigned, let the earth rejoice, let the many islands be glad. For when Christ had reigned over what is under heaven, taking all things under His hand, and snatching them from the tyranny of demons; then also they rejoiced, that is, they became full of gladness, the Churches throughout all the earth. For that the prophet in these things, by naming the islands, indicates the Churches from the Gentiles, would become clear through what follows. For he immediately added to, Listen to me, O islands, the phrase, Pay attention, O nations. Then he says, that After a long time it will stand, says the Lord. He promises, as I said, the manifestation of the Savior of us all, Jesus Christ, and that the Word, being God, would associate with those on earth in a form like ours. But that the time was then of prophecy, and not yet of the appearance of the events themselves, he shows by saying that After a long time it will stand, that is, what was promised, or rather, what was prophesied. What this is, the very person of the Savior was brought in, saying: From my mother’s womb He called my name. He immediately included in

these things the deep and great mystery, one needing initiation from above. For so it was revealed to the divine Peter. It was For the Word is indeed God, of equal glory, and enthroned with God the Father, co-existing and co-eternal.

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

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

For he scattered the mist of deceit, and sent into the hearts of all the dawn of the true knowledge of God; for he transformed the world under heaven into a pious

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

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

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

You are my Servant. Therefore the Word, who is free by nature, is made a servant through the economy of the flesh, that is, that which is understood according to the flesh, so that you may again understand his birth according to the flesh from a woman in time. But he names him Israel, because he was born according to the flesh from the blood of Israel; but also, ”And in you,” he says, ”I will be glorified.

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

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

They have been cast out from intimacy with him, they have been thrust out from being the people of God, they have become without share in the salvation from

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

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

and for this reason he was also highly exalted and the name was bestowed on him that is above every name, that at his name every knee should bow,” For he was, and is, God the Word. But since he has been called man, and has become this in truth, he has ascended to his own glory with the flesh. For he was known to be God, and he has not labored in vain. For the manner of the economy has resulted in glory for him, not attributing to him something silly and strange, but revealing him as Savior and Redeemer of what is under heaven, which indeed also being made known, prepared heaven and earth, and the things yet lower, to fall down to him. And now thus says the Lord, who formed me from the womb to be a servant to himself, to gather together Jacob and Israel; To him I shall be gathered, and I shall

be glorified before the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said to me, It is a great thing for you to be called my child, to establish the tribes of Jacob, and to bring back the dispersion of Israel. None the less, we say that in these things it is the Lord Jesus Christ himself who uses such human-like words, even though he especially makes clear the great mystery of godliness, and renders the manner of his emptying plain.

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

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

For some he caused to turn away completely from the one who created them, making them subject to himself and to the unclean demons, and casting upon them the inescapable yoke of sin, and turning them away completely from knowing who is by nature the God and Lord of all. And others, who had the law of Moses as the

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

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

For Israel has not been saved once and for all, but some have disbelieved because of their own wickedness, not having accepted the grace of the evangelical teachings. But the multitude of the Gentiles has been called in with the remnant; who have also been made children of Abraham, so that in every way what pertains to the economy might not miss the purpose of the advent; for everyone who is Israel has been gathered, and indeed, also Jacob, according to the arguments just now presented by us. Therefore, the people called in Christ promise that they will both be gathered to God, clearly through faith, and that they will be glorified before God, gaining the splendid boast of adoption, and having become a partaker of the divine nature, and being made resplendent by the Holy Spirit, and having been shown to be a curator of the best practices, and that they will consider God their

strength. For it is fitting for those who long for salvation and glory from him to be so disposed. He adds to these. And he said to me: It is a great thing for you to be called my servant, to establish the tribes of Jacob, and to bring back the dispersion of Israel.

To speak in human terms, the Father does not allow the Son to shrink from the economy, nor for the meanness of the form of a servant to be unrewarded, but rather he shows the matter to be fruitful, and the humiliation not without reward, and the burden of the economy not to be without wonder, and indeed glorious for this very reason, even though it seems to be inglorious. For it was admittedly a small thing, for the Word begotten of God, to be called a servant, that is, a house-servant. For the name signifies sometimes the Son, and sometimes, as I said, the servant. But the need of the contexts causes this or that to be brought in, according to the time fitting for each. But since the discourse is about the economy with the flesh, it would be fittingly understood that the servant be understood as a slave. Therefore, even if the shame of servitude was a small matter for the Son, as I said, yet it was otherwise. And indeed it has become not a small thing for him;

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

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

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

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

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

Thus we say also in our prayers: ”Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. And we are certainly not saying that we ask for an addition of holiness to

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

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

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

be glad in it. And I have given you for a covenant of the nations, to establish the earth, and to inherit a desolate inheritance, saying to those in bonds: Come forth; and to those in darkness, Be revealed. And in all their ways they will be fed, and in all the roads shall be their pasture.

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

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

And it is clear that he made this an occasion for the salvation of the flesh for those throughout all the earth, and death was abolished by his resurrection, and corruption has been trampled [variant: corruption], and we have flourished again into life, we who through the transgression in Adam were brought down to the contrary. Therefore we do not say that there was a failure in the prayer of our Savior

Christ, may it not be, but rather a divine plan, which must needs be followed by wonder. And in another way too we say that the intercession, I mean, before the precious cross, was wise. For it has become for us a model and an example of a necessary matter; for when temptation hangs over us, and fear rages like a storm, we must not be lazy and reclining, but rather watchful, and then be intent on prayers, and to beg God who saves, so that, if it be dear to him, we may carry our foot out of snares and traps. But if indeed he knows that the necessity of suffering will be more profitable for us, this too comes to its fulfillment, with him granting the endurance. Therefore, since the opinion of some has been shown to be unpersuasive, come, let us take up again the matters at hand. For he says that he has given him as a covenant to the nations to establish the earth, and to inherit a desolate inheritance, saying to those in bonds:

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

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

life; but these were least known to those who had gone astray. But since they have been called to the light of truth, they have become pastures for them, and feeding-grounds that nourish them toward spiritual manliness, and to the desire for every good thing. And God promises them the abundance of His grace, and help, and spiritual consolation.

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

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

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

Rejoice, O heavens, and let the earth be glad. Let the mountains break forth into joy, for God has had mercy on his people, and has comforted the humble of his people. He calls heaven and earth into one company and strongly commands them to fulfill the festival for those who have been saved by him. And ’heavens’ might be understood not as the element itself, but as those who dwell in the mansions above, and possess heaven as their rich abode, the holy Powers, Principalities, and Thrones, and Authorities, and those even beyond, the Seraphim. And ’earth’ likewise those among them expecting his appearance to be, and knowing he would come for the redemption of those from Israel, and of all the nations that are throughout the whole earth; just as, in fact, Simeon the righteous, holding the infant Jesus still tiny in his arms, glorified God, saying thus: ”Now you are letting your servant depart, O Master, according to your word, in peace; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all the nations,” and what follows. Or perhaps, we must also understand it as the saved themselves, celebrating the festival for their own sake, and crowning the Redeemer with fitting doxologies; and as for the mountains ’breaking forth into joy,’ one must suppose them to be, as I just said, the rational powers raised on high in virtue, that is, the ministers of the evangelical proclamations, who speak of Christ and fill the earth with his intelligible joy.

For they announce that God has had mercy on his people, and the humble of his people has com- he has called. For Christ, having shone upon them, has had mercy on all; if it is true, they have been rescued from the hand of the devil, and from the wickedness of demons. And they were delivered both from the sin that long

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

Will a mother forget her child, so as not to have mercy, and the offspring of her womb? But even if a woman should forget these things, yet I will not forget you. For the Savior Lord of all proposed, even before others, to the children of Zion, that is, to those of the blood of Israel, the grace that is through faith, and through countless things he persuaded them, saying, Seize the opportunity in which it was possible for those who believed in him to be enriched with the bounties promised to the fathers. But they were unyielding and disobedient, and at any rate, scorning the laws given through the all-wise Moses, and caring little for the prophetic proclamations, they both slipped away from believing and were caught in the snares of deicide. Therefore, for this reason, they were cast out, and were placed far from intimacy with him, yet the remnant has been saved, and Israel has not perished root and branch. But those who have been saved have become very few, and altogether easily numbered compared to the multitude of the disobedient. Most elegantly, therefore, Zion, taking on the persona of the mother of Judaea, is now introduced all but weeping as one who has been overlooked by God who gathers. For this reason, also, few children have been left to her. For she said, he says, that The Lord has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me. And what does God say to this?

He shows his love for humanity to be incomparable, and God promises to the spiritual Zion the good things that come from compassion, and he tries to assure that he would never forget his own creatures. For just as a woman who has given birth would not forget her own children, having as an arbiter of the highest love for humankind, or rather, natural affection, the law of nature; so neither would I forget, he says, my own; if perhaps those things of God even surpass the natural affection in mothers. For the one, it is not unlikely that she can even fall into forgetfulness. But for me to suffer this is not right. Therefore, the word is as from the Zion on earth, that is, from the mother of the Jews who has suffered childlessness, or rather, having few children; but the promise is to the spiritual Zion; to which also

the all-wise Paul says that the believers have come; so that you may understand the Church gathered from Gentiles and Jews, bearing the type of the one above, which the all-wise Paul also mentions, saying: ”But the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is the city of the living God, and the nurse of the firstborn, and the mother of saints enrolled in heaven, which Christ would never forget. For he loves the Church, which he himself presented to himself, making the two peoples into one new man, and reconciling both in one body to the Father.

How then could he forget his own body? that is, the Church, of which is the head. Behold, on my hands I have painted your walls, and you are before me continually, and you shall quickly be built by those by whom you were torn down, and those who laid you waste will go out from you. The meaning of the preceding is very difficult to find. For what might one suppose the hands of God to be, upon which it is right to think the walls of Zion have also been written? Indeed, in many places the holy Scripture names the hands of God his active powers, through which he brought all things into being, even if he effects something according to his own will; for instance, the Psalmist makes clear the coming into being of every person, saying: ”Your hands have fashioned me and made me, because his is the sea, and he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. And again: ”And you, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands. Then how could anyone suppose that on the active powers of God, as on a tablet, the walls of the Zion understood here have been written? Or of what walls at all does the text make mention? What then do we say? Nothing, I think, would prevent a disciple of Christ from applying some such meaning to what has been set forth. Zion was accusing the Lord of having forgotten her.

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

Therefore he might reasonably say, ”Behold, on my hands I have painted your walls. You will understand the piercing of the hands, that is the passion, as being made clear through this one thing. But ”I have painted,” he says, instead of ”I have imprinted. And you are before me continually. For if he suffered for us, how could he forget us? Or how would those for whom he was nailed to the tree not be in his eyes? But if anyone should wish to approach the meaning of the preceding in another way, I think it is not unreasonable to think something of this sort: that all those who have believed in Christ are in the hands of God the Father, someone might say, I think, and would not err from the truth. For he himself said: ”My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me. And I give them eternal life. In addition to this, also that ”No one will snatch them out of my Father’s hand,” since indeed they are under the protection from above, and are very well fortified by helps from on high.

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

”We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he is from. And having driven to the end of all evil, and having killed the heir, they became the cause of her falling. But just as Jews tore her down, so again, the divine disciples, being Jews, raised her up, having been transformed, of course, not remaining what she was, that is, disobedient, and a slayer of the Lord, but pre-eminent in faith, clearly, that which is in Christ. But those who had made her desolate went out from her. For the first teachers were cast out, and others rose up in their place, whom we have just now mentioned; for it was not possible for her to change in any other way, and to love Christ, and to choose a shadow in preference to the shadow of the law, unless the first ones were driven out from leading her unlawfully, and the chorus of the holy mystagogues was raised up in their place, of whom also the divine David makes excellent mention, singing somewhere, and

saying to the Savior of all, Christ: ”You will make them rulers over all the earth, and they will remember your name in every generation and generation. Lift up your eyes round about, and see them all. Behold, they have gathered together, and have come to you. As I live, says the Lord, you will put them all on, and wear them as the ornament of a bride.

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

For what has completely fallen away from the forbearance and love from God, what sort of harm would it not suffer? For they will be exposed to those wishing to tear them apart, and to carry them off to wherever it seems good to each of the wrongdoers. And they carry them away from God, both wicked and destructive demons. For it is written, that ”They shall be portions for foxes. And this is done also by the manifold passions that are in us. For the all-wise Paul says that some were given over to dishonorable passions, and to a debased mind. What then in these things does the divine word promise? The calling and gathering of the scattered, and the return in spirit of the lost, and the coming back of those who fled, both a turning back and an awakening, and the rewards of love for Christ. Look around for, he says, and look at them all. Behold, they have been gathered to you. But that the promise might be shown to be faithful, he confirms what was said with an oath, and says: As I live, says the Lord, I will put them all on as a bride’s ornament. For the assembly is the ornament of the churches. For because of this, it is the custom in the divinely-inspired Scripture to adorn the Church with golden and variegated clothing; for just as the many-formed and most precious of stones, I mean the Indian ones, set in golden rules, create a certain wonderful and sightly ornament;

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

For he said, that ”And seven women will take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own garments, only let your name be called upon us. Take away our reproach. For it was said through the law, ”There will not be a barren or sterile woman among the sons of Israel. And they did not consider the reproach of childlessness to be bearable. Since, therefore, the war consumed the entire male sex, and very few were left at all, he said that seven women would be received by one man, so as to take away their reproach, that is, childlessness. But since it is burdensome for one to please seven women, they promise to eat their own bread and to wear their own garments, as if they will need nothing at all from him. For they affirmed that they only feared the reproach of childlessness, as I said. As, therefore, their land was brought into complete desolation, he promises a release from what has happened, and says that the desolate places and the fallen places will be too narrow because of the inhabitants. Evidently with those who devoured her being removed, it is clear that these were the ones who had been appointed to lead; who, almost like some wild beasts, destroyed and devoured her. And he shows the multitude of those who will be called, how great and innumerable it is. For your sons, he says, whom you have lost, will say in your ears, Make a place for me.

And it has been said somewhere also to the spiritual Zion: ”Enlarge the place of your tent and fix your curtains. Do not spare, stretch out further to the right and to the left. And we have also read in the books of Moses, that concerning the tent in the wilderness, which I say was made of skins, wide and long courts were arranged, on the one hand facing the east and the light, and on the other to the west behind the tent, and indeed to the north and south, the type prefiguring what would be in due time the breadth and length of the holy courts, that is, of the

churches. Nevertheless, even as the grace from Christ is always increasing, the places everywhere are narrow for those who have believed, so that the rejoicing Church, which is the spiritual Zion, considers and cries out by herself: Who has begotten me these? And I would say that it is faith in Christ. For through it, being childless and a widow, she is great you have become [rich] in children; she has nourished your peoples for you, and you who were formerly left alone, have become unexpectedly rich, and you have been seen with many children, you who were formerly naked and alone. Thus says the Lord: Behold, I lift up my hand to the nations, and to the islands I will raise my standard, and they will bring your sons in their bosom, and they will carry your daughters on their shoulders.

And kings will be your nurses, and their princesses your nursing-mothers on the face of the earth. And they will worship you, and they will lick the dust of your feet. And you will know that I am the Lord, and you will not be ashamed nor yet put to shame. Having promised to Zion that she will be with many children and blessed with children, and that her children will come to such a multitude, so that she would need wider places than before, and to ask that the tent be enlarged, he shows at once that not so much from Israel, but from the flock of the nations the multitude of children promised to her appears. And the matter is true, and it is possible to see it through the events themselves. For the remnant of those from Israel has been saved; but this is small and easily counted; but those under heaven have been caught in the net through faith in Christ, and the power of the apostolic and evangelical proclamations brought to him those throughout the whole earth. Therefore, that this will be, he shows by saying: Behold, I lift my hand to the nations. And ”I lift” means I exalt and I raise up. And the hand would signify strength or power.

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

the simple and very easy-to-grasp word of the catechism. This again the prophet Isaiah himself taught us, saying somewhere else:

”The way of the pious became straight, and the way of the pious has been prepared. For the way of the Lord is judgment. And he has also brought in the divine Baptist, crying out and saying: ”Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be brought low, and the crooked will become straight, and the rough into smooth ways. That, therefore, without any sweat, for those eager to go to Zion as to a mother, the arrival through faith will be, the being taken up into bosoms, and being carried on shoulders, both her sons and indeed her daughters, would signify. And that they will be full of the highest honor, and of glory and well-being, he further declares, saying that Kings will be their nurses, and princesses their nursing-mothers. For it is, it is possible to see through the piety of the rulers those who have believed in Christ being cared for with honor, and deemed worthy of all consideration, so that they seem to be their nurturers rather, and nothing else. For if they fall on their face, and will worship Zion, that is, the Church, and as if thrown to the ground with outstretched hands, they practically also lick the dust of her feet;

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

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

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

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

Just as we say the saints are vessels of election, so also there are diabolical vessels, those who have come under him and have chosen to think his thoughts, or rather have been compelled. Thus says the Lord: If one takes a giant captive, he will take spoils; and taking from the strong, he will be saved. I just said that by the powers that using ineffable and God-befitting means, our Lord Jesus Christ entered into the house of the strong man, that is, he has arrived in this world in the flesh, and the one who of old was taking advantage of, and doing violence to those throughout all the earth, and bringing them under the yokes of sin, and making them into the rank of captives, he both plundered him and, as it were, casting him into unbreakable bonds, having cast him down to Tartarus with chains of darkness, he delivered him to be kept for the judgment of the great day to be punished, and after this he plundered him, persuading those who had been under him to turn back, at least to the point of being willing to be subject to the true God, and to hold fast to his commands, and to hasten to accomplish what would lead them to the finding of salvation. And since Christ has conquered, he has also passed on victory to us

ourselves, yet not without him; for he himself is the boast of the power of the saints, according to the voice of the Psalmist.

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

It is true then, that having received from the strong one, that is, from him, for he is himself the Lord of hosts, we have both been saved and have conquered. But one might also plunder Satan in another way, skillfully bringing those who have come under him and have been deceived into the light of true knowledge of God, and transferring them from depravity to a life befitting saints. But I will judge your case, and I will rescue your sons, and those who afflicted you will eat their own flesh, and they will drink their own blood as new wine, and they will be drunk, and all flesh will perceive that I am the one who rescues you, and who takes hold of the strength of Jacob. He makes his words as if to Zion, I say. And he seems in these words to name as her sons the holy apostles and evangelists, and those after them who were still called to the priestly ministry; who also became lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, and proclaiming everywhere the glory of Christ, and making manifest the power of the salvation from him to those throughout all the earth, upon whom indeed was a certain fierce and harsh beast, and the primeval dragon, heaping up afflictions and persecutions against them, and intolerably sharpening the champions of his own inherent wickedness.

Indeed persecutions were very often attempted against the holy Churches, and the fiercely savage cruelty of tyrants, having leaped upon them, brought many to the contests of martyrdom. But I, he says, O Zion—and we say this is the Church, which he indeed also calls Zion—I will judge your case, and I will rescue your sons. For having done no wrong, those devoted to God, and having been condemned for

no impropriety at all, then having endured contests even unto soul and blood with brilliant deeds of valor for the A monad running upward; but as for what came to the plotters' purpose, they are both dead and have perished. Therefore the judgment upon them, that is, a righteous judgment, will entirely and in every way come from God. For those who for piety's sake swam through the most glorious contests, and arrived at the prize of the upward calling, will bind on the crown of incorruptibility. But those who brought persecution upon them, and unjustly killed those whom it was better to hasten to emulate, will eat their own flesh, and will not so much sip the blood of those who suffered, but rather their own. For what they brought upon others, they will suffer not in justice but rather by the just decree of God, who crowns those who have suffered, but brings under a long and unending punishment those who did wrong. And such a righteous judgment will be most well-known to all flesh, that is, to every man.

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

For as some man dwelling with and joined to a wife, he speaks to the peoples of the Jews, and speaks about their mother; I mean the earthly and perceptible Jerusalem; so that again through it, and as in the person of one woman, their system might be understood. For just as when we say Church, we are not accustomed to apply the force of the word to the circuits of the walls, but we rather denote the most holy multitude of those who have chosen to worship God in it; so too if one should speak of the mother of the Jews, again he no less signifies them. Therefore, "I have not," he says, "cast off your mother, although I have become to her as in the role of a bridegroom, and have cast down the seeds of equity through both the law and the prophets; but rather she herself has departed, having disregarded her duties

toward me, and having thought it of almost no account at all to be with God. Since what bill of divorcement has been given to her by me? For God sends no one away from intimacy with him; nor does he shake off any of those accustomed to walk uprightly; but to those who would be genuine in faith, and knowledgeable of every good work, to these he grants the ability to be unshakeably enriched with intimacy toward him forever.

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

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

For when the Only-begotten shone forth in the flesh to those upon the earth, and appeared in a form like ours, they, unholily forgetting both the law and the prophets,

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

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

for I am not simply a man as you are, but rather God, having become in your form through the economy, that I might deliver you from both death and sin. For I myself, who speak, am present, I who of old worked wonders through Moses, and with ineffable power divided the sea, that is, clearly, the Red Sea. For the waters were frozen like a wall, and the redeemed passed through, having cast off the yoke of bondage in Egypt. The phrase, I will make the sea a desert, he says here, instead of, I made it dry. And I will make rivers deserts. And the word ‘I will make’ must again be understood as ‘I have made. For he stopped the Jordan, and made it a desert of waters as Jesus led Israel across and brought them into the land of

promise. And if he says that the fish in the waters shall be dried up, understand that this too was included to show that the Jordan was completely dried up, and the divine David, commemorating this so glorious and great wonder-working, says at one time: ”What is it to you, O sea, that you fled, and you, O Jordan, that you turned back? and at another time again: ”The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you, and they were afraid. The abysses were troubled, the multitude of the sound of waters. And concerning the Jordan again he says thus: You dried up the rivers of Etham, that is, those in the south.

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

It would not be improbable, but rather not inconsistent with the words of orthodoxy, to apply the preceding words to the choir of the holy apostles, that is, to all who have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been made wise through the Spirit, and have received abundantly from him enlightenment into their mind and understanding, who also have come to partake of divine gifts, and have been able to perceive the depth of the divinely inspired Scripture with pure eyes of the mind, and have entered into the art of a good evangelical life, and of a holy understanding. These, therefore, offering up hymns of thanksgiving, say that there has been given to them a tongue of instruction, that is, the ability to speak in an instructed manner, and to explain without rebuke the divine mysteries, and when and how it is fitting to use the words of consolation. This is indeed what the divine disciples did, having stored up in mind and heart a sound and blameless knowledge of the faith in Christ, and yet for each of those who approached the divine preaching, they offered the word that was fitting and suitable for him. For to those who are still infants, as it were, in the rank of milk, they offer well the word of simple catechesis, but to those who have attained to a perfect man, and have arrived at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, the solid and most nourishing.

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

For we, believing the law to be a tutor, whenever we receive into our ear the things through Moses, we understand them with other ears, transforming the types into truth, and making the shadow a pretext for spiritual contemplation. We have therefore received an addition of ears. For the instruction through Christ, that is, the evangelical proclamation, and the initiation through him, spiritually persuades to understand the law. It widens, as it were, the ears of those who have believed in him, which those of Israel did not have. For our Lord Jesus Christ said to them: ”Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me, and you are not willing to come to me that you may have life. And the all-wise and divine Paul writes about them, that ”when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart, not being unveiled, because in Christ Jesus our Lord and Redeemer it is done away.”

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator’s own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.