Commentary on Isaiah (part 3 of 3)

Cyril of Alexandria (c. AD 376–444)

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Discourse 26

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

They have become slow to obedience, tardy and completely without understanding in what is necessary to understand for their benefit, and the things through which it was likely to be able to run through, and very easily, both the tyranny of sin, and the plots of diabolical malice. But they disobeyed, but I do not disobey. For since God the Father willed to sum up all things in me, things in heaven and on earth, I submitted myself to emptying, and have descended into the measures of human poverty, having appeared as a man that I might become obedient, even unto death, and the death of the cross. Therefore I have given my back to the scourges, and my cheeks to blows. And my face I did not turn away from the shame of spitting. For these things happened for him to suffer, with the insolence of the Jews raging against him, and Pilate tearing him with scourges, and one of the unholy servants insulting him, and striking him, and others spitting upon him. But there was one purpose for the one suffering: to carry out to the end the good will of the Father. And so Christ said somewhere, that ”I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of the Father who sent me. And this is the will of him who

sent me, ”that of all that he has given me, I should lose nothing from it, but should raise him up on the last day.

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

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

And again, as from the person of the Jews concerning him: ”Let us bind the righteous one, because he is useless to us. And the matter itself would cry out. For how was it possible for the divine and pure nature of the Word to sin against what is fitting and proper to it, and to sustain the blemish of an offense? For it has been said concerning Christ, the Savior of us all, that ”He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth of him. Therefore, since he says that he, being innocent and just, endured the plots from the Synagogue of the Jews, he necessarily ad-

dresses those who did not know his complete sincerity, or perhaps, even thought that something wrong had been done by him, and that he suffered on the cross, and in justice, and says: Who is it that contends with me? let him stand against me at the same time. This resembles what was clearly said by Christ himself to the Scribes and Pharisees: ”Which of you convicts me of sin? If I speak the truth, why do you not believe me? For although the only-begotten Word of God was made like us, and took on a likeness in every respect whatsoever, yet in this one thing alone he is believed to have been beyond our nature. For since every man is subject to stumblings and sins, and no one at all has had a completely blameless life; he alone, even when he became man, kept for himself his God-befitting dignity.

For the nature of God would reasonably be understood to be beyond sinning. Therefore he also said, that ”The ruler of this world is coming, and he will find nothing in me. For he who was made like us, that he might deliver us from the snares of sin, how could he himself be caught with us, or how could he come under blame and indictment, he who frees from indictment and blame all who have believed in him? ”For it is God who justifies, who is he that condemns? Behold the Lord helps me; who will harm me? Behold all you shall grow old like a garment, and a moth shall consume you. He wishes to teach two useful and necessary things at the same time to those who have nursed an impious and unjust envy against him. First, that the plot against him, and the bloodthirsty enterprise, would in every way and entirely fail. Then, that bitter and unbearable punishments will be exacted from those who have sinned against him; for they thought they could subject to death the Lord who is the author of life. But as the Psalmist says, ”They have devised a plan, which they shall not be able to establish. For it was impossible for him, being life, to be held by death.

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

and true Son of the Father; but they rather draw upon themselves a terrible and most severe judgment. And this he teaches, adding:

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

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

For Christ was transfigured on the mountain, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light; and Moses and Elijah appeared talking with one another; then there came a voice from God the Father, instructing the holy apostles and saying: “This is my beloved Son, hear him. If, therefore, there is

anyone, he says, who has the fear of God in his mind, and has hidden it within himself as a kind of treasure, let him hear the voice of His Servant. It is, as I said, the evangelical and divine proclamation, calling to the redemption that is through faith in Christ, and to a holy way of life, and one far superior to that in the law. For the one, as I said, was in shadows, while the other has the truth bright and manifest. You who walk in darkness, and have no light, trust in the name of the Lord, and support yourselves on the Lord. The most skillful of physicians sometimes combine with harsh medicines also remedies from gentle things, as if charming away the harsh and more savage pain. We find that our Lord Jesus Christ has now done something of this kind.

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

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

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

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

For it was not a light for them, but the seeming to know the law, yet no longer wanting to accept the things through Christ, became for them a cause of fire and flame. For that they have paid the penalty for their drunken outrage against Christ along with having died strengthened in their sins, he makes clear by adding: Through me these things happened to you. In sorrow you shall lie down. What are these things? For their country has been ravaged, and the wicked have perished wickedly, and

the holy city has been captured, and has fallen into the hands of enemies, and the temple itself was burned, and they have fallen asleep in sorrow. For those who die unpurified, and not being deemed worthy to receive the redemption through Christ, not in the hope of rewards and spiritual gladness, but in fear of punishments and in sorrow because of them will they lie down to sleep. Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, and seek the Lord. Look to the solid rock from which you were hewn, and to the pit of the cistern from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you, for he was one, and I called him, and blessed him, and loved him, and multiplied him.

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

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

the matter, or rather for the confirmation of hope for this. For they became the root of the whole nation, although being of an old and advanced age, and no longer in hope of being able to bear children. For he was one hundred years old, and she was both barren and childless.

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

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

Therefore, even if it names Sion, do not think of the earthly one, but rather accept the intelligible one, which is the Church of the living God; since how could one see the prophet's words coming true? For God promised to comfort her; but we will find this has happened nowhere, but on the contrary it is possible to see her made desolate and ravaged. Therefore the word for the prophet now has been addressed to the multitude of those who have believed, which is the Church of the living God.

And what, then, does he say? For just as, he says, I called Abraham, and being one I made him the father of many nations; so also I will comfort you, Sion. And the comfort in these things is a gladdening promise, and one that implants a firm hope in its hearers, that in every way and altogether, as God gathers those who will be called in faith, she will not be desolate and fallow, but like some paradise, flourishing and with the finest trees, adorned with beautiful and noble plants, and having intelligible fruitfulness, that is, gladness and joy, thanksgiving and a voice of praise. Understand from this that he promises to bear away from the legal worship those who will be in the rank of plants, and the intelligible filling a garden, which indeed he calls the paradise of God. For of old the law of Moses commanded to sacrifice oxen, and to slay sheep, and to offer turtledoves to God, and fine flour mixed with oil.

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

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

this, and making them more eager for what is necessary, I say, to receive the word from him. And he calls not only those who are among the peoples, but with them also kings, so that you may understand the rulers, that is, the leaders of the peoples. For from the multitude of believers many were brought to this, of whom the divine disciples became the firstfruits; then after them, following in their footsteps, those after them were invested with the name of kingdom;

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

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

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

”You have been gracious, Lord, to your land, you have turned back the captivity of Jacob, you have forgiven the iniquities of your people, you have covered all their sins. Therefore, in the righteousness of God the Father, that is, in Christ, we have been saved and have been sanctified, having washed away the filth of wickedness. But if it were Christ himself who says, ”My righteousness draws near swiftly,” you will understand righteousness in these things no less as the justifying grace from him, that is, the evangelical and heavenly proclamation, through which we have known the way of righteousness pleasing to him, and we have been guided to every one of the best virtuous deeds, according to what is said in the Psalms: ”Your law is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths. And he names righteousness also salvation, and very fittingly. For it draws us out of every evil, and freeing us from the bonds of death, it leads us up to unending life. And he promises something else as well. For ”nations will hope,” he says, ”in my arm. And indeed he also affirms that islands will wait for him. For of old the nations the multitude, entangled in unbreakable bonds, of sin, I say, and subjected to the greed of the all-wicked and primevally-evil dragon, was captive, and in extreme miseries, being completely without help. For there was no one able to deliver from so bitter and inescapable a calamity;

there was no one to shatter the yoke of greed, but they were, as I said, in the lot of captives, stripped of all hope that leads to life, and destitute of every good thing. For those who had not known the Lord who is by nature and truly, certainly continued in the world without God and having no hope, according to the voice of the blessed Paul. But those who were formerly weak, he says, and as it were cast down to the ground, taking my arm will gain an unexpected hope for salvation. And everywhere the sacred Scripture calls the Son the arm of the Father. For he is his power. But if anyone should wish to understand also the arm of the Son himself,

on whom will be the hope of the nations called to salvation, you will understand his God-befitting and extraordinary power, by which he will crush Satan and the world-rulers of this world, and has saved those from the nations. For he himself said: ”Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house? And David also said: ”You have humbled the proud one as one who is slain, and with the strength of your arm you have scattered your enemies. Christ, therefore, is the hope and way of salvation not only for those of Israel, but indeed also for all the nations; for whom the islands will also wait.

And by islands, as I think, he means the churches of the nations, which, lying as it were in the midst of the sea, being beaten by the assaults of affairs as by waves, carry off the crown of good repute through endurance. For endurance produces proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not put to shame. Therefore, to wait for God could not be understood as anything else, except that through perseverance and endurance one is to be well-pleasing to him, and on this account to be deemed worthy of his mercy and oversight. For it is written that, ”Waiting, I waited for the Lord, and he attended to me. Lift up your eyes to heaven, and look upon the earth beneath, for the heaven was established like smoke, and the earth will grow old like a garment, and those who dwell on the earth will die in like manner. But my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will not fail. Saying that he himself will be a hope for the nations, he weaves for them a necessary initiation. For it was not otherwise possible for those who did not know him to cleave to God in spiritual intimacy, except by being delivered from the ancient error, and getting outside the snares and perversity of the devil, and becoming rich in the true and blameless knowledge of God. For it is like an entry into intimacy with God to both know clearly and to confess, that there is no other God besides him.

Therefore, since they thought heaven to be God, and were persuaded to worship the more prominent of the stars, and they venerated the very earth lying under everyone’s feet, having completely departed from the doctrines of piety, and who is by nature the God of all things, and brought into being things that once were not; for this reason he says, showing that creation is of a different nature in relation to himself; and demonstrating very well the incomparable difference between creator and creation, he commands them to lift their eyes to heaven, that is, to consider the firmament itself and the things in it, and again to bring the mind down to the earth, that is, to the contemplation of the things in it, both animals, I say, and simply all the things in it, and even if they should choose to marvel at it, not to stop their mind there, but from the greatness of the works to measure the power of the one who crafted them, and the supreme and ineffable glory of the creator of all. And somehow we are accustomed to the [doctrine] concerning God to gather knowledge from the divinely-inspired Scripture, and from the magnificence and

order of created things. So Paul laughs at the wise men among the Greeks, because although they fashion for themselves a pretense of wisdom, they have a heart full of all foolishness. ”For they revered, he says, and served the creature rather than the Creator.

So he also rebukes others, as turning back again to the weak and poor elements of the world, and wanting to serve them beyond what is reasonable. For that the beauty of creation would not provide an occasion for going astray to the more intelligent, but rather starting points for true knowledge about God, he clarified, saying: ”For His invisible attributes from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, both His eternal power and Godhead. Therefore when you marvel, he says, at the heaven made firm, and seen as in the form of smoke, yet know, he says, that things brought into being will be dissolved again. For things that have beginnings of existence will end again in not being. The earth therefore will grow old, he says, that is, it will vanish, and those who dwell on it will die, just like these things. But he aptly calls the death of the elements the change for the better. For as Paul says, that ”The creation itself also will be set free from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. But in what way will it be set free? Christ’s disciple will clarify, saying: ”For the day of the Lord will come as a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a rushing noise, and the elements, being burned, will be dissolved, and the earth and the works that are in it will all be burned up;

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

you will not fear the reproach of men, nor be defeated by their scorn. For like a garment they will be worn out by time, and like wool they will be eaten by the

moth; but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to generations of generations. Having initiated those from the gentiles, and having woven for them a simpler discourse suited to their minds (for milk is more fitting for those still of an infant disposition) he speaks again to those who are already manly, and have a stronger heart, and a well-established mind ..... if ..... to endure suffering ... and considers piety nothing ..... But who these might be, he states clearly: Those who know judgment, that is, those who like approved money-changers test each of the things to be done, and discern accurately, holding fast to what is good, and abstaining from every evil thing. And these are they who have the law of God in mind and heart, and who have practiced receiving it as a certain tutor and wise guide. For David sings and says concerning every righteous and wise man, that "The law of his God is in his heart, and his steps shall not be tripped up. A salutary thing, therefore, is to make the divine law, as it were, a deposit in our mind and heart.

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

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

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

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

For you do not support the root, but the root supports you. For just as you were cut from the wild olive tree which is yours by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, so also these who are by nature will be grafted into their own olive tree. O Jerusalem, therefore, he says, arise. This, I think, is clearly what the most holy Paul wrote to some: ”Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. Be watchful, therefore, that is, rise as from the dead, he says; put on the strength of your arm, and not a perceptible arm, but rather an intelligible one, that of the soul, by which one is clearly directed to the accomplishment of virtue. For admittedly Israel grew weak by insulting Christ, but having turned back and become sober again, it will put on the power from Christ. And this, then, was what was said to him through one of the holy prophets, Turn back, Israel, to the Lord your God, because you have grown weak in your iniquities. And it was also said concerning them through the voice of Jeremiah by Christ, the Savior of us all: ”Behold, I am bringing weakness upon this people, and fathers will grow weak in it, and sons together, neighbor and his kinsman will perish.

For Israel has fallen away completely, because of its impiety toward Christ, from being able to fulfill at all any of the things that are accustomed to make for an ex-

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

For the waters were congealed as a wall, and the surge was passable for the redeemed; for they ran as on dry land. And these were not their own works, but rather a display of the miraculous power of the most mighty right hand. For it was God, as I said, who made the water passable for them. However, he speaks of the things that happened for her sake as the works of Jerusalem herself, at the same time persuading them to be confident, that by believing in Christ they will overcome every temptation, and will prevail over all the strength of the enemy. For He who long ago led them through the midst of the sea, and declared it a way of passage for the delivered and the redeemed, will again mightily drive away, and sometimes pursue the things that will come from certain people. For it is written, that ”All who desire to live godly in Christ will be persecuted. Therefore, it is God who says to Jerusalem: ”Are you not the one who dries up the sea? and what follows. That is, you will also understand the power of the preceding things in another way. For since she is called to the knowledge of Christ, by God the Father saying: ”Arise, Jerusalem, and put on the strength of your arm; having been watchful in a certain way, and brought to the remembrance of her strength, she converses and says to her: Are you not the one who dries up the sea, and the great deep?

The one who made the depths of the sea a way of passage for us who are delivered and redeemed, declaring a way through the waves? And it is likely, indeed, that the experience of what has already happened has been received by them as an unshakable faith in the things that will follow. For he who through the midst of the sea having led them through, He will certainly abolish also the surge of the present life, and He will show the vain and unmixed turmoil of the affairs in the world to be stale, so that in no way may the souls of those who have been called be choked by worldly cares; but He will drive them beyond every temptation, and having been saved and redeemed, to glorify Him, saying: ”Sing to the Lord a new

song, for the Lord has done wonderful things. His right hand has saved him, and his holy arm. Now the right hand and arm of God the Father could be none other than our Lord Jesus Christ. For they shall be turned back by the Lord, and shall come to Zion with joy and everlasting exultation. For on their head is exultation and praise, and joy shall overtake them; pain, sorrow, and groaning have fled away. Again he forms the figure of the speech according to the power of the things that have already happened to them.

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

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

for to be and to live belongs only to the nature that is beyond all, not having received these things by participation from another, nor indeed having the thing as a gift,

but rather being life itself. Therefore, I am, he says, the one who comforts you, that is, the one who bestows all spiritual comfort, and who sustains with assistance so that one may be well established, in order to proceed with boldness straight to every virtue. Or perhaps you will understand comfort in these words in another way as well. For through the evangelical proclamations the Savior was calling to the washing away of sin, that is, I say, through faith in Him, to the participation of the Holy Spirit, and the boast and glory of adoption. But you, he says, O Israel, You were not afraid to despise me, who am, and having scorned the one calling you to life, you were afraid of a mortal man, and of a son of man, who like grass have withered. Then you forgot God who made you, who framed the heaven, and founded the earth, but you feared the face of the one afflicting you. And in these things God accuses the leaders of the Jews, who continually opposed the glory of the Savior, and as far as it was in their power, they declared it to be absolutely nothing. He performed miracles in many ways; but they poured out bitter words beyond wonder against the divine signs;

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

For in what way they planned to take you away, and now where is the wrath of the one afflicting you? For in your salvation it will not stand, nor will it delay. For the wrath of the Scribes and Pharisees against the people under their hand was temporary; but they have gone to destruction, and are given over to slaugh- ter. And those who believed in Christ rejoiced, having been saved, and having escaped the divine wrath. But the others did not delay, that is, they perished not long after, when all Judea was ravaged, and the temple was burned, and Jerusalem was destroyed, together with those who inhabited it. For I am your God, who stirs up the sea, and makes its waves roar. The Lord of hosts is my name. I will put my

words into your mouth, and under the shadow of my hand I will cover you, by which I established the heaven, and founded the earth; and he will say to Zion, You are my God. Having accused those of Israel, as fearing men, that is, those who were chosen to preside over the synagogue, and out of respect for them having unwisely stepped into the mire of disobedience, and having utterly disregarded love for him, he shows in these things, that also circumstances and persecutions, whatever may happen to those who have chosen to be pious, he settles without toil;

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

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

frequently remembering the divine law, they might know the useful path to their salvation.

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

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

For the cup of stumbling, the bowl of wrath you have drunk, and you have drained it, and there was no one to comfort you among all the children you have borne; and there was no one to take you by the hand, not even from all the sons you have raised. He speaks to the Synagogue of the Jews as to one who has fallen and still lies low, and commands her to rise, all but giving a hand, and pitying her as God. And we certainly do not say that the rising is physical, because it is not fitting

for the fall to be understood in such a way, but rather as spiritual, as having been accomplished in unbelief. Therefore, in faith is the good of the resurrection in these things. For they have admittedly fallen into ruin, not accepting the evangelical and saving proclamation, but rather adhering to the teachings and commandments of men, although God says clearly through the voice of Isaiah: ”My people, those who call you blessed are misleading you, and they confuse the path of your feet. For those chosen to lead them, always praising among them the law of Moses, and often crying out:

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

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

sons, who are in distress, who are sleeping at the edge of every exit, like half-boiled beet, who are full of the wrath of the Lord, undone by the Lord God.

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

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

For they are filled with the wrath of the Lord, and this has become the cause of their undoing. For we are always somehow disposed, when we are struck by unending and inconsolable disasters, to have an almost ecstatic mind within ourselves, and to find no way that is able to save us, especially when the evil against us is sent

by God. Therefore hear, you who are humbled and drunk, but not with wine. Thus says the Lord God who judges his people: Behold, I have taken from your hand the cup of falling, the goblet of wrath, and you shall no longer drink it again, and I will give, and I will cast it into the hands of those who wronged you and of those who humbled you, who said to your soul: Bow down that we may pass over, and you made your back like the ground, outside for those passing by. The words are of one pitying, and restraining his wrath, but rather releasing them to cheerfulness. For he calls her humbled and drunken. For sufficient, as I said, are those beyond measure calamities, and bringing those who are captured to the utmost evil, and making drunk those who have suffered, but not from wine, as he says. For the Lord's cup is in no way understood as perceptible, nor is the mixture in it such as to be thought common.

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

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

ors Christ by faith, then indeed the cup will certainly be taken from her, and she too will delight in the other good things, concerning which it is written, that They will forget their former affliction, and it shall not come into their heart; but rather there will be everlasting joy and gladness upon their head. For sorrow, grief, and sighing have fled away.

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

”But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them. Yea, and the Son Himself said that something of this sort happened to the herds of the Jews, and He clearly convicted them, how from an unclean spirit they became hard and disobedient, and were carried off to every sort of evil. For He said, ”When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and when he findeth none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. Then he taketh seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation. For they served the gods there in Egypt, and the unclean spirit was in them. But when they were redeemed through Moses, and received the law as the determiner of what must be done (they heard it saying clearly: ”Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve”), the unclean spirit was also driven from their hearts. But since they did not have the fear of God in themselves, nor did they receive Jesus as an indweller through faith (”For he dwells in our hearts by faith,” as it is written);

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

Discourse 27

Awake, awake, O Zion; put on thy strength, O Zion, and put on thy glory, O Jerusalem, the holy city: there shall no more pass through thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Hearing Zion and Jerusalem in these things, do not think that simply the cities built of stones are being indicated. Rather, the word of the prophecy signifies the assembly of those called through faith, that is, the Church, from both the Jewish ranks and from the nations. Moreover, saying, 'Awake,' and that very often, he bestows on them a most abundant exhortation. For just as the all-wise Paul says, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: Thus, where the bitterness of the judgment is great, there is a consolation equal to the misfortunes, or rather, much more abundant than the faint things. And He has commanded her to put on her strength, and in addition to this, her glory. And strength might reasonably be understood as the practical, according to its operation, by which the soul of each person goes toward some particular of the things to be done with a youthful spirit. And what other glory could there be besides the Lord of glory, who is Christ? to whom somewhere the divine melodist also says, at one time, that "Awake, my glory; and at another time again concerning everyone who believes in him, that "You are the boast of their strength. And in what manner we shall put on both the glory and the strength itself, the all-wise Paul has made clear to us.

For he said again; "Put on our Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. And in addition to this; "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Yes, and indeed the prophet Isaiah has introduced the person of the Church as in the manner of a woman variously adorned, saying: "Let my soul rejoice in the Lord. For He has clothed me with the garment of salvation, and the tunic of gladness. Christ is therefore a most fitting garment for every saint; and a tunic of spiritual gladness, the author for us of strength and glory. And he calls the Church a holy city. For it was sanctified not through the worship according to the law (for the law made no one perfect), but by becoming conformed to Christ, and a partaker of his divine nature, that is, by participation in the Holy Spirit, in whom we were also sealed for the day of redemption, having washed away all filth, and being delivered from every stain. For we have been

justified through faith in him, and we have been enriched with security from him against anything whatsoever, and we are, as it were, walled in by his grace, which wards off every diabolical attack against us, and the savage uprisings of the opposing powers. And this he teaches, saying as to Zion, that is, Jerusalem, which is the Church of the living God; The uncircumcised and the unclean will no longer pass through you.

For historically indeed you will understand what was said in this way: The nations neighboring Jerusalem might be understood as uncircumcised and unclean, knowing neither the God who is by nature and in truth, nor indeed having received the instruction through the law; and they fought very often against those of the blood of Israel, so that in many places they were seen as superior in the power that was in them, and they all but passed through it, as though having it cast under their feet. And from the things that happened historically, at times, come, let us fashion the spiritual things. The hordes of demons, that is, the world-rulers of this darkness, and with them the profane Satan, have under their feet the souls not yet subject to God, and they, as it were, pass through them, with no one hindering, that is, defending; but when, having been reconciled to God, they have him as their glory and strength, then indeed, then their greed will cease. For it is written that ”The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. Therefore uncircumcised and unclean might be understood as the abominable, and profane, and productive of all filth, and evil, and opposing powers. Shake off the dust, and arise, and sit down, Jerusalem. Loose the bond from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion. He then shows her knowledgeable of holy boasts;

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

And it is also written in the book of Psalms: ”God sits upon his holy throne,” that is, He perpetually has the firm and established nature of His own kingdom. For nothing bodily should be thought of in relation to God. And there follows the sitting, that is, the having a mindset that is firm and established, and the putting off of the bond of the neck. For each one is bound by the chains of his own sins, and we have been brought under the yoke of sin, and of Satan himself. But in Christ we are freed from these things too; and having broken their bonds, as it is written, and having cast off their yoke from ourselves, with a free and relaxed mind we achieve the good. Thus somewhere the God of all says to us through one of the prophets: ”And you shall go out, and leap like calves released from bonds, and you shall trample the lawless; for they shall be as ash under your feet. And adding to these, The captive daughter Zion, first lets us understand that God pities those who have fallen under diabolical yokes and have served sin. Then in addition to this he shows that we fall into this, although it was possible not to suffer it. For having named Zion a captive, he also calls her a daughter. Then how was it possible for the daughter of God, who had been deemed worthy of such resplendent glory, to be caught in the snares of captivity?

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

but rather by the strength of Christ, the Savior of us all. For being a good shepherd, he has laid down his life for his own sheep, and has saved us by his own blood; for by his wound we were healed; and he was weakened for our sins; but we have been set free, having shaken off both the yoke of sin and the rapacity of the devil. Thus says the Lord: My people went down to Egypt previously to sojourn there, and they were led by force to the Assyrians. And now why are you here? Thus says the

Lord: Because my people were taken for nothing, you marvel and wail. Thus says the Lord: For your sake my name is continually blasphemed among the nations. Having called Zion captive, he wishes to know the cause for which it has happened to her to fall into this disgrace and misery. For sometimes it brings back to better things those who have suffered something unexpected, the fact of not remaining in ignorance of their sins. For this reason he usefully reminds them of the things that happened from time to time to those before them. For when a famine was severe, Jacob went down at that time to Egypt, and his journey was unwilling, being unable to find provisions from anywhere. And Israel was also carried away to the Assyrians, when the king of the Chaldeans at that time ravaged Judea. And what was the reason for this? For having departed from being genuine, and from the duty [alt.

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

And in these things the prophetic word has revealed this to us concerning the common multitude. But since it was the custom especially for the teachers of the Jews to raise a high brow against every nation, and for Israel to sometimes remain uncaptured and unconquered by its enemies, if indeed it was called the inheritance of God and a holy people; then when it happened that Judea was brought down in the ways I just mentioned, they were astonished and wailed, as if the evil had run beyond all hope for them. For this reason the God of all says to them: Because my people were taken, he says, for nothing, you marvel, and you wail. Thus says the Lord: For your sake my name is continually blasphemed among the nations. For you yourselves, he says, have become responsible for the suffering of those under you, leaving them untaught, or rather not allowing them at all to turn to God, and to see with the eyes of the mind the one who came down from heaven, the God Logos

who appeared in human form, so that he might proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, and to heal those who have a broken [crushed] heart, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Therefore for your sake my name is blasphemed among the nations.

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

We who have been called by him have known his glory, and we do not approach Christ, the Savior of all, as a human judge; but even if the Word became flesh, we believe that, being God by nature, and ineffably begotten of God the Father, he is above all creation, and is pre-eminent on the highest thrones, and rules over all things, and has a most powerful right hand, and easily saves whomsoever he might choose of those who have come to be under him, and absolutely nothing surpasses his power. But Israel was not so disposed. For they paid attention to him as to one of us, and not as to God who had become man. For this reason they sometimes said: ”Who are you? And what do you make yourself to be? and: ”For a good work we do not stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God. Nevertheless, whoever might be called to the knowledge of truth, he says, will know my glory. For I myself am he who speaks in the prophets: I am present. For God the Lord has appeared to us, as it is written. This the all-wise Paul also teaches, saying: ”In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the worlds.

It must be observed therefore in these things, that God the Father brought all things into being through the Son, and has spoken to us in the last times, not as through another son, the one according to the flesh from a woman, as some of the

perverse have thought, but as there being one Son with the flesh, the Word who became man for us, who is also the maker of the ages. I am present then as a season upon the mountains, he says; and by season he means the spring. Come, then, let us observe the spiritual things as from an manifest fact. What does the spring, seen on the mountains, accomplish? It crowns the plants with new blossom, and from barrenness it moves them to bringing forth what each might naturally have. We will find something of this sort also written in the Song of Songs; ”For arise, come, he says, my companion, my beautiful one, my dove; for behold, the winter has passed, the rain has passed by for itself, the flowers have appeared on the earth, the time of pruning has arrived. For when winter has passed, the bright spring rises for the earth, and makes it a nurse of flowers, and becomes the mother of ripe fruits. Something of this sort has also been done for us in an intelligible way. For the apostate dragon made winter under heaven, rendering it dry and fruitless.

For there was no one at all who did good, not even one, ”But all turned aside together, they have become worthless. But when the Only-begotten appeared with the flesh, he became for us as a season upon the mountains. For having, as it were, lost our bloom and cast off from our own souls the beauty of all virtue, we blossomed again in him and have been filled with spiritual fruitfulness, so as to be able to say what is in the Song of Songs: ”Let my beloved come down into his garden, and eat the fruit of his choice trees. He became, then, as a season upon the mountains, and as the feet of one preaching a message of peace, and preaching good things; for with sin lying between us and God, we were separated from him, and were estranged from the Master, and rising up against his divine laws, and acting contrary to the Master’s will, and were placed in the rank of enemies. But Christ appeared the our peace, who took away the sin that lay between, and prepared us to enter into friendship with the Father, and united us through himself; for through him we have had access. Just as, therefore, if someone should come, it says, running swiftly and fast, saying that enemies have been captured, and announcing peace, and bringing good news;

so also the Savior of all visited the world in the flesh, and became for us an arbiter of peace with God the Father, Satan having been destroyed, and all his host having been put out of the way, and that a time has come, in which it is possible for those who wish to partake of every good thing; for it will certainly follow for those who have believed in him, and have chosen to think and do his will, to have the most abundant participation in heavenly goods, and to be filled with every good hope; for the Savior is a lavish giver. That I will make your salvation heard, saying: Zion, your God shall reign, because the voice of those who guard you has been lifted up, and with the voice they will rejoice together; for eyes shall see to eyes, when the Lord shall have mercy on Zion. Now, he again names Zion in these words, not some earthly city, but rather his holy Church, which he established from the two peoples. For it is written that, ”Rejoice, O nations, with his people. And Christ

is said to have made both one, and to have broken down the middle wall of the partition, and to have abolished the law of commandments in ordinances. But with the proclamation of the evangelical message, which is also full of true doctrines, the power of the shadow in the law has ceased, that is, the worship and approach through blood.

Zion, therefore, is to be understood as the Church, as I said, which Christ himself presented to himself, not having spot or wrinkle, but rather holy and blameless. Of this he made salvation heard, that is, renowned. For the power of the evangelical proclamations has escaped the notice of absolutely no one on earth; nor has anyone remained unheard of the salvation through Christ. For he also said through the lyre of the Psalmist: ”Hear this, all nations; give ear, all you inhabitants of the world. And just as the memory of demons perished with a sound, that is, publicly and notoriously, and no one was ignorant of the destruction of the tyranny of demons; so also the divine and heavenly proclamation has become audible to those everywhere, bringing salvation to those who have recognized the appearance of Christ. And what is the power of the proclamation? Zion, your God shall reign. For long ago, that is, before the coming of our Savior, Satan had reigned over us through sin, and a yoke of tyrannical cruelty was cast upon those throughout the whole earth. But when the king and Lord of all shone upon us, having broken their bonds, and having cast off the yoke of him who formerly had the advantage, we subjected our neck to the scepters of God, and God the Father has reigned over us through the Son, and the matter has become for us an occasion for festival. At any rate, David sings, and says: ”The Lord has reigned, let the earth rejoice. And again:

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

”Go up on a high mountain, you who bring good tidings to Zion, lift up your voice with strength, you who bring good tidings to Jerusalem. Lift it up, do not be afraid. For the apostolic proclamation is piercing and altogether unknown to no one. And that everything will run prosperously for them, and that those to whom their word would be given will be readily called, and that they themselves will rejoice greatly, seeing the fruits of their own initiation, he makes it clear, saying, that With the voice they will rejoice together. For as soon as they speak, he says, the multitude of those who have been initiated will follow, and those who are being instructed will run to the faith without delay. And this is a joy to those who have been commanded to teach. At any rate, Paul writes to those who believed through him, that ”You are my joy and my crown. That the ready obedience of those being initiated followed the initiations of the saints in most places, one might see through many examples, by perusing the holy and God-inspired Scripture. For in Jerusalem, the divine disciples were speaking to the ranks of the Jews; but as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles: ”Three thousand men were added in one day. And indeed the divine Paul, together with the blessed Silas, being prisoners, were singing hymns to God in the middle of the night.

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

To break forth into joy would signify the use of the voice, offering up songs of thanksgiving, and being eager to practice the doxologies, through which God would be gladdened. For it is written in the book of Psalms: ”And my tongue will meditate on your justice, all the day long on your praise; and for those who wish to do this, the matter will be for gladness. Since he says the desolate places of Jerusalem must do this, we say that thing of necessity, wishing to clarify the meaning of the preceding words. Those who inhabit a wide and long city, if they are so many in number as to be able to fill it, leave no place of it desolate; but when they are few

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

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

For he calls the Church from the Gentiles barren, she who does not bear, and in addition to this, desolate. For she was childless and desolate, that is, a widow, not having the word which is the sower of all good. But he says that the Synagogue of the Jews is married, because it was yoked to the law through Moses, and became pregnant with the sacred ordinances, through which it was possible to bear fruit to God through the worship that was still in shadows and types. But many are the children of the desolate one, that is, of the widow, rather than of her who has a husband. And in what way this will be, he clarified by adding that the Lord will reveal his holy arm in the sight of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation from God. For when the arm of God the Father, that is, the Son, became manifest among those throughout all the earth, when he was made known to all the nations, and the ends of the earth, that is, those from one end to the other, have seen the salvation from him, that is, clearly through faith, then the desolate places of Jerusalem, clearly the spiritual one, were filled, and the multitude of those called is beyond number. It is a custom in the divinely inspired Scripture to call the Son the arm of God the Father.

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

for it is necessary that those who have believed in Christ, and through Him have been called to the cleansing of sin and to a participation in holiness, should love to be carried out of Jewish ignorance, and to be in every way of a different mind from them, and to be separated completely; for there is no communion of light with darkness, nor any part for a believer with an unbeliever. And indeed, the all-wise Paul writes to those from Galatia, who, after justification in Christ, dared to relapse into worship under the law: ”O foolish Ga- latians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as cru- cified? This only I want to learn from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being perfected in the flesh? For they were being circumcised without understanding, although they had received the circumcision in the Spirit, that is, through Christ. Therefore, necessarily, in these things the God of all says, ”Depart,” and ”Go out from there,” and ”Be separate, you who bear the vessels of the Lord. For those who have honored Emmanuel in faith, and have become partakers of his divine nature, by partaking of the Holy Spirit, and have been filled with his sacred gifts, bear vessels for God. And in what manner, the all-wise Paul will teach, saying:

”Put on the whole armor of God; this is the breastplate of right- eousness, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. For having this spiritual panoply, they lead out against Satan, and stand against the pow- ers with him, leaping forth in a way and defending their own souls and the peoples under their hand; for this is the role of leaders. But having

commanded to go out from her midst, ”You shall not go out with haste,” he says, ”nor shall you go by flight. For he does not command them to depart from the Jewish or- ders as fugitives, that is, as those who are afraid, but rather in a relaxed manner and as if with authority, as those refusing to want to live with those so defiled, and to be numbered with the profane and wicked. Therefore, ”You shall not go by flight,” he says; but that their affairs will also come with ease, and nothing at all hard, or steep, or rough will meet them, he has fully assured them by saying, that ”the Lord will go before you, and the God who gathers you. And with God being with them and going before, what will there be to harm the bearers of the sacred proclamations? Or rather, how will not all things turn out for them according to their prayer, and they run preaching as if on a smooth road?

Behold, my servant shall understand, and shall be exalted, and shall be glorified exceedingly. In the way that many will be astonished at you, so your appearance shall be without honor from men, and your glory from men. And so many nations will marvel at him, and kings will shut their mouths; because they to whom it was not reported concerning him will see, and they who have not heard will understand. In these things, God the Father openly makes speeches concerning our Savior of all, Christ. For ”Behold, my servant shall understand,” he says; and by servant you will understand the Son, that is, the slave. For the Word, being God, took the form of a slave, and being Lord of all, he entered into the mea- sures of humanity. ”For he did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he hum- bled himself. Therefore, when he became man, having sent himself into humiliation, then he was also blame- lessly named a slave, having taken the form of slavery. But, ”He will understand,” he says, instead of, ”He will do and speak all things with the God-befitting under- standing and wisdom.

And it is a work of God-befitting wisdom, and before all others, for the only-begotten Word of God to become flesh, that is, man, and to become poor with to those on earth, that we might be enriched by his poverty, that believing in him we might wash away the defilements of sin, since the law through Moses was powerless to re- move sins, that by the death of his own flesh he might abolish death, and overthrow corruption, and reforge to incorruption those held fast by death, and make the man on earth a citizen of heaven, and through himself unite to God the Father the one who long ago was a runaway, and proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, and heal the brokenhearted, and empty Hades, and remove Satan from his rule and dominion over all. Therefore my servant shall understand, it says. For there is nothing at all unintelligent, or rather, unwise, in what has been done for us. For he has made all things in wisdom, according to the voice of the Psalmist. For this reason he will be exalted, it says, and glorified exceedingly. For God is glorified by us as Lord, and we call him Savior and Redeemer. And we have believed this to be according to truth. But that the word from God the Father

might be entirely true and beyond reproach, it necessarily added that Just as many will be astonished at you, so will your appearance be without honor from men, and your glory from men.

For those who have recognized his epiphany, and have been able with the eyes of the mind to perceive the greatness of the divine authority within him, are amazed at the economy; such was the prophet Habakkuk, who says, ”O Lord, I have heard your report, and was afraid; I considered your works, and was astonished. But those who did not understand his glory, remaining unbelieving and without understanding, impiously condemned him to dishonor and shame, calling him a Samaritan, a glutton and a drunkard, and born of fornication, and in addition to these, a sinner. Therefore, as many will be astonished at you, so also among men will your appearance be without honor, and your glory from men. But just as this will happen, so also will many nations marvel at you, and kings will shut their mouths. For the all-daring Jews, although worthy of no account, dared to mock, and often unleashing an unbridled tongue against him, they attacked him with abusive words. But many kings, fearing him as God, and offering glory to him as king of all, will shut their mouths, that is, they will say nothing harsh, nor will they utter anything that defiles the glory of Christ.

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

But they profited those of the blood of Israel very little, who were greatly inclined to disobedience; so that although it was necessary to snatch the prediction, and to gather life-giving knowledge, and to store it in their own hearts, from the opposite, they leap upon the mystagogues, and attack them, saying very bitterly: ”Speak

other things to us, and announce to us another deceit. And so the prophet Jeremiah, as one brought down into despondency by the immeasurable cruelty of the Jews, says somewhere thus: ”Woe is me, mother! what a man you bore me, judged and contended with in all the earth? I have neither profited, nor has anyone profited me. My strength has failed among those who curse me. But in sum, the whole chorus of the saints, speaking as it were about Jerusalem, say: ”We would have healed Babylon, but she was not healed. Let us forsake her, and let each go to his own land; for her judgment has reached to heaven, it has been lifted up even to the stars. For in these words they call Jerusalem Babylon, as one eager to imitate its ways, and in no way inferior to the land of the gentiles, with respect to wickedness, and in not enduring to honor the law, or the benefit of prophetic instruction. This is the meaning and power of the preceding verses. For he accuses Israel of having completely turned aside to disobedience, and says: Who has believed our report?

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

for this is welcome to farmers. But that the once thorn-bearing, dry and waterless land has been changed into a most fertile one, and to be able to be rich in spiritual fruits, the God of all will make clear, speaking through the voice of Isaiah: ”And it shall be, instead of the thornbush shall come up the cypress tree, and instead of the fleabane shall come up the myrtle tree. For thornbush and fleabane are kinds of thorns, and the barren and waterless land always nourishes them; but the myrtle and the cypress flourish in gardens. When the thorn is removed, therefore, he says, the most fragrant of plants will then spring up, when the thirsty land becomes watered, God saying, that I will make the desert into pools, and the thirsty land into watercourses. I will put in the waterless land the cedar, and the box-tree, and the

myrtle, and the cypress, and the poplar. Therefore we announced, that by believing in Christ himself, we shall be before him, that is, watched over by him, as a field, as a root, that is, as a plant in a once thirsty land, but now made watered by him. He has no form, nor glory; and we saw him and he had no form, nor beauty. But his form was dishonored, lacking beyond all men. What then does the prophet say in these words, or what meaning might one apply to what has been said, Come now, let us consider again, as we can.

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

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

beauty*, they clearly declare in what state of countenance they beheld him who is proclaimed.

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

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

Our Lord Jesus Christ endured the cross, despising the shame, and became obedient to the Father unto death, and bore the impiety of the Jews, so that, as I just said, he might take away the sin of the world, the letter of the law, that is, the worship according to the law, having no power to accomplish this. For it was impossible for the blood of goats and bulls to take away sins. Indeed, he suffered outside the gate, so that, as Paul says, he might sanctify the people through his own blood; for he suffered, not for himself, far from it, but for all under heaven. And the all-wise Paul will testify in writing about God the Father, that "He did not spare His own

Son, but delivered him up for us all, that with him he might also freely give us all things. And he himself somewhere says through the lyre of the Psalmist to the Father and God in heaven: ”Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you had no pleasure, then I said: Behold, I come. In the scroll of the book it is written of me, to do, O God, your will, I desired.

For since the worship according to the law was useless for those on earth for taking away sins, since sacrifices of oxen and slaughter of sheep were not desired by God, the true lamb, who takes away the sin of the world, has offered himself for us as a fragrant offering; then having endured the death of the flesh, he freed all under heaven, both from death and from sin. For one more worthy than all suffered for all, that he might rule and reign over all. And Paul will again confirm this in writing: ”For this reason Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. And again: ”One died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised. Rightly therefore the prophet says, that ”This one being in affliction, who knows how to bear weaknesses, whose face was turned away, who was dishonored, and not esteemed, bears our sins, and is in pain for us, and we considered him to be in toil, and in affliction, and in distress. Observe now for me again, with how much skill the prophetic word proceeds in these things. For it assumes the person of those who do not know the mystery of Christ, but who thought that he was in his passion as one who would put away his own sins.

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

For he suffered, as I said, for our sake. For we all went astray like sheep; a man went astray in his way, and the Lord delivered him up for our sins. Therefore

we have gone astray, we have departed from the living God, following our own pleasures. But the Lord of all, that is, God the Father, on account of our sins delivered him up, so that he might free us from punishment, and save those who believe. And knowing this, Christ himself said: ”For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For as the rain comes down, or the snow from heaven, and does not return until it waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and sprout, and gives seed to the sower, and bread for food; so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return, until it has accomplished all that I willed. As from a clear and most well-known example he tries to convince us how great is the power of his commands. For rain or snow falls from heaven, and no one could hinder it when it is sent down from God; rather the purpose of him who sends it runs to its completion; for it renders all the earth fruitful, so that the farmers have great abundance both of seeds and of food.

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

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

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

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

What then does God promise to those who have believed in him? I will make my ways prosperous, and my commandments, and you will not go out in sorrow, but you will be taught in joy. This, I think, is what the prophetic writing said again somewhere else: ”The way of the pious has become straight, and the path of the pious has been prepared. For the way of the Lord is judgment. And another of the holy prophets says, ”The ways of the Lord are straight, and the righteous will walk in them, but the ungodly will be weak in them. For if God does not make the ways smooth for them, they would not have the strength to travel through them. For that it is a gift of heaven, as I said, to be able to walk the divine ways and fulfill the commandments, through which one might journey to God, he taught when he said concerning the Synagogue of the Jews: Therefore, behold, I, he says, will hedge up her ways with thorns, and she shall seek her paths, and shall not find them. Therefore, he says, when I make the commandments prosperous, you will go out in gladness, that is, you will be superior to sorrow, you will not be bitten in the heart, having become outside of passions, and running over to the better and admirable life. For you will be taught rejoicing, and delighting in the sacred words. And so the divine David: ”How sweet, he says, are your oracles to my throat!

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

and ”hills” indeed, those who are inferior to their pre-eminence, and, as it were, sitting below their glory. For there are measures in the Churches both of honor and of ministries; these intelligible mountains, he says, and with them the hills, will leap up, that is, they will leap for joy, rejoicing, clearly, on account of your conversion and calling, and they will receive you with joy; for we rejoice not moderately, when some of those who have gone astray, having forsaken continuing any longer in mist and darkness, rush to the light of the true vision of God. Thus also the all-wise Paul addressed them, saying: ”My joy and crown. But also all the trees of the field, he says, will clap with their branches. And you will understand ”trees of the field” to be those who are numbered among the laity. For flourishing is the garden of the Savior. And at any rate, since she is both thriving and fruitful, the bride described in the Song of Songs, she says: ”Let my beloved come down into his garden, and eat the fruit of his choice trees. Therefore the intelligible trees will clap with their branches, he says. For those who have believed rejoice, just as indeed also the mountains and the hills, that is, those appointed to lead the peoples, at the salvation of those called to life, and at the completion of the immaculate mystery-initiation, through which the divine light is sent into them.

Then, that there will be a very great change for the incomparably better for those who have been called, he shows immediately by saying that instead of the thornbush there will be the cypress, and instead of the fleabane the myrtle will come up. They say that thornbush and fleabane are bitter and unapproachable [or: rejected] thorns, and they do not grow at all in places under cultivation, but rejoice in dry and salty land. Such were those who were wandering, and worshipping the creation rather than the creator. But since they have been called to the knowledge of

truth, having ceased to be thornbush and fleabane, they have changed in an intelligible way into the tall and most fragrant of plants. For they are called cypress and myrtle. Great therefore is the wonder of the one who cultivates the Church, that is, of Christ. For he transforms the thorns into the noble and choice of plants, and makes them other than they were in a fatherly [or: spiritual] way. And we shall find this to have happened also among those of the blood of Israel. For though once being thornbush and fleabane, Matthew and Paul—for the one was a tax-collector, the other a persecutor and insolent man—have become luminaries of the world, and they are the sweet aroma of Christ in every place, both among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, as the most holy Paul says.

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

Discourse 28

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

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

man who does these things, and the man who holds fast to them, and keeps my Sabbaths from being profaned, and keeps his hands from doing any wrong.

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

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

And hand not in every case means that of the body, but instead of the hand you will understand practical energy, by which we approach each of the matters. Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say: The Lord will surely separate me from this people. And let not the eunuch say, I am a dry tree. Thus says the Lord to the eunuchs: Whoever shall keep my Sabbaths, and shall choose the things that

I desire, and hold fast to my covenant, I will give them in my house and in my wall a named place, better than sons and daughters, I will give them an everlasting name, and it will not fail. God drags down another brow of those of the blood of Israel, that is a pretext for arrogance, as both rotten and stale; for they thought much of themselves, as I said, saying, ”We have Abraham as our father,” and indeed that we are a holy people, chosen, and we are also assigned as God’s inheritance. And they also fled from childlessness, since indeed the forefather Abraham in the order of blessing received from God that his immeasurable seed would be extended into a multitude; for God promised to show it to be equal in number to the stars. And it was said to them also through the all-wise Moses: ”There shall not be among you a barren man or a barren woman.

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

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

those who did not receive it. Since what manner of condemnation would there be for those who died before their time, or who departed from our human affairs before marriage and union, for whom there was no begetting of children?

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

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

saying, ”We are blessed, O Israel, for the things that are pleasing to the Lord are known to us. It is clear, therefore, that it is not the power of fleshly nobility that joins one to God; for not because they are from Abraham have they remained God’s inheritance, but those who cleave to him would be counted as his people through a spiritual connection, even if they should be foreigners, cleaving through faith, and

considering servitude under him a boast, and loving his name; and loving in such a way as to run always under the yoke through complete subjection to his kingdom, not turning aside to what is not lawful, nor indeed being easily led to choose to turn back, at least to the necessity of cleaving to other gods, but rather a firm and having an unshaken mind, and so keeping His Sabbaths, so as not to profane them, of Christ, that is. For Jews keep the Sabbath according to the law, keeping the flesh free from all toil, and practicing inactivity as regards bodily works. But such a sabbath-keeping was rejected by God; but he who has entered into the rest of Christ, and keeps the Sabbath intellectually, has ceased from his own works. For thus writes the all-wise Paul. He promises to bring the foreigners into His holy mountain, and to gladden them in His house of prayer. Here see for me the shadow of the law overturned, and the oldness of the letter now somehow inoperative.

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

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

to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. But that the greatness of his gentleness was not shown only to those of the Gentiles, when Christ shone upon the world, but indeed also upon those of the blood of Israel, would be made clear by his saying, The Lord has said who gathers the dispersed of Israel.

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

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

But if by beasts we understand those who devoured Israel, 'Come, eat' is as if throwing to them those who have acted impiously, and for whom it is fitting to suffer, and very justly so; for they have killed the author of life, not having accepted the faith, and those who were near have become far, and no longer the people of God,

but rather are hated as slayers of the Lord. But lest God seem to be punishing in vain, and demanding penalties for nothing, He immediately sets forth the reasons for which they, having become liable, are given over to destruction by their enemies, that is, to the beasts for consumption. For, He says, See that they are all blinded, they did not know how to be prudent. For truly blind are those of Israel, and especially among the others the Scribes and the Pharisees, and those chosen to be leaders of the Synagogue. For they did not receive the true light, nor indeed did they wish to know Christ, although He clearly cried out, at one time, ”I am the light of the world,” and at another time again, ”I have come as a light into this world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. Therefore, when it was possible to be enriched by the light by accepting the faith, this they did not do, but as the prophet says, When they waited for light, there was darkness for them, waiting for brightness they walked in gloom.

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

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

Therefore, just as dogs, they did not want to bark at those who threatened the flocks, but they imitated the shamelessness of dogs, and their not knowing satiety. For being lovers of wealth, and overcome by shameful gains, and delighting in bribes, they acted unlawfully;

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

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

For they were lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, and they delighted more in the distractions of this present life, utterly disregarding the lawful and best life.

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

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

And he calls death ”burial,” and by adding ”in peace,” he indicated that there was no one at all in the ranks of the Jews who opposed their unholy counsels, that is, who stood against and rebuked those willing to commit unholy acts; for all from one counsel and opinion dared to act against Christ, and being at peace with one another they killed him. But you, draw near here, lawless sons, seed of adulterers and of a harlot. In what did you revel? And against whom did you open your mouth? And against whom did you let loose your tongue? Are you not children of destruction, a lawless seed? From very great love of God the divine prophet attacks the foul mouths of the Jews, and is exceedingly grieved at their unholy words, which they have spoken against Christ. For they have continually, as it were, let loose their tongue against him, and run him down with full sails, so to speak,

of his inherent forbearance. For what of the outrageous things would they not be caught having said of him? They called him a Samaritan, and a winebibber, and one born of fornication, and they said that he who rebuked demons was possessed, and that he who crushed Beelzebub worked his divine signs by Beelzebub. Then, finally, they brought him to Pilate, and they accused him, saying nothing of the truth, but rather using falsehoods and slanders. For they said, that this man stirs up the crowds, and forbids giving tribute to Caesar;

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

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

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

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

They say that Israel slipped into this error, so as to carve the forms of idols on the doors and on the posts, so that both entering their houses and walking outside they might see them, and have them in unceasing memories. This matter would be reckoned to them as a clear proof of complete godlessness, and very rightly so; and they called the carved images of the idols salvations [alt. saviors] and guardians of the house. You thought that if you should depart from me, you would have something more. You loved those who lay with you, and you multiplied your

fornication with them, and you made many those who were far from you, and you sent ambassadors beyond your borders. All unseemly pleasure, and all evil, which bewitches the human mind, all but promises some experience of a good thing, and that one will partake of things not long ago known, and will be in better circumstances than before. For having thus taken it captive, it carries it off to whatever they might choose. But the foolish, having learned by experience where they are of evil, with difficulty return to their former state; but those who with the eyes of the mind perceive very well the end of each matter, do not endure a turning away; but rather they keep the mind untouched, seeing before experience the things that come after it. But such was not the Synagogue of the Jews;

for it was under the hand of the all-powerful God, and clothed with glory from him, it was terrible and unbearable to its neighbors, and having a thrice-desired hope, and full of all prosperity. For following the law through Moses it served the God who is by nature and in truth God; and it continued for seasons not enduring to call, that is, to know how to worship, another God besides him. But when it was inclined to certain teachers and unholy shepherds, it fell into apostasy from God, and worshipped the works of its own hands; thinking perhaps, that it would also be in better circumstances, having slipped away from the love of God. For these things he accuses it, saying: You thought that if you should depart from me, you would have something more. But the expected outcomes of so cold and vain a hope did not come to pass for it; for they have rather been in every evil. Therefore they have had nothing extra for prospering, having cast away what is genuine, and considering what is firm in these things worthy of almost no account at all. And what is even more irrational than this, You loved, he says, those who lay with you, and you multiplied your fornication with them; and he speaks as to a harlot. But who were those who lay with her, except perhaps ”false shepherds, men seared in their mind,” as the blessed Paul says, and full of diabolical darkness?

These have become for it both a way and a pretext of destruction, leading away of genuineness toward God, but injecting as it were the seeds of impiety, and persuading them to bear fruit for Satan, the crimes of drunken insolence against God. And we say that the for- nication of some is multiplied, that is, the apostasy from God, when the force of the accusations is not seen, perhaps, as being of one manner and of one kind, but as being accomplished out of excessive perverse- ness, and bringing forth many things against them for which one might, and very justly, find fault with those who do them; for instance, I say: it certainly follows for one who has chosen to serve Satan to tolerate doing nothing wholesome; but to be scattered, as it were, into every path of profane and abominable pleasure. And concurrent with such accusations would be the other evils of this sort, both sorceries and necromancies, and the useless little tales of the interpreters of portents, both false prophecies and incantations, and the slanders of the astrologers, and the observance of days, and in addition to this, of hours, seasons and years. Thus, he says,

multiplying your fornication, you made many to be far from you. And who these might be, it is necessary to see again. For either he means the holy prophets, who, seeing her going beyond all audacity, and driving toward the end of all godlessness, departed from her as from one defiled, almost crying out and say- ing:

”We would have healed Babylon, but she was not healed; let us forsake her, and let us go each one to his own land; for her judgment has reached to heaven, and has been lifted up even to the stars. (for since Babylon was named a land of graven images, and Jerusalem was grievously sick with this, for this very reason the divine prophets very fitting- ly call her Babylon; or perhaps, she has made many to be far from her- self. For, being curious about the objects of worship of the neighboring nations, and the falsely-named gods among each one, they sent for these; and they were devoted to them and have served, some these, others those. And indeed God said somewhere through the voice of Jeremiah, that ”According to the num- ber of your cities were your gods, O Judah, and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem you have set up al- tars to burn incense to Baal. This, I think, is also what is shown by, You sent ambassadors beyond your borders. For not being content with the gods present among them, they sent for, as I said, many others as well, each according to what was supposed to be good for them.

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

For by going, as it were, into every way of destruction, they have spent the vi- gors of the soul—clearly meaning the intellectual ones—on nothing useful, and they have grown weary not moderately, by placing their earnestness in destructive matters. Or perhaps by ”many ways” in these things he means the constant changing to

other gods, and despising those already acquired, but seeking those that belong to certain others, and becoming drunk as if being scattered everywhere, and for the mind within them to have no support or stability. And we happen to suffer this also in the excesses of pleasures. For the mind is sometimes carried away towards every form of impurity, and sometimes it praises being rich, and sometimes it loves the flesh, and is overcome by empty glory, and is, as it were, carried about by every wind, according to what was said through the voice of Jeremiah concerning a certain one: ”In the desires of her soul she was carried away by the wind; she was given over, who will turn her back? For the soul that has suffered this will certainly be given over to the assaults of the passions; and the Proverb-writer teaches this, saying: ”For crooked thoughts separate from God, and the wandering of desire subverts an innocent mind. It is necessary, therefore, for us to restrain the mind, if it should somehow wish to go unrestrained over rocks, and to delight in and associate with the excesses of pleasures, so that, wearied from much wandering, it may not become the devil’s prey.

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

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

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

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

And I will declare my righteousness, and your evil deeds, which will not profit you. When you cry out, let them deliver you in your affliction. For a wind will take all these, and a tempest will carry them away. God said somewhere through the voice of Ezekiel to the mother of the Jews, I mean, the Synagogue: ”As you have done, so shall it be to you; your recompense will be returned upon your head. Yes, and also the prophet Isaiah: ”Woe to the lawless,” he says; ”evil things according to the works of his hands will happen to him. Something of this sort is also now signified through the preceding words. For since you have rejected the knowledge concerning me, he says, you will be overlooked by me, and you will endure a penalty equal to your transgressions. But one forgets God who is by nature and truly God, and who rules over all things, not, of course, by coming entirely into a state of forgetting that God exists (for even the demons believe, and shudder, according to the voice of the apostle), but rather by scorning the will to be subject to him, and by caring little for the things ordained by him; so as to be seen as unruly and disobedient, and having completely turned aside towards everything contrary to what he ought to fulfill. But God forgets, that is, overlooks those who are unmindful

of him, all but withdrawing his helping hand, and stripping them of all mercy; which indeed Israel has suffered.

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

But these, who? Either the gods devised by them, or perhaps those who worship them, who, like dust and ashes, are tossed up by the blasts of the winds. And this, I think, is what is said in the book of Psalms: "Let them become like dust before the face of the wind; that is, "they will go towards nothingness. And it is a custom for the divinely-inspired Scripture often to compare the onsets of temptations, that is, of punishments, to a whirlwind and a tempest. But those who hold fast to me will possess the land, and will inherit my holy mountain; and they will say: Clear the ways from before him, and take away stumbling blocks from the way of my people. Necessarily, these things also have been added to what came before. For it was necessary, it was necessary, for the punishment of the lovers of sin and the apostates to become clear, and the works of those who love him. And in general indeed True is the promise; for everyone who holds fast to God, and considers nothing better than complete love for him, and also excels in all good works; this one will be an heir of the land prepared for the saints, which indeed the Savior himself signified to us, saying: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. But by holy mountain in these things I mean, perhaps, the city above, the heavenly Jerusalem, the beautiful city of the saints. For somewhere the divine David sings and says concerning it:

"Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart. Therefore, for all who hold fast to God,

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

But to those who have acquired the land and the holy mountain, as it will be said in promise and in hope, he says: ”Clear ways from before his face; this is clearly, ”Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And in what manner the preparation is done, he clarified by saying: ”Take up the stumbling blocks from the way of my people; that is, make the way of salvation through faith smooth and easy for those throughout all the earth; let there be nothing rough and steep. For the law through Moses did not know how to pity, and it was difficult to fulfill; for we all stumble in many ways, and it was hard to find one who was completely free, and able to complete it blamelessly. And so the divine disciples said to those who after the faith wished to return to the shadows of the law: And now why do you test God, to place a yoke on the neck of the disciples, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear? And Paul also said, that the law was added because of transgressions; for the law is a conviction of sin, and stumbling against it, they were under blame and indictment. Therefore, the difficulty of the life under the law was a hindrance. But let it be taken away from the midst, he says; and let the well-trodden path, passable without sweat, be shown, that is, the power of the evangelical life bringing in true worship.

God said something like this also elsewhere to the holy mystagogues: ”Go through my gates, and cast the stones out of the way; that is, free the way from all difficulty, which would lead to God through worship in spirit and in truth, and through the brightness of faith. Thus says the Lord the most high, who dwells in the high places for ever, holy resting among the holy, and giving long-suffering to the faint-hearted, and giving life to the contrite in heart; I will not take vengeance on you forever, nor will I be angry with you for all time. For a spirit shall go forth from me, and I have made every breath. The blessed prophets, when the Lord of all promises something great and befitting of God to some, they receive the great wonder of his glory and

gentleness, and as if leaping for joy they turn to doxology. We shall now find the prophet having experienced something of this kind; for he did not simply say, Thus says the Lord, but he necessarily adds, the most high, that is, he who by nature is beyond and above all that has been brought into existence; and by saying, who dwells in the high places, he indicates again that the divine and most supreme nature is in unshakeable eminences and in ineffable heights. And yet this, I think, is what it is for it to dwell in the high places forever;

for it possesses unchangeably in things pertaining to itself, and could not in any way be in better things than what it is, but rather it is inherent in it unchangeably to be continuously in what it is. And he says that he, the Holy One, rests and dwells in the holy, hinting that he rejects those of the blood of Israel as polluted through much sin, but lovingly abides in those who have been cleansed through faith and sanctified in spirit. And he gives longsuffering to the fainthearted, and he calls fainthearted those who are accustomed at times to be somewhat weak regarding the purpose of life set before them. And he gives to them longsuffering, that is, endurance and patience, almost crying out and saying: ”Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the Lord. And he also gives life to those who are contrite in heart, that is, to the poor in spirit; and such are all those in obedience to God, and who have a yielding mind; these would be they who through faith are called to the knowledge of Christ; and they are called poor in spirit, walking the opposite path to those from Israel. For the latter were boastful, disobedient, and unbroken; but the former are good, and good-hearted, and assign to the laws of God the necessity to prevail, and place the neck of their mind under the yoke of Christ. And these are the works of those in Christ.

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

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

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

but the Gentiles were far off, because they were entirely alienated, both from holy teachings and from knowing the Creator and Lord of all. But peace has been given to these and to those by God the Father, clearly that through Christ, who made both one, and created the two peoples into one new man, and broke down the middle wall of the fence, and abolished the law of commandments in ordinances. Therefore, through him we have received reconciliation, and undivided peace, toward God and toward one another. For Christ said somewhere to the Father and God in heaven: ”I desire that, just as I and you are one, so they also may be one in us. And the prophet adds to these things: And the Lord said, I will heal them, making through this a kind of recapitulation of the whole discourse, and establishing

a clear and true promise of the God who rules over all; for he promised, he says, saying that he will heal them; but the unrighteous will be so tossed by waves, and will not be able to rest. For since he went through the rewards of those who will be called, for this reason, and very rightly, he also usefully announces the punishments of the disobedient, and the storm among them, and the endless torments. For there is no joy for them, he says, said the Lord God. And when the Lord and God of all has removed their joy, what manner of gladness will there be for them?

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

and I say that it is necessary to first lay bare the purpose of the prophecy to those who will encounter it, so that they may know to what end the sense of what has been said tends. Therefore, in the previous discourses, which God made concerning those from Israel, there were clear [proclamations] of war and of an inescapable disaster which was yet to come. For He said: ”And you did not remember me, nor did you take me into your mind, nor into your heart; and I, seeing you, overlook you, and you did not fear me; and I will declare my righteousness, and your evils, which will not profit you. When you cry out, let them deliver you in your affliction. We were saying that in these things he calls the inventions concerning idols the evils of those from Israel. For this reason he also said: ”When you cry out, let them deliver you in your affliction. There was, therefore, a certain proclamation of war, and this was rumored among the peoples of the Jews; but there were some among them who put on a pretense of piety, and while acting heedlessly, doing things which it is not even lawful to speak of, they adorned themselves with outward embellishments, and, as I said, snatched at a reputation for equity. These men also feigned fasts, and made frequent prayers, thinking by this to avert the things from the divine wrath.

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

that is, as those who have conducted themselves lawfully, and have become the best guardians of the ordinances given to them, and have a blameless life, and are clothed with the boast of a pious polity. For it would be fitting for such people to also seek God, that is, to wish to be near him, and to enjoy forbearance from above, and in addition to this to know his ways. For it has been said through one of the holy prophets: ”Seek the Lord, and when you find him, call upon him. And when he draws near to you, let the ungodly forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his counsel, and let him return to the Lord, and he shall have mercy; for he will abundantly pardon their sins. They now ask of me a just judgment, and desire to draw near to God, saying: Why is it that we have fasted, and you did not see? we have humbled our souls, and you did not know? For in the days of your fasts you find your own wills, and you oppress all who are under your hand, you fast for judgments and strifes, and you strike the humble with your fists. They accuse me, he says, as one who does not dispense just things because of not wishing to have mercy on the humble through fasting and prayer;

then they wish also to be near God, though on account of nothing pertaining to piety boasting of deeds of valor, but not even clothed with the radiance that comes from virtues, but because of mere abstinence from food alone; and indeed they say, ”We have fasted, and You did not see; we have humbled our souls, and You did not know. And they do not say such things as if God were ignorant of their humiliation through fasting; but because they have not come to a sense of their accusations, they say, ”You did not see,” and ”You did not know. For we say that God of all then knows the labors of some, those done through prayer and ascetic practice, I say, when He assents to their requests. Why then He did not accept

those who fasted, and made unacceptable the prayers of those who had humbled themselves, He explains, saying: For in the days of your fasts you find your own wills. For fasting is an excellent thing, and prayer is also beneficial; and to humble oneself in the eyes of God has the greatest benefit. For it is written, ”I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer shall return to my own bosom. And the divine David also said: ”My knees are weakened from fasting, and my flesh is changed for mercy; yes, and also the God of all Himself: ”Turn to me,” He says, ”with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. For He readily pities those who make their humiliation through toil self-chosen.

But it is most absurd for those who wish to be pitied to provoke the lawgiver in another way, and to call Him to wrath by loving to do none of the things that have been commanded; for in every way those who approach God must be holy, and excel in good works, and be seen as free from all filth. For because of this reason He says: You have fasted, but I did not see, that is, I did not pay attention; you humbled your souls, and I did not know, that is, I did not deem your humiliation worthy of any reward; because in the days of your fasts you find your own wills. It is necessary, therefore, that those who wish to fast purely and holily, should depart from their own wills, and choose what seems good to God, and submit a compliant neck to His wills; but those from Israel did not do this at all; but rather they followed their own wills, dishonoring what seemed good to the lawgiver, and they pricked their subjects to judgment and battles; and yet it was necessary to gather into one accord those who were set against one another, and to award peace to those who were brought into disputes. But they turned their zeal to the very opposite. And they struck the humble, and not entirely with hands, but with insults and greed, that is, by some other manner of injustice. Then how was it possible to praise those fasting, when such impurity was in them?

or how could the prayers of such wicked men be accepted? To what purpose do you fast for Me, so that your voice is heard today with a cry? I have not chosen this fast, and a day for a man to humble his soul. Nor if you bend your neck like a ring, and spread sackcloth and ashes, not even so will you call it an acceptable fast. The power of the true fast has an extraordinary cry before the God who rules all things. For He perhaps gladly receives the prayers of those who worship Him; and if He sees them humbled through toils and ascetic practices, without any delay He grants their requests. But indeed, of that which might be done lazily and carelessly, He makes its manner rejected. And we say that a fast is holy, that which is accomplished from a pure conscience; which someone might do, having first departed mightily from the ways of wickedness, and having sent away every stain from his mind, and having wiped away the filth of the love of the flesh, and having washed his hands in innocency, according to what is written; and simply, having been shown to be a practitioner of every good work. But that which is not

such, is like one gone astray, and while in the form of a fast, it has absolutely none of the things that befit it, it is both ridiculous and unseemly.

For those who are good and completely neglecting good things, and having accomplished none of the best deeds of valor; then practicing unprofitable and useless fasting, as if it were some great thing and honorable before God; they box in vain, and they beat the air; for their labor is not rewarded, because it is also unacceptable to God. Why then do you fast for me, he says, so that the cry of your voice may be heard in one day? He says ”cry,” meaning either the prayer with, I say, the useless fasting, or the cry from the matter itself. For the things done by us are said to have a certain voice to God, according to what was said to Cain by him: ”The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to me from the earth. But this is not the fast I have chosen, he says; and what this fast is, he has already declared, saying, that ”In the days of your fasts you find your own pleasures, and you prick all your subordinates into judgment and fights. You fast, and you strike the lowly with your fists. Therefore, not even if you bend your neck like a ring, and spread out sackcloth and ashes, that is, even if you practice extreme humiliation, and tread an unbearable path of labor, with such shameful accusations, not even so will you call it an acceptable fast. For if you wish, he says, to speak the truth, not even you yourselves would call it an acceptable fast.

Is not this the fast that I have chosen, says the Lord, but loose every bond of wickedness, undo the knots of forced contracts, send the crushed away in forgiveness, and tear up every unjust document. Break your bread for the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house. If you see one naked, cover him, and you will not overlook the members of your own seed. to Cain by him: ”The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to me from the earth. But this is not the fast I have chosen, he says; and what this fast is, he has already declared, saying, that ”In the days of your fasts you find your own pleasures, and you prick all your subordinates into judgment and fights. You fast, and you strike the lowly with your fists. Therefore, not even if you bend your neck like a ring, and spread out sackcloth and ashes, that is, even if you practice extreme humiliation, and tread an unbearable path of labor, with such shameful accusations, not even so will you call it an acceptable fast. For if you wish, he says, to speak the truth, not even you yourselves would call it an acceptable fast. Is not this the fast that I have chosen, says the Lord, but loose every bond of wickedness, undo the knots of forced contracts, send the crushed away in forgiveness, and tear up every unjust document. Break your bread for the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house.

If you see one naked, cover him, and you will not overlook the members of your own seed. It was necessary for those who did not know the manner of the true fast to be shown this by God. For from him comes all wisdom, and understanding, and the way to everything that is best is revealed. At any rate, the divine David also sings,

and says: ”Lead me, O Lord, in your way, and I will walk in your truth. Therefore, he made the most artless and in no way beneficial fast of the Jews rejected, and he reveals the power of the true one. For loose, he says, every bond of wickedness, that is, rid yourself of the desire to take advantage of anyone; for greed is a bond of wickedness, and attacking some of the weaker ones, and, as it were, binding them with inescapable entanglements of accusations, in order to make them terrified, and thus to seek to receive from them whatever they might wish. Undo the knots of forced contracts. And we say that commercial transactions are full of forced contracts, and those resulting from knots, that is, ill-nature. And in addition to these, the other things of so-called givings and takings, which involve certain kinds of greed, and prove men to be lovers of shameful gains those accustomed to doing the same things. And the broken, he says, send away in release, that is, those who endure crushing, or toil, or from the bond of injustice, or from violent transactions.

Release in release, that is, free them from the distress that has been brought upon them; permit the weary to rest at last. And tear apart every unjust contract; as I think, he means the notes of the moneylenders, often drawn up without even the giving of as much money as the measure of the contract travails with. But when you refrain from these things, he says, then add what is lacking. And this is to bear fruit for one’s neighbor the good things that come from love. For the fulfillment of the law is love, according to what is written. And the fulfillment of love toward brethren, and proof of compassion which is honored by God, is to break bread for the hungry, to take the poor and homeless into one’s house, and to clothe the naked, and to one’s own kin, that is, those of one’s family, sufficient care, I think, [to bestow] and to share with them the breadth of the abundance given by God. But observe, that to refrain from evil is not the same as to do good. Nor would it suffice for some as a boast before God not to have done what is wicked, but one must follow in every way and altogether, and fulfill the need for good works, and hold fast to the pursuits of piety. For to undo the knots of violent transactions, and every bond of injustice, and to tear apart every unjust contract, is nothing other than only to depart from wickedness.

But to choose to fulfill the works of love by breaking bread for the hungry, and taking in the poor and homeless, and clothing the naked, and not tolerating any of one’s own kin, has clear proof of the best virtues. For this reason also the old law, being a tutor unto Christ, did not bring in the fulfillment of the good to those of that time, but rather taught them to depart from wickedness beforehand. For, ”You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not swear falsely,” has this force. But the perfect, and the fulfillment of all good was reserved for the ordinances through Christ, from whom we learned to fulfill the works of love toward God and brethren.

Discourse 29

Then your light shall break forth like the morning, and your healing shall spring up speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you, and the glory of God shall be your rear guard. Then you will call, and God will hear you. While you are still speaking, He will say, ”Behold, I am here. If you fast purely, he says, and show to God hands that have been cleansed, and a mind freed from all filth, that is, when you wash away the striking of the lowly with fists, and the goading of your subordinates into judgment and fights, and following his [alt. your] desires and pleasures, when you break bread for the hungry, clothe the naked, bring the poor and homeless into your house; then your light shall break forth like the morning. The word has the greatest emphasis. For he did not simply say, ”The light will be given to you by God,” but rather ”it will break forth,” as if like a flash of lightning, sent down by God with impetus and speed, through which is clearly shown the eagerness of the one who bestows it. And by saying ”early,” he teaches that it will come down even before its time. For God, the steward of our affairs, the giver of spiritual gifts, knows the appropriate time for the honors for each person.

But if someone becomes fine and good, and in addition merciful and gentle, to this person early rewards will be given by him, so that they also spring up in him like ears of corn; and his healings, that is, the removal of all sickness, and the influx of better things. For when someone is freed from sicknesses of the soul, he will certainly bear as fruit the desire and readiness for anything good whatsoever. Therefore, when the divine and intelligible light shines in us, healings also arise in every way and entirely, with God moving us and weakening our passions, and introducing into us the will to do good and to excel in righteousness. For this reason he says, ”Your righteousness shall go before you. It will go before, clearly making the path to piety easy, and changing the rough to the smooth and passable, and bringing down the steep, and as it were directing the course in all the best things. And he adds something else. ”For the glory of God,” he says, ”will encompass you,” that is, it will surround you, and will make you admired, and a common benefit to many. For the brightness of the saints benefits not a little those who look upon them. And so Christ said to the holy apostles: ”Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Therefore we shall be brilliant, with the glory from God going about us and as it were clothing us, which He would grant to those who are diligent in [perhaps of the] righteousness; therefore, when these things belong to you, he says, you will then cry out, and God will hear you; while you are still speaking He will say: Behold, I am here. ”For he hearkens to the prayers of the righteous,” according to what is written. And as the Psalmist says, ”The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. For as one who is good He will assent to those who ask, but not to all of them immediately. But to those who have excelled in righteousness, without any delay He grants their requests, and holds his hearing most ready for them, so that rejoicing at each of their requests they say: ”He heard my voice out of his holy temple, and my cry before him will enter into his ears. Therefore, the un-postponable nature of the honor, and the great readiness of God the giver, is clearly demonstrated by His crying out, Behold, I am here, while the righteous man is still speaking and raising his prayers.

If you take away from you the yoke, and the stretching forth of the hand, and the word of murmuring, and give your bread to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall rise in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday, and your God will be with you always. The excellent points of the lessons, even if they are said often to some, nevertheless have their benefit. And so the all-wise Paul writes to those who believed through him: ”To say the same things to you is not tedious for me, but for you it is safe. Therefore in many ways through the same things he comes to us, speaking and making clear the paths of good repute, and describing the splendor of the rewards to be given to the saints, so that he might make them even more eager to choose to do those things through which they would become venerable, and will find the honor from above and from him . Therefore, ”If you take away,” he says, ”from you the yoke, and the stretching forth of the hand. And by yoke, as I think, he means the wickedness of the nations, their awkwardness and contentiousness, and the practice of making, as it were, conspiracies of things against some, and making inquiries of crooked inventions, so as to bind some at times, and to cast them into inescapable snares of circumstances.

For a man must be simple and approachable, if he has the aim of being watched over by God, and of desiring the gifts from Him. And by stretching forth of the hand perhaps he means bribery, and desiring shameful gains, for we sometimes say of certain men that he has his hand stretched out to receive, and of those who reject shameful gain, that he has his hand drawn in. And it has been said concerning the leaders of the Jewish Synagogue: ”Her leaders judged for a bribe, and her priests divined for money,” and that they have become companions of thieves, loving gifts, pursuing recompense. And somewhere the divine Habakkuk also said: ”Judgment has come before me, and the judge accepts [a bribe]. Therefore the name will either be significant of bribery, that is, the stretching out of the hand, which indeed He has commanded to take away, that is, to put away; or else, in another way, it signifies to

avenge oneself, and to return evil for evil. For the Psalmist said concerning some people, that ”He stretched out his hand in retribution. And he adds that ”They have profaned His covenant. Therefore the stretching out of the hand would signify, as I said, also the retribution, which someone might make, taking vengeance on those who have grieved them, and bringing things born of anger against those who have offended them. And we remember the Savior Himself saying that ”If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

For it would be a proof of complete gentleness and freedom from anger to know how to persevere when taken advantage of, and not to love taking revenge on those who have grieved us, but rather to be disposed toward them without malice. And in addition to this He wishes to take away also words of murmuring. For we must submit to the divine laws with a cheerful mind, and make no outcry against the excellent way of life, as if shaking off the yoke, with the mind descending to the desire for worse things, and praising the love of pleasure rather than self-control, and preferring the luxuries in the world to choosing to live reverently. Which indeed those of Israel did while traversing that deep desert. For when God sent down the manna to them, they received an inclination toward baser things, saying, ”Would that we had died, smitten by the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, and ate bread to the full. But their murmuring against God resulted in their destruction, for they were destroyed by the serpents. For this reason also the most wise Paul says, ”Do not murmur, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed by the serpents. Therefore, it is fitting for the caretaker of all good order, and for the one who strives for excellent acts of virtue, to have a cheerful mind;

and having taken away the word of murmuring, if you give bread to the hungry, and satisfy an afflicted soul, that is, if you become compassionate, a lover of good and a lover of your fellow men, generous, and sociable, and loving your neighbor as yourself, then your light will rise in the darkness. But how, then, is this so? For just as day comes from night, so in us, when the intelligible darkness is cast out, the divine light enters in its place, so that one seems to be at midday, that is, at the height of brightness. For the circle of the sun at midday then indeed especially sends forth its most intense light upon those on the earth. So thus your God will be with you always. And this, in addition to the other things, is immensely great. For what good thing is not available to those who obtain this? Or of what gifts will a person not be full, when God who is all-powerful is with him, and with a rich hand distributes those things of which He is the supplier and giver, and warding off the assaults of temptations, and making one so strong, as to stand up bravely both against Satan himself and against the outrages from the passions?

And you shall be satisfied, as your soul desires, and your bones shall be made fat, like a well-watered garden, and as a spring whose water has not failed, and your bones shall spring up like grass and be made fat, and they shall inherit for

generations of generations. And with what, then, shall you be filled? he says. Of divine gifts, clearly, and of nourishment befitting saints; for as Christ Himself said somewhere: ”Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God,” this was also of old inscribed as in a type for those of the blood of Israel, when God sent down the manna from heaven; since in a way it might be conceived as the bread of angels, and the bread of heaven. And if there should be any, in whose mind the divine light has flashed richly, and of the sacred Scriptures an accurate and has worked a blameless knowledge, and we say that these have been filled, and have come to satiety of the delight from above and from God; but Israel has fallen away from this; but the nations have come into possession and ownership of it through faith, and as many as approach the evangelical and saving word.

And so our Lord Jesus Christ said to the holy apostles, that ”To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given,” that is, to those who did not believe, to whom indeed the divine word also proclaimed, ”Those who serve me shall eat, but you shall be hungry. Behold, those who serve me shall drink, but you shall be thirsty. For they have hungered and thirsted, having no share in the good things through the Spirit, and completely without taste of the gifts through Christ, that is, of the divine and evangelical instruction. For he said somewhere through one of the holy prophets; ”Behold, I am bringing a famine upon the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord, and they shall run about from east to west seeking the word of the Lord, and they shall not find it. For the life-giving and most nourishing word of God has been taken away from the flock of the Jews. But it has been given, as I said, to those who love Christ, to whom indeed he also proclaimed, saying: ”Eat, and be drunk, O friends. And so the divine David also sings, since he too had a share in such a venerable and abundant honor; ”You have prepared a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you have anointed my head with oil, and your cup makes me drunk, as the best. Therefore, as many as have had knowledge of his divine mysteries, that is, have been filled with them, their bones have been made fat. But the saying is fashioned as from those who are accustomed to live luxuriously in a carnal manner; the soul of such persons would become like a well-watered garden, that is, blooming, and full of fine trees, and adorned with various kinds of flowers, and bringing forth all sorts of fruits. For waterless gardens are very ugly; for they are dry and destitute of all fruit, or perhaps even lacking the plants themselves. But those that are soaked by unstinting streams of water are crowned with all sorts of fruits, as I said. Indeed, the Church has become the garden of Christ, and taking on its person, the bride described in the Song of Songs says, ”Let my kinsman come down into his garden, and eat the fruit of his choice trees; for what the choice fruit is among plants, that is, beautiful fruit, this in the souls of the saints is a good virtue and most pleasing

to God. Therefore, your soul shall be, he says, like a well-watered garden, and yes, also like a spring, whose water has not failed. Such have the divine mystagogues become, sending forth the streams of pious teaching as from an ever-flowing spring of their own heart, and richly watering the souls of those being instructed.

And the dispenser of such excellent gifts himself will confirm it, saying, ”He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water. And again: ”Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will have in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. We say that such are the holy apostles and evangelists, and all who proclaim the divine word, on the one hand being well-versed in dogmatic skill, and on the other hand also revealing the path of brightness in works. And your bones, he says, will spring up like grass, and they will be made fat, and they will inherit for generations of generations. In these things he seems to reveal the mystery of the resurrection; for then the body will rise again, just like some grass in a field, which during the winter season withered and closed up, but when the fine spring weather smiles, grows again, and as it were returns to the beauty that is in it by nature. But the bones, having sprung up like grass, will be made fat, he says, evidently by the life-giving grace the from God. For somewhere the divine David sings and says: ”You will send forth your Spirit, and they will be created, and you will renew the face of the earth,” that is, of those on the earth.

Then we will inherit generations of generations, that is, a long life, since death will have been abolished, and corruption entirely removed. And it is said in many places of the divinely inspired Scripture, that the intelligible bones of the soul are certain practical powers and energies of it, as in the saying that ”God has scattered the bones of the men-pleasers. For God does not scatter the bones of the body, but rather shatters the powers of their soul, so that nothing is able to be accomplished by those who see them, nor indeed is anything they are fond of doing done for the glory of God, nor for the benefit of their own soul. And again the divine Psalmist said, ”Because I was silent, my bones grew old from my crying all the day,” that is, to give glory and to pray, I have become silent, having fallen into human faint-heartedness. My bones grew old, that is, the powers of the mind, or of the soul, became weak. These, therefore, sometimes paralyzed for a short time by sloth, again spring up like grass, as God fattens them with consolations through the Holy Spirit, and strengthens it, so that for this reason we may be made heirs of long-enduring life; for this, and nothing else, is what ”for generations of generations” signifies. And your everlasting deserts shall be built, and your foundations shall be for generations of generations, and you shall be called the builder of fences, and you will cause the paths between them to cease.

Through two other examples the prophetic word comes to us, and the beauty of the hidden meanings is revealed. For the form of the word is fashioned as if upon a

city once made desolate, and completely shaken, so that it remained without walls. For your deserts, he says, shall be built forever, that is, you will not be bare of good thoughts inhabiting your heart, nor indeed will you remain without walls, or unguarded, and having no firm foundation. For Christ will be to you a foundation and continual security, and you shall be as a populous city, having innumerable inhabitants. For the souls of the saints are full of words and thoughts, those concerning God, that is. These are very many, and coming by means of perfect accuracy, they run up and down through it, showing it to be full of every good thing. And in addition to this you will be called the builder of fences, and you will cause the paths between them to cease; for many are they who go through deserted gardens. For with no one at all standing guard, that is, fencing it securely, there would be nothing to prevent those who wish to walk through the middle. But if they should somehow become secure under a gardener, then they also cast off being subject to the feet of the many, a fence having clearly been raised. For in this way the paths through the middle will cease.

You shall be, therefore, he says, as a diligent gardener raising fences, and causing the paths between them to cease. For as long as the soul is unguarded, snoring toward sloth, and for this reason not untrodden by the strange paths of pleasures, it is like a garden traversed by anyone whatsoever. But when, having become sober, it leaps away from the snares of wickedness, and rather seizes the will to do good, and raises up security for the mind as a kind of fence, I mean, that from the fear of God, and drives away from the intellect the thoughts that formerly held it, which went as it were through the middle of it, having it underfoot, and making it a thing to be trampled by mastering it, then it will also be called the builder of fences. But it must be known that also the evil and opposing powers sometimes run down the wretched soul, bringing forth foul pleasures, and carrying it off tyrannically wherever they wish, and walking as through a fallow garden. But they will cease from trampling it, a fence having been raised, which the fear of God raises in us. You will apply such a saying also to each of the holy mystagogues.

For they have become builders of fences, securing with admonitions to virtue the souls of those being instructed, so that they have their minds in a way untrodden by the assaults of pleasures and vulgarities, and by those accustomed to speak empty words, who corrupt the right word of faith, not knowing either what they are saying, or about what things they are making confident assertions. If you turn your foot away from the Sabbaths, from doing your own will on the holy day, and call the Sabbaths delicate, holy to your God, you will not lift your foot to a task, nor will you speak a word in anger from your mouth, and you shall trust in the Lord, and he will bring you up to the good things of the earth, and will feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your Father. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things. The divine Paul, setting aside the shadow of the law as ineffective, transfers the things in it to a spiritual contemplation. For one might observe him not accepting

either circumcision according to the flesh, or inactivity on the Sabbath, but rather he is seen proclaiming a spiritual circumcision, and likewise a Sabbath-rest. For he said, ”He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God.

Concerning the Sabbath: therefore a Sabbath-rest remains for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Therefore, if someone ceases from his own works, that is, yields the need to hold to his own desires to the sacred decrees, thus he keeps the Sabbath spiritually, and truly observes a holy day. This the saying of the prophecy at hand also shows us. For if you turn away, it says, your foot from the Sabbaths, from doing your own will on the holy day. But ”turn away your foot from the Sabbaths” would be nothing other, as I think, than that one must not do what one wishes, and follow the paths of one’s own desires. For that the goal of human desires looks toward the love of pleasure, the all-wise Paul will confirm, writing: ”For I do not do the good that I wish, but the evil that I hate is what I do. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Therefore, it is necessary indeed for those wishing to be well-pleasing to God to vigorously contend against their own will, and following His divine laws everywhere, to traverse the admirable path of righteousness. But he calls Sabbaths delicate which have nothing from one’s own judgment.

But a hard and harsh judgment is to not want to be subject to what God wills; being such, He rebuked Israel, saying, ”I know that you are stubborn, and your neck is an iron sinew, and your forehead bronze. Therefore, obedience, and tractability, and the yielding quality of one’s manner, render the inactivity on the Sabbath delicate to God, that is, the spiritual Sabbath-rest, which those wishing to achieve blamelessly do not lift their foot to a task, that is, they do not walk practically, but rather they accomplish the holy and profitable inactivity, I mean, in respect to things most shameful, and abominable, and hateful to God. He wants such people to be seen as being masters of anger and wrath, and having a door and a bolt upon their tongue. For you shall not speak a word, it says, in anger from your mouth. Therefore he here circumcises two terrible and very difficult things, from which if one departs, he will be perfect before God. For one of the holy apostles said, ”If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. But he who is superior to anger is surely also well-mannered, if the opposite is also true; for it is written that ”A man the wrathful is not comely.

Therefore, God wants those who observe the sabbath spiritually, and holily, and delicately, to be gentle and possessing the greatest virtue, and he commands them to trust, not in wealth rather than worldly powers, not in the strength of bodies, not

in any other such thing, which, like the grasses in the fields, are both temporary and easily withered, but rather in the Lord, the giver and ruler of all cheerfulness. The things of those accustomed to live thus, what sort of men they might be, crowning them, he points out saying, that ”He will bring you up to the good things of the earth, and will feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father. For the God of all promised the land of promise to the fathers of the Jews, and indeed they were brought into it under the leadership of Jesus after the hierophant Moses; Then how through the preceding verses, as to those who had not yet received the inheritance promised to the patriarch Jacob, does he promise to give it to them? Therefore, the promise was not from God to the divine Jacob concerning the perceptible land, that is, the one bequeathed to them, that is, to Abraham and Isaac, but rather concerning that which the Savior himself signified to us, saying: ”Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. And that the things promised will in every way and altogether come to fulfillment, he confirms by saying: For the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things;

and it is impossible for the divine words to fall away; for God is truth. Is my hand not strong enough to save? Or has his ear become heavy, that it cannot hear? But your sins separate between you and God, because of your sins he has turned his face from you, so as not to have mercy. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with sins. And your lips have spoken iniquity, and your tongue meditates injustice; no one speaks righteous things, nor is there true judgment. They have trusted in vain things, and speak empty things. A little before this, the person of God was introduced, saying to the divine prophet: ”Cry out with strength, and do not spare, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and declare to my people their iniquities, and to the house of Israel their sins. They seek me day by day, and desire to know my ways, as a people who have done righteousness, and have not forsaken the judgment of their God. They now ask of me a righteous judgment, and desire to draw near to God, saying, Why is it that we have fasted, and you have not seen? we have humbled our souls, and you have not known? For in the days of your fasts you find your own wills, and you oppress all who are under your hand, you fast for judgment and strife; I have not chosen this fast, says the Lord.

And we were explaining the power of the prophecy, as is possible, interpreting that, rising up against the things established through the all-wise Moses, and considering it of little account at all to live rightly, they did their usual things, practicing a way of life hateful to God and fond of sin, then when war was announced, they sometimes considered fasting through a bare and mere fast, that is, abstinence from food, thinking they would render the judge merciful to themselves. Then, having failed in their hope, they grumbled, and indeed they said: Why is it that we have fasted, and you have not seen? we have humbled our souls, and you have not known? Behold then, behold the divine prophet, as out of a very great love for God he rebukes them, and says, Is the hand of the Lord not strong enough to save, or

has his ear become heavy, that it cannot hear? For the all-powerful right hand of the Lord, he says, has not become weak, nor is his ear heavy and turned away, so as not to listen. But your sins separate between you and him. Therefore, if one should remove the difference, and take away that which walls off the knowledge of God, that is, sin, he who saves is not far off, but will certainly receive the supplications. For in him is both the all-powerful, and the capacity to benevolently receive the prayers from those who are weary.

What sins therefore separate between God, and those of the blood of Israel he brings forth, saying: ”For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with sins. And your lips have spoken lawlessness, and your tongue meditates injustice. For they killed the holy prophets who were sent from God, and they have spoken against him. For Jeremiah said, My strength has failed because of those who curse me; but leaving such things aside now, he seems to be accusing them of impiety against Christ, saying their hands are defiled with blood. For they became killers of the Lord, and their lips spoke lawlessness, and their tongue meditated injustice; for they have not ceased fighting and reviling and speaking against Christ, and at one time mocking his divine signs and bearing false witness against his god-fitting great works, and at another time accusing and saying: ”Away with him, away with him, crucify him. And sometimes for this reason, as Christ endured an unjust sentence, the prophet cries out with holy boldness, No one spoke what is just, nor is there true judgment. They have trusted in vain things, and call on what is empty. And what is their vain trust? For they thought that by removing the heir from their midst, they would possess his inheritance; and speaking these empty words to one another, the wretched ones have acted impiously against him.

Therefore, the prophetic word either accuses those of the blood of Israel of impiety toward Christ, that is, that being in no way righteous, they would be convicted, they who have hands defiled with blood, and lips and a tongue that know how to meditate on nothing else except things tending to impiety, and lawlessness, and injustice, and that in addition to these things they have become unjust judges, taking bribes, that is, and being overcome by shameful gains. For it is said somewhere else, ”How the faithful city has become a harlot, Zion, full of judgment, in which righteousness lodged, but now murderers! Your silver is worthless, your wine merchants mix the wine with water, your rulers are disobedient, companions of thieves, loving gifts, seeking rewards, not judging orphans, and not heeding the judgment of the widow. Because they conceive trouble and bring forth lawlessness. They have broken asps’ eggs, and weave a spider’s web, and he who is about to eat of their eggs, having crushed an addled one, found also a basilisk in it. Their web will not become a garment, nor will they cover themselves with the works of their hands. It is a custom in the divinely-inspired Scripture to always call envy ’trouble’. And the saying has much probability; for it melts away and withers the hearts of those who receive it. The Psalmist also says something of this sort about someone,

that is, about the people of the Jews, ”He has conceived trouble and brought forth lawlessness.

For having been in labor with envy against Christ, they have brought forth impiety against him, that is, lawlessness; for they would be convicted by their very arguments of saying that prophetic word: ”Let us bind the just man, for he is unprofitable to us. And we will find them in their councils taking a most outrageous counsel. For they were saying concerning the Savior of us all, Christ: ”What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, the Romans will come and take away both our nation and our land. And one of them, Caiaphas, this one became the inventor of the impiety against Christ; for he said again, ”You know nothing at all, but that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish. Most clearly, therefore, from what has been said, it is possible to see that, having conceived trouble, that is, having been in labor with trouble against him, they have brought forth lawlessness. What then does the prophetic word signify to us in these things? They have broken asps’ eggs, and he who is about to eat of their eggs, having crushed an addled one, found. For the Jews thought that their deliberations against Christ would come to a favorable end for them, and would be for the benefit of the whole nation.

But they missed the mark, and it has happened that they have suffered something like what those suffer from excessive folly, who the things of breaking the eggs of asps. For having crushed them, they will find nothing else, except a basilisk in it; and this is the most difficult offspring of a serpent, and deadly besides. Therefore, the end of their audacious acts against Christ is profitless for the Jews, but rather also a cause of destruction. For a serpent has, as it were, come forth for them, and an acknowledged offspring, that brings them to the abyss of hades; but that the conspiracy against Christ has been entirely useless, he shows immediately also through another example; For they weave, he says, a spider’s web. For the spider, I mean this small and most insignificant creature, weaves webs in the less used parts of rooms, skillfully woven with thin threads, which, having been made with the greatest labor, profit them not at all in the end; for they will not be a garment for the one who made it, but are easily torn when used for a covering, and better than the art itself. Thus, he says, are also the inventions of the Jews, clearly those against Christ;

for by weaving deceits and entwining false accusations, they thought, as I said, that by covering him with the death of the flesh, they would accomplish something beneficial for themselves, and to be enriched with the covering from their own undertakings, but the end of what they hoped for came to nothing for them. For they have become naked of the good will from above, and have cast off their protector, that is, Christ; for from good works, a covering will come to those who wish to do them, with God bestowing this on them; but for the workers of evil, what comes

from them will not be for a covering, but rather they will be destitute of the covering from God. For their works are works of iniquity, and their feet run to evil, they are swift to shed blood, and their thoughts are thoughts of murder; destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known. There will be no judgment in their ways. For their paths are crooked, which they travel, and they do not know peace. For this reason judgment has departed from them. Each of the Jewish transgressions is enumerated in detail, so that since they have been cast out of intimacy with him, they may be convicted of having suffered this by a just sentence. For he says all their works are works of iniquity, and in these, in summary, the condemnation of their entire life has become true;

and so he runs through each of the accusations, saying that their feet run to evil, and are swift to shed blood, and that they have had thoughts set on murder. Consider again for me, that although their transgressions are very many, he first mentions their readiness for, I mean, choosing to murder. For he said their feet run to this, and are sharp or swift to receive thoughts of blood and murder; and he insists that destruction and misery are in their ways, and that they do not know peace, or the way of peace. For what they did unholily, and going beyond all boldness, became for them a cause of destruction and misery, or rather, from them to others. And they were certainly full of meddlesomeness, and litigious, and very sick with contentiousness; and the pretext for this was the desire for gains and bribe-taking. Therefore, quite rightly, he says, ”There is no judgment in their ways. And by judgment he here means righteousness, that is, a most lawful and irreproachable way of life. For thus somewhere the divine David says concerning the commandment through Moses, ”You have established judgment and righteousness in Jacob. Therefore, uprightness, that is righteousness, is not in their ways. For they are crooked, and they flee peace, that is, refusing to be peaceful towards others, or rather, by peace here he means our Lord Jesus Christ, whom they did not wish to know, digging for themselves the pit of destruction.

For this reason, he says, judgment departed from them, that is, for this cause righteousness departed from them, that is, the knowledge of doing those things which procure the crown of righteousness to those who have chosen to do them aright. But the Jews are outside of all spiritual skill, and as it were, the ability to know at all how to accomplish correctly anything of the things pleasing to God has flown away from their mind. While they waited for light, it became darkness to them; waiting for brightness, they walked in gloom. They will grope for the wall like a blind man, and as those who have no eyes they will grope, and they will fall at noonday as at midnight. They will groan like those who are dying, they will go together like a bear and a dove. Having declared their life accursed and most lawless; for he said what their works are, works of iniquity, and having enumerated these in detail, what they are, and in how many ways they come, he necessarily adds and sets forth both the loss inflicted on them from this and the recompense for their unbear-

able wickedness, that is, the fruits of the impiety within them. For the Jews indeed were expecting the illumination from Christ. They heard holy prophets crying out openly, ”Be enlightened, be enlightened, Jerusalem, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

And then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and as for what pertains to the foretelling of the holy prophets, the wretched ones were not without good hope. And indeed the leaders of the synagogue of the Jews once spoke to one another, ”Does the Christ come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David, and from Bethlehem the village? And that Samaritan woman confessed clearly, speaking to Christ Himself, the power of His advent. For she said that, ”We know that Messiah is coming, who is called Christ; when He comes, He will tell us all things. Therefore they were expecting, as I said, the illumination from Christ, but the things of their hope turned out for them completely the opposite. For they did not receive the true light, but, as if self-invited, having brought darkness into their own minds, they have become blind, and guides of the blind, according to the voice of the Savior. Therefore, while they waited for light, that is, having hoped or expected, it became darkness to them, and waiting for brightness, they walked in gloom. Again, the prophet states this same thing in another way, that is, about the same thing, making the meaning of what was said clear. For those who expected brightness, walked in deep darkness. For this is what the word ’gloom’ signifies. Then, showing the magnitude of the blindness that came upon them, he said they would grope for a wall like a blind man.

For in this way it is sometimes the custom for those who suffer the affliction of blindness in their eyes to walk. But it being noonday, he says, they will fall as at midnight. And ’noonday’ he usually calls the middle of the day, when the sun’s orb also sends forth its strongest ray from mid-heaven upon those on earth, and as it were illuminates all things with richer beams; and ’midnight,’ the middle of the night, when deep darkness is also poured down upon all under heaven. At noonday therefore, he says, that is, when a most abundant light, that is, a divine and intelligible one, was illuminating the world under heaven through Christ, the Savior of us all, the Jews will fall just like blind men, not even knowing where they are going; for they did not wish to obey Christ when He said, ”While you have the light, walk in the light, that darkness may not overtake you. Therefore they were overtaken by darkness, not having endured to walk in the light; and they will suffer something else besides. For they will groan like those who are dying, he says, that is, as those who are held fast by a grievous and unbearable disease.

And they will go together as a bear and a dove, and not as two distinct beings reconciling with each other, of whom one might be understood as a bear, and the other as a dove, but each one of them at the same time, according to his disposition and at least according to the mind within them, being at once a bear and a dove. For

since he said they would groan, he shows very well what sort and how great their groaning will be. For they say that bears, if they should be bereaved of their young by someone, their of her cubs, to wail dreadfully, and to be filled with unmixed madness, to roam the mountains and glens, and to leap uncontrollably upon those it meets; and somewhere through one of the holy prophets He signifies something of this sort, when the God of all says concerning those of the blood of Israel, I will meet them as a bear bereaved, that is, savagely and fiercely. But the doves, settling in their nests, coo frequently, and send forth a sort of mournful sound. Such have the Jews become; for with their whole country having been sacked along with the holy city, I mean Jerusalem, and the temple itself also having been burnt, they have a beastly disposition against those who took it. Yet they mourn for its suffering like doves. For it is written, that ”And they shall be on the mountains like mourning doves.

Or perhaps we shall suppose the prophetic word in these things to indicate something else. For they will go, it says, as a bear and a dove, that is, they will live in a ferocity of mind, coupled with foolishness; and of ferocity the bear is an image, or an example, but of simplicity and foolishness, the dove. For it has been said concerning Israel through one of the holy prophets, And Ephraim was a silly dove, without a heart; and we will find the Jews to be truly somewhat savage and foolish. For the understanding and gentleness from Christ is not in them; for they denied Him who is the bestower of wisdom and understanding, who makes those who love him tame and gentle. Thus the prophet Jeremiah said concerning them at one time, that ”Every man has become foolish from his knowledge,” and at another time, ”There is no wisdom in them, because they have rejected the word of the Lord. We waited for judgment, and there is no salvation, it is far from us; for our lawlessness is great before you, and our sins have stood against us; for our lawlessness is in us, and we have known our wrongdoings. We have acted impiously, and we have lied, and we have turned away from following our God. We have spoken unjustly, and have disobeyed; we have conceived, and have meditated from our heart unjust words, and we have turned judgment back, and justice stands far away.

The word of the holy prophets is always a lover of truth. For the spirit of truth speaks in them, that is, of Christ. For this reason, whenever they make mention of the rejection of the nation of the Jews, and of the wrath brought upon them because of their impiety towards Christ, they also usefully call to mind their future conversion in the last times of the age, and of the calling in Christ through faith. Most providentially, therefore, lest anyone think that the truth speaks falsely, it introduces them repenting, and taking on their person, it almost presents them to God saying: We waited for judgment, and there is none. And by judgment they mean righteousness, that which is through Christ, of course, which they expected to receive, but it is not among them, for they have become hard and disobedient. Because of this it says, that salvation is far from us. For our lawlessness is great

before you, and our sins are in us. For since they have utterly fallen away from the one who justifies by faith, they have also become far from the salvation from him, not having cast off the pollutions of sin, not having wiped away the charges of lawlessness, but as it were having the filth from it ingrained in them. For this reason Christ addressed them, saying, ”Truly I say to you, that if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. Therefore, since they have not believed, they have died in their sins;

and since they have acted impiously against Christ in many ways, they make confession of these very things. For they say, that We have known our wrongdoings, we have acted impiously, and we have lied, and we have turned away from following our God. For they acted impiously, intolerably speaking falsely of the glory of the Savior of us all, Christ, and turning away from the will to follow him. More- And they confess, that We have spoken unjust things, and have been disobedient, we conceived, and we meditated from our heart unjust words. For they have spoken unjust things against Christ; for at one time mocking his glory, and slandering his divine signs, they were saying that by Beelzebul the prince of the demons he casts out demons, and at another time also bringing forth from their own heart unjust words; for they accused him, a Samaritan and one having a demon, daring to call him both a glutton and a wine-drinker, and they also slandered him before Pilate, saying that, ”He stirs up the crowds, and forbids giving tribute to Caesar. For this reason they say that, ”We have departed from behind our God, we have spoken unjust things, and have been disobedient; we conceived, and we meditated from our heart words of injustice, and we have put judgment behind, and righteousness has stood far off,” that is, we have cast righteousness behind, and as it were have given our backs, having turned away from it. For this reason it has stood far off from us.

These then indeed are the voices of those repenting, and of those seeking to be shown mercy by Christ. For a saving thing is to repent, and to make clear confessions of transgressions. For it is written, ”Declare thou first thy transgressions, that thou mayest be justified. And the divine Psalmist also said; ”I said, I will confess against myself my transgression unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my heart. That truth has been consumed in their ways, and they could not come by a straight path. And the truth is taken away, and they turned aside their mind, from understanding, and the Lord saw, and it did not please him, that there was no judgment. And he saw and there was no man, and he considered, and there was no one to help. And he defended them with his arm, and with the mercy, by which he was established, and he put on righteousness, as a breastplate, and placed a helmet of salvation upon his head. And he put on a garment of vengeance, and a cloak, as about to render a recompense, a reproach to his adversaries. And they from the west shall fear the name of the Lord, and they from the east the glorious

name. For the wrath of the Lord will come as a violent river, it will come with anger.

The prophet, having recalled what those from Israel will say at the time of their calling, asking from God the Father the grace of salvation through Christ, again shifts the words to his own person, and speaks against those from Israel, or rather agrees, that they have become wicked, and apostates, and enemies of the truth; and he asserts, saying, that Truth has been consumed in their ways, that is, it is all but spent, and has completely gone. For there was not at all in their works truth, that is, the law of truth. For this reason they could not pass through by a straight path; for those who have altogether slipped from the knowledge of how to live according to the law, and according to what seems right to the truth, and the law of God is everywhere called truth, how could they have come straight to what is fitting? or how have they not had crooked and perverted ways? And adding and saying, that The truth is taken away, and they turned aside their mind from understanding, he shows that truth had completely departed from them, and they were completely turned aside from being able to understand the things that lead to salvation. These things, he says, the Lord saw, and it did not please him. For there was no judgment among them, that is, just judgment, and law. Then;

He has seen, he says, and there was no man, he considered and there was no one to help, For since he is compassionate, as God he remits, sometimes, even the charges against a whole city, for one, and only one righteous man found in it; and at least he said through the voice of Jeremiah; ”Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and seek in the broad places thereof, and see if ye can find a man, if there is one that executes faith, and loves mercy, and I will be merciful to her, saith the Lord. And he also promised to Sodom that he would remit the punishment by fire, if they had five righteous men among them, that is, in each city one righteous man. He considered therefore, he says, and there was no man, there was no one to help. For the human race to be saved, that is, and before all others those from Israel, who have believed, to be in participation of the Holy Spirit, through whom also the boast of adoption is brought in, and to speak in a tongue the word of faith, as the all-wise Paul has written: ” Do not say,” he says, ”in your heart: Who will ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down, or, Who will descend into the abyss? that is, to bring Christ up from the dead. But what does the Scripture say?

The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that if you say, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses unto salvation. We have received, therefore, from God the word of faith, that is, the confession: a saving thing, and a cause of righteousness: for thus Christ justifies the ungodly, He who also cried out of old, ” Behold, I have blotted out your iniquities like a cloud, and your sins like a mist. Let this word of faith be

in us continually, and it will not cease from our mouth. And we shall send it on to generations of generations, for thus also those after us will be justified. For if Christ is always both God and Lord, the confession of faith in Him will never cease among those who have known His appearing. Arise, shine, O Jerusalem, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness and gloom shall cover the earth over the nations: but the Lord shall appear upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you. And kings shall walk by your light, and nations by your brightness.

As the promise has been given that Israel will be saved in due time, the prophetic word in these things leaps up, in a way, for us to gladness, for, raising a great cry on high, it almost exclaims: ”Arise, shine,” it says, ”for your light has come. But consider how, when the divine light from God was distributed to those of Israel before all others—it is clear that this is through Christ—the prophet says, ”your light has come,” almost pointing out to them as present Him who was long ago foretold through the law and the holy prophets, but who shone upon those on earth in the last times of the age with flesh. And he says that the One who appeared is the glory of the Lord, for Christ has risen like some sun, illuminating all things with divine and intelligible light, and sending down the radiance of the true knowledge of God to those more ready for faith. And He is also the glory of God the Father. For in Him, and through Him, and with Him He is glorified. And He portrays, as if in His own nature, the One who begot Him. And since we have known the Son, we have seen through Him and in Him the majesty of the Father, and His incomparable glory, and the excellence of His divine dignities. And so Christ said somewhere: ”Father, glorify your Son, that also the Your Son, I will glorify you.

Therefore the glory of God the Father appeared among us, then, having separated Israel from all other nations, as one specially honored by God and being His inheritance, he adds and says: ” Behold, darkness and gloom will cover the earth upon the nations, but upon you the Lord will appear. And he does not say such things as if darkness were about to overshadow the nations when Christ shone upon the world, but rather it was enlightened, and has cast off the darkness of ancient deceit. But those who interpret the divine Scripture are often indifferent concerning the rendering of tenses. Therefore they have put ”will cover” instead of ”covers. For it is true that even when Christ shone forth, and before others to those from Israel, the multitude of nations was still held in darkness, grace not yet having been transferred to them. Behold, therefore, he says, the whole land of the nations is covered with darkness and gloom, that is, of ignorance and of error, but upon you the Lord will appear, for, as I said, he shone upon them, and his glory was first seen by them, through exceptional great works, and signs, and wonders. For he performed miracles as God among them, raising the dead from tombs, putting light into the eyes of the blind, cleansing lepers with a command, rebuking demons with authority,

and in short leaving no way unused which was sufficient for the conviction that he is truly God, and the Son of God by nature.

”And kings shall come, he says, to your light, and nations to your brightness. Again the prophet connects the calling of the nations with the visitation of those from Israel, so that they might know that even if they dishonor the Redeemer by their disobedience, and leap away from love for him, to the destruction of their own head, he will not be destitute of worshippers, but rather will gather by faith both nations and kings: for by the brightness given to you, he says, that is by the illumination from Christ, kings and nations will come. And where will they come? To salvation through faith, obviously, to a glorious and blameless life, to knowing and confessing who the Creator and craftsman of all things is by nature and in truth. For they worshipped the creation rather than the creator, and attached their reverence to wood and stones. But since they were illuminated by the light given to you, they too, he says, will travel the straight and royal road, stumbling over none of the things lying in between, but as in the dawn and in the day, although they were sons of night and darkness, running past all the stumbling blocks. Lift up your eyes round about, and see your children gathered together: Behold, all your sons have come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders:

then you will see, and you will fear, and you will be amazed in your mind, because the wealth of the sea will turn to you, and of nations, and of peoples, and droves of camels will come to you, and the camels of Midian will cover you m and Ephah. All shall come from Sheba, bearing gold and frankincense, and they shall bring precious stones, and shall proclaim the salvation of the Lord: and all the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you, and the rams of Nebaioth shall come to you, and they shall be offered acceptably upon my altar, and my house of prayer shall be glorified. The word has a very great and wise economy. For it proclaims the calling of the gentiles, and the union of the two peoples in Christ, and the change from the shadow of the law to spiritual worship. For all things are new in Christ, and the old things have passed away, and he himself created the two peoples into one new man, making peace, and reconciling both in one body to the Father. Of all these things he makes the prediction, and indeed he says to the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, the Church, which from the beginning was constituted of the Jews: for they were the first to believe: ” Lift up your eyes round about, and see your children gathered. For behold, all your sons have come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on shoulders.

For as the divine and evangelical preaching gathers those who have believed from every nation and country, netting the whole world under heaven, and persuades them to go to a certain very well-towered city for the grace that comes through faith, that is, for the nourishment of the saints, I mean the Church, it says such things, just as, indeed, somewhere else: ” For it shall be, it says, in the last days that

the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, prepared on the tops of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and many nations shall come to it, and shall say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will announce to us his way. And we will walk in it. Therefore, the children of Jerusalem would not be called only those from the blood of Israel, but rather also all those from every nation and country called through faith into the light of truth. For as the all-wise Paul writes, ”Not all those who are from Israel are Israel, nor because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children, but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. And it was said by God to the divine Abraham, that ”I have made you a father of many nations. Therefore, as a multitude has already been gathered from the nations, and is worshipping Christ:

Lift up, it says, your eyes round about, that is, survey the whole inhabited world, and from every part of it you will see your children running to you, and they shall come, though once they were far off, but far off not in place, but in mind and disposition of intellect. And so one of the holy prophets said to those who had fled from knowing the God who is by nature and truly so: ”Remember, you who are far from the Lord, and let Jerusalem come up upon your heart. And the all-wise Paul also wrote concerning Christ, that ” He came and preached peace ce to those who are far off, and to those who are near. And he writes to those from the Gentiles: ”Remember you Gentiles, who are called the uncircumcision by the so-called circumcision in the flesh made by hands, that you were at that time without Christ, alienated from the hope of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, but now you who were once far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For those who did not know at all the God who is by nature and in truth, are said to be, and are, far off, according to disposition and mind, as I said. But behold, they have come, he says, that is, their calling will not be to a distant time, nor for a postponement:

for they will run as if at the heels of the evangelical proclamations, and they will make their arrival to God through faith without any toil and free from all difficulty and sweat. For they will be carried on shoulders: for the figure of speech is formed as from an example from our own lives: for newborn infants love to be nursed, and seek to rest in their mothers’ bosoms and arms. Something like this happens with those called from Hellenic error, for they are cared for by their instructors in the mysteries, not being led harshly, nor immediately taking the rough path, but, as it were, through a tender upbringing are fed with milk and ascend little by little toward a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. And so it was commanded to the holy apostles to baptize all the nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, and to teach them to observe all that he had commanded them. And they, wishing to do this, laid no burden at first on those who believed, using pedagogical skill. For they wrote to those from the Gentiles, that ” It seemed good to the holy Spirit and to us to lay no greater burden

on you, except that you abstain from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood.

And the most excellent Paul also writes to some, that ”I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it, nor are you able even now. But solid food is for the perfect, of those who by practice have the senses of their heart trained for the discernment of good and evil. Therefore, on shoulders will your sons be carried, he says, and your daughters, and then you will see, and you will fear, and you will be amazed, that is, you will marvel: for thus somewhere also the divine Habakkuk: ”Lord, he says, I have heard your report, and I was afraid. I considered your works, and was amazed. And we ourselves are somehow accustomed, to say at times, ”I was amazed,” whenever something paradoxical happens to be done by someone. You will marvel, therefore, he says, and what will be the reason for this? For the wealth of the sea will be transferred to you, and of nations, and of peoples. In these words he makes a clearer prediction, that in due time the multitude of the nations will be called to the knowledge of the truth. For it was indeed in the land in the more southern regions of the Jews, but indeed the parts towards the north, and the sea, and the cities, and the lands lying upon it, the flocks of the Gentiles divided among themselves.

But since, having returned from their ancient deceit, they have undergone a change for the better, having been called to the knowledge of the God who is according to nature through those who minister the Gospel of Christ: for this reason, he says, the wealth of the sea will be transferred to the Church: and the wealth, as I said, of the cities and lands lying by the sea, are those who dwell in them. ”And herds of ca- mels shall come to you, he says, and the camels of Midi an and Eph- ah shall cover you. For these are nations neighboring Jerusalem, and having common borders, both the Midianites and those from Ephah. For they were abominable, and uncircumcised, and idolaters, but that they themselves also will be called, and will bear fruit for God, he shows in these things. For they were camel-riders, and they provided the resources for living from both fighting and raising cattle: and they were especially so to those of Israel, but those who once wandered, both profane and unmixed with the sanctified, will come, he says, not one by one, but as in a herd, and in a multitude, either mounted on camels, that is, bringing what they have, and honoring God with what is at hand. ”And all shall come from She ba, bringing gold and frankincense, and they shall bring a precious stone, and shall proclaim the salvation of the Lord.

Again, Sheba is a land beyond that of the Ar abs, and rather near the Red Sea, from which She ba, the queen of the Ethiopians, in the times of Solomon visited Jerusalem. And the land is most fruitful in frankincense-trees, and gold, and In- dian stones. Therefore they will come, he says, bearing fruit for the glory of G od, and offering frankincense, and gold, and stones, that is, the fragrance from

good works, and intelligible brightness, and spiritual wealth. ”And they will also proclaim the good news of the salvation of God. For very many who have been called from the nations, and having been made wise in heart, and having received a knowledgeable mind of the sacred doctrines, have obtained the dignity of teaching, and proclaiming to others the salvation and grace from Christ our all-Saviour, have put on the crown of genuineness. ”And the sheep of Kedar, he says, and the rams of Nebaioth will come to you, and will be offered up acceptably upon my altar. And Kedar, and Nebaioth are again other lands, both rich and with good pastures, and having very many inhabitants in them, but they were idolaters, and wanderers. But these also, he says, will offer rams and sheep, and all will be acceptable upon my altar: and yet according to the law of Moses it was not permitted for foreigners to offer sacrifices to God. Nor if they had offered them would anyone have made them acceptable. But behold, God commands that these also be acceptable to the holy sacrif borders.

For in Christ Jesus there is neither slave nor free, barbarian, Scythian, Greek and Jew, but Christ is all, and in all. For the two peoples have become one, since he brought down the middle wall of partition, and abolished the law of commandments in decrees. Therefore the sacrifices of all are acceptable, of those who approach God through faith in Christ. [1]And the house of prayer of God was glorified. And again, consider for me the depth of the word: for he no longer wishes the Church to be called a house of sacrifices and smoke, just as the temple in Jerusalem was, but rather of prayer, that is, of spiritual worship. For somewhere the divine David also sings and says: ”Let my prayer be set forth as incense before you, the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice. And it should be noted that the Savior himself also recalled this verse somewhere when rebuking the commerce of the Jews, saying: ”It is written: ’My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it a ’den of robbers.’” Therefore, when it became a house of prayer, then it was also glorified. Who are these that fly like clouds, and like doves with their young? The islands have waited for me, and the ships of Tarshish among the first, to bring your children from afar, and their silver and their gold with them, for the sake of the holy name of the Lord, and because the Holy One of Israel is glorious.

It is possible to see again in these things the person of the Church introduced, that is of the spiritual Jerusalem, lifting up her eyes as in a circle, as she was commanded by God, then being astonished at the multitude of those running to her, and the people gathered through faith beyond all number. ”For who are these that fly,” it says, ”like clouds, and like doves with their young? For they are caught in the net through faith, not only the old, but with them also the young, and together fathers with children, and mothers with daughters. Therefore, for every age the linen-net of the evangelical proclamations is spread out, and this, I think, is what is written in the book of Psalms: ”Young men and maidens, old men with younger

ones, let them praise the name of the Lord. And it says they fly, either because they will walk to her, not carelessly and feebly, but like winged and swift creatures, or that, having left behind their earthly and base mindset, they are in a way raised on high, and just as clouds from the sea, so from worldly turmoil and luxury, they leap up high, and swim up, hastening to the city above. Therefore, as the Church marvels at the gathering through faith from every land, he who nets them lays bare again the cause of the matter, and says: ”The islands have waited for me, and the ships of Tarshish to bring your children from afar, and their gold and their silver with them.

And here you will understand islands not, of course, as the lands of the islands themselves, for that is foolish, nor yet as the very... Of another race, indeed, because not from the blood of Israel according to the flesh, but wise master builders, according to the divine Paul, and knowing well how to lay Christ as a foundation in us, that is, through faith and the teaching of good things. This, I think, is what is meant by, ”Men of other races will build your walls, and their kings will stand by you. But whose kings? Clearly, those of the other races. By these he means kings, either the rulers and leaders of peoples, who have stood by the Church of Christ, as if serving as its bodyguard, and protecting its children, and warding off every attack of enemies visible and invisible, or in truth those crowned with the highest honors, and holding the scepter of kingship, who also have stood by the Church. And the ’standing by’ in this context signifies obedience. For they yield to the divine and sacred decrees, and they deem the proclamation of the Church worthy of all account. For in my wrath I struck you, and in my mercy I have loved you. And your gates will be opened continually, day and night, and they will not be shut, to bring in to you the power of nations, and kings being led. For the nations and the kings that will not serve you will perish, and the nations will be made desolate.

For since, it says, you were found guilty of very many and intolerable sins, you have undergone the commensurate penalty. For it was necessary for one who was such to undergo the things that come from wrath. But since again it was necessary for you as from a good and compassionate Lord and God for mercy to be given, it is given, and I will banish the things that come from wrath. What then will there be, what will be given, when the grim things have ceased? ”Your gates,” it says, ”will be opened continually, day and night, and they will not be shut. In these words it seems he promises them peace, and the calm weather that comes from it. For cities that are under suspicion of an enemy attack do not always have their gates thrown open, but as occasion and need require, and hardly in the daytime, and not without fear: but those completely freed from expecting to suffer any such thing open them wide to those entering, even if some do this at night.

If, therefore, God promises them peace, and a breadth of prosperity, that is, the concourse of those coming to it will be uninterrupted, and the entry, as it were,

continuous, as they are drawn in a certain way through faith to the knowledge of Christ, so that the gates seem to be opened, and there is no time at which it is proper for them to be closed, and not only for those of a humble life, and under the yoke of kingship, but indeed also for those themselves who hold power over all. And it is possible to see through the events the power of the prophecy prevailing to this day. For the Church receives at all times those willing to believe, and shuts out from this endeavor absolutely no one: and it is possible for those who wish, with no one hindering, at whatever time they might wish, to to be led to the light of the true knowledge of God: and God and the Father leads all to the knowledge of the Son, through whom, and in whom, and with whom he is glorified. And he himself has revealed this to us, saying: ”No one can come to me, unless my Father who sent me draws him. But he says that the power of the nations will be brought in, so that you might not think only, as I said, of those in smallness and in a low state, but also those in power, and glory in this life.

And he adds that, ”And the nations, and the kings, who will not serve you, will perish, and will be made desolate. For the unbelieving, and uninitiated, and those without a share in the salvation through Christ, whether they be some of the distinguished, or of the more obscure, will fall into the pit of Hades, and into the snare of death: for they will have died in their own sins, and they will suffer the final punishment of all. And the glory of Lebanon will come to you in cypress, and pine, and cedar, together to glorify my holy place. Lebanon is a mountain of Phoenicia, full of cedars, and cypresses, and pines, and with these very plants of Lebanon. And for this reason the aforementioned mountain is admired, as having the most abundant timber, and abounding with the tallest and most fragrant trees. This glory, therefore, will be given to you, he says, that is, intelligibly, and spiritually. For the Church of Christ nourishes very many, and renowned heads of the saints raised on high from virtues, and yes, most fragrant. For they have the fragrance of Christ: and in them is also the state of being beyond the corruption that comes from a carnal mind, just as indeed the pine and the cedar do not decay. But it is the custom of the divinely-inspired Scripture at times to liken the multitude of the saints to such plants, and so God said somewhere again through the voice of Isaiah:

”And I will make water in the desert, and rivers in the waterless land. I will place in the waterless earth the cedar, and the box-tree, and the myrtle, and the cypress, and the white poplar. For he likens the nations to a desolate and waterless land: for the divine word was not among them, which is able to give life, and to bring to growth in piety and knowledge of God, but there have come to be among them the cedar, and the box-tree and the myrtle, and the cypress, and the white poplar, that is, tall and admirable plants, of which also the divine Psalmist makes mention, saying: ”Bread strengthens man’s heart, the trees of the plain will be satisfied, and the cedars of Lebanon, which you have planted. For as the all-wise Paul writes, ”We

are God's field. This glory of Lebanon, therefore, he says, will be given to you, that is, you will be seen abounding with many and admired heads of saints. And this will be, so that my holy place may be glorified. For the boast of the Churches are those who have entered into the heights of the virtues, and having nothing low, that is earthly, and cast on the ground in mind because of the to mind the things of the flesh, but rather rushing on high, and minding the things that are above, and as it were departing from the earth, and while walking upon it, yet having our citizenship above and in the heavens.

And the sons of those who humbled you and provoked you shall come to you in fear, and you shall be called the city of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. The very outcome of events shows precisely the power of the prophecy, not straying from the truth: for having acted insolently towards the Savior of all, our Jesus Christ, Jerusalem has been humbled, having been cast out from intimacy with God, and having slipped away from hope in him, and having become destitute of mercy from above, and having fallen into the hands of enemies, who indeed having laid waste to all of Judea, also burned the divine and famous temple. But since the remnant has been saved through God's pity, for not a few of those from Israel have believed in Christ, it has been called the Church of Christ, and has become a mother, as it were, of nations. For the sons of those who once humbled her, that is, those who hold power in earthly matters, and coming as it were from them in the succession of scepters, consider the Church venerable, and in fear, that is, with reverence, and having the divine fear in mind, they approach her: "For she has been called the city of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. For the Church is the city of God, and the divine David teaches this, as if to her, "Glorious things have been spoken of you, O city of God.

And the Lord of all himself says somewhere through the lyre of the Psalmist: " Here I will dwell, for I have chosen it; I will bless her provision, I will satisfy her poor with bread; I will clothe her priests with salvation. But if anyone should wish to name the successive sons of the kings who once persecuted the Church, who now approach her with honor and fear, and honor her as a divine city, he is not carried outside the scope. For we see the outcome of events has turned out this way. Because you were forsaken and hated, and there was no one to help you, I will make you an everlasting exultation, a joy from generation to generation. And you shall suck the milk of nations, and you shall eat the wealth of kings; and you shall know that I am the Lord who saves you, and the God of Israel who redeems you. "For you have become, he says, forsaken, and hated, and there was no one to help. This was the cause of your humiliation, for you acted insolently toward the one able to exalt you and to guard your prosperity unshakably, but there was no one to extend a helping hand, since you were hated by God: for you acted insolently not against some one of those in a servile station, and having a diaconal ministry, but against the very King and Lord of all.

But since you have once suffered humiliation, the wicked things will pass away, and he will reclaim you with the second things. For just as having disobeyed if it was necessary for her to be punished by the just decree of God, so it is fitting for her when she has returned to be pitied. ”I will make you, therefore,” he says, ”a joy for generations of generations: For there is nothing gloomy in the Church of Christ, where there is altogether the hope of incorruption, and of unending life, and of unfading glory, and of the kingdom of the heavens, what dejection could it have? And you shall suck the milk of nations, and you shall eat the wealth of kings. And the meaning of the prophecy seems to some to teach something of this sort, that many from the Hellenic flock, having been made wise in their mind by the God-inspired Scriptures, and having leaped up to a knowledge of dogmatic skill, will be teachers of the Synagogue from the Jews. But somehow for the present the text seems to go not so much this way of thought, but perhaps wants to make this clear, that she will be filled with the fruitfulness from the nations, and with royal offerings. For the experience of things shows that this too is true. But with these things thus accomplished, he says that, ”I am the Lord who saves you. For as the prophet Isaiah says:

”Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we would have become as Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah. For by the grace and loving-kindness of God the remnant of Israel has been saved, so that the nation from the holy fathers should not be utterly destroyed. And instead of bronze I will bring you gold, and instead of iron I will bring you silver, and instead of wood, I will bring you bronze, and instead of stones, iron. And I will give your rulers in peace, and your overseers in righteousness. He takes up the materials as in the order of examples, having a very great difference from one another. But he signifies something spiritual and profound indirectly. For he wishes to say that all things will be changed for the better, and the second things will differ from the first. For the education in the law will in every way yield to that through Christ, that is, to the evangelical ordinances, and the difference will be as great as that between bronze and gold. For bronze has the appearance of gold, but it is not gold; and iron has the appearance of silver, for it has brightness in it, but it is not silver, but is very much inferior to the superior one. Therefore one might liken the education in the law to bronze, but that through Christ to gold:

and again one might liken the power of the way of life in the law to iron, which has a measured brightness, but that in Christ and the gospel, rather to silver: for it has perfect brightness, spiritually speaking. For this very reason, the all-wise Paul, although saying that he had the greatest boast from the life in the law, and from the knowledge under it, considered all things to be refuse, but wished to gain Christ, and the surpassingness of the knowledge of him. And wood and stones are useful for building: and we will find the all-wise Paul likening the power of the initiation by some to these materials. ”For if anyone,” he says, ”builds upon the

foundation, wood, ...wood, hay, stones, stubble. This being so, we say this, that the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees, that is, the instruction of the unbelieving Jews as a whole, who do not understand the mystery of Christ at all, since they have not believed in him, might be compared to wood perhaps, and to stones, but the teaching in Christ, the evangelical, is so much better, as bronze is to wood, and iron to stone. For their teachings and thoughts were easily broken, but those of the Christians were solid, and as it were unbreakable, along with being splendid and precious. For the Jews fall into genealogies and endless myths, explaining to the people under them, weaving in certain trifles and old wives' chatter:

but those who bear Christ in mind teach those under them every way of holy skill, and make those who come to them lovers of dogmatic precision, and workers of every virtue: and the following passage immediately shows somehow that the meaning of the prophecy has this purpose. "For I will give," he says, "your rulers in peace, and your overseers in righteousness. For with the first ones, he says, having been cast out, the Savior of all raises up other rulers and overseers of the peoples, excelling in peace and righteousness. For those are at peace with God, who are eager to think the things that are pleasing to him, and who are crowned with the boasts of righteousness. The prophet Isaiah said something of this sort again elsewhere, or rather God through the prophet to the mother of the Jews, I mean Jerusalem: "And I will bring my hand upon you, and I will purge you to purity, and I will destroy the disobedient, and I will take away all the lawless from you, and I will humble all the arrogant; and I will establish your judges as before and your counselors as from the beginning, and after these things you will be called the city of righteousness, the faithful metropolis Zion. Indeed, the Savior himself also rebuked the teachers of the Jews, saying: "Truly, truly I say to you, the kingdom of heaven will be taken away from you and will be given to another nation, producing its fruits."

Discourse 30

And injustice will no longer be heard in your land, nor destruction and misery in your borders, but your walls will be called salvation, and your gates a sculpture. And the saying is very likely. For if her rulers are in peace, and the overseers are pre-eminent in boasts of righteousness, surely the practice of living eagerly in all righteousness and piety according to Christ will prevail also among those under their yoke. ”Not And there shall be, he says, no devastation within your borders. By devastation he means greed, especially against those in a subordinate and weak position. For such people are an easy path, and are set forth as a most ready prey for those who wish to plunder. And at times, the leaders of the Synagogue of the Jews have become unjust and greedy, and rising up against the divine laws, they made their judgments on every matter perverse. For Sacred Scripture in many places accuses them of having advanced to such a measure of unholiness that they were seen to be liable to intolerable charges: for at one time it says that her leaders judged for bribes, and her prophets divined for silver. And the divine one also sings, ”Devastation and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes. And the God of all rebuked them even when they were fasting, saying thus:

”For in the days of your fasts you find your own wills, and you provoke all who are under your hand. You fast for judgments and quarrels, and you strike the lowly with your fists: and in addition to these things, through the voice of Isaiah: ”And they coveted fields, and they plundered orphans, and they oppressed houses, and they plundered a man and his house, a man and his inheritance. Since their ways have ceased, but the choir of the holy apostles has been raised up in their place, and those after them who still endeavor to follow in their footsteps rightly divide the word of truth, and have become the best teachers of those under their hand. For this reason, and very rightly, he says that injustice will no longer be heard in their land, nor devastation and misery: but her walls will rather be called salvation, and her gates a carving, and by walls, as I think, he means the holy teachers, securing the Church with dogmatic and ethical instructions, so that it is also impregnable to enemies, whether they be visible or invisible. And these same ones would also be gates, since indeed they use an introductory word, and bring in through faith

to the knowledge of truth those who were until now outside of it. And a carving because their word was exceedingly beautiful, and as it were, turned on a lathe toward truth: for everything that is carved is comely:

and the Seventy have given this interpretation, but the other interpreters have put Jesus instead of carving. And this is also true. For he was and is called beautiful in his comeliness beyond the sons of men, and we have been enriched with him as walls and gates. For he secures us with unspeakable power, and with the aid of the holy angels: ”For he shall give his angels charge over you,” he says, ”to keep you in all your ways: and ”The angel of the Lord will encamp round about those that fear him, and will deliver them. But we come d through him to the knowledge of the Father, and for this he has become both a door, and a gate, and a way. For he said that ” I am the door, and the way, and no one comes to the Father, except through me. And he is also an engraving, that is the form, and the appearance of the one who begot him, and the character of his substance, and an image, and the effulgence of his glory. And the sun will not be for you a light by day, nor will the rising of the moon give you light by night, but the Lord will be for you an everlasting light, and God your glory. For your sun will not set, and the moon will not fail. For the Lord will be for you an everlasting light. Some wish, through the meaning of the preceding words, to lead us to suppose something of this kind.

For in the last times of the age, when those who lie in the earth have been raised, and our Savior of all, Christ, has descended from heaven with the holy angels in the glory of the Father, the brightness of the elements will cease, but we expect new heavens, and a new earth, and his promises, according to what is written. And the Savior himself also said something of this sort, that ” In those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light. For the glory of the Savior himself will be sufficient for the enlightenment of the saints. But so that the preceding words might seem somehow to follow the meaning of what has gone before, having praised this interpretation, we also say that something else is signified through the preceding verses. For the light of the sun, and additionally that of the moon, is both useful and necessary for the eyes of the body. But at night the light of the sun is withdrawn, and in the day that of the moon. For they alternately yield to each other to shine. But the divine and intelligible light, which the Savior of all sends into the hearts of believers, he says, through the Holy Spirit, and through those who know well how to initiate into the mysteries, will be unquenchable, and unending, and ever-shining, so that the mind of each is in no need of sun or moon for illumination, or for sight:

for the mind is not illumined by perceptible light, but is rather satisfied by the illumination and brightness through the Holy Spirit to be able to see the glory of Christ, and whatever resemblance he might have to the one who begot him, in substance, of course, and indeed also to know unerringly the way of the best life.

The Savior has therefore become for us an everlasting light, and this he makes clear to us, saying: ” I am the light of the world,” and again: ” As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. ” He who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life. And the days of your mourning will be fulfilled, and all your people will be righteous, and they will inherit the land forever, guarding the planting, the works of his hands for glory. The few will become a thousand, and the least a great nation. I the Lord in due time will gather them. Those who the Saying that the time of the consummation is being revealed through the fact that the light of the sun, or that of the moon, no longer shines, but is rather diminished, so that our Lord may become an eternal light, they say that for those who mourn now, whom the Savior says will indeed be comforted, there will be an end of mourning at about that time:

for they will cease from doing so any longer, and from being worn out, and they will obtain eternal rewards. For this, I think, is what it means to be comforted. But since again it is necessary to follow the lofty aspects of the contemplations, we say this, that for those who remain in transgressions dejection is fitting and most appropriate. For they expect not honors and crowns, not comfort from God, but rather punishment, and fire, and darkness: whereas those who are engaged in good works rejoice in hope, as the all-wise Paul says: for their goodness is succeeded by glory and delight for endless ages: except when he turns to the Lord, even he who is held fast by very many sins, then is justified through faith, and receives the remission of his offenses, and will expect to receive also the honors prepared for the saints. Then indeed the days of his mourning will cease, and toil and dejection will end, and what follows confirms this thought, as it were: ”For it shall be,” it says, ”all your people will be righteous,” that is, every people that follows you will be justified: and the word is as to the Church: for Christ justifies the impious by grace and loving-kindness, and He Himself releases from every charge those who have been caught. For who will be the provider of such things, He has revealed, by saying: Protecting the planting, the works of His hands for glory.

For we are a planting of the plants of our Savior of all, Christ, and His work: for being wild olives we were grafted into a good olive tree, with Christ, as it were, working on us Himself: for not an ambassador, not an angel, but the Lord Himself saved us. For He Himself said: ”Behold, I who speak am here.”-”And it shall be,” it says, ”that the few will become a thousand, and the least a great nation. For now, that is, in this age, the glory of the saints is hidden, and with respect to worldly arrogance they seem to be very few, not having manifest glory. But when Christ shines forth again from the heavens at that time, even he who was considered to be least and few will become a great nation. For he will lead peoples, and will rule over many, since indeed he has completed the approved course in this life: and this it is possible to see from what Christ said: for speaking to the apostles: ”When the Son of man shall sit,” He says, ”on the throne of His glory, then you also shall

sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. But indeed also in the distribution of the talents He is found saying, ”You shall be over ten tribes: but to others He gives the lesser portion: ”For you shall be,” He says, ”over five cities.

Of equal weight as though in every way extending to them a reward for their fairness, and weighing out the honor fitting for each. Therefore, rejoicing in this very thing, the saints say: ”He has subjected peoples to us, and nations under our feet. Those indeed who were considered to be the least in life, then became thousands, and a great nation. ”I, he says, the Lord of all, will gather them at the proper time,” namely, those of the visitation from heaven. For then the saints will have the enjoyment of every good thing: who also will be caught up, as the all-wise Paul says, in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord, delighting in unending honors. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because of which he has anointed me; he has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to call the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of recompense, to comfort all who mourn, that to those who mourn in Zion should be given glory instead of ashes, the oil of gladness to those who mourn, and a garment of glory instead of a spirit of dejection. He who said in the preceding words concerning those who would be called in faith:

”I the Lord will gather them at the proper times,” as the time was already present, in which he promised to gather them, and as one who had already become man, and had undergone the likeness to us, and had lowered himself to emptiness, ”The Spirit of the Lord,” he says, ”is upon me,” although being by nature God the Only-begotten is the Holy of holies, and he himself sanctifies all creation, since indeed he is begotten of a holy Father, and pours forth the Spirit from himself, and sends it into the powers above as his own, and moreover to those who have recognized his epiphany. How then was he sanctified? For being at once God and the same one man, he gives the Spirit divinely to creation, but he receives it from God the Father according to his humanity. This we say is the use [or, anointing]. And he makes clear the cause of the incarnation. For having said that it was from the Father, he necessarily added, ”Because of which he has anointed me; he has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to those in captivity, and to grant recovery of sight to the blind, and in addition to these to call also a day of recompense: many at the same time are the manifest achievements of the incarnation of the Only-begotten.

For in order that he might win the world under heaven, and bring those throughout the whole inhabited world to God the Father, having transformed all things to a better state, and as it were renewed the face of the earth, he took the form of a servant, although being Lord of all. He therefore preached good news to the poor; he says he was sent for this reason. And the poor would be, or rather, be

understood as, those who had once suffered the lack of every good thing, having no hope, and without God in the world, according to what is written. written. These would be those from the nations, who being rich in faith toward him, have gained the divine and heavenly treasure, that is, the evangelic and saving proclamation, through which they have become partakers of the kingdom of the heavens, and co-sharers with the saints, heirs of things beyond mind and reason. ”For eye has not seen,” he says, ”and ear has not heard, and it has not entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him. Or perhaps the saying also means that to the poor in spirit has been granted in these things the abundant supply of the gifts through Christ. And he says ”brokenhearted” for those who have a weak and easily corrupted mind, and are not able to stand against the assaults of the passions, but are so overcome by them as to seem to be captives.

To these he promises both healing and release, and to them, being blind, he gives recovery of sight. For those who worship creation, and say to the wood: ”You are my father,” and to the stone, ”You begot me,” and then did not know the God who is by nature and truly is, how would they not be blind, having their heart bare of the divine and intelligible light? to these the Father sends forth the light of the true knowledge of God. For they have been called through faith, and they have known him, or rather have been known by him, and being sons of night and of darkness, they have become children of light: for the day dawned upon them, and the Sun of righteousness arose, and the bright Morning Star shone forth. But it is no harm to apply all that has been said also to those of the blood of Israel. For they were poor, and brokenhearted, and as captives, and in darkness. ”For there was none on earth doing good, there was not even one, but all turned aside, together they became worthless. And Christ has been sent, before others, preaching the good news to those from Israel of the achievements of his coming. And in addition to these things, so that he might also call a year of the Lord acceptable, and a day of recompense. And an acceptable year, indeed, is that in which Christ was crucified for us.

For then we became acceptable to God the Father, and made fruitful through him, and he himself taught us this, saying, ”Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone: but if it dies, it bears more fruit. And again, ”When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all to myself. And so, on the third day he came back to life, having trampled the power of death. Then he addressed the holy disciples, saying: ”All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me: go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit. That year, therefore, is surely acceptable, in which we were received, having obtained intimacy with him, washing away sin through holy baptism, and becoming partakers of his divine nature through of his tyranny, ”And having cast him down to hell with chains of darkness,” according to what is written, ”delivered them to be reserved for judg-

ment to be punished on the great day" both him and the others, who became his fellow-apostates. For indeed the divine David also sings as from the person of the redeemed, and says: " I will give thanks to You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and exult in You.

I will sing to Your name, O Most High, for you have maintained my judgment and my cause. You have sat on the throne, judging righteousness: You have rebuked nations, and the wicked one has perished: You have blotted out his name for ever and for ever and ever: "Yes, and elsewhere again he says about him thus. "His sin shall be sought, and shall not be found. And the Savior Himself also said: "Now is the judgment of this world, now will the ruler of this world be cast out. It is a time therefore of recompense, and in this manner, in which Christ shone upon the world: and He says that He has come to comfort all who mourn in Zion, to give them glory instead of ashes, and the oil of gladness, and a garment of glory instead of a spirit of faintheartedness. For there have been at times among the Jews holy men, and learned in the law, and searchers of the prophetic proclamations, and men of knowledge. These, seeing those of the blood of Israel caring little for the commandment through Moses, but turning rather to what seemed good to them, and teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and living a most lawless and sin-loving life, felt over them a grief befitting the saints. And they were looking for the redemption through Christ. For being Spirit-bearers they were not ignorant of Him who justifies the ungodly by faith, and with a grace that forgets evils cleanses those who are defiled.

And so, the righteous Simeon, taking the infant Christ in his arms, prayed, saying: "Now you are releasing your servant, Master, according to your word, in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel. And we shall find also the divine Zacharias, the father of John, saying: "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and has made redemption for his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us. And Philip also evangelized Nathanael, saying thus: "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth. And somewhere the all-wise Paul also writes that "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."-"Therefore, comfort has been given to those who mourn in Zion," that which is through Christ, "and glory instead of ashes. For they ceased to mourn and weep for it, and they received the grace through Christ, evang- both hoping and proclaiming. " And an ointment of gladness was given to them instead of mourning, and a garment of glory, instead of a spirit of faint-heartedness.

But by ointment in these things he means cheerfulness, that is, hilarity, and gladness, instead of mourning and weeping, and a garment of glory, that is, a covering,

or a robe, and a mantle instead of a spirit of faint-heartedness, that is, instead of their former smallness of soul. For those who formerly mourned her and were faint-hearted for her have been glorified. But how were they glorified? For they have been set up as her guides and teachers, and this was indeed what was said to her through the lyre of the Psalmist: ” Instead of your fathers, sons have been born to you. For being children of the Jewish Synagogue, the all-wise disciples have become fathers. Indeed the all-wise Paul writes to some, ” For in Christ Jesus through the Gospel I have begotten you. Therefore, those who had become her sons were placed in the rank of fathers: But that the divine disciples have received the garment of glory from God would be clear from Christ saying to them, at one time, that ” Heal the sick, cast out demons, raise the dead: and at another time again: ” You are the light of the world. And they shall be called generations of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for glory. And they will build up the eternal desolate cities, they will raise up those formerly desolated, and they will renew the desolate cities that were desolated for generations.

For those in Christ are called ”A chosen generation, a holy nation, a people for possession,” on account of the beauty of the righteousness within them, and I do not mean that according to the law, but rather that which they have received through the ordinances of the Savior: for the one through Christ is incomparably better than the one in the law: and indeed He said to the holy apostles: ” Amen I say to you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven.”-”Therefore, he says, they will be called generations of righteousness, and moreover a planting of the Lord. For we are truly God’s tillage, and concerning us the divine David says: ”Planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. And indeed the all-wise Paul calls those called through faith in Christ God’s tillage. But he said again, that ” I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. ” For the Savior cultivates us through the holy mystagogues: for this reason they also very rightly say that they have become co-workers with God. And the all-wise David also sings in the Psalms: ”The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, he will be multiplied like the cedar in Lebanon. We are therefore indeed a planting of the Lord, and for His glory. ”But they will build, he says, eternal desolate cities, and they will renew desolate cities.

He seems to wish to make clear through this, either the multitude of those who will be called, that it will be so great, as to seek out other cities besides the existing ones, and to renew them those once desolate: that is to say, perhaps this: For, being straitened, he says, by the multitude in the churches, although they were once bare and desolate, they will do something of the sort that those who wish to build up desolate cities are accustomed to do, and as those who are zealous to raise what is lying on the ground. It was said, then, to the Church: ”Enlarge the place of your tent, and of your courts: fix them, do not spare: spread out still to the right

and to the left. And the outcome of events itself would show, and very easily, that the prophecy concerning this is true. And foreigners shall come shepherding your sheep, and aliens as plowmen, and vinedressers: but you shall be called priests of the Lord, ministers of God. You shall consume the strength of nations, and in their wealth you shall be admired. [Instead of your double shame, and instead of dishonor their portion shall rejoice, and so] they shall inherit the land a second time. And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. Here he says clearly that there will be a change of the law and of the priesthood according to it.

For it is no longer fitting for those of the blood of Levi + to perform sacred rites, nor the name and reality of ministry, but they have been pushed out, and the glory in this has been given to those from the nations who have been called through faith. For they are crowned by the decree of God, and they themselves are appointed as ministers and priests: ”For foreigners shall come,” he says, ”shepherding your sheep. But the saying is directed to the Church, whose sheep the holy multitude of those saved through faith would be understood to be: she is shepherded by foreigners. For the scribes and Pharisees of old, who obtained the lot of leading those of the blood of Israel, became indolent and supine, and most unskilled shepherds. Therefore the multitude placed under them was perishing, since their silver was counterfeit. And they taught as doctrines the commandments of men, and they carried away those subject to them from knowing Christ, at one time saying: ”We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he is from: and at another time: ”He has a demon and is mad; why do you listen to him? Therefore, the God of all things testified through the voice of prophets, saying thus, that ”The shepherds have become foolish, and have not sought the Lord. Therefore the whole pasture did not understand, and they were scattered: and indeed through the voice of Ezekiel: ”O shepherds of Israel, do the shepherds feed themselves?

do not the shepherds feed the sheep? Behold, you consume the milk, and you do not feed my sheep: and in addition to these things: ”You fed on the good pasture, and trampled the rest with your feet, and you drank the settled water, and disturbed the rest with your feet, and my sheep fed on the treadings of your feet, and drank the water disturbed by your feet. For settled water is the [teaching] through the law he calls it my teaching, and the best pasture: but those who were confusing all things, and muddying it by not teaching the people under their hand correctly, prepared, as it were, water to drink that was not pure, nor pasture to graze on that was not fresh. Therefore, and quite rightly, they were thrust out from still shepherding the people of the Lord. For gentiles have been called to this. For wise teachers of the Churches are ordained by Christ, and sagacious, and having a mind filled with doctrinal skill, men from the Greek flock, and not being of the blood of Israel, these have become both plowmen and vinedressers. For since those who have believed are called in many places of the divinely-inspired Scripture chosen

earth, and a vineyard, and a garden: for this reason, the word says, that those who from time to time should become priests of the Lord and ministers of God will be plowmen and vinedressers, rightly dividing the word of truth, and ministering the Gospel of Christ, as it is written:

therefore they do not seize the honor for themselves, but rather are called by God, just as the all-wise Paul also says. And yet, though he was of the tribe of Benjamin, he calls himself everywhere a minister, and a called apostle of Jesus Christ. ”You therefore, all who have received the dignity of the sacred ministry, shall eat the strength of the nations, and in their wealth you shall be admired. He says the strength of the nations, either the honors from the most powerful, who would be those called from the nations, or you will understand it in another way. ”For none of you,” he says, ”will escape the mouth,” that is, the word, for the sacred Scripture everywhere puts ”mouth” for ”word,” as in, ”Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.” -”Therefore you shall possess,” he says, ”the strength of the nations. And by the power of the nations, the word seems in these things to mean either those who are brilliant among them, that is, the most renowned, and those who have worldly wisdom. And we shall find that the word of the holy mystagogues prevailed, and being enriched by their calling, they were glorified. For the boast of teachers, and crown and glory, are those saved through their enlightenment. For this reason he says, ”In their wealth you shall be admired.

That the divine proclamation will take hold of the regions, and of every nation, and that in due time the leaders of the holy Churches will be, so to speak, heirs of the world under heaven, ascribing glory to Christ, he implies, saying: ”Thus they shall inherit the land a second time. For long ago Joshua the son of Nun allotted to those of Israel the lands of the nations: for they took the land of the Amorites, and the Idumaeans, and the Hivites, and those of the others. But Christ, shining upon the world, of whom the Joshua of old was a type, allotted to his own ministers, not just Judea, but indeed the whole earth. And a second allotment came after the first. For they divided the countries and cities by his decree, mystagogues and teachers, and they come hither rejoicing in Christ, and having an intelligible joy, as a certain crown upon their head. And the joy is eternal: for we do not expect the reward to be in temporary things, but in a long hope, and in a life without end, and in the good things that are beyond mind and reason. For I am the Lord who loves righteousness, and hates robberies from injustice: and I will give their labor to the just, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the nations. And their offspring in the midst of the peoples.

Everyone that sees them shall know them, that these are a seed blessed by God, they shall rejoice with joy in the Lord. Having said, that ”Strangers shall come feeding your sheep, and foreigners shall be plowmen and vinedressers,” as the first were evidently cast out, and driven from leading the peoples, he shows the causes

for which they have suffered this, by the holy decree of him who judges righteously. For since I love, he says, righteousness, but hate robberies from injustice, and the leaders of the synagogue of the Jews have become such, I have passed over, he says, and cast them out. For the labor of those who seize plunder from injustice I give to others. For those who become rich unjustly, and, as the prophet says, treasure up for themselves impiety and misery, pass these things on to others. For Solomon said, that ”Wealth unjustly gathered shall be vomited up, an angel shall drag him out of his house. And again: ”He that gathers his wealth with interest and increase, shall leave it to him that has mercy on the poor, and certainly not at all to good and compassionate men, but rather to the profligate. For he euphemistically said that such men have mercy on the poor. For to those who live in profligacy very many attach themselves, and spend with them the things unjustly accumulated by the sweat of many. And the divine David also sings about such men, and says: ”Surely he is disquieted in vain:

he treasures up, and knows not for whom he shall gather them: And in another way the labor, that is the care, of the Scribes and Pharisees was given to others, it is clear that ”The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. Therefore they were cast out, he says, but with us who are called from the nations to the priesthood I will make an everlasting covenant, which signifies the evangelical preaching, that is, the hope without end. ”And among the nations shall be known,” he says, ”their seed, and their offspring, everyone that sees them shall know them, that these are a seed blessed by God. For the sons in discipleship of the holy mystagogues from much exceeding good work, and from the pious life, are most well-known to all, that they have also become the offspring of saints according to j, which we have done upon the earth. Therefore, the saints must be compared to a bridegroom and a bride, on account of their strength, and in addition to this, their fruitfulness: but consider this, for everywhere in them is that which excels in beauty. This is preserved in them, both in bearing the exceptional fruits of mighty deeds, and in acting manfully against the passions. But that righteousness and exultation shone upon the nations when Christ appeared, like some flourishing grass crowning the earth under heaven, he has shown by saying:

“ As the earth bringing forth her flower, and as a garden its seeds, so the Lord will cause righteousness and exultation to spring up before all the nations. And through these things, it seems that what springs up, that is, what rises up, the seed and flower before the nations, he names our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. For He said in the Song of Songs: “ I am a flower of the plain, a lily of the valleys: that is, the evangelical and saving proclamation, and His justification being superior to that according to the law, which is entirely and in every way followed by rejoicing, which is exultation. For to those who have completely achieved it, to be in long-lasting gladness will be allotted by God. For they will hear our Savior of all, Christ,

saying: “Well done, good and faithful servant, you were faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord: And exultation, the saving proclamation, might also be understood in another way. For the law was a chastiser, and had much that was dejecting: for anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses, but the evangelical oracle brings to us life and a promise of rewards, and a true hope of goods beyond understanding.

For Zion’s sake I will not be silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until my righteousness goes forth as light, and my salvation as a burning torch, and the nations shall see your righteousness, and kings your glory, and he shall call you by your new name, which the Lord will name, and you shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. In these things he calls Zion the Church, of which the divine disciples became the first-born children from the beginning, and those called through them to the knowledge of Christ, and before all others, those of the blood of Israel. For the remnant has been saved, and very many of them have believed. Therefore, I will not rest, he says, that is, I would not cease from needing to carry out to the end what has been promised to Zion. And God the Father promised salvation through Christ to both Jews and Greeks, if indeed “God is one. as the all-wise Paul says, “who will justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. For He is not the God of the Jews only, but of the nations also. Therefore, I will not rest, he says, until my righteousness goes forth as light. And the salvation of me will be kindled as a lamp.

Both righteousness and salvation Christ appeared and became to those upon the earth, for he justifies, and saves, being himself the true light, and as a lamp in darkness. For he himself said, that ” When I am in the world, I am the light of the world. For all things had been seized by gloom and darkness, the devil blackening the hearts of all, and there was no one who did good, and knew righteousness, that is, the path that leads away [alt. leads to] to be saved. But neither was there one who had the divine light in his mind, and was able with the eyes of the intellect to perceive, who is God by nature and in truth, and the creator of all things, and Lord: but when he arose as a light, and the Savior shone as a lamp, then the world under heaven was enlightened, and we have seen the path of salvation through him. Then he says to the Church, from the flock of the Jews, and when the multitude of the Gentiles had not yet been gathered in the net, that ” Nations will see your righteousness, and kings your glory. And again in these things, righteousness, and indeed also glory, he says is nothing other than our Lord Jesus Christ. For we have been justified in him, and we have been enriched with the glory from him. For we have become his, and we are called his inheritance.

And we have been placed under yokes and scepters, having washed away the greed of the one who tyrannized over us: and that having departed from the worship

according to the law, and having, as it were, changed towards the newness of evangelical life, it will also cast off its former calling, and will then be renamed with a new name, according to what seems good to the God over all, he shows by saying: ”He will call your new name, which the Lord will name it: for it is no longer called a synagogue, but the Church of the living God, and his city and house. For the divine David also remembers it, saying thus: ”Glorious things have been spoken of you, O city of God. And that it will be exceedingly beautiful, and crowned with incomparable beauty, he teaches, saying: ”You will be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. For each holy soul, and the Church as a whole, that is, the communities of the saints, must be compared to a crown composed of many flowers, or to a royal diadem, shining with Indian stones, and having manifold excellence: for the heroic deeds of the saints are very many, and the manner of their boasts is not one, but many and various.

And indeed the divine David introduces the Church of Christ clothed in gold-fringed garments, variegated, but the phrase ” In the hand of the Lord,” he says, that is, under the shadow of my hand I will cover you: and Christ himself somewhere concerning his own flock, that is, of the flock of those who have believed in him, says, that ”No one will snatch them out of my Father’s hand. And no longer c You will be called forsaken, and your land will not be called desolate: for you will be called my delight, and your land, inhabited. He teaches again, that He will at last cease from the former turning away, which He has often made towards the Synagogue of the Jews, and will have stopped from His anger, and will make her desirable, and in addition to this also fruitful, and will show her to be crowned with the multitude of those who have believed. For Zion, having rejected our Lord Jesus Christ, has been given over to desolation, and the multitude of those who disbelieved has perished. But since the remnant accepted the faith, then the multitude of the Gentiles has been called to it, and the two were founded into one people, and one Church has consequently been named from both, God grants to her that in no way is she to be caught in the former evils, nor indeed to be called [al.

ai] forsaken, or desolate, but that rather she will become desirable to him, and no longer desolate, but rather will be called inhabited. And we see this having come to fulfillment through the things themselves. For in fair weather and calm we see the Churches situated everywhere, and the believers always extending into a multitude beyond measure, and God taking pleasure in them. For persecutions have been stirred up from time to time, but not for a long time, but constrained, and training the saints rather than harming them: for they have become approved through endurance and patience, having taken up the crown of genuineness toward Christ, and having become rich in the glory of martyrdom. And as a young man cohabits with a virgin, so will your sons dwell with you, and it will be that in the way a bridegroom rejoices over a bride, so will the Lord rejoice over you. Then he makes his words to the Church as one constituted, at least, from the Jewish

ranks in the beginning. Of this one the divine disciples were sons according to the flesh, but they were in her, pre-eminent over the others, and leading, as being in apostolic dignity, yet preserving for her the utmost love and affection, so that the tender love that came to be for her seemed to be such as would befit a young man living with a virgin, that is, to her who was joined to him from virginity:

and they say that it drives to the limit of all tender love those who are all but bound tight in such a bond. And indeed the all-wise Paul says: ”Sorrow I have,” ”and unceasing anguish in my heart for my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites. And he even prayed to be accursed for their sake, except that a great newness of things is signified through the prophecy set before us, and the change is worthy of admiration: for the old Synagogue, and in a way grown grey [al. grown old] because of time, is compared to a young woman: ”For they will dwell as with a virgin,” he says, ”your sons: And this, I think, is what is in the Psa hymned by us: ”Your youth will be renewed like an eagle’s,” indeed they have dwelt in her, leading her by the hand as a nurse, exhorting her as a mother, carrying her away from the shadows and types, and wisely leading her up to the point of choosing the truth over the unprofitable shadow: the divine David also said something like this to her: ”Instead of your fathers, sons have been born to you. For those who were her sons according to the flesh have become her fathers, being the beginning of her new children, namely, those called through faith to the knowledge of Christ our Savior of all: and since this is so, he says: ”So the Lord will rejoice over you, just as a bridegroom over a bride.

For the only-begotten Word of God came down from heaven, that He might make the Church fruitful, whom He presented to Himself as a pure virgin, having no spot or wrinkle, but rather holy and blameless. Having therefore received from Him the seeds of the evangelical way of life, she has both conceived and given birth, no longer to the worship through blood and smoke, but rather to that in which the beauty of truth is most especially engraved. For this very reason He rejoices quite fittingly, seeing the types of the law transferred into evangelical truth, and with spiritual sacrifices, and with truly holy achievements the bride shining forth. And on your walls, Jerusalem, I have set watchmen all the day, and all the night, who shall never be silent, remembering the Lord. For there is none like you. He speaks as to a splendid and well-inhabited city: and always somehow the most prominent of the cities very many and sober watchmen surround, lest any of the enemies should invade unexpectedly: so also the Savior and Lord of all, having fortified the Church with ineffable power and with the help of angels, has appointed for her wise and watchful guardians, who have a sleepless care for her, namely, the holy mystagogues, who in no way cease from remembering His glory, and His wonders, as it is written.

For we are accustomed in the churches to always proclaim to the people under our care the mighty works of the Savior, and the demonstration of His divinely-fitting excellence, so that from this they may have a sure and unshakable faith concerning Him. Or perhaps he says that the watchmen will remember the Lord by exclaiming and saying, that ”there is none like you. For He is not like us, but by as much as He surpasses human things in the excellence of His renown and in the glory of His divinity, by so much does He excel also in being good and loving-kind. For as the Psalmist says: ”He has not dealt with us according to our iniquities, nor rewarded us according to our sins. For He saved us while we were sinners, and lovingly brought to Himself those who were not worthy of being saved. He said something similar also through another prophet: ”What shall I do to you, Ephraim? What shall I do to you, Judah? I will set you as Admah, and as Zeboim my heart is turned within me, I will not act according to the anger of my wrath: I will not abandon Ephraim to be blotted out, because I am God, and not man, the Holy One in you. For since I am not a man, he says, but rather God, the Holy One in you, for this reason I will not abandon Ephraim to be blotted out.

If you are corrected, and I make you, Jerusalem, an exultation upon the earth, the Lord swore by his glory, and by the strength of his arm, If I will yet give your grain, and your food to your enemies, and if strangers will yet drink your wine, for which you have labored, but those who gather it will eat it, and they will praise the Lord, and those who gather it will drink it in my holy courts. As from a similarity of things, that is, of misfortunes very often inflicted upon those of Israel, he weaves a narration of most profitable contemplations for us. For they sinned in many ways, having abandoned the God who is by nature and in truth, and being devoted to the worship of idols: for they worshipped the works of their own hands, and having kicked away, as it were, even the life according to the law, they were carried off toward what seemed good to them. For this reason they were smitten by God, sometimes with barrenness, with bodily plagues, with incursions of wars, which, ravaging their whole country, plundered even the things in the fields. For it has been said to them: ”You shall sow, and not reap; you shall press olives, and not anoint yourself with oil; and wine you shall not drink.

” If therefore you are corrected, he says, O Jerusalem,” that is, if you should change to spiritual worship, if you should flee from the types, and recognize that Moses wrote concerning me, if you should receive the grace through faith, ”and you make for yourself an exultation upon the earth,” that is, a glorious boast, namely that which is in Christ, ”the Lord swore by his glory,” for he has no one greater by whom to swear, ”and by his arm,” that of the things formerly inflicted on you because of great disobedience, nothing will happen any more. For you will not have the sweat of your husbandry unrewarded: but you will understand this spiritually: but as the divine David says: ”You shall eat the fruits of your labors. And as Paul says, that ” Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap, and he who sows to the Spirit will

from the Spirit reap eternal life: that therefore one will abundantly heap up for oneself the things from spiritual fruitfulness, he indicates through the preceding words: ”But those who have obtained these things will give glory, he says, to the Lord, and those who gather them will drink them in the holy courts. For those who have gathered the boasts of the excellent life and who collect the fruits of right and blameless faith will delight in the mansions above.

Go forth through my gates, and prepare a way for the people it must be, he said, that is, that the word of faith which we preach should be lifted up and become most known, or perhaps also the symbol of the saving passion. And this too is a confession of faith. For one must say that Jesus is Lord, and believe that God raised him from the dead. And this saves both from death and from sin. Therefore not only of the Jews, but also of the gentiles. For the sign is raised not only for those who have believed from the blood of Israel, but also for those everywhere on earth: for the whole world under heaven has been gathered in through the evangelical preachings. Say to the daughter of Zion: Behold, your Savior has come to you, having his own reward, and his work before his face: and he will call them a holy people, redeemed by the Lord: and you shall be called a city sought after, and not forsaken. And he foretells the arrival of the Savior, and what things we have gained through it, and the wealth that will be given to those who believe in him. Indeed, he names Zion a daughter. And if someone should wish, let him understand the ancient one as having now been shown mercy, and justified in faith. But if indeed the new one, that is the Church, she too might not unreasonably be said to be the daughter of Zion.

For first those from the blood of Israel have believed, and as a kind of daughter of the Church constituted from them in the beginning, the one from the gentiles is named. And to whom does he command to preach the good news to Zion? Or surely to the holy mystagogues who have been appointed to lead the Churches, whom he also strongly exhorted to open the gates and to cast the stones out of the midst? And what then is being preached? ” Behold, your Savior has come to you, having his own reward, and his work before his face. He puts two things together, both befitting God and excellent, through which the glory of the Savior might become manifest. For the divine prophets called it to a good life, and to a life lawful and decent. Then they made mention of the rewards, which they will receive from God in due season, for whom it should be to be well-pleasing in word, but they themselves were not givers of the spiritual gifts. But they proclaimed, as I said, the promises of God. But the Savior of all, since he is indeed God, has the power to give rewards, and in addition to this, to oversee the way of each one, that is, his work: for this too is befitting of God.

For it is written, that ” The ways of a man are before the eyes of God, and he looks upon all his paths.” -” He will come therefore,” he says, ”having his own reward,”

that is, he himself giving the prizes to whom it may be fitting to receive them. And indeed, to the divine Peter who confessed the faith correctly, ”I will give you,” he says, ”the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in the heavens. And he also bestowed upon all the holy apostles collectively over unclean spirits authority, and to be able to heal every disease, and every infirmity among the people. Indeed, he declared that the faith of the thief crucified with him was not without reward, saying: ” Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. Having arrived, then, he says, those who believe in him ”he will call a holy people, and redeemed by the Lord. For not an ambassador, not an angel, but the Lord himself saved us, as it is written: ”But you, Zion,” that is, the Church, ”will be called a city sought after, and not forsaken: And ”sought after,” he says, means ”deemed worthy of remembrance. For what is sought is remembered: and not forsaken, as was the first, that is, the multitude of those who disbelieved.

For it was said by Christ through the voice of Jeremiah, ”I have forsaken my house, I have left my inheritance,” and through [the voice] of our Savior of all, Christ himself: ”Behold, your house is left to you. Who is this that comes from Edom? with the redness of his garments from Bosor? This one, beautiful in his robe, crying out with strength: I speak righteousness, and a judgment of salvation. Why are your garments red, and your clothing as from a full, trodden winepress? And of the nations there is no man with me. And I trod them down in my anger, and I crushed them as earth. And I brought down their blood to the earth, and I stained all my garments. For a day of retribution has come upon them, and a year of redemption is at hand. And I looked, and there was no helper. And I considered, and no one took hold, and my arm delivered them, and my anger was present. And I trod them down in my wrath, and I made them drunk with my anger, and I brought down their blood to the earth. Wisely and artfully the word of the prophecy all but paints the ascension into heaven of our Savior of all, Christ: for to bring to completion the power of the economy in the flesh, he ascended to the Father and God in the heavens.

Moreover, he was seen by the powers above not only in our form, that is, as a man, but also showing the signs of the passion: and we are not saying that after the resurrection from the dead the piercings of the nails, and the other marks were still in the holy flesh, but rather this: for just as he showed the prints of the nails and his side to the disbelieving Thomas, when the holy apostles said that they had seen the Lord raised from the dead, so we understand that in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places through the Church, which he accomplished in Christ, ascending with the signs of the passion, he made a strange and completely unaccustomed spectacle for the powers above. At any rate, they were astonished seeing him ascending, and indeed they said: ”Who is this that comes from Edom?

is interpreted In Greek, Edom means ”fiery,” or ”earthly: and Bosor, either ”of flesh,” or ”fleshly. ”Who then,” he says, ”is this from the earth,” that is, earthly, ”with redness of garments from Bosor,” that is, with his clothing crimsoned as if from flesh, or rather, from blood? ”This one is beautiful in his robe. For the mighty and wise powers, and those full of God-befitting glory, were contemplating Christ, even though He was in the flesh, yes, and indeed full of invincible strength, for this, I think, signified the divine.

Therefore, when the angels asked, or perhaps when they were saying to one another, ”Who is this? he answers and says: ”I speak righteousness, and a judgment of salvation: and he says righteousness is either the evangelical and divine proclamation, or that every word of God is just: and perhaps he calls a judgment of salvation the judgment upon us, for He has vindicated the world under heaven and Satan who wronged it, and has saved those who were oppressed by unbearable greed: and He has cast out the apostate and alien from his rule over them: for he said just now that ”Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out, and I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. When Christ had said these things, they ask again, and say: ”Why are your garments red, and your clothing like that from a trodden winepress, full and trampled? Here, recall for me the patriarch Jacob saying: ”He will wash his robe in wine, and his cloak in the blood of a grape. For his garments appeared reddened with blood, and as if stained from wine to a crimson color. Then immediately again the Savior: ”And of the nations there is no man with me: he holds to the statement, and connects these things after it: ”For I,” he said, ”speak righteousness, and a judgment of salvation, and of the nations there is no man with me.

”For no one stood by me when I was suffering,” he says, ”from any nation was there one who grieved with me,” and as far as men were concerned, he was completely unaided, when both the cohort of soldiers and the ferocity of the officers attacked him, ”who also led him away to Caiaphas, as the evangelist says, at that time all the disciples deserted him and fled,” but Christ also foretold this: for He said: ”Behold, the hour is coming, and has come, that you may be scattered, each to his own, and you may leave me alone, and I am not alone, because the Father is with me. And he said also through the lyre of the Psalmist: ”My soul expected reproach and misery, and I waited for one to grieve with me, and there was none, and for one to comfort me and I found none, and they gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Therefore, ”There was no one with me,” he says, ”from all the nations. So then, since you were alone, and bereft of fellow-combatants, were you overcome by the hand of your enemies? Have they prevailed, and of your strength who, having grown great, then rejoice as if they have conquered? By no means, he says. And yet, though I had no one to stand by me, I trod them down in my fury, and I crushed them like earth, I brought down their blood to the earth:

for after Christ's ascent into the heavens, every kind of unbearable calamity from divine wrath was brought upon the people of the Jews. " For a day of recompense," he says, "has come upon them. For those who had the opportunity to seize the faith, and through it to be enriched with grace, then having become indifferent, or rather arrogant, and insolent, and fighters against God to the very end, how have they not very reasonably come into every evil? However, the time of His recompense was one of redemption for those who had acknowledged His manifestation. For in this, the unruly was punished, but the obedient and submissive was redeemed by Christ. " For I looked," he says, "and there was no helper; I took thought, and there was no one to help: and my arm rescued them, and my fury came upon them. "And I trod them down in my wrath. It seems in these things to make an outcry against the indifference of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were appointed to lead the people, and to guide them to righteousness, and to instruct them very well towards what is pleasing to God. But they were so indifferent and supine as to help none of those under their yoke, and to correct them with admonitions, but on the contrary to lead them away into unbelief. For they have dared to say concerning Christ the Savior of us all:

" We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he is from. And again: "He has a demon and is mad; why do you listen to him? Therefore, since there was no one, he says, helping or assisting, my arm, that is, my power, saved them, for very many, as I said, from among the Jews have believed. But upon those who were unwilling to help, my fury came; they became a thing to be trodden down by wrath. For the evil have perished evilly, and have paid penalties equal to their charges. I remembered the mercy of the Lord, the virtues of the Lord in all things, which the Lord repays to us. The Lord is a good judge to the house of Israel, he brings upon us both according to his mercy, and according to the multitude of his righteousness. God saying that fury came upon the disobedient, and wrath trod them down, and that their blood was brought down to the earth, the prophet has intervened, and does not permit despair for those against whom the words are, but he pursues the matter, and very skillfully. For I remembered, he says, to myself, that the judge of all is not harsh. For I know his mercy and his virtues, that is, his mighty acts in all things, with which he repays us.

For even if He has turned away, he says, from an Israel that has acted insolently and has been chosen to disobey, and as he repays us with things from wrath, not unrestrained but rather held back by gentleness, nevertheless I know well his virtues, that is, the mighty works that happened at various times for the redemption of Israel. "Therefore," he says, "the Lord will be a good judge to the house of Israel," not rather strict, but kind, that is, good. For it would be the work of a strict judge to demand from those who have sinned penalties corresponding to their offenses; but of a good one, to have mercy as on those who have become weak. Therefore, since he is a good judge, he brings upon us according to his mercy, that is, he will

measure what comes from wrath, and mixing it with mercy he will create the indignation. For a multitude of righteousness is in him, that is, he has passed through to the end of all righteousness. For this reason, and very reasonably, he will not let Israel go completely unpunished, but rather with gentleness, as I said, he will mix what comes from wrath. For the remnant has been saved. And the Lord said, Surely they are my people, children that will not deal falsely. And he became to them salvation out of all their affliction: not an ambassador, nor an angel, but the Lord himself saved them, because he loved them, and spared them:

he himself redeemed them, and took them up, and exalted them all the days of eternity. But they disobeyed, and provoked his Holy Spirit: and he turned to be an enemy to them, the Lord himself warred against them. Consider now for me again the person of God introduced immediately, all but crying out against the disobedience of Israel. For the Lord said, he says, that is, the God of all himself: Did I not reckon the people in the rank of children? Since this is true (for he said that ”Israel is my firstborn son”), one would not doubt that he would not be hard and disobedient. But he will rather receive the Son who was sent. But this did not come to pass, and the one who knows all things was not mistaken in his hope; for he knew what was to come. For nothing at all escapes him. But the form of the speech has been fashioned in a human way. The prophet, taking up these things that God says, indicts Israel for both insensibility and ingratitude, and shows that they have completely forgotten the good things that came to them. ”For he became to them,” he says, ”salvation out of all their affliction: and no one else besides him saved them, not an ambassador, not an angel, but the Lord himself through himself. For he worked wonders in Egypt, with Moses acting as mediator, yet he himself was performing the marvels.

And so when Israel made the calf, then God was grieved at this, and promised to send an angel with them, Moses was displeased, saying: ”If you yourself do not go with me, do not lead me up from here. He himself therefore through himself saved them, having received absolutely nothing from them, but only because he loved them and cared for them. And this is a clear demonstration of his incomparable love for mankind, and of his divine serenity: he therefore redeemed them from the house of is it? That is, they forgot, and they did not seek him, that is, by remembering and loving him. Where is he who brought up Moses with his right hand? Great was Moses, both renowned and exalted in glory: this is what ”who brought up” hints at, as the right hand of God was working through him. ” The arm of glory prevailed,” or it struggled and conquered the nature of the waters, making them firm. For it brings up the waters as a wall, it says, that is, it prevailed over the waters, so that they endured solidification, even though they have a liquid nature. And he fulfilled this also, it says, that he might make for himself an everlasting name: for if anything happened, that is, was also worked through the all-wise Moses, this was done for the glory of God. Having solidified the waters, it says, as

a horse, or as a beast, he led them through the sea, as through a plain. This the Psalmist also teaches, saying:

”And he brought up his people as sheep, and he led them as a flock in the desert. And he led them, as I said, by the Spirit of the Lord. Thus you led your people, to make for yourself a name of glory. For two things were done at the same time. For not only was Israel saved and delivered from the hand of the oppressors, but also the conclusion of the wondrously accomplished things procured for the God who rules over all the glory fitting for him. Look from heaven, and see from your holy house, and your glory. Where is your zeal, and your strength? Where is the multitude of your mercy, and of your compassions, that you have restrained from us? For you are our Father, because Abraham did not know us, and Israel did not acknowledge us. From the beginning your name is upon us. Why have you caused us to wander, O Lord, from your way, have you hardened our hearts from fearing you? Here, then, the prophet makes prayers on behalf of the whole nation, and from the person of those of Israel he raises up the supplication: for he calls on him to cease from his anger against them, and to end his turning away, and as it were to return to them, he who had departed from them, since he is not some one [among those] on earth, but rather the true God, and has heaven as a house of glory.

But if it should be said somewhere that God dwells in heaven, let nothing bodily be thought of him. For we do not say that the Divine is in a place and circumscribed, because it is also simple and incorporeal, and fills all things. But since he rests upon the spirits above, as upon holy ones, for this reason we say that heaven is his throne and his house. Return then, they say: ”For where is your zeal, and your strength? And surely no one would say, I think, that the God of all was in lack of such things, but they say such things as no longer partaking of them. For by always using zeal and strength befitting God, he saved Israel. What I mean is, they had been enslaved to the Egyptians who were also distressing their life [alt. distressed their life] with clay, and brick-making, and with the of the people of your inheritance, that we might inherit some small part of your holy mountain. We have become as from the beginning, when you did not rule us, nor was your name called upon us. They ask again for his return to them, I mean through gentleness and loving-kindness. They say they are slaves and an inheritance: not as having done anything befitting a slave, that is, having submitted their neck to his yokes, nor as being counted in the inheritance allotted to him, having practiced obedience.

But since they were once called his, and were rich in their intimacy with him in the beginning, for this reason alone they ask to be saved: ” For ’Return,” it says, ”that we might inherit some small part of the holy mountain. The holy Scripture, therefore, very often calls the Church a holy mountain, of which those from Israel have become a small part: for if they had accepted the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the system of the Church would have been gathered from them into a very

large part, with the multitude of the Gentiles also being brought to them. But since through much disobedience they have fallen behind the Gentiles, and the multitude of the latter is greater in number, while they themselves are indeed very few: for the remnant has been saved: for this reason they have inherited a small part in the holy mountain, that is, in the Church. But if anyone should say that the city above, the Church in the heavens, the mother and nurse of the saints, is called by them a holy mountain, and that in it they wish to receive a share of the inheritance, you will understand correctly, also in this way: and it says to become as from the beginning, when he did not rule them, nor was his name called upon them: and the saying is very plausible: for having once fallen from his mercy and protection, they returned to their state in the beginning. And what is this?

They were enslaved to the Egyptians with clay and brickmaking, and they were continually abused by the labors for this purpose: and now they have fallen under diabolical feet, and are defiled by the passions of the flesh and worldly desires: for this might reasonably be understood as the hidden brickmaking. In Egypt they served wicked spirits, and now the unclean spirit is in them. And the Savior himself taught us this, saying concerning them, ” But when the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finds none. Then it says: I will return to my house from which I came out. And when it comes, it finds it empty, and swept: then it takes, it says, seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. So shall it be,” he says, ”to this wicked generation. If you open the heaven, trembling will seize the mountains from you, and they will melt, as wax melts from the face of fire: and fire will burn up the adversaries, and it will be manifest t the name of the Lord among the adversaries. From your face the nations will be troubled, when you do glorious things. Trembling from you will seize the mountains.

It is a custom for the holy prophets to make supplications on behalf of Israel, when at times it was sinning, and about to pay the penalties for its accusations, and as if putting aside the effects of wrath, they would beseech that it be sent upon others, and be turned upon the heads of foreigners. And so the divine Psalmist, in the seventy-eighth psalm, was lamenting the ravaged Jerusalem, and indeed he was saying: ”O God, nations have entered into your inheritance, they have defiled your holy temple. And bringing in other things in addition to these, in the middle he says: ”Pour out your wrath upon the nations that do not know you, and upon kingdoms, that have not called upon your name. Something like this the prophet now also says: ”For if you open the heaven,” that is, by the descent of wrath, just as indeed also at the time of the flood: for the floodgates of heaven were opened: then trembling from you will seize the mountains, and they will melt, ”as wax melts from the face of fire. And by mountains in these words he means, not at all, of course, the perceptible ones, but rather the evil powers, which on account of their very

great arrogance, are very well compared to the highest mountains. Trembling therefore will seize these powers that are companions of arrogance. ”For they will be melted down as by fire. Being adversaries to your ordinances, obviously, wrath falling upon them like fire would burn them up.

”And the name of the Lord will be manifest among the adversaries. And what is this? For the God of all often works wonders, making manifest the greatness of His inherent power and excellence. Through this He punished sinners at times, and through the wrath upon them He made Himself manifest: something like what happened when He sent fire upon the Sodomites, or when He subjected the stupefied Pharaoh to many and unbearable plagues. Therefore, O Master, they say, do not make manifest your glory or name, through wrath against us: but rather bring it upon the evil powers, that is, upon those who openly fight against your glory, and have been carried to this point out of very great arrogance. For you will be manifest even in this way. For when you do glorious things, trembling from you will seize the mountains: and again he means those mountains, which we just now mentioned. From of old we have not heard, nor have our eyes seen a God besides you, and your works, which you will do for those who wait for mercy: for he will meet those who do righteousness, and they will remember your ways. The Divine is indeed invisible by nature: ”For no one has ever seen God,” according to what is written: yet it is seen with the eyes of the mind, from what He may work wondrously, and beyond reason.

”For the invisible things of him,” he says, ”from the creation of the world being understood by the things that are made are clearly seen men, and we have all become as unclean ones, and all our righteousness as the rag of a menstruating woman: and we have fallen away like leaves because of our iniquities: so the wind will carry us away as dust, and there is no one who calls upon your name, and one who remembers to take hold of you, because you have turned your face away from us, and you have delivered us over because of our sins. It seemed to some of the commentators, according to another meaning to the preceding Therefore, be not exceedingly angry with us. They are not ignorant that they have stumbled, but rather they confess that they have shown themselves worthy of punishment, having savagely denied the Son: for this reason they, as it were, check their prayer, and do not make their approach completely free: having somewhat restrained their boldness, they do not pitifully ask God not to be angry with them at all, but rather that his wrath be mingled with calmness. For ”we are confessedly worthy of wrath,” he says, ”we who are held fast in such terrible evils, but it would be worthy of your gentleness to shorten for us the things that come from just wrath.

” In the time,” therefore, ”of affliction,” he says, ”remember not our sins, considering that we are all your people, and the city of your Holy One,” that is, in which is your sanctuary. And by these things they mean the temple. Zion has become

a desert, Jerusalem has become as a desert, our holy house has become a curse, the glory which our fathers blessed, has been burned with fire, and all our glorious things have fallen. And at all these things you held back, Lord, and you were silent, and you humbled us exceedingly. Having announced beforehand the losses in the soul, and having foretold that they have become easily captured by sins, and carried astray, and like leaves tossed hither and thither by every wind, they finally also call to mind the external calamities brought upon them: and they seem to be lamenting the sack of Jerusalem, and the burning of the temple: for after the cross of the Savior, all these things were indeed accomplished: ”Therefore Zion has become a desert,” he says, she who was so distinguished, and renowned, and once populous. ”And our holy thing has become a curse: and ”a curse,” they say, instead of, for denunciation and reproach to those who do not know God: for the worshipers of demons, when holy things suffer—that is, things in any way dedicated to God—laugh loudly and exult, and they mock the glory of the one who saves them.

For perhaps they think his hand has suffered from not being able to save them, and they do not understand that they have fallen under judgment, having done some of the things that displease him. ”Therefore our holy house is a curse. For the temple was holy among them, and it has also been burned with fire, he says, the one proclaimed beforehand by the voice of the holy fathers, so as to be famous and renowned: and they say that all the glorious things have fallen together: for there was no reverence at all for the holy vessels lying in the divine temple from those who were plundering and burning them: ”But you held back,” he says, ”at all these things, and you fell silent, and you brought us down to the ground. For since, though he was able to ward off the attack of the enemies, he permitted them to prevail, and to overrun even the temple itself, they thence infer that they have been neglected on account of wrath, and as the wages of sins, they have had silence over these very things.

For though it was possible to easily put a stop to the insolence, then letting this go, and allowing the terrible things to proceed to their end, he would surely be manifest as having brought a harsh wrath upon them, so as to disregard even his own glory, and to endure the laughter of enemies, when it turns out well that punishment is exacted from those who ought to be chastised for their great sin. I was made manifest to those who did not seek me; I was found by those who did not ask for me. I said: Behold, I am, to a nation that did not call upon my name. I stretched out my hands all the day to a disobedient and contradicting people, who did not walk in a true way, but after their own sins. These things are necessarily added to what has already been said. For since they were saying: ”Why have you made us wander, Lord, from your way? You have hardened our hearts so as not to fear you: and they added that ”Zion has become a desert, Jerusalem has become a desert, our holy house a curse. therefore, the person of Christ himself necessarily enters, as

if announcing the reasons for which they have justly suffered these things; instead of attributing the reasons to themselves, they complain, as it were, against the one bringing just punishment upon them. ”For I was made manifest,” he says, ”even to those who did not seek me;

I was found by those who did not ask for me: for the Savior of his own accord, running into the synagogues, taught them, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people, as it is written. For what was not done by him that is beyond both word and wonder? Lepers were cleansed, both by the touch of his hand and by his divine command; the dead were raised from tombs, the blind received the much-desired light, the lame leaped like a deer. And indeed, to those who had seen these things, Christ said: ”If I do not do the works of my Father, do not believe me; but if I do, even if you do not believe me, believe my works.”-”I said” therefore, he says, ”I am to the nation that did not call my name: for he is found at one time saying, ”I am the light of the world,” and at another time again, ”If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ’Out of his belly will flow rivers of living water’: but they were not willing to call upon his name, although he said ”I am” explicitly on many occasions. And that they have become unadmonished and perhaps on a par with those who have no ears, hard and disobedient, he shows by saying that ”I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contradicting people:

for we are always somehow accustomed when conversing with the disobedient to spread our hands with a shout, and to make the strongest possible rebuke against them: ”but they did not walk,” he says, ”in a true way. For they in no way accepted the saving proclamation, ”but rather followed their own sins,” that is, they were swept away with an irresistible impulse toward a careless and a most lawless life, a cause of both judgment and destruction for them. This again the Savior is found saying to them: ” Truly I say to you, if you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins. For they acted contrary when admonished, and they ordered those under their authority saying: ”He has a demon, and is mad, why do you listen to him? Yes, and in addition to this they shouted that: ”For a good work we do not stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God. This is the people that provokes me, they are before me continually. They sacrifice in the gardens, and burn incense on the bricks to the demons, which do not exist. And in the tombs, and in the caves they sleep for the sake of dreams, who eat swine’s flesh, and the broth of sacrifices, all their vessels are defiled: who say, Keep away from me, for I am pure, do not come near me. This is the smoke of my wrath, a fire burns in it all the days.

He convicts those of Israel of being unholy, and not only at the time of His advent, but from the beginning, and as it were from the root, and from their fathers who rejected His divine law, and all but bade farewell to the commandments through

Moses, have worshipped idols, and have sacrificed to falsely-named gods, and have become servants of unclean spirits. ”This people has always been,” he says, ”provoking me. For they have sacrificed unceasingly,” that is, for long periods of time, ”before me. Then how was it possible for them to escape notice, when God oversees all things? For He said somewhere, also through one of the holy prophets: ”I am a God who draws near, says the Lord, and not a God afar off, shall anything be hidden from me? Therefore if nothing is hidden from him, how could some who were burning incense in gardens, that is, in thickets, and mountains and glens, have escaped notice? What then does ”before me” mean, instead of, even in the very temple dedicated to me. For He said something like this also through the voice of Jeremiah concerning Jerusalem: ”What has the beloved done in my house, an abomination? And it is the custom in the Holy Scriptures to call the idol an abomination. Therefore, before my eyes ”they burn incense,” he says, ”both in the gardens,” that is, in the mountains, as I said, ”underneath an oak, and a poplar, and a shadowing tree,” according to what is written.

And they sacrificed, as is likely, having followed the passions of the Greeks, to certain demons, which they call nymphs, hamadryads and oreads: but they are not, he says, not because the wicked demons do not exist, but because they are rather not gods, according to the suppositions of those who sacrifice to them. And they sacrificed both in tombs, and in caves, practicing what are called necromancies, as is likely. And they slept in tombs, being deceived by certain dream-sendings and phantoms, and meddling with the knowledge of future events. For such are somehow the inventions of the unholiness of the Greeks. That also the p of the law a blessing is in it: thus will I do for the sake of him who serves me. For this reason I will not destroy them all. And I will bring forth the seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah, and it shall inherit my holy mountain, and my elect and my servants shall inherit it, and they shall dwell there. Indeed, the things from divine wrath were brought upon the Jews, and they have paid penalties equal to their own transgressions, yet not all have been utterly and indiscriminately destroyed. For the judge is just, and would not destroy the good with the wicked: but he makes as it were a bright image, and receives as an example a cluster of grapes in which one berry is saved, although the others have been spoiled:

then he brings in the husbandman, that is, the master of the field, saying to someone: ”Do not destroy it, for a blessing is in it: thus will I do,” he says, ”for the sake of him who serves me,” that is, I will use such precision, that even if in one city all the others have turned to destruction, and one and only one is found faithful and obedient, this one will receive mercy, and would not share the danger with the others against whom the judgment justly goes. ”For I will not destroy all,” he says. For the Lord’s wrath leaped down, as it were, upon the arrogance of the Jews, all but consuming the disobedient and intractable: but by the providence of God was saved whoever among them was worthy of salvation through Christ: and indeed

the divine Paul says that a remnant chosen by grace has come into being, and as it were, a selection from the whole land of the Jews, the remnant of Israel, was caught by the net for the faith. ”Therefore I will not destroy them all,” he says, ”but I will bring forth the seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah. But as for ”I will bring forth,” you will understand here, not so much ”I will destroy,” but ”I will show to be high and conspicuous: for sometimes ”to bring forth” is ”to exalt.

And such, I say in my opinion, have the divine disciples become, high and conspicuous to all everywhere, and like a city set on a hill, and a lamp set on a lampstand, and shining to all who are in the house, according to the voice of the Savior himself. This, then, is the seed from Jacob and from Judah: ”It shall inherit,” he says, ”my holy mountain: and it is clear that this means the Church. For thus also somewhere else the all-wise Isaiah signifies it, speaking about those who through faith in Christ have been called to participation, that is, and communion of his divine nature: ”For they shall drink gladness, and they shall drink wine, they shall anoint themselves with myrrh on this mountain. Deliver all these things to the nations. For this is the counsel upon all the nations. On this mountain, therefore,” he says, ”there will be an inheritance for my elect, and on it all shall dwell, as many as run under the yoke of my kingdom: and it is not at all unlikely to say that the city above, the heavenly Jerusalem, is called a mountain, in which is the inheritance of the saints, as God distributes to them goods beyond mind and reas aqa/. ”For eye,” he says, ”has not seen, and ear has not heard, and it has not entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love him.

And there will be in the forest folds for flocks, and the valley of Achor for a resting place for herds for my people, who have sought me. It is the custom for the divinely-inspired Scripture to compare with very leafy forests, and with thick flowers the populous cities, or countries at times, and so indeed one of the holy prophets said, as to the mother of the Jews, I mean, Jerusalem: ”Open, O Lebanon, your doors, and let fire devour your cedars: howl, oaks of Bashan, for the dense forest has been cut down. And surely one would not say that he commands pines and indeed oaks to howl: for the thing is utterly simple-minded: but with trees, as I said, he sees fit to compare the multitude beyond number of those in the cities and countries. But the Jews howled, falling under the swords of the enemies on account of their impiety toward Christ. And somewhere the divine David also sings in a psalm, since Christ was about to appear to the world: ”Then all the trees of the forest will rejoice before the face of the Lord, for he is coming to judge the earth. Therefore, ” In the forest,” he says, that is, in the multitude of the nations, or in their cities and countries, ”there will be folds for flocks,” that is, the Churches of Christ. ”and the valley of Achor for a resting place for herds for my people, who have sought me. This Achor was one of the blood of Israel:

and when Jericho had been sacked, then God having commanded to put under a ban all things in it, he stole from the accursed thing. And when he was exposed by God, a bitter penalty was exacted: for he perished with his whole household, Joshua the son of Nun having determined the penalty for him. Therefore, then, the valley of Achor was for a curse. And such in a way were also the lands of the nations: for they were accursed, and hated by God, as there was no one in them who knew the God by nature: but the accursed land, he says, according to the ancients will be for a resting place for herds, that is, folds of spiritual sheep, under the hand of Christ the chief shepherd of all, who has spoken to the people of the Jews, saying concerning the nations, ”And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will become one flock, one shepherd. For those who were once wandering sought him through faith, and indeed having found him, they have become his own, and fellow citizens of the saints, and fellow heirs of the good things promised to them. But you, who have forsaken me, and have forgotten my holy mountain, and who prepare a table for the demon, and who fill a drink offering for Fortune: I will deliver you to the sword, and you will all fall in slaughter, because I called you, and you did not listen;

I spoke, and you did not hear, and you did evil before me, and you chose the things I did not want. Just as g it has not been without penalty for those of the blood of Israel to disobey Christ, for they are given over to slaughter, the remnant having been saved by the mercy and loving-kindness of God, so also you will understand regarding the calling of the nations. For those who have seized the salvation through Christ, have been outside of both fire, and judgment, and the things from divine wrath: but those who have remained in their own ignorance, and have kept the stain of their old accusations unwashed, through wishing to be attached to the worship of idols, will be given over to slaughter. For they will dwell in Hades, and they will have unending punishment through sleepless fire. You therefore, he says, who have forsaken me, that is, the apostates to the end, and those who have been brought down, as it were, into complete forgetfulness of my holy mountain. For some of the deceived do not endure, and of those who have worshiped creation, to know, so to speak, the name of the Church: ”those who prepare tables for the demons, and fill mixed drinks for Fortune. And those who have their heart filled with diabolical darkness did something like this. You will be handed over to slaughter, and if anyone dares to say for what reason, I will say to him:

I called and you did not listen, but you have a persistent and unremovable wickedness, doing only those things that are discordant with my laws, and debasing every way of doing good, but being eager to do rejected things, through which one might become full of every filth. Therefore, thus says the Lord: Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry. Behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty. Behold, my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame. Behold, my servants shall exult in gladness, but you shall cry out for the pain of your heart,

and you shall howl from a broken spirit. For you left your name for a reproach to my chosen ones: but the Lord shall slay you. He always necessarily sets alongside the crowns the evil things, by both leading to the necessity of choosing the things that please him, both to think and to do: for just as rewards entice towards the pursuit of virtue, so the bitterness of judgment sometimes removes one from the ways of wickedness, and drives one towards better things. Most skillfully, therefore, he runs under the minds of those who are called, both promising them rewards, and threatening punishments. ”For my servants shall eat,” he says, ”but you shall be hungry, and they shall drink, but you shall be thirsty. And while they are rejoicing, you will be put to shame:

for those who have known God who is by nature and in truth, and have leaped away from those falsely named, and have marveled at the beauty of true worship, will truly luxuriate in the blessings from above, being fattened in their hearts, and approaching the life-giving table of our Savior of all, Christ, and eating the bread of life, and the divine drink, through which they might be of the gladness from above partakers: for He cleanses from sins, and puts away what causes grief, and does not allow the fear of punishment to prevail over our thoughts. For we rejoice rather in the hope of good things, which the holy Scripture says have been prepared for those who love God, ” But you,” it says, who have remained in error, ”will cry out because of the pain of your heart, and from a broken spirit you will wail. For when our Savior of all, Christ, has descended from heaven, and then gives to each according to his works, all will mourn, and those who have not known God will lament. the true one, but rather having died in their own sins. For you have left, it says, your name for a surfeit to my elect, the Lord will destroy you. Observe for me again the depth of the thought. It is a custom of the divinely inspired Scripture to sometimes say ”for a surfeit,” instead of ”for satiety,” and ”hatred. For God said somewhere to those of the blood of Israel: ”I will no longer bear your sins:

you have become a surfeit to me. You, therefore, it says, who have neither departed from the falsely named gods, but are dead in your own sins, have left your name for a surfeit, that is for hatred, to my elect: for to those once chosen, no one considers the name of the superstitious acceptable. And everyone flees from being called God-hated, and an unholy and profane idolater: but rather desires to be called a holy people, a chosen nation, a royal priesthood, according to the voice of the divine Peter. But if someone should wish to apply what was said to those of the blood of Israel, so that to them would be said, ”You have left your name for a surfeit to my elect: we say that Israel was indeed called children of God, and His people, and His inheritance: but since they slid uncontrollably into willfulness, they have fallen from such glory, while those called from the nations have inherited it, as it were: and this, I think, is what God said through the voice of Hosea: ”I will call what was not my people, my people, and I will say to what was not my people: You are my people. But to those who serve him, a new name will be called, which will be

blessed upon the earth: for they will bless the true God. And those who swear upon the earth, will swear by the true God: for they will forget their first affliction, and it will not come upon their heart.

For the heaven will be new, and the earth new, and they shall not remember the former things, nor shall it come upon their heart, but they will find gladness and rejoicing in it. All things have become new in Christ, both worship, and life, and legislation: for we are no longer attached to shadows and useless types: but we rather perform for the God over all the worship and service in spirit and in truth. But we are not named according to those of the blood of Israel, as from the patriarchs, or fathers, Ephraim, or Manasseh, or as from they struck the heads of the poor with their fists, and they turned aside the way of the humble. I will rejoice, therefore, he says, over my people, seeing them to be workers of true righteousness. For no one among them will weep, clearly because he is being defrauded; and again, no one will cry out as one who has been wronged. ”And there shall not be there, he says, an untimely-born or an old man who shall not fulfill his time. For the youth shall be one hundred years old, and the sinner who dies at one hundred years old shall also be accursed. But I think the mind of the prophecy wishes to signify something like this. For it seems to consider as untimely-born the people from the gentiles, who are still young, concerning whom David says: ”The people that shall be created will praise the Lord: and to these also the disciple of Christ writes, saying:

”Like newborn babes, long for the spiritual and pure milk. Therefore, the young one is untimely-born, but the old man is he of the circumcision, that is, Israel by blood, since he was called beforehand and, in the spiritual Church, had precedence: But in the calling, he says, that is through Christ, and in the times of his coming, neither the untimely-born nor the old man will have a distinction between them in this very respect: for all will be perfect, and all will fulfill their time, that is, they will ascend to a perfect man, and to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. For the young one, that is, the people from the gentiles, will be one hundred years old, meaning, perfect, and mature in mind, and having reached the end of spiritual age: for the number one hundred years is a sign, or a symbol, of perfection. Then he says, that ”the sinner who dies at one hundred years old shall also be accursed. In these words he shows that even the perfection according to the law is useless to those who have it, if they have not accepted the faith that is through Christ, and the redemption through holy baptism, through which alone we cast off the thoughts that come from sin. Therefore, even if someone is one hundred years old, he says, that is, he should have the perfection according to the law;

then he should die a sinner, that is, not having received the righteousness that is in faith, he will also be accursed, meaning, he will also be found guilty of transgres-

sions of the law. For no one among the Jews has become so great as to fall away in no way: ”For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace. And that this zeal is useless even to those perfected according to the law, if the grace through Christ has not been received, the all-wise Paul shows very well by having written to some, that he considered all things in the law to be rubbish, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him not having my own righteousness, that is, that which is in the law, but that which is through faith in Jesus Christ. And he writes as if to the Jews for their foolishness, saying thus: ”For being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. And he said again: ”We are Jews by nature, and not sinners from the Gentiles: but knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed in Christ.

For this reason Christ was called a curse, so that he might redeem from the curse of the law those who had come to be under it: for it is written, that ”Cursed is everyone who does not abide in all the things that are written in the book of this law, to do them. And they will build houses, and they themselves will inhabit them: and they will plant vineyards, and they themselves will eat their fruit. And they shall not build, and others inhabit: and they shall not plant, and others eat. For as the days of the tree of life shall be the days of my people: the works of their labors will grow old. But my chosen ones shall not labor in vain, nor will they beget children for a curse: because they are a seed blessed by God. And it will be before they cry out, I will hear them. While they are still speaking, I will say: What is it? He promises to them unshakable peace, forbearance and goodwill, kindness and philanthropy. For of old those of the blood of Israel, through too much folly, and manifold wickedness, and of not enduring to live rightly, they continually provoked God who rules over all: for this reason they were tormented in many ways: for sometimes the things in the fields were destroyed, and enduring the sweats of agriculture in vain, they were worn out by famine: for it is written, that ”And he gave their fruits to the blight, and their labors to the locust.

And it has been said somewhere to them also through one of the holy prophets: ”You shall sow, and you shall not reap: you shall press the olive, and you shall not anoint yourself with oil, and you shall not drink wine. And again: ”You shall build polished houses, and you shall not dwell in them: you shall plant desirable vineyards, and you shall not drink their wine. For at times attacks of wars were also brought upon them, so that some were consumed by their own swords, and others, fearing to suffer this, fled from their own homes and from the land that bore them, and migrated to other regions: but the ancients suffered these things, and not once, on account of great sin: but those who in Christ have seized the grace that is through faith, and have washed away the defilements of sin through holy baptism, will not fall into their evils, nor will they suffer an unapproved loss

of the things they have spiritually labored for: but rather they will delight in their own right actions, according to that which is sung in the Psalms: ”You shall eat the fruit of your labors: the wrists being called the flesh beneath the palm. For no one casts them out: nor will anyone ever drive them away from the dwelling that will be given to them by God. For there are many dwellings with the Father: but not even if they they shall be of the lot to be given and fitting for their spiritual fruitfulness:

for, he says, their life will be according to the days of the tree of life, that is, holy. For such it was before the transgression in the first-formed humans, when it was also possible for them to partake of the tree of life, when the most abominable and God-hated sin had not yet found a place in them. The word of the prophecy adds something else of this sort: ”For the works, he says, of their hands will grow old,” that is, they will have an unchangeable way of things to be done. What do I mean? For the law was given to those of Israel through Moses: but in it was shadow and type, having the form of the truth, but not yet the truth itself. But when Christ shone forth, the types changed to truth, and as it were the shadows have passed away and grown old, that is, the power of the way of life in the law has not prevailed forever. Therefore, those of the blood of Israel did not make their works old—for the legal worship was unprofitable, at least as far as types are concerned—but those in Christ will make them old. For another law will not be given to them, so as to transfer the power of the evangelical ordinances to something better. For it has been said somewhere to the Savior of all, Christ, through the voice of the Psalmist:

”Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your law is truth. -But my elect, he says, will not labor in vain, nor will they beget children for a curse. He teaches again as if by comparison, that is, by contrast with what formerly happened to the Jewish teachers: and these are Scribes and Pharisees, who, having abandoned the law and teaching as doctrines the commandments of men, became fathers of children, that is, in respect to learning, but in vain and for a curse: the Savior taught us this also, rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees: for he said that ”Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna as yourselves. Therefore they begot children for a curse and in vain; but my elect, he says, that is, the divine disciples, or in short, the ministers of my ordinances, will not beget children for a curse, nor indeed in vain, like them: for their seed will be a blessed seed, and blessed by God. And that he will be very attentive to them, giving gifts out of gentleness and love for mankind, and holding his ear most ready for their supplications, he shows by saying that ”Before they call, I will hear them. While they are still speaking, I will say: What is it? Then wolves and lambs will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like an ox, and the serpent, earth like bread.

They will not do wrong, nor will they do any harm on my holy mountain, says the Lord.It was understood in two ways of life: that therefore He rather lays claim to worship in spirit, and He deems that which is in shadows and types as completely worthy of no account, He teaches clearly: but besides this He also wants them to know something else, how they raise their eyebrow, and have grown proud over none of the necessary things, having raised the temple in Jerusalem: For they thought that the Divine is also contained by a place, and dwells in handmade temples comprehensively, just as the falsely named gods of the nations, being nothing at all, except that they are wood and stones: and for this reason He says: ”O you who do not know the excellence of the divine glory, O you who do not understand the greatness of the dignities that belong to me,” ”Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? Or what is the place of my rest? For the Divine fills all things: and with it, earth and heaven? Let it be said then in a human way, that having heaven as a throne, He makes the earth as a footstool. What space then will receive Him? Or what house will suffice to contain Him? ”For all these things, He says, my hand has made: and all these things are mine. But what are these things?

It is clear that it is both the things seen, and what is beyond the things seen: for all creation is His, and by His nods things that once were not were brought into being. What then shall we offer to Him as if it were not His? He says something like this also through the voice of the Psalmist: ”If I were hungry, I would not tell you: for all the beasts of the field are mine, cattle on the mountains and oxen. I have known all the beasts of the field, and all the birds of the sky, and the beauty of the field is with me. ”On whom then shall I look,” He says? ”Or in any case upon the humble and the quiet, that is, the yielding and meek, and the genuine minister of my will, so as even to tremble at the words that might come from me? And through these things He signifies the evangelic and saving proclamation: He deems these worthy to watch over, and to visit as humble. For he is bold and boastful who rises up against His divine laws, and through much disobedience, he stretches out to Him, as it were, a proud and hard neck of his own mind: that He makes the worship through the law unacceptable, and holds it in hatred, He will make clear by saying: ”He who sacrifices a calf to me is as one who kills a dog: and he who offers fine flour, is as one who offers swine’s blood:

and he who gives frankincense for a memorial, as one who is blasphemous. See then how the things that are as in shadows and types, He not only makes rejected, but has indeed also hated, as I said: for He considers the slaughter of a calf as the death of a dog, and the fine flour mixed with oil as unclean. For He means, I think, this by comparing it to swine’s blood: and the swine is unclean according to the law: and the smoke from frankincense He puts on a par with a blasphemous voice. He therefore through these things moves them toward the will to live evangelically, and thus [these] somewhere rather according to the existing of the Songs, that

”Your breasts are better than wine. But first of all to those accepting the faith in our God Jesus Christ food suitable for infants is offered, that is, the tender and simple word of catechesis: for thus Paul also somewhere addressed some, saying: ”I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it, nor are you able now. But that it is not fitting to always be and be seen as infants, those who drink up the word of catechesis, but that they should rather advance, both to a perfect man, and to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that they might then be able to understand the precise and examined word about him, he taught by adding:

”That having been weaned you may delight yourselves, from the entrance of her glory. And when he says, ”having been weaned,” it is instead of, ”having gone beyond breasts and the nipple,” that is, having been weaned from milk, that is, no longer remaining infants, but being, as it were, already among youths and men, and desiring solid food, you shall delight from the entrance of her glory: and he calls Christ ”glory” for thus somewhere the Psalmist also says concerning him, ”That glory may dwell in our land”: and ”entrance,” the mystery of the economy with the flesh: being God by nature, he became man, and, as it were, entered into this world through the incarnation. Therefore they delight who know [or, give] the precise account of the faith concerning him, and who learn in what manner glory, that is, Christ, has entered into the inhabited world: for this reason the divine prophet immediately, and in connection, makes his appearance with the flesh clear: for he presents his person speaking, that ”Behold, I am turning upon them, like a river of peace, and like a torrent flooding the glory of the nations. Christ, then, is a river of peace, and a torrent of delight for thus the divine David also names him, saying: ”How you have multiplied your mercy, O God; and the sons of men will hope in the shelter of your wings: they will be drunk from the fatness of your house, and you will give them to drink of the torrent of your delight. And again:

”The rushings of the river make glad the city of God.”: And he has turned, and as it were with most abundant streams has flooded the glory of the nations, that is, the honored part of the nations, or, all that has been glorified. For not all have believed, nor indeed have been glorified, but as Paul says concerning God the Father, ”Those whom he foreknew and predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, these he also called; and those whom he called, these he also glorified. Indeed, in saying, ”turning,” he gives such a thing to be understood: For his way and his course, according to the purpose and good pleasure of the Father, was toward those of the blood of Israel: for he said that ”I was not sent, except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But since they rejected the faith, he turned away from them as it is written, and to those of the nations n flocks he bestowed the comfort from the sacred streams, that is, the evangelical and saving proclamation, through which they have gained peace with him, and through him have been joined in spiritual kinship to God the Father. Their children will be carried on their shoulders, and

they will be comforted on their knees. As a mother might comfort someone, so I will comfort you. And in Jerusalem you will be comforted, and you will see, and your heart will rejoice, and your bones will flourish like grass.

And the land of the Lord will be known to those who revere him. He promises to us the most abundant comfort, and a giving of all gentleness, so as to be able to accomplish what is pleasing to him even without any labor. For those among them who are still infants, he says, and not yet perfected in their minds, will be carried on their shoulders like small infants, and will be comforted on their knees: for it is the custom of mothers to care for infants in this way. Therefore, I will concede little to a mother, he says, but I will so comfort those who for now have a weak mind, that they will lack nothing of those things that contribute to their rest: and being so nursed, he says, and going through all gentleness and love, in due time you will see both the city above, the heavenly Jerusalem: you will be filled with gladness, and all your bones will flourish like grass. For the dead will be raised, and those in the tombs will rise up, having become rich with the dew from Christ, that is, the life-giving spirit: for so says the Psalmist somewhere to God concerning those who lie in the earth: ”You will send forth your spirit, and they will be created, and you will renew the face of the earth. As, therefore, the things that have flowered in the fields after a short while fall and wither, but when the spring season has arrived, they rise up again and appear:

so the remains of the dead in the earth, at the time of regeneration, by the ineffable power of God will rise again. For they will be raised, as I said. ”Then indeed, then the hand of the Lord will be known to those who revere him. By hand, in these things, he means either his power, or our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and in whom are all things. For through him again is also the revival of the dead. For it would be a result of his power, both to have the strength to bring into existence things that never were, and having suffered corruption, to renew them again to their original state. And he will threaten the disobedient: For behold, the Lord will come as fire, and his chariots as a tempest, to render vengeance in wrath, and rebuke in a flame of fire. For in the fire of the Lord all the earth will be judged, and by his sword all flesh: many will be the wounded of the Lord, those who sanctify and purify themselves for the gardens, and in the porches eat swine’s flesh and the abominations and the mouse, they will be consumed together, said the Lord. And I their works and their reasoning I know their.

Having sufficiently exhorted those in the new Zion, that is, in the Church, and having promised them the most lasting consolation, and a supply of spiritual goods, and in addition to these the revival from the dead, and the mansions above, and the glory there, he says that the attempt in these matters will not be without penalty for those who choose to disobey him. For he shall come as a fire, he says: for he shall descend from heaven, in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. For this

is his chariot, according to what is sung in the Psalms, ”The chariot of God is ten thousandfold, thousands of the prosperous. And he will come to render vengeance in wrath, and a casting away in a flame of fire. The casting away signifies the rejection: for he will say to those who have died in sins: ”Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for thus, he says, the whole earth will be judged, and as if struck by the sword of divine wrath many will be wounded. These would be those who receive the inescapable penalty, and run into the unquenchable flame, and are bound by the chains of their own transgressions:

but especially of all, he says, will be subjected to the penalty those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves for the gardens, that is, those who have rejected the redemption through Christ, and have dishonored the grace through holy baptism, which justifies the ungodly, and frees from every charge those who have been defiled by sins: but rather loved to walk in error and ignorance, and to worship gods that are not, who also use unclean and filthy instruments of sprinkling. For they purify themselves, as indeed they suppose, deceiving themselves and being deceived. For either they were sprinkled with waters, or, carrying firebrands around in a circle, they thought to cleanse their own souls from evil thoughts [or defilements]. And that there is absolutely no account of decency and fairness among such people, nor even a mind befitting a human, but they were rather compared to senseless beasts, he shows by saying, that they sanctify themselves in gardens, that is, in the groves, or thickets, under the oak and the poplar, and the shading tree. For there by them are built altars and precincts to the demons, and in the entrances of the precincts they ate swine’s flesh. And this too is proof of luxury. And they worshipped the abominations and the mouse. For perhaps some of the superstitious descended to such a madness as to even have establishments and images of mice in shrines. But all these, he says, will be consumed together, that is, along with those who were disobedient from Israel:

” For I knew their works and their thought. And by thought he means their reasonings, by following which they became inventors of shameful enterprises, on account of which to them also the of the abom of things has been made, although it is necessary to worship the one God by nature and in truth. I am coming to gather all the nations, and the tongues. And they shall come, and shall see my glory, and I will leave signs upon them, and I will send forth from them those who have been saved to the nations, and to Tarshish, and Phud, and Lud, and Mosoch, and Thobel, and to Greece, and to the islands far away, who have not heard my name, nor have seen my glory, and they shall declare my glory among the nations. Christ makes, as it were, a certain recapitulation of the whole discourse, and of all prophecy through these things, and as in brief and concise terms he announces the things from the beginning to the end, and the power of the economy in the flesh. For he also remembers the calling of the nations, and the appointment of

the holy apostles, and that he will be worshipped by all under heaven. For the old law gathered one and only one nation, that is, clearly, the one from Israel, and it called one tongue.

But our Lord Jesus Christ did not bestow the power of the economy in the flesh on those of the blood of Israel alone, but indeed on every nation and all tongues. For He said through the lyre of the Psalmist: ” Hear these things, all nations: give ear, all you who inhabit the world: therefore I will gather all, he says: ” They shall come, and shall see my glory. For they have been called through faith, and those who were once far off have become near, and they have seen his glory: how, or in what way? For they have heard through the evangelical proclamations that he is both equal in work and equal in strength to God the Father, and he has become the accomplisher of things beyond reason, so as to raise the dead from their tombs, and to give light to the blind, and in addition to these things to have done other things worthy of all account and wonder. Or in another way: they have seen his glory, having been initiated that the Word was God, and became man: for the Gentiles have not said, as the Jews did: ”Why do you, being a man, make yourself God? But rather, having recognized the mystery concerning him, they cry out those sacred words: ”You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” and indeed also that which was said by the holy apostles, ”Truly you are the Son of God. And a sign has also been set upon them:

for as Paul says, ” We were sealed with the Spirit of redemption, and Christ was formed in all our hearts through participation in the Holy Spirit. And from those who have been saved, he says, I will send them to the nations, to these and those. And these nations are some towards the west, some towards the east, and some in the more northerly regions, that is, according to the land of the Greeks, and to the islands beyond. ” There, he says, they will declare my glory. For the disciples have not been silent, but have proclaimed everywhere the Gospel of the kingdom, and of the sacred proclamations

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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.