Commentary on the Gospel of John (part 4 of 4)

Cyril of Alexandria (c. AD 376–444)

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Book 12

[Translated by T. Randell] OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS,

CYRIL,
Archbishop of Alexandria, ON THE

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.
BOOK XII. [Introduction] xviii. 24, 25, 26, 27 Annas therefore sent Him bound unto Caiaphas, the high priest. Now Simon Peter was standing warming himself. They said therefore unto him, Art thou also one of His disciples? He denied, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with Him? Peter therefore denied again: and straightway the cock crew.

The inspired Evangelist, to our profit, checks the course of his narrative, like a horse at full speed, and turns it back again. And why? Because he was bound, before narrating what next ensued, to point out to us Peter's third denial; and this event is best and most appropriately described as it occurred. He therefore designedly refers to what took place at first, and says, that Jesus was sent by Annas to Caiaphas; and shows us that Peter was questioned by the servants who were warming themselves with him at the fire, and also by a kinsman of him whom he had smitten; and that this was the occasion of his third denial. Then He mentions the crowing of the cock, making, it plain to us that no word of our Saviour ever falls to the ground; for He had foreknown and foretold the frailty of His own disciple in the midst of danger. Perhaps the divinely taught compiler of this book would have made no mention at all of this fact, had he not bethought himself of the captious spirit and ceaseless babbling of the adversaries of God. For some of those who seek to make bitter war on the glory of the Saviour would straightway have said: "Show us the denial of Peter, and how, and where, that came to pass which was foretold by Christ, Who, you say, cannot lie. For you maintain that He is Truth, and that He proceedeth from a Father Who is true." It was very essential, therefore, that the inspired Evangelist should narrate to us this occurrence, and show that Christ at all times said what was true.

But perhaps some opponent, abstaining from bringing any such attack against us, will bring a grievous charge against Peter, and accuse the well-beloved disciple of incomparable cow-

ardice, and say that he was so ready to make this verbal repudiation of his Lord, as thrice to fall away and deny Him, when he had not so much as had any actual experience of danger, and when peril was not, indeed, nigh at hand. Talk of this sort may be suitable to those who are not yet initiated in the faith; but I will at once dismiss it, and, bidding farewell to such nonsense, will attempt to make some excuse for the Apostle's conduct, setting forth my argument for the benefit of those who are already accustomed to reflect upon the mysteries contained in the mysterious working of Divine Providence. For it was the bounden duty of the wise Evangelist to make mention of such things, that his hearers might know what even the teachers of the world were in themselves before Christ's Resurrection, and before the Holy Spirit descended upon them; and what they were thereafter, when they had received the grace of the Spirit, Which Christ called power from on high. For any one may see how very jealous they were in assuming virtue; how readily they girded up their loins to follow Christ, and to overcome perils of every sort which they so frequently encountered. But when our Saviour Christ had not yet subdued the power of death, the fear thereof was still stubborn, and altogether invincible;

and they who had not yet received the Spirit, nor had their hearts steeled by grace from above, showed that their minds were not yet wholly free from human frailty, and they were not altogether unshaken by the terrors of death. For just as iron, though naturally strong, cannot encounter without injury the harder kinds of stone, if it be not strengthened in the forge; so the soul of man may be buoyed up with unslacking enthusiasm for every thing that is good, but can never be triumphant in the conflicts that so arise, except it be first perfected by the grace of the Spirit of God. Even the disciples, therefore, themselves were frail at first; but, when they had received the Spirit of Almighty God, cast aside their native weakness, and, by communion with Him, attained to exceeding boldness.

It was expedient, then, that the frailty of the Saints should be recorded to the praise and glory of God, Who changed their weakness into power, and raised up, like a strong tower, their spirits, which were easily daunted even by slight dangers, and at times broken down by the mere apprehension of suffering. And that which befell a single one, or some few of the Saints, may afford us at the same time a lesson and a consolation. For we are taught thereby, not, through dwelling on our own infirmities inconsiderately, to slacken in God's service, but rather to trust in Him Who is able to make us all strong, and to boast ourselves in His miraculous works and favour shown to us beyond hope. 28 They lead Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the palace: and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the palace, that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the passover.

Judge righteous judgment, and Thou shalt not slay the innocent and just man, were the express injunctions of the Law and the Word of God. These miserable men could not help being ashamed of their lack of charges against Him; but, finding their fury against Christ to be without excuse, and being prevented from killing Him with their own hands by the approach of the atoning sacrifice (for they were about to sacrifice the Paschal lamb, according to the Law, which yet with them had lost its power), they bring Him to Pilate; trusting,

in their gross folly, that they would not be quite implicated in the charge of shedding blood unjustly if they did not slay Him themselves, but only brought Him to suffer death at the hands of another; though what was in their hearts was altogether at variance with the Mosaic Law. And we must convict them, besides, of the greatest folly in acting as follows. For, while sentencing the sinless One to the doom of death, and bringing down upon their own heads the guilt of so frightful an impiety, they yet shun the threshold of the judgment hall, as though it would cause them to be defiled, and anxiously shrink from having intercourse with men who were still unclean. For they believed, I suppose, that stones, and the bodies of men who were their brethren, could defile the soul of man; but deemed that the worst of all crimes, the most unjust shedding of blood, stained them not a whit.

And, marvel of marvels, the most absurd and irrational idea of all, they think themselves purified by the slaughter of a lamb, which typified for us nothing but the shadow of the mystery that is in Christ; and, while honouring the type of what is coming to pass, they scorn the reality itself. For while they were performing that which was but the semblance of His Atonement, they were defiled by the shedding of the Blood of Christ. Christ, then, said well when He called them whited sepulchres, outwardly adorned with the superficial embellishments of art, but inwardly full of evil odours and detestable impurity; and when, in another place, He said that they strained out the gnat and swallowed the camel. For while they were often exact about matters that were, so to say, wholly unimportant and insignificant, or, rather, about a mere nothing (for what is the gnat?), they made of no account the most weighty of all the charges against themselves, and made clean the outside of the cup and platter, while they regarded not at all the uncleanness within. For see how, though the prophet Jeremiah said plainly: Wash thy heart from wickedness, O Jerusalem, that thou mayest be saved, they were thoroughly convinced that the inward impiety of the soul mattered not a whit; and, when they brought Christ to Pilate, they shrank from places as accursed, and from the bodies of uncircumcised men;

and if they did not commit the lawless act with their own hands, they yet made Pilate, as it were, minister to their cruelty, and in their stupidity imagined that they remained free from all blame. It may well excite our wonder to find that the holy prophets were well aware even of this impiety of theirs; for the blessed Isaiah said concerning them: Woe unto the wicked I for the reward of his hands shall be given him. And Ezekiel also: As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. Moreover, the inspired Psalmist exclaims: Render to them their desert; give them according to the work of their hands. For as they led Christ, the Saviour of all, captive to the Roman officers, so they received in their turn their reward, and were abandoned to the dominion of Rome, and were spoiled by the hand of their conquerors. For so fearful was the war that was kindled against them, and so frightful the extremities in which they were involved, that, if it had been possible, some, nay many, among them would rather have chosen to go into the mountains and rocks, and die there, before they saw the war----a choice which Christ foretold that they would make, when He said: When ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then shall ye say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.

29 Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring ye against this Man?

They shrank from the pollution, as they deemed it, of stones and walls, but Pilate went forth and inquired of them the reason of their coming to him, and required them to tell him the charges against the Captive they had brought unto him, judging the leaders of the Jews on the other hand. For, though he was a foreigner, he held in respect the ordinances of the Jews, and treated with consideration their prevailing customs. For he hastened out of the judgment hall, as was not his habit, expressing to the Jews by this significant action that their Law ought to be observed. They, being contrariwise minded to the Divine commandments, and paying very little heed to the Mosaic dispensation, were bringing about an unrighteous blood-shedding; while Pilate, who was outside the pale of the Law, inquired the charges, and investigated the accusations, they brought against Him, and pointed out to them, that it was absurd to chastise or exact a penalty from a Man Who had done no sin. And they, though they had nothing to say against Him, brought Him to Pilate, like a fierce robber. Well, then, was it said to the Synagogue of the Jews: Sodom has been justified by thee; and Christ Himself cries out, accusing the madness that the children of Israel here showed: Thou hast not done according to the judgments of the nations round about. And the saying is true; for the Greeks would not with defiled and unwashed hands have brought the usual sacrifices to the stones and blocks of wood they conceived to be gods, nor would they have destroyed one, unless it was in the most evil plight; but the Jews, though about to sacrifice the Passover to the true God, had their souls stained with the guilt of innocent blood, and were hastening to put to death unjustly Him Who was a stranger to all sin.

30 They answered and said unto him, If this Man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered Him up unto thee. They were perplexed for a specious plea against Him, but cloak the baseness of their impiety, and their apparent resolution to put Him to death unjustly, by the sophistical reply, that they would never have brought Jesus to suffer justice, if they had not taken Him in a criminal act. For they still affected to observe the Law, which bade them execute righteous judgment in all things; and, marvellous to relate, they use their respect for the Law as a weapon against the Lawgiver. They, who did not shrink from bringing an accusation against the Lawgiver, claimed credit as keepers of the Law. They declared that He That had come to take away sin had done evil, that the truth of the words that Christ spake, by the mouth of the Prophet Isaiah, might be seen: Woe unto them! for they have fled from Me: their doom is misery, because they have transgressed against Me. Though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against Me.

31 Pilate therefore said unto them, Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your Law. I should not do justice, he says, if I were to subject to legal penalties a Man Who has been convicted of no wrong, and Whose doom you left undecided; but judge Him, rather, according to your Law, if, indeed, he says, it has ordained that the Man Who is wholly without guilt deserves chastisement. It is not a little absurd, or, I should rather say, it is a subject for perpetual regret, that, while the Law of the Gentiles justified our Lord, so that

even Pilate shrank from punishing Him That was. brought to him on so vague a charge, they, who made it their boast that they were instructed in the Law of God, declared that He ought to be put to death. 31, 32 The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which He spake, signifying by what manner of death He should die.

They answer, that their purification, accomplished by the slaughter of the Paschal lamb (if any purification at all were possible for such murderers), stood in their way, and was, as it were, an overpowering obstacle to their shedding His innocent Blood. For, surely, they would have been very ready to commit the impious crime, and would not have needed the co-operation of any other. The Jewish mind was very prone to work every kind of evil deed, and to shrink from no atrocity; and to feel no shame at doing anything displeasing to God. They deemed it right for Pilate to lend them the service of his own cruelty, and to' imitate the fury of the Jews, and to minister to them on this occasion, and to be by them overruled, so as to partake of their madness. And this also they say, that Christ might be proved to speak truth, and to have foreknown what manner of death He would die, and to have foretold it to His holy disciples. For what spake He unto them? Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man is betrayed unto the hands of sinners; and they shall crucify Him, and kill Him, and the third day He shall be raised up. It is requisite to make mention of this. For it was necessary that He should have this foreknowledge, that none might suppose that He, in Whose sight all things are naked and laid open, encountered His death involuntarily; but that men should believe that, of His own Will, He underwent the Cross on our behalf, and for our sakes.

33 Pilate therefore entered again into the palace, and called Jesus, and said unto Him. Art Thou the King of the Jews?

Having nothing at all to accuse Him of, and none of those crimes to allege against Him, which seem to bring in their train just punishment on the doers of them, and Pilate persisting in inquiring why they had brought Him, they assert that Jesus had sinned against Caesar, in assuming on Himself the dominion which Caesar had acquired over the Jews, and in changing the glory of his kingdom to suit His personal pretensions. Great was the malice which suggested this device, and caused the false accusation to assume this shape; for they knew that Pilate, however reluctant he might be, would take thought for his own safety, and would swiftly and precipitately punish the man against whom any such outcry was raised. For, as the inhabitants of Judaea ever were continually moved to tumults and civil strife, and were easily provoked to revolt, Caesar's officers were the more vigilant in this respect, and were more careful guardians of order, and inflicted the most summary penalties on men who had this charge brought against them, sometimes groundlessly. The Jews, therefore, make it a charge against Christ, that He reigned over Israel. Therefore justly were they cast out, and the Gentiles brought in, and made subject to the yoke, and put into the Kingdom of Christ. Ask of Me, He says, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.

For when the one nation of the Jews provoked Him to wrath, all the nations of the world are given to Christ; and instead of one country, I mean Judaea, the uttermost parts of the earth. For, as Paul saith: Their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles. Pilate, then, speaks out plainly what he heard the Jews muttering, and bids Jesus answer him, whether He was in truth the King of the Jews. He was full of anxiety, it would appear, and thought Caesar's rule was menaced, and was, therefore, very desirous to learn the truth, in order to visit what had been done with appropriate retribution, and acquit of blame the office entrusted to him by the Romans.

34 Jesus answered, Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning Me? As no one, He says, has openly brought this charge against Me, whence proceeds your question? There can be no doubt that this trick proceeds from the malice of the Jews, and that they devised this cruel stratagem; for else you would not be, He says, at once judge and accuser. And Christ said this, wishing to bring it to the knowledge of Pilate that nothing that was unseen, and devised, and said in secret, could escape Him; and that, seeing that He was more than man, he might be more reluctant to minister to the cruelty of those who brought Him; and at the same time to teach him that he did very wrong in forcing Him, Who had been convicted of no crime, on the mere word of others to pay the penalty.

35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered Thee unto me: What hast Thou done? He now exposes the villainy of the Jews, and almost publishes the multitude of His accusers. It is as though he said: "It does not concern me to know about Thee, for I am not a Jew; but rather befits Thine own nation and kindred, who. it may be, have this knowledge, and so bring Thee to suffer death." He then accuses himself. For to say, What hast Thou done, implies nothing else but this. The holy Evangelist was very zealous to narrate every detail about the trial of Christ, and among them he tells us the fact that Pilate asked Jesus the question: What hast Thou done? And hereby we may best observe the total absence of charges against Him, and that, as none were brought forward, and Christ our Saviour was convicted of no crime, the sentence of death that went forth against Him was impious and most unjust.

36 Jesus answered, My Kingdom is not of this world: if My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My Kingdom not from hence. He dispelled the fear Pilate felt as the appointed guardian of Caesar's kingdom, for he supposed that Christ was meditating insurrection against temporal rule, as the Jews had vainly talked. For they hinted at this when they said: If this Man were not an evildoer, we should not have delivered Him up unto thee; meaning insurrection by the evil they said He was doing. For they affected to be so well-disposed to the Romans, as not even to be able to utter the word revolt. For this cause, then, they said they had brought Him to Pilate, to suffer judgment. Christ, in His reply, denied not that He was a King, for He could not but speak truth; but He clearly proved that He was no enemy to Caesar's rule, signifying that His Kingdom was not an earthly kingdom, but that He reigned, as God, over heaven and earth, and yet greater things than these.

What proof, then, did He give? and how did He remove this suspicion? He says, that He had never employed any spearmen or warriors, and had never had with Him any men at all resolved on resistance; not merely in order to prevent His losing His Kingdom, but not even, that He might escape from the imminent danger cast upon Him by the hand of the Jews; for it did not proceed from their ruler himself, namely, Caesar. When, then, He had shown the groundlessness of this outcry by so clear a proof, Pilate perceived that the presumptuous attempt against Christ was without excuse. Yet, without any compulsion, and when there was nothing to incite him to that consequence, he complied with the pleasure of the Jews, to the perdition of his own soul, and shared with them the guilt of having put Christ to death. Christ, indeed, when He said that His Kingdom was a supernatural kingdom, not only freed Pilate from all alarm, and dispelled his suspicions about an insurrection, but induced him also to have an exalted opinion of Him, and by His reply in some sort commenced to instruct him.

37 Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a king then? He makes use of Christ's truth-speaking to charge Him withal. When he heard Him say: My Kingdom is not from hence, he was indeed quit of his fear of an insurrection; but he still compels Him to openly profess this thing, and defines as a charge His mere assertion that He had a kingdom, though He asserted that it was not of this world. He drives Jesus, as it were, to make this profession; and says, Thou hast confessed already that Thou art a King. 37, 38 Jesus answered him, Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice. Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth?

He does not deny the glory of His Kingdom, nor leave it to the voice of Pilate only to affirm it, for as God He is King, whether man so will, or no; but He once more showed the power of the truth which impelled Pilate, though reluctant, to declare the glory of Him Who was on His trial; for, He says: Thou hast said, that I am a King. For this cause was I born, He says, and came into this world when I became Man, that I should bear witness unto the truth; that is, that He might take lying out of the world, and, having subdued the devil, who gained his way by guile, He might show truth triumphant over the universe; truth----that is, that nature that is truly sovereign by nature, which has not by craft acquired the ability to hold rule and dominion over heaven and earth, and, in a word, everything that is brought into being; nor has this been added unto it from without, but it is seen to be essentially and naturally inherent. In order, too, that He might show that Pilate's dulness of apprehension arose from his stubborn heart, and his reluctance to admit the truth, Christ fitly adds the word: Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice. For the word of truth gains a ready acceptance from those who have already learnt and love it; but with others it is not so. Yea, the Prophet Isaiah said to some: If ye will not believe, neither shall ye understand.

Pilate showed at once the truth of this, when he said: What is truth? For, just as those whose sight is injured, and who have wholly lost the use of their eyes, have their sense of colour entirely annihilated, so as not to note when gold is brought before them, or a shining

and precious stone shown them, nay, even the very light of the sun's rays excites in them no wonder, as they have no perception thereof, and can gain no profit from any such thing; so to men whose minds are warped, truth seems a foul and ugly thing, although it instils into the minds of those who behold it its spiritual and Divine radiancy.

38, 39 And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find no crime in Him. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one prisoner at the Passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

For a condemnation at once of the want of piety, and of the cruelty of the Jews, he excels them in the knowledge of what was just and right, though he could not boast of Divine instruction, but was merely the guardian of human ordinances, and reverenced most of all the enactments of those from whom he had his office as a gift. If the teachers of the Jewish Law had so done, and chosen to be thus minded, they might very likely have escaped the net of the devil, and shunned the most abominable of all crimes, I mean the shedding of the Blood of Christ. Pilate, then, hesitates to condemn Christ, Who had been taken in and convicted of no criminal act, and says that He That was far removed from all guilt ought not to pay a penalty, and strongly maintains that it is wholly at variance with the laws he observed; putting to shame the frightful frenzy of the Jews in contradiction to their own Law. For he thought that, as they professed to reverence the doctrine of impartial justice, they ought at once to yield to the statement of what was just and right that he put before them.

But, perceiving that to acquit Him That they had brought to him of all blame would imply no small condemnation of the precipitancy of the Jews, that they might not on this account insist the more vehemently, and stir up a strange commotion, he paved the way, as it were, and put the best complexion upon the matter, by saying: Ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one prisoner at the Passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? When he called Jesus King of the Jews, he spoke in jest, and tried to abate by ridicule the anger of the furious mob, and hereby also clearly showed that this particular accusation was brought in vain; for a Roman officer would never have thought a man condemned of plotting for a kingdom and revolution against Rome, worthy to be released. He bore witness, then, to His utter guiltlessness by the very reasons he gave for His release.

I think these words explain the drift of the passage. And as I was considering and meditating in my mind how the custom arose for the Jews to ask for one man to be released to them (a robber, it might be, or a murderer), the idea occurred to me that they no longer regulated their actions altogether according to the Law, but, choosing rather to use their own customs, they fell into a decayed state of manners not altogether in accordance with the Mosaic dispensation. But while I was searching the Divine Scriptures, and hunting everywhere for the origin of this custom, I came upon one of the Divine dictates, which caused me to suspect that when the Jews sought the release of a malefactor, they were, in fact, in however mistaken a way, fulfilling one of the customs of the Law. At the end of

the book called Numbers we find recorded the law concerning voluntary and involuntary homicide; and when the penalty in the case of premeditated murder has been clearly laid down, the book goes on to speak of involuntary homicide, and, after other remarks, makes the following declaration: But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him anything without laying of wait, or with any stone wherewith a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him that he die, and was not his enemy, neither sought his harm:

then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled. Such, then, being the written commandment, when any, as it chanced, were involved in such a calamity, the Jews, when they were congregated together, that they might not appear altogether to neglect this enactment, sought the release of one of them. For the Law laid down that it was to be the act of the entire assembly. As, then, they were permitted by the Law to ask for the release of a prisoner, they make this request of Pilate. For after they had once accepted the Roman yoke they were henceforth, for the most part, in the administration of their affairs ruled by their laws. Nay, further, though it was lawful for them to put to death any one convicted of a crime, they brought Jesus to Pilate as a criminal, saying: It is not lawful for us to put any man to death. For though they alleged as a plea their purification by the sacrifice of the Passover, yet they showed themselves flatterers of Rome, in entrusting to the laws of the Romans the duty which the Divine commandment from heaven laid upon themselves.

40 They cried out therefore again, saying, Not this Man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

Herein also the Jews show themselves indeed lawbreakers, and more inclined to give way to their own inclinations than to honour their ancient commandments; for though the Mosaic Law ordered that a man who had committed involuntary homicide should be released, and not a man like Barabbas (for how could such a thing be?), they prefer to ask for a notorious robber. And that the man here named was, in fact, a dangerous and brutal criminal, and not free from blood-guiltiness, the words of the inspired Peter to the people of the Jews will make clear to us: But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you. For they preferred a robber to Him Who regarded not His equality with God the Father, and took our poverty upon Him for this very end, that He might deliver us from the true murderer, that is, Satan; and they were men adorned with the priesthood of the Law, and who greatly vaunted themselves thereon. Yet they passed by and utterly rejected the commandment, Judge righteous judgment, and justified the murderer, condemning Christ, and cried with one accord: Not this Man, but Barabbas. The Jews, however, will pay the penalty of their impious act; but we may well admire the Holy Scripture, examining it in the light of Christ's Person, and this desperate outcry; for thus saith the Prophet Jeremiah: I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage, I have given my beloved soul into the hand of her enemies.

Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest; it crieth out against me. It may be well to explain this simile of the lion in the forest. He says it is with his heritage as when this great and frightful beast desires to seize some prey in the forest, it goes up to a high peak, and gives forth a great and fearful roar, and strikes such terror into those who hear, that man or beast at once fall prostrate, not able to endure the awful sound of his threatening voice, and the beast, as it were, makes them fall by the breath of his mouth. And God confirms this saying also by the prophet, when he thus speaks: The lion roareth; who will not fear? The assembly of the Jews, therefore, was as a lion in the forest to our Saviour Christ, so far, at least, as their presumptuous clamour against Him went; for the Nature of God endureth not panic or fear at all. For the assembly, by its clamour, put Him to death, though Pilate invited them to choose His release; so that even those who had not yet learnt the Divine Law might be proved better than men instructed in the Law.

xix, 1, 2, 3 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him. And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on His head, and arrayed Him in a purple garment; and they came unto Him, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! And they struck Him with their hands.

He scourges Him unjustly, and suffers the crowd of soldiers to insult Him, and put a crown of thorns about His Head, and throw a purple robe upon Him, and buffet Him with the palms of their hands, and otherwise dishonour Him. For he thought he could easily put to shame the people of the Jews, if they saw the Man Who was altogether free from guilt suffering this punishment, only without a cause. He was scourged unjustly, that He might deliver us from merited chastisement; He was buffeted and smitten, that we might buffet Satan, who had buffeted us, and that we might escape from the sin that cleaves to us through the original transgression. For if we think aright, we shall believe that all Christ's sufferings were for us and on our behalf, and have power to release and deliver us from all those calamities we have deserved for our revolt from God. For as Christ, Who knew not death, when He gave up His own Body for our salvation, was able to loose the bonds of death for all mankind, for He, being One, died for all; so we must understand that Christ's suffering all these things for us sufficed also to release us all from scourging and dishonour. Then in what way by His stripes are we healed, according to the Scripture? Because we have all gone astray, every man after his own way, as says the blessed Prophet Isaiah; and the Lord hath given Himself up for our transgressions, and for us is afflicted.

For He was bruised for our iniquities, and has given His own back to the scourge, and His cheeks to the smiters, as he also says. The soldiers indeed take Jesus as a pretender to the throne, and insult Him soldierlike. And for this cause was a crown of thorns brought and put upon His brow, being the symbol of earthly sovereignty; and the purple robe was, as it were, an image and type of royal apparel; and ridicule also was thereby heaped upon Him, for they came near unto Him, and cried, as the Evangelist says: Hail, King of the Jews!

And I have heard some say, and to some the conceit is well-pleasing, that the crown of thorns further signifies the multitude of idol-worshippers who will be taken up by Christ, as it were, into a diadem, through faith in Him; and they liken the Gentiles to barren and useless

thorns, through their bearing no fruit of piety, and being rather fit to feed consuming fire---- just like rubbish in the fields, just as wild thicket, which grows up without any culture; and the royal apparel, I mean the purple robe, they say, means Christ's Kingdom, which will be extended over all the world. We may well receive any interpretation which is not alien to the truth, and which it is not unprofitable to believe in. We need not therefore reject such a construction of the passage, indicative as it is of careful ingenuity. 4 And Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring Him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in Him.

He confesses the wrong he had done, and is not ashamed. For he admitted that he had scourged Him without a cause, and declares that he will show Him unto them, supposing that he would glut their savage passion by so pitiable a spectacle, and well-nigh accuses them henceforth, and that publicly, of putting Him to death unjustly, and of compelling him openly to be a law-breaker, who, if he transgressed his own laws, could not escape scot free. The saying was fulfilled in Christ, and shown to be true, that the prince of this world cometh, and he will find nothing in Me. For observe how Satan, after throwing everything into confusion, finds nothing at all cast out from God, and ranked under the power of sin, which he might, perhaps, if it had been referred to the Saviour Christ, have caused to be rightly condemned and implicated in his accusations. Just as; then, in Adam he subdued the whole human race, showing it to be subject unto sin, so now was he vanquished by Humanity. For He That was truly God, and had no sin in Him, was yet Man; and just as the sentence of condemnation for transgression went forth over all mankind, through one man, the first Adam, so likewise, also, the blessing of justification by Christ is extended to all through One Man, the Second Adam. Paul is our witness, who says: As through one the judgment came unto all men to condemnation;

even so through One the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. We therefore are diseased through the disobedience of the first Adam and its curse, but are enriched through the obedience of the Second and its blessing. For He that was Lord of the Law as God came among us, and kept the Law as Man. Yea, we find Him saying unto us: He that loveth Me will keep My commandments; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. Note how He, as Lawgiver and God, has enjoined upon us the keeping of His commandments; and how, as keeping the Law while a Man among men, He declares that He Himself also kept the commandment of His Father.

5, 6 Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple garment. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man! When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, Crucify Him.

He showed, then, the Lord of all impiously outraged, and mocked by the intolerable insults of the soldiers, trusting that the furious wrath of the Jews would be sated, and now, at last, abate, and rest content with that most pitiable and dishonourable spectacle. But they were so far from showing any mercy in word or deed towards Him, and from entertaining any kind of good intentions, as even to surpass the ferocity of beasts, and to hurry onward to

greater evil still, and make a still more furious outcry, condemning Him to the worst of deaths, and compelling Him to undergo the extremity of suffering. For what punishment can be as severe as the Cross? And it is to the leaders of the Jews alone, it appears, that the wise Evangelist ascribed the origin of this impious doom. For see how, as it were, carefully guarding his words, he says: When, therefore, the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, crucify Him. For, when the multitude of the vulgar were, it may be, somewhat ashamed by the sight of Christ's sufferings, for perhaps they called to mind the wonderful miracles wrought by Him, the rulers first start the clamour, and kindle into strange fury the passions of the people subject unto them. That which was said of God in the prophets, concerning them, is true: For the pastors have become brutish, and have not sought the Lord; therefore all their flock perceived Him not, and were scattered abroad. And the saying is true.

For as those in the pasture, that is, the multitude of the vulgar, did not enjoy the direction of their rulers to the knowledge of Christ, they perished, and relapsed into ruinous heedlessness of Christ. For let any man that likes probe the origin of the impious crime, and he will ascribe it to the rulers. For it was in the outset their most unholy design; they it was who induced the traitor to make a bargain with them, and bought Him over with the money of the Sanctuary; they joined the band of soldiers to the officers, bade them bind Him like the meanest of robbers, and brought Him to Pilate; and now, when they saw Him scourged, and well-nigh beside Himself with insults from every quarter, are but exasperated the more, and utter the dictates of their unmeasured hatred. For they purposed to put the Lord of the Vineyard to death, and thought they would securely enjoy His heritage, and, if Christ were removed, that they would again rule and enjoy all honour. But, as the Psalmist says: He that sitteth in the heavens, shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall hold them in derision. For nothing happened according to their expectation, but, on the contrary, the course of events was completely reversed.

6 Pilate saith unto them, Take Him yourselves, and crucify Him; for I find no crime in Him.

Pilate is in consternation, that the people of the Jews and the inhuman crowd of the chief priests should attain to such a pitch of presumption, as not even to shrink from subjecting Christ to so frightful a death, though no fault was found in Him to bring Him to such a doom. And, therefore, he says, almost like one annoyed at an insult offered to himself: "Make you me a judge of this unjust shedding of blood? Am I, contrary to all Roman Law, become the murderer of the Innocent? and shall I, at your beck and call, fling to the winds all thought of myself? and shall I not, if I minister at my own peril to your requests, live in expectation of paying the penalty? If you do not think that you are doing an unholy deed; if you think the work presents no difficulty; do you yourselves, he says----you, who boast of Divine instruction, you, who vaunt so highly your knowledge of your Law----do you fix the cross, dare the murder, do of yourselves the unholy deed, bringing down on your own heads the charge of this great impiety; let the presumptuous act be the act of Jews, and upon them let the blood-guiltiness rest. If you have a Law that subjects the Sinless to so fearful

a penalty, that chastises the Guiltless, execute it with your own hands; I will not endure to be a party to it." We may imagine this to be what Pilate says, for his words are pregnant with some such meaning. And the shamelessness of the Jews may here also well excite our amazement, for they are not even put to shame by the just judgment of a foreigner, though the Divine Law said concerning this people: For the priest's lips should keep judgment, and they should seek the Law from his mouth.

7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. When their false accusation that they had at first contrived proved fruitless, and they established against Him no attempt at revolution or revolt against Caesar's rule (for the Lord parried these charges, saying: My Kingdom is not of this world; if my Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews), and when Pilate thereupon gave a just and impartial verdict, and did not as yet comply with their will, but said openly that He found no fault in Him, the audacious Jews completely changed their tactics, and asserted that they had a law, which condemned the Saviour to death. What law was that? That which fixes the punishment for blasphemers; for in the book called Leviticus it is recorded, that certain men, who were counted among Jews, strove together, according to the Scripture, in the camp, and that one of them made mention of the Name of God, and blessed Him, for thus saith the Scripture euphemistically, meaning that he cursed and blasphemed Him, and was then doomed to die, and to pay a bitter penalty for his impious tongue, God plainly declaring: Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin, and he that taketh the Name of the Lord in vain, shall be put to death, and all the congregation of Israel shall stone him: as well the stranger as he that is born in the land, when he taketh the Name of the Lord in vain, shall be put to death.

But, perhaps, someone may be in doubt, and ask this question: "What, then, does the Law say, and what does it intend to signify hereby?" For that a man who is convicted of blasphemy against God should die is, indeed, just, and he very rightly meets his doom. But suppose a man treat a false god with contumely, is he then not free from guilt? For the words of the Law are, If any man curse God, he shall bear his sin. What do we reply? The Lawgiver is infallible, for to love to hurl scorn upon false gods is, as it were, a course of preparation which makes us ready to utter blasphemies against the true God. Therefore also, in another passage, He dissuades us from it, saying: Gods thou shalt not revile; for He thought it meet to give unto the name of Godhead, though it be sometimes misplaced, the honour that is its due. The Law, however, did not certainly bid us ascribe any honour to gods erroneously so called, but teaches us to regard as holy the name of Godhead, though it be stolen by some.

As the Law, then, orders that the man who is convicted of blasphemy should be rewarded with death, they say that Christ is subject to the penalty, for that He made Himself the Son of God. We ought to bear in mind where, and in what sense, this was said by Christ. At the pool that was called after the sheep-gate, He healed the impotent man of his long and grievous infirmity on the Sabbath-day. And the Jews, when they ought to have marvelled at the wonders that He wrought, were, on the contrary, offended at His breaking the Sabbath,

and for that reason only railed against Him. Then Christ answered, and said: My Father worketh even until now, and I work; and thereupon says the Evangelist: For this cause therefore the Jews persecuted Jesus, because He not only brake the Sabbath, but also called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. The Jews, then, were offended when Christ called the Lord of all His Father; and then He made this most mild reply to them, saying: It is written in your Law, I said, Ye are gods, and are all sons of the Most High. If he called them gods unto whom the Word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), say ye of Him Whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? But the people of the Jews, remembering none of these things, make the truth a charge against the truth;

and because Christ said what was in fact the truth, they assert that He is worthy of death. Here I will make use of the Prophet's words: How do ye say, We are wise, and the Law of the Lord is with us? For would it not have been right, either first to ascertain by the strictest scrutiny Who Christ was, and whence He came; and if He had been convicted of falsehood, then, very justly, to pass sentence upon Him, or if He spoke the truth, to worship Him? Why, then, did you Jews give up searching and satisfying yourselves by Holy Writ, and betake yourselves to making a mere outcry against Him? and why made you what was in fact the truth, the ground for accusation? You ought, when you said unto Pilate: He made Himself the Son of God, to have charged Him also with the works of Godhead, and to have made His mighty wonder-working power a count in the indictment; you ought to have cried out thereafter, that a man who had been three days dead, rose again, and came back to life at the mere bidding of the Saviour; you ought to have brought forward the only child of the widow, and the daughter of the leader of the synagogue; you ought to have called to mind that Divine saying, spoken unto the son of the widow: Young man, I say unto thee, Arise; and to the damsel: Maiden, Arise.

You ought, besides, to have told Pilate, that He gave sight to the blind, and cleansed the lepers of their leprosy; and also, that by a single word of command He calmed the storm of the angry sea, and the onslaught of the raging billows; and whatever else Christ did. All this, however, they bury in the silence of ingratitude, and passing over those miracles whereby Christ was seen to be God, in malice they proceed to basely state the paradox; and, miserable wretches that they were, they cried out to a foreigner, who had no knowledge of the Divine Scripture, and saw that Jesus was a Man: He made Himself the Son of God; though the inspired Scripture declared that the Word of God should visit the world in human form: Behold, the Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His Name Emmanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us. And what could that which was born of a virgin be but a man, like unto us in bodily appearance and nature? But, besides being Man, He was also truly God.

8, 9 When Pilate therefore heard this saying, he was the more afraid; and he entered into the palace again, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. The malicious design of the Jews had a result they little expected. For they wished to pile up the

indictment against Christ, by saying that He had ventured to sin against the Person of God Himself. But the weighty character of the accusation itself increased Pilate's caution, and he was the more oppressed with alarm, and more careful concerning Christ than before, and questioned Him the more particularly, what He was, and whence He came; not disbelieving, as I think, that though He was a Man, He might be also the Son of God. This idea and belief of his, was not derived from Holy Writ, but the mistaken notions of the Greeks; for Greek fables call many men demi-gods, and sons of gods. The Romans, too, who in such matters were still more superstitious, gave the name of god to the more distinguished of their own monarchs, and set up altars to them, and allotted them shrines, and put them on pedestals. Therefore Pilate was more earnest and anxious than before, in his inquiry Who Christ was, and whence He came. But He, the Scripture saith, answered him not a word, remembering, I suppose, what He Himself had said unto him: Every one that is of the truth, heareth My voice. And how could Pilate, a worshipper of idols, have hearkened to the voice of the Saviour, when He said that He was Truth, and the Child of truth? And how could he at all have received and honoured the name of truth, who at once ridiculed it, and said, What is truth? because he still worshipped false gods, and was buried in the darkness of their deceitfulness?

10 Pilate therefore saith unto Him, Speakest Thou not unto me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee? Pilate thought this silence the silence of a madman. Therefore, he stretches over Him, as it were, the wand of his official power, and thought that he could induce Him by fear, against His Will, to return a fruitless answer. For he says that nothing could hinder his inclining whichever way he chose, either to punish Him, or to take compassion upon Him; and that there was nothing to turn him aside, to give a verdict against his will, with whom alone rested the fate of the accused. He rebukes Him, therefore, as though he felt himself insulted by untimely silence, and, so far as that went, his indignation were whetted against Him. For he perceived not at all the hidden meaning of Christ's silence. Observe here the accurate fulfilment of that which was foretold by the voice of the Prophet: He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth. In His humiliation His judgment was taken away. Thus saith the blessed Isaiah, and the Psalmist also, assuming the Person of Christ, saith in the Spirit: I have kept My mouth with a bridle, while the wicked congregated themselves before Me. I was dumb, and humbled Myself, and kept silence from good words. By good words, curses must be understood. For it is usual with Holy Scripture to speak euphemistically on such occasions, when reference is made to the Person of God Himself.

11 Jesus answered him, Thou wouldest have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivereth Me unto thee hath greater sin.

He makes no clearer revelation of what He was, or whence He came, or Who was His Father. Nor, indeed, does He suffer us to waste the word of revelation, by giving it to ears that are estranged, saying: Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before

the swine. When, then, Pilate was parading before Him his official power, and, in his folly, alleging that he could wholly determine His fate according to his mere will and pleasure, He very appropriately meets him with a declaration of His own power and might, and stops him short, as it were, as he was vaunting himself with vain and empty boasting against the glory of God. For, in truth, it were no small calamity that any should suppose that Christ could be dragged, against His Will, to suffer insult; and that the malice of the Jews vanquished Him, Who was truly God, and proclaimed Sovereign of the universe by the holy and inspired writings. He has, therefore, removed this stumblingblock from our path, and cuts up, as it were, such an error by the roots, by the words: Except it were given thee from above. And when He says, that power was given to Pilate from above, He does not mean that God the Father inflicted crucifixion upon His own Son, against His Will; but that the Only-begotten Himself gave Himself to suffer for us, and that the Father suffered the fulfilment of the mystery in Him.

It is, then, plainly the consent and approval of the Father that is here said to have been given, and the pleasure of the Son is also clearly signified. For, no doubt the force of numbers could never have overcome the power of the Saviour; but we may easily see this from the numerous plots they laid against Him, which resulted in nothing but their being convicted of having made an insolent attempt. They, indeed, desired to seize Him, as the Evangelist says; but He, going through the midst of them, went His way, and so passed by. He says, so passed by, meaning, not cautiously, or with bated breath, or practising the manoeuvres that men do who wish to escape; but with his usual step, free from all alarm. For He hid Himself by His Divine and ineffable might, and then eluded the sight of His would-be murderers; for He did not wish as yet to die nor did He suffer the passions of His persecutors to determine, as it were, without His consent the hour of His peril. Therefore He says, that by His own command, and the consent of God the Father, power was given unto Pilate, so that he was enabled to accomplish the deeds which he did, in fact, venture to perform. For the nature of the Most High God is wholly invincible, and cannot be subdued by anything that exists; for in Him the power of universal dominion of necessity exists.

He accuses of the greater sin----that is, of greater sin against Himself----the traitor that brought Him to Pilate; and with great reason. For he was, as it were, the source from which the impious crime against Him sprang, and also the gate through which it passed; while the judge was but the minister to the crimes of others, and so showed himself, by his ill-timed cowardice, a partaker in the iniquity of the Jews. Who, then, is the traitor, and to whom is the prime authorship of the charges to be referred? Surely, to that most venal disciple, or rather traitor and destroyer of his own soul; and besides him, the crowd of the rulers and the people of the Jews; and though Christ attributes to them the greater part of the blame, He does not acquit Pilate wholly of complicity in guilt.

12 Upon this Pilate sought to release Him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this Man, thou art not Caesar's friend: everyone that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

The exclamation of the Jews afflicts Pilate with panic, and sharpens the keenness of his caution, and makes him pause before putting Him to death. For they shouted out, that that very prisoner had made Himself the Son of God, Whom Pilate had been most anxious to release from all danger, and to acquit of every false accusation, having this fear at heart. The Israelites saw this, and returned to their original falsehood, saying, that Jesus had courted the people, and transgressed against Caesar's power, and, so far as His power went, had waged war against the rule of Rome, for He had made Himself a king. See how laborious and passionate was the attempt of His accusers against Him! For, first of all, they cried out with one accord, miserable wretches that they were, and asserted that He had ventured to assail Caesar's power. But when they did not meet with much success, Christ declaring that His Kingdom was not an earthly kingdom, they alleged, even unto Pilate, who sat in a Roman tribunal, His offence against God Himself, saying: He made Himself the Son of God. For the villains thought that they could thereby spur Pilate to heedless wrath, and lend him courage to doom the Saviour to death, making His action a mark of His piety towards God;

but when their malicious attempt proved unavailing, they once more recurred to the charge they had presumed to make at first, declaring that He had ventured to assail the rule of Caesar, and violently accusing the judge of taking up arms against Caesar's majesty, if he did not consent to pass the sentence of fitting condemnation upon Him Who, as they alleged, had spoken against Caesar, by daring to take upon Himself, in any shape, the title of King; though Caesar did not claim an empire in the heavens, such as that of which Christ was, indeed, the Lord, but an earthly and inferior empire, which itself had its root in the power of Christ. For through Him kings reign, according to the Scripture, and monarchs rule over the earth. Therefore these most impious men bridled not their tongues, but, in their excessive enmity to God, attacked the glory of the Saviour. Them did the blessed Prophet Isaiah justly rebuke, saying: But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore. Against Whom do ye sport yourselves? against Whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? Are ye not children of perdition, a lawless seed? For it was not against any mere man that they made their outcry, and spoke out with unbridled tongues, and practised every sort of calumny; but against their own Lord Himself, Who ruleth over all with the Father. Therefore rightly did they become, and are in truth, children of perdition, and a lawless seed,

13, 14 When Pilate therefore heard this saying, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment-seat, at a place called the Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the preparation of the Passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

The Evangelist, when he thus speaks, throws the whole burden, as it were, of the charge of shedding Christ's blood upon the Jews. For he now clearly says, that Pilate was well-nigh overcome against his will by their opposition, so that he put away the thought of justice, and paid little heed to the consequence; and, therefore, he was dragged down to do the will of Christ's murderers, though he had often expressly told them, that Jesus had been found

guilty of no fault at all, and it is this which will make Him subject to the worst of penalties. For, by preferring the pleasure of a mob to honouring the Just, and giving over a guiltless Man to the frenzy of the Jews, he will be convicted out of his own mouth of impiety. He ascends, therefore, to his usual judgment-seat, as about to pronounce sentence of death against Christ. The inspired Evangelist is induced to signify to our profit the day and hour, because of the resurrection itself, and His three days' sojourn among the departed, that the truth of our Lord's saying to the Jews might appear: For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so also shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The Roman ruler on his judgment-seat, pointing to Jesus, says: Behold your King! Either he was jesting with the multitude, and was granting, with a scornful smile, the innocent blood to those who thirsted for it without a cause, or, perhaps, he was casting in the teeth of the savage Jews the reproach that they endured to see in such evil plight Him Whom they themselves named and asserted to be King of Israel.

15 They therefore cried out, Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? They reiterate their old cry with the same fury, and desisted not from their lust for blood, and were not softened at all by the insults He had endured, nor inclined to clemency by the outrages inflicted upon Him; but were rather goaded to a greater pitch of fury, and intreat that He Who had raised the dead in their midst, and shown Himself the worker of such marvels, should be crucified; at which Pilate was sore amazed, seeing that they declared with such vehemence, that He, Who had acquired such eminence among them as to be deemed the Son of God, and King, was not merely worthy of death, but that He deserved so cruel a fate, for crucifixion is the worst of deaths. The judge, therefore, makes their outcry a charge and reproach against them, that they should be desirous that He should be crucified, Who had excited so great admiration by deeds which were so pre-eminent as to transcend anything on earth. For what is there that is equal to what does not fall short of the Son of God, and King?

15 The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Hereupon the well-beloved Israel spurned his God, and started aside from his allegiance, and, as Moses said, abandoned the God that was his Father, and remembered not the Lord his helper. For see how he turned his eyes upon an harlot, according to the Scripture, refused to be ashamed, disowned his own glory, and denied his Lord. Of this very charge God accused Israel of old, speaking by the mouth of Jeremiah: For pass over the isles of Chittim, and send unto Kedar, and see whether the nations change their gods, who are yet no gods; but My people have changed their glory. And again: The heavens were astonished thereat, and were horribly afraid, saith the Lord; for My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that hold no water. For while other nations throughout the whole world clung fast to the deceitfulness of their idols, and steadfastly adhered to the gods whom they so deemed, and did not readily undergo a change of faith, nor easily alter their form of worship, the Israelites started aside, and joined themselves to the empire of Caesar, and cast off the rule of God. Therefore, very justly, were they given over into Caesar's hands, and, having at first welcomed his rule, af-

terwards brought themselves to grievous ruin, and underwent expulsion from their country, and the sufferings of war, and those irremediable calamities that befell them.

Observe, too, here the minuteness of the writer. For he does not say that the people started the impious cry, but rather their rulers. For he says: the chief priests cried out, everywhere pointing out, that it was through their submissively following their leaders that the multitude was carried down the precipice, and fell into the abyss of perdition. The chief priests incur the penalty, not merely as losing their own souls, but also as having been leaders and responsible guides of the people subject unto them, in the fatal shedding of blood; just as also the prophet rebuked them, saying: Because ye have been a snare unto the watch-tower, and as a net stretched out upon Tabor, which they who catch the prey have spread. The Prophet here means by the watch-tower the multitude, who were subject unto them, who were arrayed, as it were, to observe the conduct of their rulers, and to conform their own to it. And, therefore, the leading men of the people are called watchmen in Holy Writ. The chief priests themselves, then, were a snare and a net unto the watch-tower; for they both started this denial, and also induced all the rest to cry: We have no king but Caesar. These miserable men presumed so to say, though God the Father, by the mouth of the Prophet, predicted the coming of the Saviour, and cried out: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation;

lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. These men, who had once brought Jesus into Jerusalem riding upon an ass, and honoured Him as a God with blind praises, with one accord, for they cried: Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord! now make an outcry against Him, accusing Him only of attacking the Roman rule, and shaking off, as it were, the yoke of the Kingdom of God from their necks. For this was the plain meaning of the cry: We have no king but Caesar. But we shall find that then, too, it was the people that raised the shout for the Saviour Christ, and that it was the chief priests who presumed in their madness to make this exclamation, just as the others had proceeded from them.

16 Then therefore he delivered Him unto them to be crucified. Pilate henceforward permits the Jews, in their unbridled resentment, to run to all lengths in lawlessness; and, divesting himself of the power due unto a judge, suffers their uncontrolled passions at length to take their course unreproved, in allowing them to crucify One Who was wholly guiltless, and Who received this monstrous condemnation merely because He said He was the Son of God. One must lay the whole guilt of the impious crime at the door of the Jews; and rightly and justly, I think, accuse them of being the prime movers in the act, for with them originated this impiety against Christ. Yet we cannot acquit Pilate of complicity in their iniquity; for he shared their responsibility, inasmuch as when he might have delivered and rescued Him from the madness of His murderers, he did not merely refrain from releasing Him, but even gave Him up to them for the very purpose, that they might crucify Him.

16, 17, 18 They took Jesus therefore. And He went out, bearing the Gross for Himself, unto the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha: where they crucified Him, and with Him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

They lead away, then, to death the Author of Life; and for our sakes was this done, for by the power and incomprehensible Providence of God, Christ's death resulted in an unexpected reversal of things. For His suffering was prepared as a snare for the power of death, and the death of the Lord was the source of the renewal of mankind in incorruption and newness of life. Bearing the Cross upon His shoulders, on which He was about to be crucified, He went forth; His doom was already fixed, and He had undergone, for our sakes, though innocent, the sentence of death. For, in His own Person, He bore the sentence righteously pronounced against sinners by the Law. For He became a curse for us, according to the Scripture: For cursed is everyone, it is said, that hangeth on a tree. And accursed are we all, for we are not able to fulfil the Law of God: For in many things we all stumble; and very prone to sin is the nature of man. And since, too, the Law of God says: Cursed is he which continueth not in all things that are written in the book of this Law, to do them, the curse, then, belongeth unto us, and not to others. For those against whom the transgression of the Law may be charged, and who are very prone to err from its commandments, surely deserve chastisement. Therefore, He That knew no sin was accursed for our sakes, that He might deliver us from the old curse. For all-sufficient was the God Who is above all, so dying for all; and by the death of His own Body, purchasing the redemption of all mankind.

The Cross, then, that Christ bore, was not for His own deserts, but was the cross that awaited us, and was our due, through our condemnation by the Law. For as He was numbered among the dead, not for Himself, but for our sakes, that we might find in Him, the Author of everlasting life, subduing of Himself the power of death; so also, He took upon Himself the Cross that was our due, passing on Himself the condemnation of the Law, that the mouth of all lawlessness might henceforth be stopped, according to the saying of the Psalmist; the Sinless having suffered condemnation for the sin of all. And of great profit will the deed which Christ performed be to our souls----I mean, as a type of true manliness in God's service. For in no other way can we triumphantly attain to perfection in all virtue, and perfect union with God, save by setting our love toward Him above the earthly life, and zealously waging battle for the truth, if occasion calls us so to do. Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ says: Every man that doth not take his cross and follow after Me, is not worthy of Me. And taking up the Cross means, I think, nothing else than bidding farewell to the world for God's sake, and preferring, if the opportunity arise, the hope of future glory to life in the body. But our Lord Jesus Christ is not ashamed to bear the Cross that is our due, and to suffer this indignity for love towards us;

while we, poor wretches that we are, whose mother is the insensate earth beneath our feet, and who have been called into being out of nothing, sometimes do not even dare to touch the skirt of tribulation in God's service; but, if we have anything to bear in the service of Christ, at once account the shame intolerable, and shrinking from the ridicule of our adversaries,

and those who sit in the seat of the scornful, as an accursed thing, and preferring to God's pleasure this paltry and ill-timed craving for reputation, fall sick of the disease of disdainful arrogance, which is the mother, so to say, of all evils, and so make ourselves subject to the charge. For thus is the servant above his lord, and the disciple above his master, and thinks and acts accordingly. Alas, for this grievous infirmity, which always in some strange shape lies athwart our path, and leads us astray from the pursuit of what is meet!

Call to mind, too, how the inspired Peter could not endure Christ's prophecy, when He foretold His sufferings upon the Cross, for He said: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man is betrayed unto the hands of sinners; and they shall crucify Him, and kill Him. The disciple, not yet understanding the mysterious ways of God's providence, God-loving and teachable as he was, was moved by his scruples to exclaim: Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall never be unto Thee. What answered Christ? Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art a stumblingblock unto Me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men. But we may hence derive no small profit, for we shall know, that when occasion calls us to exhibit courage in God's service, and we are compelled to endure conflicts that ensue for virtue's sake; yea, even if they who honour and love us best strive to hinder us from doing anything that may tend to stablish virtue, alleging, it may be, our consequent dishonour among men, or from some worldly motive, we must not yield. For they, then, are in nowise unlike Satan, who loves and is ever wont to cast stumblingblocks in our path by divers deceits, and sometimes by smooth words, so as to divert from the pursuit of what is meet, the man who is urged thereto by the spirit of piety. And methinks Christ meant something like this, when He said: If, therefore, thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. For that which does us injury is no longer our own, even though united to us by the bond of love, and though its connexion with us be but its natural desert.

Two robbers were crucified together with Christ, and this was owing to the malice of the Jews. For, as though to emphasize the dishonour of our Saviour's death, they involved the just Man in the same condemnation as the transgressors of the Law. And we may take the condemned criminals, who hung by Christ's side, as symbolical of the two nations who were shortly about to be brought into close contact with Him, I mean the children of Israel and the Gentiles. And why do we take condemned criminals as the type? Because the Jews were condemned by the Law, for they were guilty of transgressing it; and the Greeks by their idolatry, for they worshipped the creature more than the Creator.

And after another manner those who are united with Christ are also crucified with Him; for enduring, as it were, death to their old conversation in the flesh, they are reformed into a new life, according to the Gospel. Yea, Paul said: And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh, with the passions and the lusts thereof; and again, speaking of himself in words applicable to all men: For I, through the Law, died unto the Law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ: yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me. And he exhorts also the Colossians: Wherefore, if ye died from the world, why do ye behave yourselves as though living in the world? For, by becoming dead unto worldly

conversation, we are brought to the rudiments of conduct and life in Christ. Therefore the crucifixion of the two robbers, side by side with Christ, signifies in a manner to us, through the medium of that event, the juxtaposition of the two nations, dying together, as it were, with the Saviour Christ, by bidding farewell to worldly pleasures, and refusing any longer to live after the flesh, and preferring to live with their Lord, so far as may be, by fashioning their lives according to Him, and consecrating them in His service. And the meaning of the figure is in no way affected by the fact, that the men who hung by His side were malefactors; for we were by nature children of wrath, before we believed in Christ, and were all doomed to death, as we said before.

19 And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the Cross. And there was writ/en, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.

This is, in fact, the bond against us which, as the inspired Paul says, the Lord nailed to His Cross, and in it led in triumph the principalities and the powers as vanquished, and as having revolted from His rule. And if it were not Christ Himself that fixed the title on the Cross, but the fellow-worker and minister of the Jews, still, as He suffered it so to be, it is as though He were recorded as having inscribed it with His own Hand. And He triumphed over principalities in it. For it was open to the view of all who chose to learn, pointing to Him Who suffered for our sake, and Who was giving His Life as a ransom for the lives of all. For all men upon the earth, in that they have fallen into the snare of sin (for all have gone aside, and have all together become filthy, according to the Scripture), had made themselves liable to the accusation of the devil, and were living a hateful and miserable life. And the title contained a handwriting against us----the curse that, by the Divine Law, impends over the transgressors, and the sentence that went forth against all who erred against those ancient ordinances of the Law, like unto Adam's curse, which went forth against all mankind, in that all alike broke God's decrees. For God's anger did not cease with Adam's fall, but He was also provoked by those who after him dishonoured the Creator's decree;

and the denunciation of the Law against transgressors was extended continuously over all. We were, then, accursed and condemned, by the sentence of God, through Adam's transgression, and through breach of the Law laid down after him; but the Saviour wiped out the handwriting against us, by nailing the title to His Cross, which very clearly pointed to the death upon the Cross which He underwent for the salvation of men, who lay under condemnation. For our sake He paid the penalty for our sins. For though He was One that suffered, yet was He far above any creature, as God, and more precious than the life of all. Therefore, as the Psalmist says, the mouth of all lawlessness was stopped, and the tongue of sin was silenced, unable any more to speak against sinners. For we are justified, now that Christ has paid the penalty for us; for by His stripes we are healed, according to the Scripture. And just as by the Cross the sin of our revolt was perfected, so also by the Cross was achieved our return to our original state, and the acceptable recovery of heavenly blessings; Christ, as it were, gathering up into Himself, for us, the very fount and origin of our infirmity.

20 This title therefore read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek. We may remark that it was very providential, and the fruit of God's inexpressible purpose, that the title that was written embraced three inscriptions ---- one in Hebrew, another in Latin, and another in Greek. For it lay open to the view, proclaiming the Kingdom of our Saviour Christ in three languages, the most widely known of all, and bringing to the crucified One the first-fruits, as it were, of the prophecy that had been spoken concerning Him. For the wise Daniel said that there was given Him glory and a Kingdom, and all nations and languages shall serve Him; and, to like effect, the holy Paul teaches us, crying out that every knee shall bow; of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore the title proclaiming Jesus King was, as it were, the true firstfruits of the confession of tongues. And, in another sense, it accused the impiety of the Jews, and all but proclaimed expressly, to those who congregated to read it, that they had crucified their King and Lord, purblind wretches that they were, without thought of love toward Him, and sunk in crass insensibility.

21, 22 The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews, but, that He said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written. The rulers of the Jews took ill the writing on the title, and, full of bitter hatred, once more denied the Kingship of Christ, and said in their great folly that He had never reigned in fact, nor been accepted as King, but had merely used this expression: not knowing that to lie is contrary to the nature of truth, and Christ is Truth. He was, then, King of the Jews, if He was proved to have given Himself this title, as they themselves also confirmed by their own words. And Pilate rejected their request that he should alter the inscription, not consenting in all things to do despite unto the glory of our Saviour, doubtless owing to God's Ineffable Will. For the Kingship of Christ was firmly rooted, and beyond the reach of calumny, though the Jews might not consent thereunto, and might strive to deface the confession of His glory.

23, 24 The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

The soldiers, then, divided our Saviour's garments among themselves, and this is indicative of their brutal ferocity and inhuman disposition. For it is the custom of executioners to be unmoved by the misery of condemned criminals, and to obey orders sometimes with unnecessary harshness, and to show a masculine indifference to the fate of the sufferers, and to divide their garments among themselves, as though the lot fell upon them by some sufficient and lawful reason. They divided, then, the dissevered garments into four portions, but kept the one coat whole and uncut. For they did not choose to tear it in pieces, and make

it altogether useless, and so they decided it by casting lots. For Christ could not lie, Who thus spake by the voice of the Psalmist: They divided My raiment among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots. All these things were foretold for our profit, that we might know, by comparing the prophecies with the events, what He is of Whom it was foretold that He should come for our sake in our likeness, and of Whom it was expected that He should die for the salvation of all men. For no man of sense can suppose that the Saviour Himself, like the foolish Jews, would strain out the gnat, that is, foretell a trifling detail concerning His sufferings, as in this mention of the partition of His raiment, and, as it were, swallow the camel, that is, think of no account the great lengths to which the impious presumption of the Jews carried them. Rather, when He foretold these details, He foretold also the great event itself; firstly, in order that we might know that, as He was by Nature God, He had perfect knowledge of the future; secondly, also, that we might believe that He was in fact the Messiah of prophecy, being led to the knowledge of the truth by the many and great things fulfilled in Him.

And if it behoves us also to declare another thought which strikes us with regard to the partition of the garments----a thought which can do no harm, and may possibly do good to those who hear it----I will speak as follows: Their division of the Saviour's garments into four parts, and retention of the coat in its undivided state, is perhaps symbolical of the mysterious providence whereby the four quarters of the world were destined to be saved. For the four quarters of the world divided, as it were, among themselves the garment of the Word, that is, His Body which yet remained indivisible. For though the Only-begotten be cut into small pieces, so far as individual needs are concerned, and sanctify the soul of every man, together with his body, by His Flesh; yet is He, being One, altogether subsistent in the whole Church in indivisible entirety; for, as Saint Paul saith, Christ cannot be divided. That such is the meaning of the mystery concerning Him, the Law dimly shadows forth. For the Law represented the taking of a lamb at the fitting time, and the taking, not of one lamb for every man, but of one for every house, according to the number of the household; for every man (if his household were too small) was to join with his neighbour that was next unto his house. And so the command was, that many should have a part in one lamb;

but, in order that it might not appear, therefore, to be physically divided, by the flesh being dissevered from the bones, and taken from house to house, the Law laid down the further injunction: In one house shall it be eaten: ye shall not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house. For observe how, as I said just now, the Law took care that many who might be in one household should have a part in one lamb, but most carefully also took great precautions that it should not appear physically divided, but should be found in its completeness and entirety as one in all who partook of it, being, at the same time, divisible and indivisible. We must entertain some such view with regard to Christ's garments, for they were divided into four portions, but the coat remained undivided.

And it can do no harm also to add, that if any man choose, by way of speculation, to look upon the coat that was woven from the top throughout, and seamless, as an illustration of

Christ's holy Body, because It came into being without any connexion or intercourse of man with woman, but woven into its proper shape by the effective working of the Spirit from above, this view is worthy our acceptance. For such speculations as do no damage to the elements of the faith, but are rather fertile of profit, it would surely be ill-advised for us to reject; nay, we ought rather to commend them, as the fruit of an excellent disposition of mind. 25 But there were standing by the Cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

This also the inspired Evangelist mentions to our profit, showing herein also, that none of the words of Holy Writ fall to the ground. What do I mean by this? I will tell you. He represents, as standing by the Cross, His mother, and with her the rest, clearly weeping. For women are ever prone to tears, and very much inclined to lament, especially when they have abundant occasion for shedding tears. What, then, induced the blessed Evangelist to go so much into detail, as to make mention of the women as staying beside the Cross? His object was to teach us that, as was likely, the unexpected fate of our Lord was an offence unto His mother, and that His exceeding bitter death upon the Cross almost banished from her heart due reflection; and, besides the insults of the Jews, and the soldiers also, who probably stayed by the Cross and derided Him Who hung thereon, and who presumed, in His mother's very sight, to divide His garments among themselves, had this effect. For, doubtless, some such train of thought as this passed through her mind: "I conceived Him That is mocked upon the Cross. He said, indeed, that He was the true Son of Almighty God, but it may be that He was deceived; He may have erred when He said: I am the Life. How did His crucifixion come to pass? and how was He entangled in the snares of His murderers?

How was it that He did not prevail over the conspiracy of His persecutors against Him? And why does He not come down from the Cross, though He bade Lazarus return to life, and struck all Judaea with amazement by His miracles? The woman, as is likely, not exactly understanding the mystery, wandered astray into some such train of thought; for we shall do well to remember, that the character of these events was such as to awe and subdue the most sober mind. And no marvel if a woman fell into such an error, when even Peter himself, the elect of the holy disciples, was once offended, when Christ in plain words instructed him that He would be betrayed unto the hands of sinners, and would undergo crucifixion and death, so that he impetuously exclaimed: Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall never be unto Thee. What wonder, then, if a woman's frail mind was also plunged into thoughts which betrayed weakness? And when we thus speak, we are not shooting at a venture, as some may suppose, but are led to suspect this by what is written concerning the mother of our Lord. For we remember that the righteous Simeon, when he received the infant Lord into his arms, after having blessed Him, and said: Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Lord, according to Thy Word, in peace; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, he also said to the holy Virgin herself:

Behold, this Child is set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea, and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul, that thoughts out

of many hearts may be revealed. By a sword he meant the keen pang of suffering, which would divide the mind of the woman into strange thoughts; for temptations prove the hearts of those who are tempted, and leave them bare of the thoughts that filled them.

26, 27 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy Son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home. He took thought for His mother, paying no heed to His own bitter agony, for His sufferings affected Him not. He gave her into the charge of the beloved disciple (this was John, the writer of this book), and bade him take her home, and regard her as a mother; and enjoined His own mother to regard him as none other than her true son----by his tenderness, that is, and affection, fulfilling and stepping into the place of Him, Who was her Son by nature.

But as some misguided men have thought that Christ, when He thus spake, gave way to mere fleshly affection ----away with such folly! to fall into so stupid an error is only worthy of a madman----what good purpose, then, did Christ hereby fulfil? First, we reply, that He wished to confirm the command on which the Law lays so much stress. For what saith the Mosaic ordinance? Honour thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee. His commandment unto us did not cease with exhorting us to perform this duty, but threatened us with the extreme penalty of the Law, if we chose to disregard it, and has put sin against our parents after the flesh on a par with sin against God. For the Law which ordered that the blasphemer should undergo the sentence of death, saying: Let him that blasphemeth the Name of the Lord be put to death, also subjected to the same penalty the man who employs his licentious and unruly tongue against his parents: He that curseth father or mother shall surely be put to death. As, then, the Lawgiver hath ordained that we should pay such honour to our parents, surely it was right that the commandment thus proclaimed should be confirmed by the approval of the Saviour; and as the perfect form of every excellence and virtue through Him first came into the world, why should not this virtue be put on the same footing as the rest?

For, surely, honour to parents is a very precious kind of virtue. And how could we learn that we ought not to lightly regard love toward them,even when we are overwhelmed by a flood of intolerable calamities, save by the example of Christ first of all, and through Him? For best of all, surely, is he who is mindful of the holy commandments, and is not diverted from the pursuit of duty in stormy and troublous times, and not in peace and quietness alone.

Besides, also, was not the Lord, I say, right to take thought for His mother, when she had fallen on a rock of offence, and when her mind was in a turmoil of perplexity? For, as He was truly God, and looked into the motions of the heart, and knew its secrets, how could He fail to know the thoughts about His crucifixion, which were then throwing her into sore distress? Knowing, then, what was passing in her heart, He commended her to the disciple, the best of guides, who was able to explain fully and adequately the profound mystery. For wise and learned in the things of God was he who received and took her away gladly, to fulfil all the Saviour's Will concerning her. 28, 29 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things are

now finished, that the Scripture might be accomplished, said, I thirst. There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to His mouth.

When the iniquity of the Jews had fully wrought the impious crime against Christ, and when there was nothing left wanting to the perfect satisfaction of their savage cruelty, the flesh, at the last extremity, felt a natural craving, for it was parched by the various acts of outrage, and felt thirst. For pain is very apt to provoke thirst, spending the natural moisture of the body in excessive inward heat, and burning the inward parts with the pangs of inflammation. It would have been easy for the Word, the Almighty God, to have released His Flesh from this torment; but, just as He willingly underwent His other sufferings, so He bore this also of His own Will. Then He sought to drink; but so pitiless and far removed from the love of God were they, that, instead of liquid to quench His thirst, they gave Him something to aggravate it, and, in rendering the very service of love, committed a further act of impiety. For, in acceding at all to His request, were they not assuming the appearance of affection? But it was impossible that the inspired Scripture should ever lie, which put into the mouth of the Saviour these words concerning them: They gave Me gall to eat, and when I was athirst, they gave Me vinegar to drink.

The blessed Evangelist John says that they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it on hyssop, and so brought it. Luke makes no mention of anything of the kind, but merely declares that they brought Him vinegar. Matthew and Mark say that the sponge was put on a reed. Some may perhaps think there is a discrepancy in the accounts of the holy Evangelists; but no one who is right-minded will be so persuaded. We must rather try to search, and see by every means in our power, in what way the act of impiety was effected. The inspired Luke, then, disregarding the way in which the vinegar was brought, says, in brief, that vinegar was brought to Him when He was athirst. And there can be no question, that the Evangelists would not have disagreed with each other in these trifling and unimportant details, when, in all essential matters, they are in such perfect harmony and concord. What, then, is the difference between them? and of what treatment is it susceptible? There is no doubt, that the officers who executed the impious crime against Christ were many in number, I mean the soldiers who brought Him to the Cross; several also of the Jews shared in their cruelty, some putting the sponge on a reed, others on a stick of what is called hyssop----for the hyssop is a kind of shrub----and gave Jesus to drink of it; doing this, purblind wretches that they were, to their own condemnation.

For, unawares, they were proving themselves utterly undeserv-ing of compassion, when they thus altogether discarded mercy and humanity, and with unparalleled audacity vied with each other in impiety alone. Therefore, by the mouth of the Prophet Ezekiel, God thus spake unto the mother of the Jews, I mean Jerusalem: As thou hast done, so shall it be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head; and by the mouth of Isaiah, to lawless Israel: Woe unto the wicked! It shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him. This completed the measure of all the crimes that had been committed against

Christ; but here, too, we may find a lesson to our profit. For hereby we may know that those who are of a God-loving temper, and who are firmly rooted in the love of Christ, shall wage, as it were, a ceaseless war with those who are of a different spirit; who will not, even to their latest breath, desist from raging against them, preparing for them severe temptations from every quarter, and eagerly devising every sort of thing that may hurt them. But, just as the wicked cease not from troubling them, so also shall their courage be continually sustained; and just as their trials, and the tribulation of temptation, have no abatement, so also the blessedness of the Saints shall have no end, and the joy of their state of glory shall remain for evermore, and world without end.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His Head, and gave up His Spirit.

When this indignity had been added to the rest, the Saviour exclaimed, It is finished; meaning that the measure of the iniquity of the Jews, and of their furious rage against Him, was completed. For what had the Jews left untried, and what extremity of atrocity had they not practised against Him? For what kind of insult was omitted, and what crowning act of outrage do they seem to have left undone? Therefore rightly did He exclaim, It is finished, the hour already summoning Him to preach to the spirits in hell. For He visited them, that He might be Lord both of the living and the dead; and for our sake encountered death itself, and underwent the common lot of all humanity, that is, according to the flesh, though being as God by Nature Life, that He might despoil hell, and render return to life possible to human nature; being thus proved the firstfruits of them that are asleep, and the firstborn from the dead, according to the Scriptures. He bowed His head, therefore; for as this generally befalls the dying, through the slackening of the sinews of the flesh, when the spirit or soul that united and sustained it is fled, the Evangelist made use of this expression. The expression also, He gave up His Spirit, does not differ from language usually employed, for the vulgar use it as equivalent to ”his life was extinguished, and he died.

But it is probable that it was of set purpose, and advisedly, that the holy Evangelist, instead of saying simply, He died, said, He gave up His Spirit; gave it up, that is, into the hands of God the Father, according to the saying that He spake: Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit; and for us, also, the meaning of the expression lays down a beginning and foundation of firm hope. For, I think, we ought to believe, and for this belief there is much ground, that the souls of Saints, when they quit their earthly bodies, are, by the bountiful mercy of God, almost, as it were, consigned into the hands of a most loving Father, and do not, as some infidels have pretended, haunt their sepulchres, waiting for funeral libations; nor yet are they, like the souls of sinful men, conveyed to the place of endless torment, that is, to hell. Rather, do they hasten into the hands of the Father of all, by the new way which our Saviour Christ has prepared for us; for He consigned His Soul into the hands of His Father, that we also, making it our anchor, and being firmly rooted and grounded in this belief, might entertain the bright hope that when we undergo the death of the body, we shall

be in God's hands; yea, in a far better condition than when we were in the flesh. Therefore, also, the wise Paul assures us that it is better to depart, and be with Christ.

And when He gave up the ghost, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. The veil of the temple was of fine linen, let down to the floor of the centre of the temple, and shrouding the inner portion thereof, and allowing only the high priest to enter into the innermost shrine. For it was not in the power of any one at will to penetrate into the interior with unwashen feet, and carelessly to gaze upon the Holy of holies. How very necessary it was that this curtain should make this division, Paul shows us by his words in the Epistle to the Hebrews: For there was a tabernacle prepared; the first, which is called the Holy place. And after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the Holy of holies, having a golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot holding the manna, and the tables of the covenant, and Aaron's rod that budded. But into the first tabernacle, he says, the priests go in, accomplishing the services; but into the second, the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood, which he offereth for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the Holy place hath not yet been made manifest, while as the first tabernacle is yet standing.

For there can be no question, that a veil was let down at the very entrance of the temple. And so there came into his mind the first tabernacle, which he called holy; for no one could affirm that any part of the temple was not holy, or, if he did so, he would lie, for it was all holy. And after the first tabernacle came the veil which was betwixt, which is the second veil, separating the innermost portion, that is, the Holy of holies. But, as the blessed Paul said, the Spirit signified, by figures and types, that the more fitting way in which the Saints should tread had not yet been made manifest; for the people were still kept at a distance, and the first tabernacle was yet standing. For there had not, as yet, in fact, appeared unto men the manner of the life that Christ gave unto those who were called by the Spirit unto sanctification; and not yet had the mystery concerning Him been made manifest, for the written commandment of the Law was still in force. Therefore, also, the Law placed the Jews in the outer court. For the dispensation of the Law was, as it were, a porch and vestibule leading unto the teaching and life of the Gospel. For the one is but a type, the other is the truth itself. The first tabernacle was, indeed, holy, for the Law is holy, and the commandment righteous and good;

but the innermost portion of the temple was the Holy of holies, for though the men who partook of the righteousness of the Law were holy, they became yet holier when they accepted the faith that is in Christ, and were anointed with the Holy Spirit of God. The righteousness of faith, therefore, is greater than the righteousness of the Law; and by faith we are far more abundantly sanctified. Therefore, also, the wise Paul says, that he gladly and readily endured the loss of the righteousness that is of the Law, that he might gain Christ, and might be found in Him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the Law, but that which is through faith in Jesus Christ. And some fell backwards, and, after

running well for a time, were bewitched; and the Galatians were of this class: after pursuing the righteousness which is of faith, turning back to the commandment of the Law, and recurring to the state of life shadowed forth by types and figures; and to these Paul administered the well-merited reproof: If ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing. Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the Law; ye are fallen away from grace. But (to bring our explanation of the passage to a good and proper conclusion) we will simply repeat, that the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom;

to signify, as it were, that God was in the very act of revealing the Holy of holies, and making the way into the inmost shrine open henceforth to those who believe on Christ. For the knowledge of the Divine mysteries is now laid bare before us; no longer shrouded in the obscurity of the letter of the Law, as it were a curtain, nor hidden by any covering from our quest, nor defended against the intrusion of the eye of the mind by types through which we could see but dimly. Rather are these mysteries now seen in simplicity of faith; yea, but few words suffice to explain them. For the word is nigh thee, says Paul, in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach: because, if thou shalt say with thy mouth, Jesus is Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Herein is seen in its completeness the mystery of piety towards God. But, while Christ had not as yet waged the conflict for our salvation, nor undergone the death of the flesh, the veil was still spread out, for the power of the commandment of the Law still prevailed.

But when the iniquitous Jews, in their presumption, had wreaked to the utmost their malice upon Christ, and He had given up the ghost for our sake, and the sufferings of Emmanuel were accomplished, the time had then come that the broad veil, that had so long been spread out, should from henceforth be rent asunder----that is, the protection of the letter of the Law----and that the fair vision of the truth should lie bare and open before those who had been sanctified in Christ by faith. The veil was torn throughout; for what other meaning can be put upon the words: From the top to the bottom? And why was this? It was because the revelation of the message of salvation was not partial, but our enlightenment concerning the Divine mysteries was perfected thereby. Therefore, also, the Psalmist said unto God, in the person of His new people: The hidden secrets of Thy wisdom hast Thou, revealed unto me; and, furthermore, the inspired Paul thus addresses believers on Christ: I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace which was given you in Christ Jesus; that in every thing ye were enriched in Him, in all utterance, and all wisdom, and all knowledge. The rending of the veil, then, not in part, but entirely throughout, signified then, that the worshippers of the Saviour were about to be enriched in all wisdom, and in all knowledge, and in all utterance, manifestly receiving the knowledge of the mystery concerning Him, undefiled and unclouded by blot or shadow.

For this is what is meant by the words: From the top to the bottom. We say, then, that the most appropriate and fitting time for the revelation of the Divine mysteries was the occasion

on which the Saviour laid down His life for us, when Israel spurned His grace, and wholly started aside from the love of God, in his frenzy against Him, and headstrong impiety. For any one may see that the measure of their iniquities was complete, when he learns that they persecuted, even unto death, the Giver of Life.

I think, therefore, that we have said enough on this subject, and that our explanation of the Divine purpose does not fall short of the mark. But, as we find the inspired Evangelist is very diligent to say: When He gave up the ghost, the veil of the temple was rent, thereby almost signifying as essential for us to know the occasion of that event, let us supplement our remarks by a further consideration, which savours, I think, of the spirit of pious research. For it is a thought which will be found in no way abhorrent to those fundamental doctrines, which are at once a blessing and a necessity to us. To proceed, then: the following custom was in vogue, both among the people and the rulers of the Jews. When they saw anything being done which they thought would especially offend the Giver of the Law, or when they heard any outrageous or blasphemous utterance, they tore their garments, and put on the appearance of mourners; thereby, in a manner, taking up the defence of God, and by the intolerance they displayed of such offences, passing sentence of condemnation on the madness of the transgressors, and acquitting themselves of complicity therein. Moreover, the disciples of the Saviour, Barnabas and Paul, when certain of those who had not yet received the faith, thinking them to be gods (for they called Barnabas, Jupiter;

and Paul, Mercury), brought sacrifices and garlands, in company with the priests, and attempted to make sacrifices in their honour, leapt down from the platform on which they stood, because of the outrage that would be inflicted upon the glory of God, if any sacrifice were offered to men, and rent their garments, as is recorded, and by fitting words prevented the ignorant endeavour of the worshippers of idols. Also, when our Saviour Christ was on His trial before the rulers of the Jews, and was required to say Who He was, and whence He came, and said plainly in reply: Verily, I say unto you, henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven, Caiaphas leapt up out of his seat, and rent his garments, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy. The temple of God, then, followed, so to say, the custom that prevailed among the Jews, and rent its veil, as it had been clothes, at the moment when our Saviour gave up the ghost. For it condemned the impiety of the Jews as an insult against itself. And the accomplishment of this was God's work, that He might show unto us the temple itself bewailing Israel's guilt.

31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the Sabbath (for the day of that Sabbath was a high day), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. It is not with the motive of testifying to the reverence for holy days felt by men inured to shed blood with brutal ferocity, and found guilty of so monstrous an iniquity, that the blessed Evangelist says this; but rather from the wish to show that, in their gross stupidity, they committed that folly of which Christ spoke. For they strained out the gnat while they swallowed the camel; for they are found to reckon as of no account at all the most outrageous and awful

of all crimes against God, while they exercised the greatest diligence with reference to the most paltry and insignificant matters, showing their folly in either case. The proof of this is not far to seek. For, behold, in the very act of putting Christ to death, they put great store on the respect due to the Sabbath; and, while they insulted the Lawgiver by outrages which surpass description, they parade their reverence of the Law; and, as that Sabbath was a high day, they affect to pay honour to it----the very men who destroyed the Lord of the high day; and they ask a favour, which well suited their cruel spirit. For they besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, wishing to embitter, by this last intolerable outrage, the pangs of approaching death, to those who were already in agony.

32-37 The soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him: but when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His Legs: howbeit, one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His Side, and straightway there came out blood and water. And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe. For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on Him Whom they pierced. In pursuance of the request of the Jews, men afflicted with a madness akin to their cruelty----I mean the soldiers of Pilate----break the legs of the two robbers, as they were still numbered among the living, intensifying the bitter pang of their last agony, and finally despatching them by the most grievous act of violence. But when they found Jesus with His Head bowed down, and saw that He had already given up the ghost, they thought it lost labour to break His Legs; but, as they still had a faint suspicion that He might not be actually dead, they with a spear pierced His Side, which sent forth Blood, mingled with Water; God presenting us thereby with a type, as it were, and foreshadowing of the mystery of the Eucharist, and Holy Baptism. For Holy Baptism is of Christ, and Christ's institution; and the power of the mystery of the Eucharist grew up for us out of His Holy Flesh.

By his account of what took place, the wise Evangelist confirms his hearers in the belief that He was the Christ long ago foretold by Holy Writ; for the events of His life harmonised with what was written concerning Him. For not a bone of Him was broken, and He was pierced with the spear of the soldier, according to the Scripture. He says himself, that the disciple that bare record of these things was a spectator and eye-witness of what took place, and knew, in fact, that his testimony was true; and the disciple to whom he thus alludes is none other than himself. For he shrank from speaking more openly, putting away from himself the assumption of love of glory, as an unholy thing, and as a grievous infirmity. Concerning the request for the Body of the Lord. 38 And after these things, Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked of Pilate that he might take away the Body of Jesus: and, Pilate gave him leave. He came, therefore, and took away His Body.

This saying is indeed fraught with a grievous charge against the Jews, as it shows that to become a disciple of Christ was dangerous, and exposed a man to penalties; for he plainly introduces this most excellent young man----I mean Joseph----to our notice, as most especially

anxious to escape the notice of the Jews, though he had been induced by Christ's teaching to choose that worship which was the reality itself, and better and more pleasing to the God Who loves virtue than the commandment of the Law, and at the same time gives us a proof necessary to confirm our faith. For it was necessary for us to believe that Christ laid down His Life for us. And is it not an inevitable consequence that, when a man is entombed, we must have a firm conviction that he also died? And we may well condemn, as guilty of gross brutality, the presumption, hard-heartedness, and merciless temper of the Jews, who did not even pay unto Christ the respect due to the dead, nor honour Him with burial rites, when they saw Him lying before them an inanimate corpse; though they knew that He was the Christ, and had often been amazed by the marvellous works that He did, even though their bitter hatred might never have allowed them to profit by His miraculous power. The disciple of Arimathaea, therefore, passes judgment on the inhumanity of the Jews, and condemns the men of Jerusalem, when he goes and tends with fitting care the Body of Him Whom he did not as yet honour by an open confession of faith, but still believed on Him in secret, for fear of the Jews, as says the blessed Evangelist.

39 And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the first came to Him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight. He says that this disciple was not alone in taking counsel wisely, as well as in fervent zeal, to go to dress the sacred Body for burial, but he makes mention of a second along with the first. This was Nicodemus, who completed the body of testimony to the event that is respected by the Law. For, says the Law: In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. The men who laid Jesus in the tomb were two in number, Joseph and Nicodemus; men who received the faith inwardly in their hearts, but were still scared by a foolish fear, and did not yet prefer to the honour and glory of the world that which is of God. For then they would have dismissed all fear of the Jews, and, paying slight heed to any danger from that quarter, would have indulged their faith fearlessly and freely, and thus have proved themselves holy, and good keepers of the commandment of our Saviour.

40, 41 So they took the Body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, wherein was never man yet laid.

Christ was numbered among the dead, Who for our sake became dead, according to the Flesh, but Whom we conceive to be, and Who is, in fact, Life, of Himself, and through His Father. And, that He might fulfil all righteousness, that is, all that was appropriate to the form of man, He of His own Will subjected the Temple of His Body not merely to death, but also to what follows after death, that is, burial and being laid in the tomb. The writer of the Gospel says that this sepulchre in the garden was a new one; this fact signifying to us, as it were, by a type and figure, that Christ's death is the harbinger and pioneer of our entry into Paradise. For He entered as a Forerunner for us. What other signification than this can be intended by the carrying over of the Body of Jesus in the garden? And by the newness of the sepulchre is meant the untrodden and strange pathway whereby we return from death

unto life, and the renewing of our souls, that Christ has invented for us, whereby we baffle corruption. For henceforth, by the death of Christ, death for us has been transformed, in a manner, into sleep, with like power and functions. For we are alive unto God, and shall live for evermore, to the Scriptures. Therefore, also, the blessed Paul, in a variety of places, calls those asleep who have died in Christ.

For in the times of old the dread presence of death held human nature in awe. For death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression; and we bore the image of the earthy in his likeness, and underwent the death that was inflicted by the Divine curse. But when the Second Adam appeared among us, the Divine Man from heaven, and, contending for the salvation of the world, purchased by His death the life of all men, and, destroying the power of corruption, rose again to life, we were transformed into His Image, and undergo, as it were, a different kind of death, that does not dissolve us in eternal corruption, but casts upon us a slumber which is laden with fair hope, after the Likeness of Him Who has made this new path for us, that is, Christ.

And if any one choose to give an additional meaning to the saying that the sepulchre was a new one, and that no man had been lain therein, be it so. He says, then, we may suppose, that the sepulchre was new, and that no one had been ever laid therein, that no one might be thought to have arisen from the sleep of death save Jesus only. 42 There, then, because of the Jews' preparation {for the tomb was nigh at hand), they laid Jesus.

He not only says plainly that Christ's Body was dressed for burial, and that there was a garden nigh unto the cross, and that there was a new sepulchre in it, but he also explains that He was laid therein, not leaving the least of the things which were done untold. For most essential truly to any creed or system of the mystery of our faith is the confession and the knowledge that Christ died. Therefore, also, the wise Paul, defining our rule of faith, speaks as follows: The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which preach: because, if thou shalt say with thy mouth, Jesus is Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. And in another passage also: For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures. Very essential, then, for us is the narrative which the writer of the book gives us on these points. For it was our bounden duty to believe that He died and was buried; after that will easily follow the true belief, that He burst asunder the bonds of death, and returned as God to the life that was His own. For it was not possible that He should be holden of death. For, being by Nature Life, how could He have undergone corruption? And how could He in Whom we live, and move, and have our being, have been subjected to the laws to which our human nature is subject? Could He not rather, as God, have easily quickened that which lacked life?

xx. 1-9 Now on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb. She runneth, therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid Him. Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in. Simon Peter therefore cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, that was upon His Head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, which came first to the tomb, and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

This excellent and pious woman would never have endured to remain at home and leave the sepulchre, had not her fear of the law for the Sabbath, and the penalty which impended upon those who transgressed it, curbed the vehemence of her zeal, and had she not, allowing ancient custom to prevail, thought she ought to withdraw her thoughts from the object of her most earnest longings. But, when the Sabbath was already past, and the dawn of the next day was appearing, she hurried back to the spot, and then, when she saw the stone rolled away from the mouth of the tomb, well-grounded suspicions seized her mind, and, calling to mind the ceaseless hatred of the Jews, she thought that Jesus had been carried away, accusing them of this crime in addition to their other misdeeds. While she was thus engaged, and revolving in her mind the probabilities of the case, the woman returned to the men who loved the Lord, anxious to obtain the co-operation of the most intimate of His disciples in her quest. And so deep-rooted and impregnable was her faith that she was not induced to esteem Christ less highly because of His death upon the cross, but even when He was dead called Him Lord, as she had been wont to do, thereby showing a truly God-loving spirit.

When these men (I mean Peter, and John the writer of this book, for he gives himself the name of the other disciple) heard these tidings from the woman's mouth, they ran with all the speed they could, and came to the sepulchre in haste, and saw the marvel with their own eyes, being in themselves competent to testify to the event, for they were two in number, as the Law enjoined. As yet they did not meet Christ risen from the dead, but infer His Resurrection from the bundle of linen clothes, and henceforth believed that He had burst asunder the bonds of death, as Holy Writ had long ago proclaimed that He would do. When, therefore, they looked at the issues of events in the light of the prophecies which turned out true, their faith was henceforth rooted on a firm basis.

Observe that the blessed Evangelist, John, when he tells us the time of the Resurrection, says: On the first day of the week early, while it was yet dark, cometh Mary Magdalene unto the tomb; while Matthew, also, wishing to indicate the time to us, says that the Resurrection took place when the night was far spent. No one, I suppose, will imagine that the inspired

writers are at variance, or that they fix the time of the Resurrection differently. For any one that chooses to investigate the meaning of the indications they give of the time, will find that their accounts tally. For early dawn and late night fix the same point of time, that is, the very dead of night, so to say. There is, therefore, no discrepancy between them; for the one, taking as his starting-point the end of night, and the other the beginning, both reach the middle watch, and meet at the same point, that is, as I just now said, the dead of night.

10, 11 So the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping.

The wise disciples, after having gathered sufficiently satisfactory evidence of the Resurrection of our Saviour, being in travail, as it were, with their confirmed and unshaken faith, and by comparison of events as they had actually occurred with the prophetic utterances of Holy Scripture, went back home, and hastened, as is likely, to see their fellow-workers, to recount to them the miracle, and afterwards to consider the course to be pursued. And we shall not err if we think that they had another object in so acting. For while the passion of the Jews was at its height, and the rulers were thirsting eagerly for the blood of every man who marvelled at the teaching of the Saviour, and admitted His Divine and ineffable power and glory, but most of all for the blood of the holy disciples themselves, they had good reason for shrinking from encountering them, and left the sepulchre before it was quite light, as they could not have done so without risk, if seen in the daytime, the sun's rays revealing them to all beholders. We are far from saying that unmanly cowardice was the motive of their cautious flight. Rather should we suppose that the knowledge of what was expedient for them was instilled in the minds of the Saints by Christ, Who did not permit these who were destined to be lights and teachers of the world to run untimely risks. For it was necessary that the truth of His saying should be seen, which He spake concerning them to the Father in heaven.

Holy Father, keep them, He says, in Thy Name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are One. While I was with them, I kept them in Thy Name which Thou hast given Me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition. The disciples therefore retired, thinking they ought to await the time when they should speak openly. And this they did in obedience to the Saviour's words. For He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, as it is written, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which they had heard of Him: for John indeed baptised with water, but they shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence; an event which we find actually came to pass in the days of the Holy Pentecost, when there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. For then were they invested with a spirit of the greatest courage and endurance, and, high exalted above the frailty of their fellow men, boldly encountered the madness of the Jews, and thought their plotting against them worthy of no account.

The wise disciples, then, concealed themselves from the motive of expediency, as I said just now, while Mary, in her love of Christ free from all fear and not much suspecting the wrath

of the Jews, sat on the watch persistently, and, affected after the manner of women, wept abundantly, and continually wiped away the tears that kept falling from her eyes, mourning not only because the Lord was dead, but also because she thought He had been taken away from the sepulchre.

11, 12, 13 So, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the Body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Observe that the tears let fall for Christ do not lose their reward, nor is it long before love for Him bears fruit; rather will His grace and rich requital follow closely in the wake of pain. For, behold, as Mary was sitting there, her cheeks bedewed with mourning for her beloved Lord Whom she had lost, the Saviour vouchsafed unto her the knowledge of the mystery concerning Him, by the mouth of holy angels. For she saw angels in bright apparel, the garments wherewith they were clad signifying to her the perfect beauty of angelic purity, who interrupted her lamentations, and said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? It was not, indeed, that they desired to learn the reason why her tears were falling, for they would have known it even had the woman not told it them, and the very circumstances themselves were sufficient to indicate it. Rather do they bid her cease from weeping, as there was no occasion for tears, and as she had made what was a subject for rejoicing a cause of grief. Why, indeed, say they, when death has been subdued, and corruption lost its power, and our Saviour Christ has therefore risen again, and made a new pathway for the dead back to incorruption and to life, why dost thou, O woman, mistake the time, and why art thou so distraught by bitter pangs of woe, when the issue of events rather calls you to rejoice? For, in truth, thou shouldest be glad, and of good cheer. Why, then, weepest thou, and thus in some sort detractest from the honour due unto a festival?

The angels appeared sitting at the head and at the feet where the Body of Jesus had lain; thereby, as it were, signifying to the woman, who thought that the Lord had been taken away, that no one could have done despite unto the holy Body while angels kept watch and holy powers encompassed the Temple of God, for they knew their Lord. One may raise the question, not unreasonably, how it was that the blessed angels said nothing to the holy disciples, and did not even appear unto them, but were both seen by the woman and also spake unto her. We reply, then, that it was the object of the Saviour Christ to instil into the minds of those who loved Him the perfect knowledge of the mystery concerning Him; but that this perfect knowledge was in different ways given unto them, and adapted to the requirements of those who stood in need of it. The course of events itself, as compared with the expectations raised in Holy Writ, sufficed to give the holy disciples adequate knowledge, and begat in them a confidence that did not admit of doubt. For they went home trusting in the Holy Scriptures, and it would have been superfluous for those, whose faith was thus firmly grounded, to be taught by the mouth of the holy angels; but it was very necessary to the woman, who knew not the Holy and Divine Scripture, and by no other means could apprehend the deep mystery of the Resurrection.

13, 14 She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. The woman, or rather all womankind, is slow of understanding. For she does not understand the hidden meaning of what met her gaze, but rather announces it as the cause of her grief. But as she ceased not to call Christ Lord, and thereby signified her love towards Him, she is justly permitted to enjoy the sight of the object of her desire. For she beholds Jesus, though she did not think Him to be at her side; and why? Either her ignorance was caused by our Saviour Christ still concealing Himself by His Divine power, and not allowing Himself very easily to be recognised by the eye of the beholder; or, as it was still early in the morning, she could not readily distinguish what was before her eyes, as night somehow prevented her from so doing, and scarcely revealed the Figure of Him Who was drawing nigh. Therefore, also, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in the Song of Songs, makes mention of His walk on this night, and the moisture of the morning dew, in the words: For My Head is filled with dew, and My Locks with the drops of the night.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.

As it was still dark, and the night had not yet wholly passed away, she sees Jesus, Who stood near her, but dimly, and knows not Who He is, being unable to distinguish the Form of His Body or His Features, but hears Him say, Woman, why weepest thou? The Saviour's words are indeed words of courtesy, still such as to arouse in her the suspicion that they were most like the words of one of the gardeners. It follows, too, that the Lord, when He thus spake, was not in point of fact asking her the reason for her weeping, nor desirous to learn of whom she was in search; but was rather anxious to stop her lamentations, just as, indeed, were the two blessed angels, for it was in their company that He spake. Why, then, weepest thou, O woman? He says; Whom seekest thou? That is to say, wipe away thy tears, as thou hast the object of thy search. I, He says, am He Who is the occasion of thy mourning, as having been dead, and as having suffered a dreadful fate, and as having also been taken away out of the tomb. But, as I am alive and am here, give up thy lamentations, and contrariwise be of good cheer. He asked the question, then, wishing to end her sorrow. For it was meet that the Lord should be our restorer in this way also. For by Adam's transgression, as in the firstfruits of the race, the sentence went forth to the whole world:

Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return; and to the woman in special: In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children. To be rich in sorrow, then, as by way of a penalty, was the fate of woman. It was, therefore, necessary that by the mouth of Him That had passed sentence of condemnation, the burden of that ancient curse should be removed, our Saviour Christ now wiping away the tears from the eyes of the woman, or rather of all womankind, as in Mary the firstfruits. For she, first of women, being offended at the death of the Saviour, and grieving thereat, was thought worthy to hear the voice that cut short her weeping; the power

of the word, in fact, extending also to the whole race of women, if indeed they be pained by the outrages against Christ, and honour faith in Him, and almost fall to quoting that saying in the Psalms: Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee? And am I not grieved with those that rise up against Thee? I hate therm with a perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.

While, however, our Lord Jesus Christ says this to put a stop to her weeping, she, supposing the speaker to be one of the gardeners, undertook very readily to transfer the remains to another place, if only it were shown her where he had laid Him. For, not yet apprehending the great mystery of the Resurrection, she was disturbed by suspicions of this kind. For the feminine mind is slow-witted and ill-prepared to readily comprehend even what is not very difficult, far less miracles which baffle description. 16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto Him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say, Master, and ran forward to touch Him. He invites the recognition of the woman, whose mind had already been enlightened, and, allowing her to gaze upon Him without let or hindrance (for indeed she loved Him ardently), He almost rebukes her for having been so slow to perceive that He was Christ, for there is some such implied meaning in His calling her by name. She understood at once, and at the sight of Him casts aside the suspicions she felt at first, and offers Him the usual tribute of respect, calling Him Rabboni, that is to say, Master; and, with her mind full of a heavenly joy, ran eagerly to touch the holy Body, and to gain blessing therefrom.

17 Jesus saith to her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended unto My Father.

The meaning of this saying is not easily understood by the vulgar, for a mystery underlies it; but we must probe it for our advantage. For the Lord will vouchsafe unto us the knowledge of His own Words. For He repulses the woman as she was running up to Him, and though she longed to embrace His Feet, He suffered her not; and, in explanation of His reason for so doing, said: For I am not yet ascended unto My Father. We must inquire into the meaning of this saying. For what if He were not yet ascended to His Father? How could this reason suffice to render it improper for those that loved Him to touch His holy Body? Would it not be blameworthy for any one to imagine that the Lord shrank from the pollution of the touch, and thus spake that He might be pure when He ascended to the Father in heaven? Would not such a man stand convicted of great folly and madness? For the Nature of God can never be polluted. For just as the light of the sun's ray, when it strikes upon a dunghill or any other earthly impurities, suffers no stain----for it remains as it is, that is, undefiled, and partakes in no degree of the ill odour of the objects that it encounters----even so the all-holy Nature of God can never admit of the blemish of defilement. What, then, is the reason why Mary was prevented from touching Him, when she drew near and yearned so to do? What can the Lord mean when He says: For I am not yet ascended unto My Father? We must investigate this according to the best of our ability. We say, therefore, that the reasons for our Saviour's sojourn amongst us were manifold and diverse, but this one the principal of all, which is indicated in His own words: For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Therefore, before the saving Cross and the Resurrection from the dead, while as yet His providential scheme had not received its appropriate fulfilment, He mingled both with the just and the unjust, and ate with publicans and sinners, and allowed any that so willed to come to Him and touch His holy Body, that He might sanctify all men and call them to a knowledge of the truth, and might bring back to health those who were diseased and enfeebled by the constant practice of sin. Therefore also, in another place, He said unto them: They that are whole have no need of a physician; but they that are sick. Therefore, before His Resurrection from the dead, He had intercourse indiscriminately with the righteous and with sinners, and never frightened away any that came unto Him. Moreover, when He was once reclining at the house of a Pharisee, a woman came in unto Him weeping, who was a sinner in the city, as is written, and let down her wanton locks, scarcely released from the service of her past sins, and wiped His Feet therewith; and we see that He did not stop her. Again, when He was on His way to bring back to life the daughter of the leader of the Synagogue, once more a woman came near unto Him, who had an issue of blood, and touched the border of His garment; and we find that He was in nowise offended, but rather vouchsafed unto her the comforting assurance: Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole;

go in peace. But at that time, by His Providence, men who were still unclean, and who were polluted both in mind and body, were suffered without let or hindrance to touch the holy Flesh Itself of our Saviour Christ, and to gain every blessing thereby; but when, after having completed the scheme of our redemption, He had both suffered the Cross itself, and death thereon, and had risen again to life, and shown that His Nature was superior to death, henceforward, instead of granting them a ready permission, He hinders those who come to Him from touching the very Flesh of His holy Body; thereby giving us a type of the holy Churches, and the mystery concerning Himself, just as also the Law given by the all-wise Moses itself did, when it represented the slaughter of the lamb as a figure of Christ; for no uncircumcised person, said the Law, shall eat thereof, meaning by uncircumcised impure---and humanity may justly be deemed impure in its own nature. For what is the nature of man, as compared with God's inherent purity? We may not, therefore, while we remain uncircumcised, that is, impure, touch the holy Body, but only when we have been made pure by the true circumcision of the Spirit. For circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, as Paul saith. And we cannot be spiritually circumcised if the Holy Spirit hath not taken up His abode in us by faith and Holy Baptism.

Surely, therefore, it was meet that Mary should for a while be restrained from touching His sacred Body, as she had not yet received the Spirit. For even though Christ was risen from the dead, still the Spirit had not yet been given to humanity by the Father through Him. For when He ascended to God the Father, He sent the Spirit down to us; wherefore also He said: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter cannot come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. As, therefore, the Holy Spirit had not yet been sent down unto us, for He had not yet ascended to the Father, He repulses Mary as not yet having received the Spirit, saying: Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father; that is to say, I have not yet sent down unto you the Holy Spirit. Hence the type is

applicable to the Churches. Therefore, also, we drive away from the Holy Table those who are indeed convinced of the Godhead of Christ, and have already made profession of faith, that is, those who are already catechumens, when they have not as yet been enriched with the Holy Spirit. For He does not dwell in those who have not received Baptism. But when they have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, then indeed there is nothing to hinder them from touching Our Saviour Christ.

Therefore, also, to those who wish to partake of the blessed Eucharist, the ministers of Divine mysteries say, "Holy things to the holy," teaching that participation in holy things is the due reward of those who are sanctified in the Spirit.

CHAPTER I. That the Son is by Nature God, even though we find Him calling the Father His God.

xx. 17. But go unto My brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.

For reasons which we have given, Christ suffers not Mary to touch Him, though, in her love of God, she greatly yearned for this boon; but still rewards her for her watchful care, and doubly requites her for her passionate faith and love for Him, showing that those who are diligent in His service meet with a recompence. And, what was even yet more glorious, she achieved the deliverance of woman from the frailties of old; for in her first----I mean in Mary----all womankind, so to speak, are crowned with a double honour. For though at first she thus lamented, and made Christ an occasion for weeping, she turned her mourning into joy when she was told to forbear from tears by Him, Who, by His own sentence of old, had made woman easy to be overcome by the attacks of sorrow. For God had said to the woman: In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; but just as He once made her subject unto sorrow in Paradise, when she hearkened to the voice of the serpent, and ministered to the devil's wiles, so now again in a garden He bids her refrain from weeping. Releasing her from that curse which bound her unto sorrow, He bids her be the first messenger of tidings of great joy, and proclaim to the disciples His journey heavenward;

that as the first woman, the mother of all mankind, was condemned for listening to the devil's voice, and through her the whole race of women, so also this woman, in that she had hearkened to our Saviour's words, and announced tidings fraught with life eternal, might deliver the entire race of women from the charge of old. The Lord, therefore, grants unto Mary that, besides being delivered from tears, and from a heart ever prone to sorrow, her feet also should be beautiful. For, as the Prophet exclaims: How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things! while the feet of that woman of old time were not beautiful, for no good tidings did she bring when she enticed our forefather to transgress the Divine command. That Mary is worthy our admiration we may infer, from the fact that she was deemed worthy of mention in prophecy. For what said the Prophet concerning her, and the women with her, who announced unto the holy disciples the Resurrection of the Saviour? Ye women, who come from the sight, come hither; for it is a people that hath not understanding. For this Divine prophecy bids these women, true lovers of Christ, come,

as it were, with quickened steps, that they may tell what they themselves have seen, and condemns the insensibility of the Jews in that they laughed to scorn the words of our Saviour Christ Himself concerning the Resurrection.

And though there were also other women there (for this the other Evangelists are pleased to record), and the wise John made mention only of Mary, we shall yet find no discrepancy in the accounts of these holy men. For it is probable that John made mention only of Mary Magdalene, because her love for Christ was more impassioned, and she outran the others, so that she first saw the tomb, and was in the garden, and visited every place that was nigh unto the sepulchre, to search for the Body; for she thought, in fact, that the Lord had been taken away. For results are always ascribed to those who take the lead in counsel and action, though there may be others who co-operate in both.

Therefore, to her honour and glory and perpetual renown, the Saviour vouchsafed unto Mary the duty of proclaiming to the brethren the tidings contained in His words: I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God; and do thou for thy part accept this great and profound mystery, not suffering thine heart to vault over the measure of the truth of the Divine doctrines. Observe how the Only-begotten Word of God came among us, that we also might be even as He is, so far as is possible for our nature to attain thereto, and so far as relates unto our new creation by grace. For He humbled Himself that He might exalt that which was by nature lowly to His own high station; and wore the form of a servant, though He was by Nature Lord and Son of God, that He might uplift that which was by nature enslaved to the dignity of Sonship, in conformity with His own Likeness, and in His Image. How, and in what sense, then, He, becoming one of us as Man, in order that we also might be like Him, that is, Gods and Sons, receives our attributes into Himself, and gives back unto us His own, you may well be anxious to inquire. I will explain, then, as far as I am able:

In the first place, then, though we are servants by rank and nature (for creatures are subject to their Creator), He calls us His brethren, and designates God the common Father of Himself and us; and, making humanity His own, by taking our likeness upon Him, He calls our God His God, though He is His Son by Nature; that, as we mount up to His exceeding great dignity of station by likeness to Him (for it is not because we are by nature sons of God that we are so called, for He cries in our hearts by His own Spirit, Abba, Father), so also He, since He took our form----for He became Man, according to the Scriptures----might have God for His God, though He was truly God by Nature, and proceeded from Him. Be not, therefore, offended, though you hear Him calling God His God, but rather contemplate His words in a teachable spirit, and attentively consider their true meaning. For He says that God is both His Father and our God; and both sayings are true. For, in very truth, the God of the universe is Christ's Father, but not ours by nature; but rather our God as our Creator and Sovereign Lord. But the Son, as it were, blending Himself with us, vouchsafes to our nature the dignity that is in a special and peculiar sense His own, calling Him That begat Him the common Father of us all;

while, on the other hand, He receives into Himself, by taking upon Him our likeness, that which belonged to our nature. For He calls His Father His God, being unwilling, through His inherent love and mercy toward mankind, to dishonour our likeness that He had taken upon Himself. If, then, you choose in ignorance to cavil at this saying, and it seem intolerable to you that the Lord should say that God the Father was His God, you will then, in your perversity, be bringing a charge against the scheme for your own redemption; and when you ought to be offering up thanksgiving you will be dishonouring your Benefactor, and be foolishly objecting to the manner in which He manifested His love towards you. For if He humbled Himself, despising shame, and became a Man for your sake, on your head is the charge of humiliation, and to Him Who chose to undergo this for your sake, exceeding great is the honour due. And I am amazed that you have ears merely for the eclipse of glory (for He humbled Himself for our sake), and consider not its restoration, and, regarding only the degradation, reflect not upon the exaltation. For how was He humiliated, if you do not regard Him as perfect, as being God? And in what sense was He degraded, if you do not take into account the lofty attributes of His ineffable Nature? Therefore, when He was perfect and all-sufficient as God, He humbled Himself for your sake, transforming Himself to your likeness;

and though He was high exalted as the Son of God, and of the very Essence of the Father, He degraded Himself, being mulcted of the attributes of Divine glory, so far as His Nature admitted. As therefore, now, He is at the same time God and Man, being high exalted because of His parentage (for He is God of God and truly Begotten of His Father), and also made lowly for our sake (for He became Man for us); be of a tranquil mind when you hear Him saying: I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God. For it was very meet and right that, as being by Nature God and Son of God, He should call Him That begat Him His Father; and that, as being Man, even as we are men. He should call God His God.

18 Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples that she had seen the Lord; and how that He had said these things unto her. That race which is specially subject to weakness----I mean the race of women----is restored by the loving-kindness of our Saviour, Who, in a manner, rolled up in one the source and origin of our infirmities, and ameliorated them for the future. For Mary announced that she had seen the Lord, Who had escaped from the bonds of death, and had heard His Voice, and brought to the disciples the words of life, and the firstfruits of the Divine Gospel. 19, 20 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had said this, He showed unto them His Hands and His Side.

On the selfsame day on which He had appeared unto Mary, and discoursed with her, He also showed Himself to the holy disciples, who dreaded the intolerable attacks of the impious Jews, and were, on that account, collected together in a certain house. For it was not likely that they who had been so instructed, and had often been bidden to make haste to escape

from the wrath of their would-be murderers, would be found lacking in proper prudence. Christ miraculously appears unto them. For while the doors were shut, as the Apostle says, Christ unexpectedly stood in the midst, by His ineffable Divine power rising superior to the chain of cause and effect, and showing Himself able to dispense with the design and method appropriate to His action. For let no man say, "How did the Lord, Whose Body was of solid Flesh, enter without let or hindrance, though the doors were shut? but rather let him reflect that the Evangelist is not here speaking of one of ourselves, but rather of Him Who is enthroned by the side of God the Father, and Who easily doth whatsoever He will. For He that was by Nature the true God, was of necessity not subject unto the sequences of cause and effect, as are the creatures that owe their being to Him; but rather does He exercise Lordship over necessity itself, and due and appropriate methods of performance.

For how did He make the sea afford a footing unto His Feet, and walk thereon as upon dry land, though we are not so framed that we can tread upon the paths of the sea? And how did He perform the rest of His marvellous works with God-like power? All these things, you will say, surpass man's understanding. Put this miracle of Christ side by side with the rest, and do not, following the opinion of certain men, who, in the folly of their hearts, have been led astray to judge falsely, imagine on account of this very occurrence that Christ rose again without His human Body, wholly bereft thereof, and severed from the Temple that He had taken on Himself. For if thou canst not understand the working of God's ineffable Nature, why dost thou not rather cry out against the infirmity of man's reason ----for that would be the wiser course----and then silently acquiesce in the limit prescribed to you by the Creator? For in rejecting the conclusion of wisdom, thou doest wrong to the great mystery of the Resurrection, on which all our reliance is fixed. For remember the exclamation of Paul: If the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins. And again: Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we witnessed of God that He raised up Christ: Whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised.

For what can be raised up save that which is fallen? or what restored to life, save that which is bowed down in death? And how shall we expect to rise again, if so be that Christ raised not up His own Temple, making Himself, for us, the Firstfruits of them which are asleep, and the Firstborn from the dead? Or how shall this mortal put on immortality, if, as some think, it be lost in total annihilation? For how shall it escape this fate if it have no hope of a new life? Do not, then, swerve from orthodoxy in the faith, because a miracle was accomplished; but rather be wise, and add this to the other marvellous works that Christ did.

For observe how, by unexpectedly entering when the doors were shut, Christ showed, once more, that He was by Nature God, and no other than He Who had erewhile dwelt among them; and also, by laying bare the wounded Side of His Body, and by showing the print of the nails, He gave us complete satisfaction that He had raised that Temple of His Body which had hung upon the Cross, and had restored to life that Body which He had worn,

thereby subduing death, which is due to all flesh, inasmuch as He was by Nature Life and God. What need, then, was there for Him to show them His Hands and Side, if, as some perversely think, He did not rise again with His Body? And, if He wished His disciples not to entertain this idea concerning Him, why did He not rather appear in another form, and, disdaining the likeness of flesh, conjure up other thoughts in their minds'? But, as it is, He thought it of so great importance that they should be convinced of the Resurrection of His Body, that, when the time even seemed to call Him to change His Body into some form of ineffable and surpassing Majesty, He resolved in His Providence to appear once more as He had been of old, that He might not be thought to be wearing any other form than that in which also He had suffered crucifixion.

For that our eyes could not have endured the glory of the holy Body, if Christ had chosen to reveal it unto the disciples before He ascended to the Father, is easily to be inferred, when we reflect upon His transfiguration on the Mount before the holy disciples. For the blessed Matthew the Evangelist writes, that Jesus took Peter, and James, and John, and went up into the mountain, and was transfigured before them: and His Face did shine as lightning, and His garments became white as snow, and they could not endure the sight, but fell on their faces. Very appropriately, then, our Lord Jesus Christ, as He had not yet transformed the Temple of His Body into its due and proper majesty, still appeared in His original shape, not wishing the belief in the Resurrection to be transferred to another form or body than that which He had received from the Holy Virgin, in which also He was crucified, and died, according to the Scripture, the power of death extending only over Flesh, from which also it was driven forth. For if His Body, after death, did not rise again, what sort of death was vanquished, and in what way was the power of corruption weakened? For it could not be by the death of a single rational being, or soul, or angel, or even the very Word of God.

When, then, the power of death has reference only to that which is doomed by nature to corruption, with this it is that the power of the Resurrection is concerned, and with this alone, in order that the dominion of the lord of this world might be taken away. The entry of our Lord through the closed doors must be classed, by men of wisdom, with the other miracles that He wrought. He then greeted His holy disciples. Peace be unto you, He says; meaning by peace, Himself. For while Christ is present among men it follows that the tranquillity of their minds is assured unto them. Paul also declared that this boon is granted to those who believe on Him, when he says: The peace of Christ, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts; meaning by the peace of Christ which passeth all understanding nothing else than His Spirit, of Which if any man partake he shall be filled with everything that is good.

20 The disciples, therefore, were glad when they saw the Lord.

Hereby, also, the blessed Evangelist testifies to the truth of our Saviour's Words, when he says that the disciples were full of peace and joy of heart when they saw Jesus. For we remember the mysterious utterance that He spake unto them concerning His precious Cross and Resurrection from the dead, saying: A little while, and ye behold Me no more; and again

a little while, and ye shall see Me; and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one talceth away from you. The Jews, indeed, whose minds were transported by a frenzy of fury, rejoiced when they saw Jesus nailed to the Cross, while the heart of the holy disciples was heavy laden with an intolerable burthen of sorrow. But as He is by Nature Life, He overcame the power of death, and rose again, and the joy of the Jews was extinguished, while the heaviness of the holy disciples was turned into joy, and nothing could rob or deprive them of their soul's delight. Christ, having died once for all to put away sin, dieth no more, as is written. For He is alive for evermore, and of a surety He will preserve those whose hope is in Him, in joy without ceasing. He once more greets them with the oft-repeated assurance: Peace be unto you; laying down, as it were, this law for the children of the Church.

Therefore, also, more especially in the assembling and gathering of ourselves together in holy places, at the very commencement of the blessed mystery of the Eucharist, we repeat this saying to one another. For our being at peace with each other and with God must be accounted a fountain and source of all good. Therefore, also, Paul, when he prays that those who are called may enjoy the highest of all blessings, says: Grace to you and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; and also, when he invites those who have not yet believed to make their peace with God, he says: We are ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God. None the less, also, the Prophet Isaiah exhorts us, crying out: Let us make peace with Him, let us make peace who come. The meaning of the saying well befits the Dispenser of Peace, or rather the Peace of all men; that is, Christ, for He is our peace, according to the Scripture.

21 Then said He to them again, Peace be unto you: as the living Father sent Me, even so send I you.

Hereby our Lord Jesus Christ ordained the disciples to be guides and teachers of the world, and to be ministers of His Divine mysteries, and also bade them, for the time was now come, like lights to illuminate and enlighten, not merely the country of Judaea, according to the limit of the commandment of the Law, which extended from Dan even unto Beersheba, according to the Scripture, but rather also all under the sun, and men scattered throughout all lands, wheresoever they dwelt. The saying of Paul, therefore, is true: No man taketh the honour unto himself, but he that is called of God. For our Lord Jesus Christ called into His most glorious apostleship, before all others, His own disciples, and firmly fixed the whole earth, which was well-nigh tottering and in the act of falling, pointing out, as God, men to be props thereof who were well able to support it. Therefore, also, He thus spake by the mouth of the Psalmist, concerning the earth and the Apostles: I have fixed the pillars of it; for the blessed disciples were as the pillars and ground of the truth, whom also He says that He sent forth, even as the Father had sent Him; showing at the same time the dignity of their apostle-ship, and the incomparable honour of the power vouchsafed unto them, and also in all likelihood suggesting the method of life the Apostles were to follow.

For if He thought it meet that He should send forth His own disciples, even as the Father had sent Him, was it not necessary for those who were destined to imitate His mission to ascertain what the Father sent forth the Son for to do? In divers ways, then, expounding unto us the character of His own mission, He said in one place: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; and again: They that are whole have no need of a physician; but they that are sick: and again, in another place: For I am come down from heaven, not to do Mine own Will, but the Will of Him That sent Me; and yet once more: For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him. Summing up, therefore, in a few words the character of their mission, He says that He sent them even as the Father had sent Him, that they might know thereby that they were bound to call sinners to repentance, and to minister to those who were in evil plight, whether of body or soul, and in all their dealings upon earth, not in any wise to follow their own will, but the Will of Him That sent them, and to save the world by their teaching, so far as was possible. And in truth we shall find the holy disciples eager to show the utmost zeal in performing all these things;

and it is not difficult for any one to satisfy himself of this, who has once turned his attention to the Acts of the Apostles, and the words of the holy Paul.

22, 23 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

After dignifying the holy Apostles with the glorious distinction of the apostleship, and appointing them ministers and priests of the Divine Altar, as I have just said, He at once sanctifies them by vouchsafing His Spirit unto them, through the outward sign of His Breath, that we might be firmly convinced that the Holy Spirit is not alien to the Son, but Consubstantial with Him, and through Him proceeding from the Father; He shows that the gift of the Spirit necessarily attends those who are ordained by Him to be Apostles of God. And why? Because they could have done nothing pleasing unto God, and could not have triumphed over the snares of sin, if they had not been clothed with power from on high, and been transformed into something other than they were before. Therefore, also, it was said to one of old time: The Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt be turned into another man; and the Prophet Isaiah also declared that those who waited upon the Lord should renew their strength. The wise Paul, too, when he says that he surpassed some in his labours, that is, in the deeds of an Apostle, adds at once: Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Besides, we say this, that the disciples would never at all have understood the mystery that is in Christ, nor have been true guides in this knowledge, if they had not advanced in the light of the Spirit to a revelation of things which surpass man's reason and understanding, a revelation which is able to point out to them the heights to which they were bound to ascend; for no man can say Jesus is Lord, as Paul says, but in the Holy Spirit. As, then, they were destined to proclaim that Jesus was the Lord, that is, to preach that He was God

and Lord of necessity, therefore they received the grace of the Holy Spirit in immediate connexion with the office of apostleship, Christ granting Him unto them, not ministering to the desires of another, but rather vouchsafing Him of Himself; for the Spirit could only come down unto us from the Father through the Son. The old and written Law, however, which contained shadows and types of the reality, ordained that the appointment of priests should be performed in a more physical way, so to say, and that their appointment should be attended with more outward display. For the blessed Moses, by God's command, bade Aaron and the Levites wash themselves with water:

then he slew the ram of consecration and anointed with the blood the tip of Aaron's right ear, as is written, and also put of the blood upon the thumb of the right hand, and upon the big toe of the right foot, giving an outline and type, as in a picture, of the mystery concerning Christ. For in the presence here of water and blood, the instruments of sanctification, how can there be any question that in an obscure type an outline was given of the fair beauty of the reality? Our Lord Jesus Christ, transforming into the power of truth the figure of the Law, consecrates through Himself the ministers of the Divine Altar. For He is the Lamb of consecration, and He consecrates by actual sanctification, making men partakers in His Nature, through participation in the Spirit, and in some sort strengthening the nature of man into a power and glory that is superhuman.

And there can be no doubt that the explanation I have here given can be proved not to err from the truth. But, perhaps, someone will come and say as follows, with a praiseworthy desire for knowledge, it may be, putting to us the question, "Where then, and when, did the Saviour's disciples receive the grace of the Spirit? When the Saviour appeared unto them in the house, immediately after the Resurrection, and breathed upon them, saying: Receive ye the Holy Ghost; or in the days of the holy Pentecost, when, as they were again assembled together in one place, suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance? For either, such an one will say, we must suppose that a double grace was given unto them, or we must remain in ignorance of the occasion on which they, in fact, became partakers in the Holy Spirit; if indeed our Saviour's saying, and that which is written in the Acts of the holy Apostles, is found to be true. And, indeed, the question may well excite our perplexity, especially as Christ Himself said: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter cannot come unto you; but when I depart, I will send Him unto you;

for the inquirer will perhaps go on to say, "The Truth, that is, Christ, cannot lie. When, then, He said in plain words that the Comforter would not come unto the disciples unless He were taken up unto the Father, but of a surety He would send Him then, when He was in heaven at His side; how, then, can He be supposed to grant the gift of the Spirit, though His journey from hence was not yet accomplished? Still, though the inquiry is very obscure, and very likely to cause perplexity, it yet allows of an appropriate solution, when we remember our

faith that Christ is not as one of ourselves, but rather is God, and of God, and so exercises dominion over His own Words, and moulds them to suit His purposes.

For He proclaimed that He would send down to us from heaven the Comforter, when He was ascended to God the Father; and this, indeed, He did, when He had gone away to the Father, and vouchsafed to shed forth the Spirit abundantly upon all who were willing to receive it. For any man could receive it, through faith, that is, and Holy Baptism; and then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the voice of the Prophet: I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh. But it was necessary that the Son should appear as co-operating with the Father in granting the Spirit; it was necessary that those who believed on Him should understand that He is the Power of the Father, That has created this whole world, and called man out of nothing into being. For God the Father, at the beginning, by His own Word, took of the dust of the ground, as is written, and fashioned the animal, that is man, and endowed him with a soul, according to His Will, and illuminated him with a share of His own Spirit; for He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, as is written. And when it came to pass that through disobedience man fell under the power of death, and lost his ancient honour, God the Father built him up and restored him to newness of life, through the Son, as at the beginning. And how did the Son restore him?

By the death of His own Flesh He slew death, and brought the race of man back again into incorruption; for Christ rose again for us. In order, then, that we might learn that He it was Who at the beginning created our nature, and sealed us with the Holy Spirit, our Saviour again grants the Spirit, through the outward sign of His Breath, to the holy disciples, as being the firstfruits of renewed nature. For Moses writes concerning our creation of old, that God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. As, then, at the beginning, man was formed and came into being, so likewise is he renewed; and as he was then formed in the Image of his Creator, so likewise now, by participation in the Spirit, is he transformed into the Likeness of his Maker. For that the Spirit impresses the Saviour's Image on the hearts of those who receive Him surely does not admit of question; for Paul plainly exhorteth those who had fallen through weakness into observance of the Law, in the words: My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you. For he says that Christ will not be formed in them save by partaking of the Holy Spirit, and living according to the law of the Gospel. Therefore, as in the firstfruits of creation, which is made regenerate into incorruption and glory and into the Image of God, Christ establishes anew His own Spirit in His disciples.

For it was necessary that we should also perceive this truth, namely, that He brings down and grants the Spirit unto us. Therefore, also, He said: All things, whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine. And as the Father hath, of Himself and in Himself, His own Spirit, so also the Son hath the Spirit in Himself, because He is Consubstantial with Him, and essentially proceeded from Him, having by Nature in Himself all the attributes of His Father.

From the following fact we can prove that, many as were the actions that He repeatedly promised us that He would perform in due season, He even in part anticipated the appointed

time in the performance of them, for our edification, that we might be fully convinced that whatsoever He has spoken will assuredly come to pass. He declared that He would raise up the dead, and bring back again to life those who are lying in the earth and in tombs. The hour cometh, He says, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment. And, desiring to satisfy us that He could readily accomplish this, He taught, saying: I am the Resurrection and the Life. But, inasmuch as the vastness of the miracle made it difficult of belief that the dead could ever be restored to life, He anticipated to our profit the time of the Resurrection, and gave us a sign by raising Lazarus and the widow's son and the daughter of Jairus. And what else besides? As He said that full of glory would be the resurrection of the Saints, for then, He says, shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father, in order that here again He might be believed to speak truth, He granted the sight thereof before the time to the disciples.

For He took Peter and James and John, and went up into the mountain, and was transfigured before them: and His Face did shine as lightning, and His garments became white as snow. Just as, then, although He promised to accomplish these things in their season, yet He performed the works in part and with a limited scope even out of due time, as an earnest and foretaste of that which was expected to come to pass and to affect the whole world, so doing in order that faith in Him might not be shaken; even so, likewise, after having said that He would send the Comforter to us when He went away to the Father, and having fixed this occasion for granting this grace universally, He performed in the persons of His disciples the first instalment, as it were, of the promise, for the many just and sufficient reasons we have previously given.

They, therefore, partook of the Holy Spirit when He breathed on them, saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; for it were impossible for Christ to lie, and He would never have said "Receive" without giving; but in the days of Holy Pentecost, when God more openly proclaimed His grace, and manifested the stablishment of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, there appeared unto them tongues through flame, not signifying the beginning of the gift of the Spirit in their hearts, but rather having reference to the time when they were first endowed with the gift of languages. It is written, indeed, that they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Note, that they began to speak, not to receive sanctification, and that the gift of divers tongues came down upon them; and this was the working of the Spirit that was in them. For just as the Father spake from heaven, and bare witness to His Son, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; and did this to satisfy the minds of those who heard, uttering, or causing to be uttered, a sound as of some instrument which fell upon the ear; even so, also, in the case of the holy disciples He made the manifestation of the grace given them more public, sending down upon them tongues as of fire, and causing the descent of the Holy Spirit to resemble the sound of the rushing of a mighty wind.

And that this very portent was given unto the Jews by way of a sign, you will readily see, if you listen to God, the Lord of all, saying by the mouth of the Prophet: By men of strange tongues, and by the lips of strangers, will I speak unto this people, and yet will they not believe. And to the intent that we might believe that the blessed disciples did, in fact, partake of the Holy Spirit, and were from henceforth honoured with the grace of Christ from above, and that they were able to expound the truth, and that the glory of their apostleship was worthy all admiration, witness being borne thereto by the gift from on high, therefore it was that fire came down in the form of tongues.

I think, indeed, that I have here said enough to accurately explain the meaning of the passage; but, inasmuch as we are bound to take every precaution in our treatise, that no stumblingblock spring up to offend the brethren through the carping spirit of any amongst us, let us make this addition to what we have said, and refute the vain talk that we may expect will be started. We shall find, then, in the passage that follows, the words: Thomas, called Didymus, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. How, then, someone may not unreasonably inquire, if he were away, was he in fact made partaker in the Holy Spirit when the Saviour appeared unto the disciples and breathed on them, saying: Receive ye the Holy Ghost? We reply that the power of the Spirit pervaded every man who received grace, and fulfilled the aim of the Lord Who gave Him unto them; and Christ gave the Spirit not to some only but to all the disciples. Therefore, if any were absent, they also received Him, the munificence of the Giver not being confined to those only who were present, but extending to the entire company of the holy Apostles. And that this interpretation is not strained, or our idea extravagant, we may convince you from Holy Writ itself, bringing forward as a proof a passage in the Books of Moses. The Lord God commanded the all-wise Moses to select elders, to the number of seventy, from the assembly of the Jews, and plainly declared:

I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee and will put it upon them. Moses, as he was bidden, brought them together, and fulfilled the Divine decree. Two only of the men who were included in the number of the seventy elders were left behind, and remained in the assembly, to wit, Eldad and Medad. Then when God put upon them all the Divine Spirit, as He had promised, those whom Moses had collected together immediately received grace, and prophesied; but none the less also the two who were in the assembly prophesied, and, in fact, the grace from above came upon them first. Nay, further, Joshua, that was called the son of Nun, who was the constant attendant of Moses, not understanding at once the meaning of the mystery, but thinking that after the manner of Dathan and Abiram they were rivals in the art of prophecy to those whom Moses had brought together, said unto him: Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp; my lord Moses, forbid them. And what answered that truly wise and great man, seeing in his wisdom the working of the grace given unto them, and the power of the Spirit? Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them! Observe how he rebukes the saying of Joshua, who knew not what had been done. Would that, he says, the Spirit were given to all the people!

Nay, this will indeed come to pass in due season, when the Lord, that is, Christ, will grant unto them His Spirit; breathing upon His holy Apostles as upon the firstfruits of those whose due it is to receive Him, and saying: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Then, if Thomas were absent, he was not cut off from receiving the Spirit, for the Spirit pervaded all whose due it was to receive Him, and who were included among the number of His honoured disciples.

Christ, when He gave the Spirit unto them, said: Whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained; though only the living God is able and powerful to grant unto sinners remission of sins; for whom could it befit to pardon the transgressions that sinners have committed against the Divine Law, save the Lawgiver Himself? You may, if you choose, see the meaning of the saying from the analogy of human affairs. Who has authority to meddle with the decrees of earthly monarchs, and who tries to undo that which has been ordained by the will and judgment of rulers, save only someone who is invested with regal honour and dignity? Therefore, wise was the saying, Insolent is he who saith unto the king, Thou breakest the law. In what way, then, and in what sense did the Saviour invest His disciples with the dignity which befits the Nature of God alone? The Word that is in the Father cannot err; and this He did, and whatsoever He doeth, He doeth well. For He thought it meet that they who have once been endued with the Spirit of Him Who is God and Lord, should have power also to remit or retain the sins of whomsoever they would, the Holy Spirit That dwelt in them remitting or retaining them according to His Will, though the deed were done through human instrumentality.

They who have the Spirit of God remit or retain sins in two ways, as I think. For they invite to Baptism those to whom this sacrament is already due from the purity of their lives, and their tried adherence to the faith; and they hinder and exclude others who are not as yet worthy of the Divine grace. And in another sense, also, they remit and retain sins, by. rebuking erring children of the Church, and granting pardon to those who repent; just as, also, Paul gave up him that had committed fornication at Corinth, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved, and admitted him again into fellowship, that he might not be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow, as he says in his letter. When, then, the Spirit of Christ dwelling in our hearts doeth things which befit God alone, surely He is the living God, invested with the glorious dignity of the Divine Nature, and having power over sacred laws.

24, 25 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His Hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His Side, I will not believe.

The greatest marvels are always attended by incredulity, and any action which seems to exceed the measure of probability is ill-received by those who hear of it. But the sight of the eyes succeeds in banishing these doubts, and, as it were, compels a man by force to assent to the evidence before him. This was the state of mind of the wise Thomas, who did

not readily accept the true testimony of the other disciples to our Saviour's Resurrection, although, according to the Mosaic Law, in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established. I think, however, that it was not so much that the disciple discredited what was told him, but rather that he was distracted with the utmost grief, because he had not been thought worthy to see our Saviour with his own eyes. For he, perhaps, thought that he would never receive that blessing. He knew that the Lord was by Nature Life, and that He was able to escape death itself, and to destroy the power of corruption; for surely He "Who released others from its trammels could deliver His own Flesh. In his exceeding great joy he affected incredulity, and though he well-nigh leapt in his ecstasy of delight, he longed to see Him before his very sight, and to be perfectly satisfied that He had risen again to life according to His promise. For our Saviour said: Children, a little while and ye behold Me no more;

and again a little while, and ye shall see Me, and your heart shall rejoice. I think that the disciple's want of faith was extremely opportune and well-timed, in order that, through the satisfaction of his mind, we also who come after him might be unshaken in our faith that the very Body that hung upon the Cross and suffered death was quickened by the Father through the Son. Therefore, also, Paul saith: Because if thou shalt say with thy mouth, Jesus is Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For since it was not the nature of flesh itself which brought back life, but the deed was rather accomplished by the working of the ineffable Nature of God, in which naturally abides a quickening power, the Father through the Son manifested His power upon the Temple of Christ's Body; not as though the Word was powerless to raise His own Body, but because the Father doeth whatsoever He doeth through the Son, for He is His Power, and whatsoever the Son bringeth to effect proceedeth also of a surety from the Father. We, therefore, are taught, through the slight want of faith shown by the blessed Thomas, that the mystery of the Resurrection is effected upon our earthly bodies, and in Christ as the Firstfruits of the race;

and that He was no phantom or ghost, fashioned in human shape, and simulating the features of humanity, nor yet, as others have foolishly surmised, a spiritual body that is compounded of a subtle and ethereal substance different from the flesh. For some attach this meaning to the expression "spiritual body. For since all our expectation and the significance of our irrefutable faith, after the confession of the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity, centres in the mystery concerning the flesh, the blessed Evangelist has very pertinently put this saying of Thomas side by side with the summary of what preceded. For observe that Thomas does not desire simply to see the Lord, but looks for the marks of the nails, that is, the wounds upon His Body. For he affirmed that then, indeed, he would believe and agree with the rest that Christ had indeed risen again, and risen again in the flesh. For that which is dead may rightly be said to return to life, and the Resurrection surely was concerned with that which was subject unto death.

26, 27 And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see My Hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into My Side: and be not faithless, but believing.

Christ appeared once more unto His disciples miraculously by His Divine power. For He did not, like unto us, bid them open the doors for Him to enter in, but disdaining, as it were, the natural sequence of events, passed within the doors, and unexpectedly appeared in the middle of the room, presenting the same kind of miracle before the sight of the blessed Thomas as He had performed on the former occasion. For he that was most deficient in faith had need of healing medicine. He made use of the greeting so often on His Lips, and solemnly gave them the blessed assurance of peace, as a pattern unto us, as we have said before. One may well be amazed at the minuteness of detail shown in this passage. For such was the extreme accuracy that the compiler of this book took pains to observe, that he is not content with simply saying that Christ manifested Himself to the holy disciples, but explains that it was after eight days, and that they were gathered together. For what else can their being all brought together in one house mean? We say this to point out the diligent care that the Apostle so admirably displays, and because Christ hereby has made clear unto us the occasion of our assembling, and gathering ourselves together on His account. For He visits, and in some sort dwells with, those assembled together for His sake, especially on the eighth day, that is, the Lord's day. Let us reckon it up, if you so please:

On the one occasion He appeared unto the other disciples; on the other, He manifested Himself to them, when Thomas was also present. It is written in the preceding passage: When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut, He stood in the midst. Note, that it was on the first day of the week, that is, the Lord's day, when the disciples were gathered together, that He was seen of them, and that likewise also He appeared unto them on the eighth day following. And we must not, because he says eight days after, suppose that he means the ninth day, but that when he says this he includes the eighth day itself, on which He appeared, in the number given.

With good reason, then, are we accustomed to have sacred meetings in churches on the eighth day. And, to adopt the language of allegory, as the idea necessarily demands, we indeed close the doors, but yet Christ visits us and appears unto us all, both invisibly and also visibly; invisibly as God, but also visibly in the Body. He suffers us to touch His holy Flesh, and gives us thereof. For through the grace of God we are admitted to partake of the blessed Eucharist, receiving Christ into our hands, to the intent that we may firmly believe that He did in truth raise up the Temple of His Body. For that the partaking of the blessed Eucharist is a confession of the Resurrection of Christ is clearly proved by His own Words, which He spake when He Himself performed the type of the mystery; for He brake bread, as it is written, and gave it to them, saying: This is My Body, which is given for you unto remission of sins: this do in remembrance of Me. Participation, then, in the Divine mysteries, in addition to filling us with Divine blessedness, is a true confession and

memorial of Christ's dying and rising again for us and for our sake. Let us, therefore, after touching Christ's Body, shrink back from unbelief in Him as utter ruin, and rather be found well grounded in the full assurance of faith.

Let the attentive reader call to mind that our Lord repulsed Mary Magdalene from touching Him, saying plainly: Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father. Yet He allows Thomas to touch His Side, and to feel with his fingers the print of the nails. We have already explained why our Lord did this, but none the less will we call back to mind the reason, briefly recapitulating what we said. For not yet had the time arrived for Mary to touch Him, because she had not yet been sanctified by the grace of the Holy Spirit; for while Christ was yet in our midst, and had not yet ascended to the Father in heaven, it was impossible to see the descent of the Comforter fully accomplished among men. It was meet, however, for Thomas to touch Him, as he, as well as the rest, had been enriched with the Spirit. For, as we said before, he was not on account of his absence without his share in the Spirit. For the munificence of the Giver reached unto him also, when the boon was granted to the entire company of the holy disciples.

I think we ought also to investigate the following question. Thomas felt our Saviour's Side, and found the wounds made by the soldier's spear, and saw the print of the nails. Then how was it, someone may inquire, that the marks of corruption were apparent in an incorruptible Body? For the abiding trace of the holes bored through the Hands and Side, and the marks of wounds and punctures made by steel, affords proof of physical corruption, though the true and incontrovertible fact that Christ's Body was transformed into incorrup-tion points to a necessary discarding of all the results of corruption, together with corruption itself. For will any man who is lame, at the Resurrection have a maimed foot or limb? And if any man have lost the sight of his eyes in this life, will he be raised again blind? How then, someone may say, can we have shaken off the yoke of corruption, if its results still remain and rule over our members? It is essential, I think, to inquire into this question; and this we say, with reference to the difficulties raised by the passage. We are as far as possible anxious to assent to the contention that at the time of the resurrection there will be no remnant of adventitious corruption left in us, but, as the wise Paul said concerning this body of ours, that which is sown in weakness is raised in power, and that which is sown in dishonour is raised in glory.

And what can we expect the resurrection of this body in power and glory to be, if it does not imply that it will cast off all the weakness and dishonour of corruption and disease, and return to its original purity? For the human body was not made for death and corruption. But, inasmuch as Thomas required this proof for his perfect satisfaction, our Lord Jesus Christ, of necessity, therefore, in order to leave no excuse for our want of faith, appears even as he sought to see Him; for even when He ascended into heaven itself, and made known the meaning of the mystery concerning Himself to the rulers, principalities, and powers above, and to those who commanded the legions of angels, He appeared also unto them in this same guise that they might believe that in very truth the Word That was of the

Father, and in the Father, became Man for our sake, and that they might know that such was His care for His creatures that He died for our salvation. And, in order to make the meaning of my explanation clearer to my hearers, I will add the very words spoken by the mouth of Isaiah on this subject. He saith: Who is This That cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra? They who raise this shout, I mean the cry: Who is This That cometh from Edom? that is, from the earth, are angels and rational powers, for they are marvelling at the Lord ascending into heaven.

And, seeing Him almost, as it were, dyed in His own Blood, they say unto Him, not yet apprehending the mystery: Why is Thy apparel red, and why are Thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-vats? For they compare the colour of the blood to new wine, lately trodden in the press. And what saith Christ unto them? First, in order that He may be known to be the living God, He saith: I speak righteousness; using the word speak, instead of "teach. And most assuredly. He that teacheth righteousness must be a Lawgiver, and if a Lawgiver, surely also God. Then say the angels unto Him, as Christ showeth them the marks of the nails: What are these wounds in Thy Hands? and the Lord answereth: Those with which I was wounded in the house of My beloved. For Israel was the house that the Lord loved, and Israel smote Him with nails and spear. For the outrages of the soldiers may justly be ascribed unto the Jews, for they brought the Lord to His death. Therefore, when He wished to satisfy the holy angels that He was, in fact, a Man, and that He had undergone the Cross for us, and that He was risen again to life from the dead, Christ was not content with mere words, but showed unto them the marks of His suffering.

What is there to astonish us in the fact, that when He desired to rid the blessed Thomas of his unbelief He showed the print of the nails, appearing unto him, contrary to expectation, for the advantage of all men, and to the intent that we might believe without question that the mystery of the Resurrection was actually accomplished, no other body being raised but that which suffered death?

28 Thomas answered Him, and saith unto Him, My Lord and my God.

He that had shortly before been slack in the duty of faith was now eager to profess it. and in a short time his fault was wholly cured. For after an interval of only eight days the hindrances to his faith were removed by Christ, Who showed unto him the print of the nails and His wounded Side. But, perhaps, someone will ask the question: "Tell me why did the minds of the holy disciples carry out so rigid an inquiry, and so careful a scrutiny? For would not the sight of the Lord's Body, the features of His Face, and the measure of His Stature, have sufficed to prove that He had indeed risen from the dead, and to secure His recognition? What do we reply? The inspired disciples were not free from doubt, although they had seen the Lord. For. they thought that He was not in very truth the same as He Who of old had lived and dwelt among them, and had hung upon the Cross, but rather that He was a Spirit, cunningly fashioned like unto our Saviour's Image, and simulating the features of the form which they knew. For they fell into this delusion not without some apparent excuse, as He miraculously entered when the doors were closed; in spite of the fact that a body of coarse

earthy mould requires a hole through which it can pass, and necessitates the aperture of the door to correspond in width with the size of the body.

For this cause our Lord Jesus Christ, greatly to our profit, laid bare His Side to Thomas, and exposed the wounds on His Person, through his agency giving adequate proof to all. For though of Thomas alone is recorded the saying: Except I shall put my hands and see the prints of the nails, and put my hand into His Side, I will not believe, yet was the charge of lack of faith common to them all; and we shall find that the minds of the other disciples were not free from perplexity, though they said unto the holy Thomas: We have seen the Lord. And that what we say does not err from the truth we may easily perceive by what the Divine Luke tells us: As they spake these things, He stood in the midst of them, that is, of course, Christ, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do reasonings arise in your hearts? See My Hands and My Feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold Me having. And when He had said this, He showed them His Hands and His Feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

And He took it, and did eat before them. You see how the thought of unbelief is found lurking, not in the blessed Thomas alone, but that the minds of the other disciples were afflicted with a kindred disease. For, lo and behold! seeing that their faith wavered even after the sight of the wounds upon the Cross, He thought it right to convince them by another act, in nowise suited to a spirit, but specially appropriate to earthly bodies and the nature of flesh. For He ate the fish that was brought unto Him, or the portion of one. For when no mark at all of corruption any longer remained after the Resurrection of His holy Flesh, because He lived again to incorruption, and when it was incredible that His Body stood in need of food as heretofore, He yet showed unto them the print of the nails, and did not refuse to partake of food, in order that He might establish the great mystery of the Resurrection, and cause faith in it to spring up in the souls of us all. He does acts wholly alien to the nature of spirits. For how, and in what way, could the prints of nails, and the traces of wounds, and participation in bodily food, be found to exist in a naked spirit unconnected with flesh, to which all these things are suitable by the law of its being and the conditions under which it exists?

In order, then, that none might think that Christ rose again a mere spirit, or an impalpable body, shadowy and ethereal, to which some give the name of spiritual, but that the selfsame body that was sown in corruption, as Paul saith, might be believed to have risen again, He openly did acts suitable to a palpable human form. What we said at first, however, namely, that the blessed disciple did not so much lack faith owing to infirmity of judgment, but rather was affected in this way by excess of joy, will not be wide of the mark. For we have heard the saying of the blessed Luke concerning all the others: And while they disbelieved for joy and wondered. It was wonder, therefore, that made the disciples slow to be convinced.

But as henceforward there was no excuse for unbelief, as they saw with their own eyes, the blessed Thomas accordingly unflinchingly confessed his faith in Him, saying: My Lord and my God. For we must all confess that it follows of a surety that He That is Lord by Nature and Ruler over all is also God, just as also universal dominion and the glory of sovereignty is clearly seen to appertain to the living God.

Observe, too, that when he says My Lord and my God, he uses the article to show that there was One Lord and One God. For he does not say without the qualification of the article, My Lord and my God, to prevent any one from imagining that he called Him Lord or God as he might have done one of ourselves or of the holy angels. For there are gods many and lords many, in this sense, in heaven and on earth, as the wise Paul has taught us; but rather he recognises Him as, in a special sense, the One Lord and God, as begotten of the Father, Who is by Nature Lord and God, when he says, My Lord and my God; and, what is a still greater indication of the truth, the Saviour heard His disciple saying this, and saw that he rested in the firm conviction that He was, in fact, the Lord and God, and thought it not right to rebuke him. Christ, then, approved his faith, and with justice. And you may easily see that what I say is true. For to him that was possessed of this faith He says, at the end of the Gospel, as unto the rest: Go ye and make disciples of all the nations. And if He bids him who was thus minded teach all nations, and appointed him to instruct the world in His mysteries, He wishes us to have a like faith. For He is, in fact, Lord and God by Nature, even when Incarnate Man. For observe that the disciple, when he had touched His Hands, and Feet, and Side, made unto Him this confession of faith, not severing Emmanuel into a duality of Sons, but recognising Him as one and the same in the Flesh, for Jesus Christ is One Lord, according to the Scripture.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.

This saying of the Saviour is very pertinent and we may derive the greatest profit therefrom. For hereby He showed His great care for our souls; for He is good, and willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, according to the Scripture. What is here said may not unlikely excite surprise. It was, indeed, necessary for Him to be long-suffering, as was His wont, with Thomas, who uttered that saying, and also with the other disciples with him, who thought that He was a spirit or apparition; and also to exhibit, as He very readily did for universal satisfaction, the print of the nails and His pierced Side; and also, contrary to use and need, to partake of food, that no plea for their unbelief might be left to those who sought to gain the benefits of His death. But it was also essential to have regard to the security of our faith. It was necessary also to have another end in view, namely, that those who should come at the last times should not easily be drawn into unbelief. For it was likely that some should err from the straight path, and from ignorance, practising a spurious kind of caution, refuse to accept the resurrection of the dead, and put themselves forward, and say unto us, like that unbelieving disciple: Except I shall see in His Hands the print of the nails, and put my hand into His Side, I will not believe.

What sufficient means of satisfying them would there have been, Christ being no longer on earth but having ascended into heaven? And would they not have been, at times, thought to be justified in thus speaking, when they appeared to be imitating therein the disciple of the Saviour, and, considering it a noble thing not to believe off-hand, but rather to require more for their complete assurance, claimed for themselves the sight that was shown to the holy disciples? Christ, therefore, restrains men from such an inclination, and keeps them from falling. For being truly God, He knew well the malicious designs of the devil and his practice to deceive. And, therefore, He declares that blessed are they who believe without seeing, for they are surely worthy of admiration. And why? Because unquestioning belief is due to what lies before our eyes, for there is nothing at all to raise doubt in us. But if a man accept what he has not seen, and believe that to be true which the words of his instructor in mysteries have brought to his ears, then he honours with praiseworthy faith Him that is preached. Blessed, therefore, shall be the lot of every man that believeth through the voice of the holy Apostles, which were eye-witnesses of Christ's actions, and ministers of the Word, as Luke says. To them must we hearken if we are enamoured of life eternal, and cherish in our hearts the desire to abide in the mansions above.

30, 31 Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye may have eternal life in His Name. He sums up the book in a manner, and makes plain to His hearers the object of the preaching of the Gospel. For, he says, this book was composed that ye may believe, and believing might have eternal life. He says that the signs were many, and does not limit the actions and marvellous works of our Saviour to those which were accurately known by him personally, and recorded by him, and leaves the other disciples to publish, if they chose, whatever was vividly impressed on their memory. For all the signs, he says, are not written in this book, but those only have been inserted by me which I thought best able to convince my hearers that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

This is what the inspired Evangelist says; and I think, too, that it may be of use to make the following observation: For if the whole meaning of the record is directed to producing in us this faith, and is well calculated to make us steadfast in the conviction that the Child of the Holy Virgin, Who was called Jesus by the voice of the angel, is the very Christ Whose coming was proclaimed by Holy Writ; and if He be, indeed, very Christ and none other----not merely a son but the Son of God in a unique and special sense; what then, I ask, can they who, through ignorance, are in doubt about the faith, and who, furthermore, strive to teach others to believe that there are two Christs----what can they do or say in their defence, and what will be the sentence passed upon them when the great day shall come? For they divide Christ into two separate Beings, Man and God the Word, even after His union with man, and His ineffable and wholly incomprehensible Incarnation. Therefore are they in error, and have wandered far astray from the truth, and denied the Master that bought them. For if we examine into the definition of the being of Christ, and form a conception of Him, we

find that the flesh is different from God the Word, Which is in the Father, and proceedeth from Him;

but if we consider the meaning of 'the Incarnation, and strive to fathom so far as we are able this exceeding great mystery, we conceive of the Word as One with His own Flesh, though not converted into flesh. God forbid that we should so say, for the Nature of the Word is inconvertible and unchangeable, and admits of no shadow of turning. Rather do we maintain, according to our Holy and inspired Scriptures, that the Messiah, conceived of as attaining to the perfect definition of manhood through the Temple of flesh that enshrined His Godhead, is One only----Jesus, the Christ and the Son of God. Consider that the selfsame truth is found to have existence in the nature of ourselves who are men. For we are combined into one man composed of soul and body; the body and the soul that it contains being distinct, but nevertheless coinciding to form one perfect animal, and wholly incapable of separation after combination with each other.

xxi.1-6 After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and He manifested Himself on this wise. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of His disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee. They went forth, and entered into the boat; and that night they took nothing. But when day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach: howbeit the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye ought to eat? They answered Him, No. And He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. And they said, We toiled all night and took nothing: but at Thy word we will cast down the net. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

Our Lord Jesus Christ once more gladdens His disciples with the enjoyment of the sight of Himself, Whom they so greatly longed to see, and vouchsafes unto them a third visit, in addition to the other two, in order that He might confirm their minds, and render them unchangeably steadfast in faith towards Him. For how after they had seen Him not once, but now for the third time, could they fail to have their minds released from all wavering in the faith, and to become faithful instructors of the rest of mankind in the doctrines of the religion of Christ? Peter then goes forth with the others a fishing. For when he was bound on this errand they hurried with him, and doubtless our Saviour Christ is here seen working for their good. For He once said to them, when He put upon them the yoke of their discipleship, and called them to the dignity of apostleship: Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. In order, then, that He might convince them by a palpable sign that every Word that He had spoken would surely come to pass, and that His promise would result in complete fulfilment, He draws a convincing proof from the trade at which they were at work. For the blessed disciples were practising their art, and were fishing, but yet had they caught nothing, though they had toiled all the night.

And when it was already early morning, and the dawn was beginning to break, and the sun's rays to appear, Jesus stood on the beach. And they knew not that it was Jesus. And when He questioned them whether they had any fish fit for the table in their nets, they said they had taken nothing at all. Then He bids them cast down the net on the right side of the boat. And they, although all the night they had spent their toil in vain, replied: "At Thy word we will cast down the net. And when this was done, the weight of the fish that were caught overpowered the strength of the fishermen who were hauling it up.

Such is the narrative of the inspired Evangelist. As we have just observed, the Saviour, by the actual performance of a palpable miracle, satisfied the holy disciples that they were destined to be, as He had said, fishers of men. Come, then, let us convert, so far as in us lies, that which was fulfilled in type into the truth of which it is symbolical; and let us bear witness to the truth of the Saviour's Words, and, according to our ability, unfolding the meaning of everything that took place, let us put before those who may light on these pages what may serve in some measure, I think, to start a spiritual train of thought. For give instruction to a wise man, and, he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. I think, then, that the fact of the disciples fishing all the night, and taking nothing, but spending their labour in vain, signifies that no one, as we shall find, or very few, would be wholly won over by the teaching of the first instructors of old, and caught into their net to do God's pleasure in all things. We may regard what is very small in amount as equivalent to nothing, especially when it is taken out of a great multitude. And, surely, we must regard the number of mankind scattered throughout the whole world as exceedingly great. What hindrance, then, or obstacle was there in the way which rendered the labour of the pioneers of the faith fruitless?

And why did their preaching fail to bear fruit? There was still night and darkness, and a kind of mental mist and devilish deceit brooding over the eyes of the mind, not suffering men to perceive the true light of God. For there was no man that doeth good, as said the Psalmist; yea, not one; but all had gone astray and become abominable. And though the Israelites had been, in a manner, caught in the net by Moses, yet were they as though they had not been caught at all, and were devoted to the worship of types and shadows, and had no instruction in the law that bringeth to perfection. For that we shall find that the worship of types was abominable, and displeasing to God, it is easy to see, from His rejection of bloody sacrifices, and every kind of earthly and physical offering. To what purpose, He says, bring ye to Me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto Me.

This we say not wishing to disparage the first commandment given of old, nor with the intent to accuse the Law, but rather desiring to suggest to our hearers that as God the Lord of all hath regard only to the beauty of the Gospel life, even those who were caught in the net by the Law, and brought to the barren worship of shadows and types, were but on a par with those who had not been caught at all until the time of reformation dawned, Christ saying clearly, when He became Man, I am the Truth. And if it be necessary to add any

further words, I shall not shrink from doing so, if it be for our profit. They who were called by Moses to learn the Law, spurned the Law given unto them, and, as it were, opened their mouth wide and gaped upon the holy ordinance, and made the precepts of men their code of instruction, and relapsed into such stubbornness and perversity of heart that even the word of the holy prophets lost its power. Therefore, also, they cried: Lord, who hath believed our report? Jeremiah also exclaims: Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth: I have not helped any man, nor hath any man helped me. My strength hath failed me because of them that curse me.

Surely, then, one is constrained to admit that the disobedient and unruly Israelites were on a par with those who had not been caught at all, when they trampled under foot even the Law that Moses had laid down. And it needs no demonstration to show that the great multitude of the Gentiles was still uncaptured, and remained altogether outside the net. Darkness, then, and devilish night was in their hearts, driving out the light of true knowledge of God. Therefore they toiled, so to say, during the whole night, and still had their spiritual net barren of fish before Christ's coming; but when early morning came, that is, when the mist of the devil was dispersed, and the true light dawned, that is, Christ, and when Christ inquired of the toilers, Have you anything within your nets which may serve as food for God, Who thirsts, as it were, for the salvation of us all (for the Scripture called the conversion of the Samaritans His food), and when they gave His question the plain answer that they had nothing, then Christ bade them cast down the net again on the right side of the boat. For the blessed Moses also let down the line of instruction, that is, by the letter of the Law; but this was fishing on the left side, the commandment of Christ unto us being on the right. For incomparably greater, then, and far exceeding in honour and glory the commandments of the Law, is the teaching of Christ;

for the reality greatly surpasses the type, and the Master the servant, and the grace of the Spirit, which justifies, surpasses the letter, which condemneth. Christ's teaching, therefore, is placed on the right, the right hand signifying to us its superiority over the Law and the prophets.

The inspired disciples, then, without hesitation, obeyed the bidding of our Saviour, and let down the net. And the meaning of this is, that they did not seize fpr themselves the grace of apostleship, but at His bidding went forth to capture the souls of men. Go ye, He said, and make disciples of all the nations. The disciples themselves say, that at the Word of Christ they let down the net. For they fish for men only by the Saviour's Words and commandments in the Gospels. And great was the, multitude of fish within the net, so that the disciples, were no longer able to haul it up. For they who have been caught, and believed, are innumerable, and the marvel thereof seems in truth to surpass, and be out of all proportion to the strength of the holy Apostles. For it is the working of Christ, Who gathereth by His own power the multitude of the saved into the Church on earth, as into the net of the Apostles.

7-14 That disciple therefore, whom Jesus loved, saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea. But the. other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits off), dragging the net full of fishes. So when they got out upon the land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. And Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now taken. Simon Peter therefore went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, the net was not rent. Jesus saith unto them, Come and break your fast. And none of the disciples durst inquire of Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus cometh, and taketh the bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to His disciples, after that He was risen from the dead.

Again, in this passage, the writer of this book calls himself the beloved disciple----and he would seem to have been thus well beloved on account of his great discernment and purity of mind, and the keenness of his mental vision, and a disposition which enabled him readily to grasp the truth. And, in fact, he seized the meaning of the sign before the rest, and perceived Christ's Presence, and told the rest, entertaining not a shadow of doubt, but crying out to them with a very confident voice, It is the Lord. The inspired Peter leapt into the sea, thinking that to go by the ship would cause delay, for he was always fervent in zeal, and easily stirred up to confidence and love of Christ. The rest followed his lead, with the ship, dragging the net. Then they see a fire of coals, for the Saviour had kindled a fire miraculously, and put a fish upon it that He had caught by His ineffable power; and this too He had done of design. For it was not the hand of the holy Apostles, or the preaching of these spiritual fishermen among men, but the power of the Saviour that started the work. For He first caught one as the firstfruits of those who were to come (not that we mean one precisely, for by one is signified a small number), then afterwards the disciples caught the multitude in their nets, being enabled by His Divine bidding to take something of what they sought. Peter then hauls up the net;

by which it was to be understood, that the labour of the holy Apostles would not be without its effect. For they put the mass of captured fish before Him Who had commanded them to be caught; and the quantity of the fish is indicated by the number 153. The number 100, to the best of my judgment, signifies the complement of the nations, for the number 100 is a very perfect number, being compounded of 10 times 10; and for this reason our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in one place, speaks in the parable of having 100 sheep belonging to Him, signifying the complete sum of rational creatures, and in another place declares that the best ground will bring forth a hundredfold, meaning thereby the perfect fertility of the righteous soul. The number 50, on the other hand, betokens the elect remnant of the Israelites, saved by grace; for 50 is half 100, and falls short of the perfect number in amount. And by the three, reference is made to the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity, the number alone showing this; for to the glory and ceaseless praise of the Trinity the life of those who have been taken captive through faith is consecrated, and implies connexion with the Godhead. For God is

in all those who believe in Him, and keeps nigh unto Him, by means of sanctification, those who have been won over by the teaching of the Gospel. And when the net had been drawn up, our Lord said again to the holy disciples:

Come and break your fast; thereby teaching them, that after their pain and tribulation in gathering in those who were called and saved, they should sit down with Him, as the Saviour Himself said, and their table would be spread with food such as no tongue can name, the spiritual, that is, and Divine, and that passeth man's understanding. Christ also wishes to imply that which is said by the Psalmist: Thou shalt eat the fruit of the labours of thy hands. They did not take food for themselves, and eat thereof, but Christ gave to them of it; that we might learn, as in a type, that on that day Christ will Himself provide us with Divine blessings, and apportion unto us those things which may be profitable unto us as our Lord.

15, 16, 17 So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My lambs. He saith unto him again, a second time, Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou Me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Tend My sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep.

Peter started to reach Jesus before the rest, disdaining, as it appears, to go by boat, because of the incomparable fervour and admirable zeal of his love towards Christ. Therefore He comes first to land, and draws up the net; for he was always an impressionable man, easily excited to enthusiasm both in speech and action. Therefore, also, he first made confession of faith when the Saviour put to them the inquiry in the parts of Caesarea Philippi, saying: Who do men say that I the Son of Man am? And of the other disciples some said Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. But when Christ put the further question to them: But Who say ye that I am? Peter took the lead, and becoming spokesman for the rest, hastened to reply: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Moreover, when the band of soldiers came, together with the officers of the Jews, to take Jesus away to the rulers, the rest all left Him and fled, but Peter struck off Malchus' ear with a sword. For he thought it right by every means in his power to defend his Master, though the attack that he made was in fact altogether displeasing to Him. As, therefore, he came more impetuously than the rest, Christ puts to him the question whether he loved Him more than they, and repeated it three times; and Peter answers in the affirmative, and confesses his love for Him, saying that Christ Himself was a witness to his state of mind. And, after each confession, he heard Christ telling him in different words to take thought of His sheep, as He calls mankind in the parable.

And I think (for I say that we ought to search out the hidden meaning that is here implied) that these words were not written without a purpose, but the saying is pregnant with mean-

ing, and the sense of the passage contains something more than meets the eye. May not someone reasonably ask, Why is it that Christ only asks Simon, though the other disciples were present? And what is the meaning of the words, Feed My lambs, and the like? We reply, that the inspired Peter had indeed already been elected, together with the other disciples, to be an Apostle of God (for our Lord Jesus Christ Himself named them Apostles, according to the Scripture), but, when the events connected with the plot of the Jews against Him came to pass, his fall came betwixt; for the inspired Peter was seized with uncontrollable fear, and thrice denied the Lord. Christ succours His erring disciple, and elicits by divers questions his thrice-repeated confession, counterbalancing, as it were, his error thereby, and making his recovery as signal as his fall. For a transgression which was verbal, and only in mere words supplied ground of accusation against him, could surely be wiped out in the same fashion as it was committed. He requires him to say whether he loved Him more than the rest. For in truth, as he had enjoyed a greater measure of forgiveness, and received from a more bountiful Hand the remission of his transgression, surely he would be likely to feel greater love than the rest, and requite his Benefactor with the extremity of affection. For although all the holy disciples alike betook themselves to flight, the inhumanity of the Jews inspiring them with a terror that they could not overcome, and the ferocity of the soldiers threatening them with cruel death when they came to take Jesus, still Peter's transgression by his thrice-repeated denial was special and peculiar to him.

Therefore, as he had received a greater measure of forgiveness than the rest, he is asked to tell Christ whether he loved Him more; for, as the Saviour Himself said, he to whom most is forgiven will also love much. Herein, also, is a type given to the. Churches, that they ought thrice to ask for a confession of Christ from those who have chosen to love Him by coming to Him in Holy Baptism. And, by dwelling on this passage, instructors in religion may arrive at the knowledge that they cannot please the Chief Shepherd, that is Christ, unless they take thought for the health of the sheep of His fold, and their continuance in well-being. Such was the inspired Paul, who shared the infirmities of his weak brethren, and called those who through him believed, and chose to gain repute by the glory of their deeds, the boast, and joy, and crown of his apostleship. For he knew that this was the visible fruit of love for Christ. And this, if he reason well and justly, any one may perceive. For if He died for us, surely He must esteem the salvation and life of us all as deserving of all care. And if they who sin against the brethren, and wound their conscience when it is weak, in truth sin against Christ;

surely it is true to say, that they are doing the Lord Himself service who take, as it were, by the hand the mind of those who have been admitted to the faith, and who are expected to be called to perfection therein, and are eager to stablish them firmly in the faith, by every help that they can offer. Therefore, by his thrice-repeated confession the thrice-repeated denial of the blessed Peter was done away, and by the saying of our Lord, "Feed my lambs," we must understand a renewal as it were of the apostleship, already given unto him, washing away the disgrace of his fall that came betwixt, and obliterating his faint-heartedness, that arose from human infirmity.

18, 19 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and others shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. Now this He spake, signifying by what manner of death He should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me.

With great kindness and tenderness our Lord Jesus Christ testifies to the fervour of the love which His disciple bore unto Him, and the high honour of his piety and endurance, tried to the uttermost. For He tells him clearly what would be the issue of his apostleship, and what would be the end of his life. For He foretold unto him, that one would take him to a place whither he would not go; that is, in which his persecutors, or those who condemned him to the penalty of death, had fixed the cross. He says, that the place of his crucifixion would be a place whither Peter would not go. For no one of the Saints suffers death of his own free choice. But though death be bitter, and though it come upon them sorely against their will, yet do they who yearn for the glory that God gives disdain earthly life. Therefore Christ foretold, that the blessed Peter would be taken to a place to die in, sore displeasing and hateful unto him. But he would never have attained to so glorious a death, nor have been crucified for Christ, had he not followed His injunction to take charge of the sheep of His fold, and, having the power of the love of Christ firmly rooted in his heart, called to obedience those who have been ensnared into error by the wiles of the devil.

For they who ventured on this crime, and slew the blessed Peter, had no other accusation to charge him withal, save only his zeal in Christ's service. We may see then hereby, that our Lord Jesus Christ well, and of necessity, foretold Peter's end, that by the doom that he was destined to suffer he might in a manner put the seal of truth upon the words he spake unto Him: Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. For that he met his death at all on account of preaching the Gospel was surely a plain and incontrovertible proof of affection, and showed that he was in no way lacking in perfect love towards Christ. Christ, then, adds to what He had said, the words "Follow Me," which bear the signification they so commonly have of following Him as a disciple, and also hinting darkly, as I think, at something else; or meaning, Tread in the track of the perils through which I have passed, and walk in the same path, by deed and word succouring the souls of those who are called, and hesitate not to encounter death itself upon the cross, which, Christ says, will be your lot when you reach old age; not suffering Peter to be alarmed before the time, but deferring for a long season the approach of the king of terrors.

20-23 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned back on His Breast at the supper, and said unto Him, Lord, who is he that betrayeth Thee? Peter therefore seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me. This saying therefore went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him that he should not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

The inspired Evangelist points to himself obscurely, but still sufficiently to indicate who is meant. For he it was who was the beloved disciple, and who leaned upon Christ's Breast at the last Supper, and asked who it was that should betray Him. Peter, then, observing him, longed for information, and sought to know in what perils he would be involved in the time to come, and in what way his life would end. But the question seemed unseemly, and it appeared to savour rather of a meddlesome and inquisitive spirit, that, after having learnt what was to happen unto himself, he should seek to know the future fate of others. For this cause, then, I think the Lord makes no direct reply to his question or inquiry, but, diverting the aim of the questioner, does not say that John will not die, but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? That is to say, Thou hast heard, O Peter, the things concerning thyself, what need is there for thee to ask questions about others, and to seek to fathom out of season the knowledge of the Divine decrees. For if he never die at all, He says, what consolation will this be to thy heart? The man who is wise and prudent, then, if he is doomed to die, will not trouble himself as to whether another will be saved alive or not;

for it will be enough for him to suffer his own doom, and he will receive no comfort at all from the misfortune or good cheer of another. The passage is fraught with some such meaning as this. Peter's speech here seems to imply that the blessed Peter anxiously desired to know what was destined to be John's fate, as he would have considered it a consolation in his own sufferings if John were surely fated to, die by torture, either of the same or of some other kind. And do not be amazed at this, but rather take the following thought into consideration. It is common to us, however profitless it be, to like at times not to be seen to be the only ones who are suffering, or who are destined to undergo some dreadful fate, but to prefer to hear that others have either suffered it already or are expected to suffer it in the future.

24 This is the disciple which also beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true. I think no wise man will doubt that the Lord would not have loved John if he had not been specially remarkable for virtue, and apt and perfectly equipped for every good work. For God can never be found to be inclined by any irrational leanings to those unworthy of His love, for such affections are more worthy of men. And He that was wholly proof against every assault and inroad of passion, and trod firmly in the path of every virtue, nay rather, was Virtue itself in all its forms, most assuredly would act in this, too, with judgment, and have His inclination free from all reproach----I mean, the inclination which led Him to deem him to whom this boon was due worthy of His love. After this admirable preface, then, and after having said that he was beloved, he modestly and with great humility says that he testified of these things; well and admirably inviting his hearers, as a necessary consequence, to assent to the things which he had written, and of which he had testified; for the preacher of truth cannot lie. Therefore, also, he says: We know that His witness is true. Dangerous, then, and awful is it assuredly, to lie at all; for man knoweth not how to bridle his tongue, and the Truth cannot love him that sinneth against truth.

25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written. Amen. Very great, then, says the Apostle, will the number of the miracles that God hath wrought, and altogether without number will the list of His deeds be seen to be, and out of many thousands have these that are recorded been taken, as not being inadequate to profit to the uttermost those who read them. And let no one who is of a teachable spirit and loveth instruction, S. John implies, blame him that wrote this book because he has not recorded the rest. For if the things that He did had been written every one, without any omission, then would the immeasurable number of the books have filled the world. We maintain that, even as it is, the power of the Word has been displayed more than abundantly. For it is open to every one to observe, that a thousand miracles were performed by the power of our Saviour. The preachers of the Gospels, however,, have recorded the more remarkable of them, in all probability, and such that their hearers could best be confirmed by them in incorruptible faith, and receive instruction in morality and doctrine; so that, conspicuous for the orthodoxy of their faith, and glorified by manifold works that make for righteousness, they might meet at the very gates of the city above, and being joined unto the Church of the firstborn in the faith, might at length attain unto the Kingdom of Heaven in Christ; through Whom and with Whom be glory to God the Father, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE END. Thanks be to Christ.

Christ's prophecy fulfilled. 591 592 God's glory shown in the frailty of the Saints. The inconsistency of the Jews. 593 594 The rebukes of the Prophets. Pilate was less guilty than the Jews. 595 596 Christ justified by the Law of the Gentiles. Christ's Word fulfilled. 597 598 The crafty malice of the Jews. Pilate, accusing the Jews, is self-accused. 599 600 Christ dispels Pilate's suspicion. Christ acknowledges the glory of His Kingdom. 601 602 Pilate endeavours to release Christ by appeasing the mob. 603 604 The Jews demand Barabbas and rage against Christ. 605 606 Christ was punished that we might go free. 607 608 Christ, being guiltless, freed humanity. The rulers were foremost in the crime. 609 610 Pilate refuses to be responsible. The law concerning blasphemy. 611 612 Christ declared Himself the Son of God. His works testified to His Divinity. 613 614 Pilate disposed to believe Christ. The Scripture again fulfilled. 615 616 Power was given to Pilate, inasmuch as Christ suffered willingly. 617 618 The Jews return to their first charge. Pilate overcome, against his better judgment. 619 620 The Jews reproached by Pilate. Israel's unfaithfulness to God. 621 622 The exceeding great guilt of the rulers. Christ bore the curse for us. 623 624 We must bear the Cross that is our due. Man's tendency to fail in the strife. 625 626 The thieves a type of Jews and Gentiles.

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[There are no footnotes in book 12. The margin contains mainly biblical references and fragments of Greek. These have been omitted]

Introduction to volume 2

A LIBRARY OF FATHERS OF THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, ANTERIOR TO THE DIVISION OF THE EAST AND WEST. TRANSLATED BY MEMBERS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH. YET SHALL NOT THY TEACHERS BE REMOVED INTO A CORNER ANY MORE, BUT THINE EYES SHALL SEE THY TEACHERS. Isaiah XXX. 20. LONDON: WALTER SMITH (LATE MOZLEY), 34 KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN. TO THE MEMORY OF THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD WILLIAM LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND, FORMERLY REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, THIS LIBRARY OF ANCIENT BISHOPS, FATHERS, DOCTORS, MARTYRS, CONFESSORS, OF CHRIST'S HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, UNDERTAKEN AMID HIS ENCOURAGEMENT AND CARRIED ON FOR TWELVE YEARS UNDER HIS SANCTION, UNTIL HIS DEPARTURE HENCE IN PEACE, IS GRATEFULLY AND REVERENTLY INSCRIBED. COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S. JOHN BY S. CYRIL ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA VOL. II S. JOHN IX-XXI LONDON: WALTER SMITH (late MOZLEY), 34, KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

PREFACE.

More than eleven years have passed since the first volume of a translation of S. Cyril's Commentary on S. John was given to the world by the late Mr. P. E. Pusey. The volume was introduced by a Preface, the greater part of which was written by the translator's father, Dr. Pusey, and mainly with a view to showing that S. Cyril's language on the subject of the Procession of God the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son is substantially identical with that of the Greek Fathers of an earlier age. This Preface was in part intended as a contribution to the then expected discussion of the subject at the Reunion Conferences which, in the event, were held at Bonn, under the presidency of Dr. Döllinger, in the autumns of 1874 and the following year. The translation itself was reviewed by an English critic in terms which rendered its humble and too self-distrusting author unwilling to resume it. At his death, on Jan. 15th, 1880, nothing more had been done. But Dr. Pusey, who all along had been anxious for the completion of the work, entrusted it to a scholar who was at the time taking up his residence in Oxford, the Rev. Thomas Randell, M. A., of S. John's College.

Mr. Randell's distinction as a Classical Student had heen already attested by the honours gained by him in the London University; and Dr. Pusey early formed and expressed a very high opinion of his "wide and solid" accomplishments as an Orientalist----an opinion which has been amply justified by the successes which Mr. Randell has achieved in his adopted University. The text from which the present translation, as well as that in the previous volume, has been made, is that which the unwearied labours of Mr. P. E. Pusey himself had based on the earlier work of Aubert. Of this noble enterprise his father writes:---- "It was at my wish that, in his uniform filial love, my son took as the central work of his life to make the text of S. Cyril's works as exact as it could be made. For this he visited libraries in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Russia, Mount Athos, Cairo, Mount Sinai, and applied to this the knowledge of Syriac which he had perfected in view of another object ."

The work of editing the original text was to have been completed in ten volumes. It remains, alas! a splendid fragment, consisting of six volumes and a-half; which, unhappily, do not include the Thesaurus. But in Dr. Pusey's judgment the greatest of S. Cyril's works is his Commentary on S. John , the original text of which is given in the third, fourth, and fifth volumes of Mr. Pusey's edition. This original text consists of 1636 pages octavo, partly Greek and partly Syriac. Of these the first 863 pages were translated into English by Mr. P. E. Pusey himself; the translation forms the first volume of the present work. For the translation of the remaining 773 pages contained in the present volume Mr. Randell is responsible. Dr. Pusey commissioned Mr. Randell to complete his son's work in 1880, and took the greatest interest in its progress. On March 10th, 1880, he writes to Mr. Randell:----

"There is no hurry about the translation of S.Cyril. I only wished to have my dear son's work completed. Mr. Jebb, I think, thought his translation rather quaint; so it would not be a model for you. Every one must translate in the way most natural to himself. I should think that you would do well to read yourself into S. Cyril's style before you begin the actual translation. It will flow rapidly then. Your translation will, I fear, be at a disadvantage, because it begins with fragments of the lost books." Mr. Randell, it need not be said, acted on the advice contained in this letter. In November, 1881, Dr. Pusey again writes to Mr. Randell, expressing his pleasure at the progress of the work, and adding: "At 81, I am glad not to leave things unsettled." In January, 1882, Dr. Pusey once more writes:---- "I have just had the first 52 pages of your MS., as set up, to read over. I have ventured to change the προτείχισμα, which you had rendered 'fortification,' into 'outer wall,' for it represents [Hebrew]; but perhaps you left it on purpose, as our version always renders by some general term . I only looked at the pages to see that they came to you, as they should. But I found that they read pleasantly, which is a great gain for a writer who uses so many compound words as S. Cyril."

In truth, the difficulty of translating S. Cyril lies not only in his compound words but in his long and involved sentences----the product of his sustained and anxious thought. But the correction thus suggested is the only one made by Dr. Pusey. Dr. Pusey read through and approved of the first 176 pages of the present volume, which alone were set up in type

before he was himself taken from us, at Ascot Priory, on September 16th, 1882. Dr. Pusey's death, as was inevitable, seriously interrupted the progress of the work. The Holy Rood Press, at which the book was being printed, was broken up. In Dr. Pusey the last surviving editor of the Library of the Fathers was withdrawn from this earthly scene. Dr. Pusey's executors were for some time engaged in making arrangements with a new publisher, and other difficulties presented themselves. But at length a fresh beginning was made. From page 177 onward the volume has been printed at the Oxford Clarendon Press; and every care has been taken to secure uniformity, not only between the two portions of this volume, but also between the whole volume and its predecessor.

Indeed the work, as a whole, has been considerably enriched by Mr. Randell's industry. Through an inadvertence, some copies of the first volume had no Table of Contents, while other copies were furnished with an erroneous one. In order to remedy this as far as possible, Mr. Randell has provided the present volume with a Table of the Contents of both. The first volume, too, was published without any Index. At the end of the present volume are subjoined full Indexes to both. The translator has also been careful to note in the margin of the second volume those passages of the Commentary in which the translation has been made from the Syriac version. It may not be undesirable to remind the reader that S. Cyril used a text of the New Testament which is not quite identical either with that of any known ancient manuscript, or with any conjectural text that has been constructed by modern scholars, or with the Textus Receptus. Accordingly, in translating passages of the New Testament that occur in the present volume----whether passages of the Holy Evangelist upon whom S. Cyril is commenting, or incidental quotations in the Commentary itself----especial care has been taken to render S. Cyril's own text as exactly as possible. Whenever therefore the rendering is not identical either with the Authorised or the Revised Version, the reader may be assured that there is a corresponding difference in the Greek or Syriac text as exhibited by S. Cyril. Moreover, quotations from the Old Testament will often be found to differ from the corresponding passages of our English Bible, because they are taken from the Greek version of the Septuagint, and not from the original Hebrew text.

Mr. Randell is anxious to express his gratitude for generous assistance which he has received from many kind friends in the course of his work. Among Greek Scholars who have helped him are Sir William J. Herschel, Bart., M.A.; C. H. Sampson, Esq., M.A., Fellow of Brasenose College; H. P. Palmer, Esq., M.A., and A. P. Moore, Esq., M.A., both of Wadham College; and, in one case of considerable difficulty, the Rev. Dr. Bright, Regius-Professor of Ecclesiastical History. In translating the Syriac he has been aided by the Very Rev. Dr. Payne-Smith, Dean of Canterbury, and his accomplished daughter, Miss Jessie Payne-Smith; by the Rev. Dr. Driver, Regius Professor of Hebrew; and by the Rev. F. H. Woods, B.D., of S. John's College. When correcting the proofs and preparing the Indexes, he had to thank Arthur T. Bott, Esq., B.A., for time and trouble freely placed at his disposal. Not many weeks after his son's death, Dr. Pusey said, in the course of conversation, to the present writer:----

"I cannot help hoping, that if dear Philip is allowed, now or hereafter, to be anywhere near S. Cyril in another world, S. Cyril may be able to show him some kindness, considering all that Philip has done in these later years to make S. Cyril's writings better known to our countrymen." Since these words were uttered father and son have met again after their brief separation. And it may be that they have also been permitted to hold converse with the great Alexandrian Father before the Throne of that adorable and deeply-loved Redeemer, Whose Glory, Divine and Human, each of the three, according to his measure and opportunity in the days of earthly work and trial, did so much to set forth. H. P. LIDDON. CHRIST CHURCH, Feast of All Saints, 1885. [Footnotes moved to the end]

Praefatio - by Cyril of Alexandria

S. CYRIL,
ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA.

INTERPRETATION OR COMMENT ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.
[Translated by P. E. Pusey] INTRODUCTION.

THE LORD will give utterance to them who evangelize with much power, declareth exceeding well the Psalmist. But I deem that they who ought to approach this, are, not mere chance persons, but those who have been illumined with the grace that is from above, seeing that both All wisdom is from the Lord, as it is written, and Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights. For a thing unsure and not unfraught with peril to the many, is the speaking concerning the Essence that is above all, and the Mysteries belonging thereunto, and silence on these subjects is free from danger. Us nevertheless albeit deeming that we have much need of silence, God Who is over all excludes from this, saying to one of the Saints (this was Paul), Speak and hold not thy peace. And no less does the ordinance of the Law shew this, indicating things spiritual in the grosser type. For it enjoins those who have been called to the Divine Priesthood, to declare to the people by the sound of trumpets, about those things which they ought to learn.

For God, when He willed to set forth in His laws most excellent things, did not I deem intend that the leaders of the people should lay their hand on their mouth, as it is written, and, in fear of appearing rashly to attempt things above the mind of man, hold back from the doctrine that is so necessary for those who are being instructed in piety and the knowledge of God, and choose a silence perilous to those who are their disciples. But the Disciple of Christ again terrifies us, saying Be not many masters, and moreover the most wise Preacher too, darkly shewing the peril that exists in the teaching of such things. For, says he, he that cleaveth wood, shall be endangered thereby; if the iron head fall, both himself hath troubled his face and he shall strengthen powers. For he likens the keenness of the mind to the iron-head, in that it is of a nature to pierce through, and sinks in to the innermost parts, even though it be resisted by the thickness and close texture of the wood. Wood again he in a figure calls the thoughts that are in Holy Scripture, which render the Books wherein

they are a kind of Spiritual Paradise, and yet more than this, full with the fruitfulness that comes of the Holy Ghost.

He that endeavours therefore to unfold the spiritual wood, that is the Divine and Mystic thoughts of Divinely-inspired Scripture by means of insearch, and most accurate grasp and keenness of mind, will run very deep risk, saith he, when the iron-head slippeth, that is when the mind not carried to a true understanding of the things which are written, misses the right perception, and having left, as it were, the straight path, is borne on some other way of thought turned aside from what is fitting. Whereupon he will place in jeopardy the face of his soul, that is, his heart, and will invigorate against himself the bad opposing powers, who with their bitter perverse words sophisticate the mind of those who have gone astray; not suffering it to behold the beauty of truth, but manifoldly perverting it and persuading it to go astray after mad thoughts. For no one calleth Jesus Anathema save in Beelzebub.

And let no one deem, himself astray, that the exposition of the above is astray, or otherwise of false reasoning. For Divine Scripture does sometimes, as we said before, call the thoughts of Holy Scripture wood. And indeed the God Who is over all says something on this sort through the all-wise Moses to those at that time: When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them, for thou mayest eat of them and thou shalt not cut them down: (is the tree of the forest a man, to go before thee unto the palisade?) Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down, But that the God of all would not have deemed it worth to prescribe to us such things, if it were to be understood only of trees of the earth, is I suppose clear to every one, yet I think one ought to shew from another command also that He is very unsparing of these, and takes not account of them. For what I pray does He enjoin should be done to the false-called gods? Ye shall destroy their altars, saith He, and break down their images, and cut down their groves. And by His own altar He no way suffers any tree to be cultivated. For He plainly declares: Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the Lord thy God. And if one must add anything to this, I will speak after the manner of most wise Paul. Both God take care for trees? or saith He it altogether for our sakes? by grosser examples leading us by the hand to the idea of spiritual things.

Let us now say that the writings of the unholy heretics may be considered as cities, and fortified, haply not without skill, by the wisdom of the world, and the intricate deceits of their cogitations. There comes to storm them, and in some sort environs and sits round them taking the shield of the faith and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, every one who agonizes for the holy dogmas of the Church, and sets himself in array with all his strength against their false-speaking, studying to cast down imaginations, as Paul saith, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. When then, He says, such a soldier of Christ compasses, as a land of aliens, the bitter writings of heresies, and lights upon the

best cultivated trees, that is, if he find words from the Divinely-inspired Scripture, or things spoken by the Prophets or even testimonies from the New Testament, wrested unto their own purpose, let him not apply his mental acumen, like a sort of tool, to destroy and cut them down. For not because taken hold of by those who know not to interpret it aright, is therefore that which proceeds of the Mouth of God to be wholly rejected too: but since it is fruit-bearing, it shall be to thee rather as a help and for food.

For turning round unto the right argument of the faith that which is sometimes foolishly taken by them, not only shall we not be caught unstrung, but rather are we nerved into words against heresy. But he subjoins forthwith an argument persuading the hearers, that the onslaught of the advocate for the truth should be made, not for the overthrow of the Divine oracles, but for the destruction of what is non-rightly said by the opponents. For is, it says, the tree of the forest a man, to go before thee unto the palisade? For do you suppose, he says, that the utterance of the holy writings, will of its own self rise up against thee to battle, like one of the arch-heretics, and is not rather wronged by their madness? Do not then cut it down, says it, but let it be to thee as food also; only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down. For uneatable by them who would think aright, is the fruit of those men's writings: against them let every tool come: there let the might of the spiritual wood-men be shewn, upon them let the axe of strength in advocacy glitter. For the uselessness and unprofitableness of the babbling of the heterodox the Prophet Hosea also most excellently interprets to us saying: A stalk having no strength to yield meal; if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.

For they that are diligent to estrange themselves from friendship with God, shall feast themselves on the weak and old-wife tale of those people's unlearning. As then I was saying at the beginning (for I think we must go back to that), most exceeding hard is the exposition of the Divine mysteries, and better perchance were silence, but since thy much speech persuadeth us, O most labour-loving brother, to offer the work, as a sort of fruit of our lips, and spiritual sacrifice, this too will I not shrink from doing, encouraging myself in God who maketh wise the blind, and seeketh at our hands not surely that which is above us, but accepteth equally the offerings of poor men. For him that would offer a gift for a burnt-sacrifice to the Lord, as is put in the beginning of Leviticus, the lawgiver having enjoined an offering of the herd and having moreover herein set down the measure of the honour of the type, he again lowers it, saying that they who cannot attain to this, should sacrifice of the flock. And well did he know that sad and inexorable poverty will render some powerless even to this: therefore he says, he shall bring his offering of turtledoves or of young pigeons. But him that comes yet short of these too, and approaches with the most insignificant offerings, he honours. For says he, his offering shall be fine flour, defining an offering easily procurable I suppose by every one and not too oppressive to the deepest poverty.

For the lawgiver well knew (I think) that better and more excellent is it to bear fruit even a little, than to be wholly bereft of it and through shame of seeming to come short of others' gifts, to rush forward to the conclusion that it needs not to honour the Lord of all.

Persuaded then with reason by all these things, and having dismissed from my mind unreadiness, the ally of silence, I will deem it my duty to honour my Lord with what I have, discourse wholesome and joyous to the readers, like fine flour bedewed with oil: and we will begin the Book of John, taking in hand an exceeding great work, yet by reason of faith, not unstrung. And that we shall say and think less than is meet, we must unhesitatingly confess. But the great difficulty of the book, or to speak more truly, the weakness of our understanding, will persuade us to ask meet pardon for this. Turning about on every hand our discourse to the more dogmatical exposition, we will set it in array, according to our power, against the false doctrines of them that teach otherwise, not stretching it forth to its full extent, but even retrenching superfluity, and studying to render it not lacking fitness. The subjoined subscription of the chapters, will shew the subjects over which our discourse extends, to which we have also annexed numbers, that what is sought may be readily found by the readers.

[Page running titles] 2 Danger of speaking of sacred things, uncalled. Books of heretics, like cities of aliens. 3 4 God accepts the offerings of poor men. 5 This text was transcribed by Roger Pearse, 2005. All material on this page is in the public domain - copy freely. Greek text is rendered using unicode.

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.