Commentary on the Twelve Minor Prophets (part 3 of 3)

Cyril of Alexandria (c. AD 376–444)

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Book 2

And the angel that spoke in me returned, and awakened me, as a man that is awakened out of his sleep, and he said to me, What do you see? And I said, I have seen, and behold a candlestick all of gold, and its lamp upon it, and seven lamps upon it, and seven pipes to the lamps that were upon it, and two olive trees upon it, one on the right of its lamp, and one on the left. The word 'returned' here we will not understand as from a place; for that is utterly foolish; but we will consider it rather as the transition from the vision at hand to another one immediately neighboring, which is clearly a spiritual one. But since there is need of pure sobriety and of something beyond the human mind, especially in these matters, God instilled a subtle wakefulness in the Prophet, through the mediation of the angel who also spoke in him, so that he seemed to be roused from sleep. For such, somehow, is the state of the mind within us, and it is much less than that which exists in the holy angels, so that one might say that their state is wakefulness, but ours is as if in a sleep. But since the divine angel saw that his mind and understanding were brought to this point, so as to be able to comprehend the vision subtly, he inquired, saying what he thought the things shown might be.

But the Prophet again made a most unerring narration of the vision, saying he had seen a lampstand, entirely of gold throughout; upon it its lamp, and indeed seven lamps, and pipes of equal number to them, and two olive trees, one on the right of the lamp, and the other lying on the left. And the more manifest rendering of the things shown would be none other than this; but I for my part say that those who apply their minds to the innermost things must try very well to examine more carefully the things being declared, and to connect these things also skillfully with what has already been said. Therefore the God of all said that he will both dig a pit and feel for all the iniquity of that land in one day, and he urged others also to call one another under a vine and under a fig tree. But we, making the scope of the prophecy clear, were saying that for those who have chosen to disobey, and who ignorantly dishonor the salvation through Christ, a pit of sorts has been dug, bringing them down to destruction, namely the drunken violence at the cross, and the charges of the murder of Christ. For the wretched ones have perished, having killed the Lord unholily; "but to those who have loved his appearing" there was both delight and luxury, and what of such things was there not? For they have become as if under a fig tree and a vine in the churches.

But behold, the Prophet has also seen the power of the mystery in another way. For we say that the golden lampstand is again the Church, as honored in the world, as most transparent in virtues, as lifted up very high by the dogmas of true knowledge of God, upon which is the lamp, that is, Christ, concerning whom God the Father says ”For Zion’s sake I will not be silent and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until my righteousness goes forth as light, and my salvation burns as a torch. This lamp which illumines all under heaven, God the Father has placed on the lampstand, ”that all who enter may see the light,” ”and it gives light to all in the house. And the seven lamps, having no light of their own, but one brought in and from without, and nourished by the supplies of oil. And they also signify the holy apostles, and indeed the evangelists, and the teachers of the churches from time to time, receiving indeed like lamps into their mind and heart the illumination from Christ, and having it nourished by the additional supplies of the Spirit, sending forth the light to those in the house, and with the lamp illuminating the faithful. But observe that the seven lamps had funnels, through which the oil was poured into them, but the lamp has no funnel. For what reason? For the Son is the true light, not from without, nor brought in, nor indeed having received from another the ability to give light;

but He himself is by nature the light; but in the saints it is by participation and from him. And the wise John will confirm this, saying ”For from his fullness we have all received. And the Son, being the true light, named as the light of the world those who have come to be in participation of his brightness; for he said to the holy apostles ”You are the light of the world. But the two olive trees, one placed on the right and one on the left of the lamp, signify the two peoples, standing, as it were, in a circle around Christ. for they have been honored as having received mercy by such a position. And the one group was from the cultivated olive tree, that is, from the Synagogue of the Jews; but the other sprang from the wild olive tree, that is, from the multitude of the Gentiles, but having been grafted into the cultivated olive tree they have become partakers of the richness of the root, according to the voice of the blessed Paul. But see how on the lampstand are together with the lamp both the lamps and the two olive trees. For Christ is with us in the Church, and the multitude of the faithful who have received mercy is illumined by the light from him, and is also lit by the lamps, which have the light by participation and from him.

But it should be known that also in the construction of the holy tabernacle, there was placed in the holy of holies a golden lampstand having seven lamps. And God commanded Aaron, saying that ”the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand from the one side. for the illumination through the lamps is not given to those behind it, but to those who have been brought near as if into the presence of Christ through faith. And so the Jews, being as it were behind him and at his back, have their mind darkened; but those from the Gentiles who have believed have the lamps before their face, for the illumination through the saints has become for them free and completely unhindered. And one lamp was also lit in the first tabernacle; the matter signifying for us that the legal observance came after the evangelical instruction. For see how for those in the first tabernacle only one lamp was lit, but for those who had entered into the holy of holies seven lamps and the lamp sent forth as it were a

most abundant radiance. And I asked and said to the angel who was speaking in me, saying, What are these, Lord? And the angel who was speaking in me answered and said to me, saying, Do you not know what these are? And I said, No, Lord. And the angel answered and said to me, saying:

This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by great power, nor by might, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty. For you might also learn from this that the mind of the intelligible powers is both better and more holy than our own thought, and surpasses our condition with incomparable preeminence. ”For the angel returned,” as the Prophet says, ”and awakened him, in the way a man is awakened from his sleep. For if one were to choose to compare the measure of human thought to the mind that is in the powers above, he would find it inferior by as much as our inert phantasms in sleep might be considered to fall short of the thought of those who are awake. The Prophet, therefore, has been awakened to sobriety, but even in this state and being exceedingly sharp, he is no less slow in being able, I mean, to understand the things shown. For this reason, and very fittingly, he both asks and demands to learn from the angel who is making him wise. But he, almost astounded that he did not understand, asks if he truly does not know. And when he had plainly confessed his ignorance and was not ashamed of his difficulty in learning, he then makes clear the riddle from the vision, and, as if from a clear and visible image, he interprets the purpose hidden within it. For this, he says, is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying:

Not by great power, nor by might, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty. It is as if the meaning of the vision and the purpose of the things shown might say: It all but cries out the things from God to Zerubbabel and declares with a voice that all these things that are seen will come to fulfillment in due time, being accomplished not by human power, nor indeed by fleshly might, but as by the power of the Holy Spirit, and as from divine assents. For the Only-Begotten became man like us; yet he did not make war in a fleshly way in order to raise up the Church for the world like a lampstand. Not by moving perceptible weapons and battle-phalanxes did he present the two peoples to himself, or place the intelligible lamps upon the lampstand, but by the might of his own Spirit he has ordained in the churches ”first Apostles, second prophets and evangelists,” and all the other company of the saints, filling them with divine gifts, and richly nourishing them with the outpouring of the Spirit. Therefore, the things from Christ were not by great power, nor by fleshly might, but as by the power of the Spirit: Satan was despoiled, and with him fell also the hordes of the opposing powers, and both those from Israel and those who had long served the creation rather than the creator were called to the knowledge of God through faith.

And the lamps were also revealed in the churches, that is, the saints, shining together with the light, I mean Christ. For they have become, as indeed the most wise Paul writes, ”lights in the world, holding fast the word of life. And that he saved the world under heaven not by a human hand, but by his own powers as God, Emmanuel testified, saying also through the voice of Hosea. For it is thus: ”But I will have mercy on the sons of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God, and I will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by

war, nor by chariots, nor by horses, nor by horsemen. And the word was very well directed to Zerubbabel, who was of the tribe of Judah, and at that time administered the thrones of the kingdom in Jerusalem. For lest, when such splendid and admirable achievements were announced to him beforehand, he should think that wars and battles would be waged in due time, he necessarily removes him from such unsound and human thoughts, and instead has commanded him to be disposed to the fact that the work is befitting of God, and the power of Christ who accomplishes such things is not human. And we remember that we said that Zerubbabel himself, as being from the tribe of Judah and a king, prefigured in himself Christ, with Jesus son of Jozadak being joined, so that in the same person he might be understood as both king and the high priest Emmanuel.

Who art thou, O great mountain, before the face of Zerubbabel to set aright? And I will bring forth the stone of the inheritance, the equality of grace its grace. The present subject is indeed very difficult to grasp; nonetheless we will say what seems to be best and correct. The saying, therefore, seems almost to rebuke the great mountain, that is, satan who rises up and opposes Christ with the power of his own depravity, which indeed was also described for us enigmatically again in what was said above. For the Prophet said he had seen "Jesus the great high priest standing "before the face of the angel of the Lord, and the devil standing "at his right hand to oppose him. For as much as it was possible and within his power, he has warred against and terribly risen up against the economies of the Savior, who was calling all under heaven to salvation, one would not doubt this, having considered that first he approached Him when he was fasting in the desert, and seeing Him saving those under heaven, he wanted to make Him his own worshipper, by showing Him "all the kingdoms "of the world," and saying that all would be His, if indeed He should choose to fall down and worship him. Then, in addition to this, even from the very choir of the holy apostles he seized the traitor disciple, persuading him to become an instrument of the wickedness of the Jews.

The saying therefore rebukes him and says, Who art thou, O great mountain before the face of Zerubbabel to set aright? But the "Who art thou" is to be understood not as of one wishing to learn who then he is and from whence; for being God He would not be ignorant; but as of one belittling and deeming him of no account, even if the mountain were great and difficult to oppose, and lying in the way as an obstacle to Christ who wishes to set such things aright, of whom Zerubbabel is also a type, as we have already said. For although the apostate dragon has an incomparable depravity, he has been trampled by Christ without toil or sweat. For He was God by nature, the one who conquers all. Either, then, we will approach what has been said in this manner, or in another way, if you please. For we said that the things pertaining to life will not be set aright for the world by human power. And the lampstand will be set up, holding the lamp, that is, Christ, and the lamps will also shine, and indeed also at the right and at the left of the lamp the two olive trees will surely be set up, signifying the two peoples. Then, as if someone were inquiring and saying, Who then are you, who promises to set such great things aright without any war and effortlessly? God the Father is understood to add, saying:

I am the great mountain before the face of Zerubbabel to set aright, that is, I am the nature that surpasses all things, the one that with God-befitting heights rushes to the glory beyond all, the one who in due season will suffice for the setting aright of the things that have been promised, and before the face of Zerubbabel. For Christ was not ignorant of His own Father, but made Him a co-worker, as it were, of His own right-doings, saying ”Of ”myself I do nothing, but the Father who sent me, dwelling in me, ”He does the works. For He worked as through the Son’s own power, through whom also in the beginnings He brought all things into being and is rightly marveled at. And we remember that in the most wise Daniel, God the Father is again named for us as a mountain, from which also ”a stone was cut without hands, which ”also ground to powder the gold, the silver, the bronze, the ”iron,” and this was also a type of Christ. For having been begotten of God the Father ineffably and beyond understanding, the Son crushed all the kingdoms, so that dominion might henceforth be ascribed to Him. ”For to Him every knee shall bow, and every ”tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the ”glory of God the Father. Therefore, as a cornerstone and choice stone cut from the mountain of God the Father, the Son has become our inheritance.

For we have been called to adoption as sons through Him, and we have become heirs of the living God, gaining equality of grace for grace. And what is this? For grace was given to Israel, the that ancient and famous one. For they were redeemed from Egypt in the flesh, they shook off the slavery imposed on them through greed, they were brought across through the midst of the sea, they ate the manna in the desert, they crossed rivers on foot; for thus they crossed the Jordan; they were brought into the land of promise. This, then, is the first grace. But in equality and likeness to that ancient grace, another grace has been given to us by Christ, who became for us a stone, as a foundation, that is, a cornerstone, and again an inheritance, for through him we have become heirs of God. How then is the second grace in equality with the first? For what was done for them in the flesh, that is, perceptibly, this Christ has accomplished for us spiritually and intellectually. He delivered us from diabolical slavery, as from clay and brick-making, he freed us from the passions in the world and from carnal impurities, he led us across as through a sea. For we have passed by the surge of the present life, and the bitterness of its cares, we have eaten the bread from heaven; the word is mystical;

we have crossed the Jordan, we have received the circumcision in the Spirit, we have inherited the city above, the truly holy land, which Christ himself mentioned, saying, ”Blessed ”are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. And I think that the most wise evangelist John wished to make this very thing clear, when he said of Christ, ”For ”from his fullness we have all received, and ”grace in place of grace; for the law was given through Moses, ”grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. For Moses became the minister and mediator of that ancient grace; but Christ is the giver of the second, which has a likeness to that one; for they were types in relation to the truth, that is, travailing with the beauty of the truth; but better and superior, inasmuch as the intelligible would rightly surpass the perceptible. And Paul will testify in writing, that ”Jesus has become the guarantor of a better ”covenant. And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid

the foundation of this house, and his hands shall complete it, and you shall know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. Behold, again he describes for us the intelligible things in perceptible matters, and he sets forth as a type of the things wonderfully accomplished by Christ the things achieved by the hand of Zerubbabel at that time.

For when Babylon was captured by the Persians and Cyrus, those of Israel were released from the bonds of slavery, and indeed they returned to Jerusalem, while Darius was now governing the rule of the Chaldeans, or rather the kingdom, God urged those who had returned to immediately rebuild the divine temple, while Zerubbabel was reigning, and Joshua, son of Jozadak, the great priest, was serving as priest. And they took up the work, and indeed the work was at the first laying of the foundations; and the walls were now being raised high, then in the meantime, with some preventing it and the envy of the neighboring nations becoming an obstacle, there was a certain suspension and a postponement of the efforts on the works. But when God again granted them the ability to succeed, the temple was with difficulty completed, while Joshua was serving as priest, and Zerubbabel was presiding and reigning. But with these things the historical account is concluded. But since Zerubbabel from the tribe of Judah has been taken by us as a type of Christ, come now, let us say how and in what manner he himself began to build the house of the Lord; and how he completed it again intellectually and spiritually. For in the beginning he established a house, as it were, and a dwelling place befitting God for himself and for the Father, the Synagogue of the Jews.

For so he named it, saying through the all-wise Moses, ”If there is a prophet among you of the Lord, I will make myself known to him in a vision, ”and I will speak to him in a dream, not so ”as my servant Moses, he is faithful in all my house; ”with him I will speak mouth to mouth, in appearance and not ”through riddles. Therefore, the house has been founded, as it were, through Christ; but it was torn down in the meantime. and so the prophet Jeremiah lamented it as having fallen and been shaken, saying, ”The house of Israel has fallen, there is no one who will raise it ”up; for since they have behaved insolently toward Christ, it has fallen for this reason, and there was no longer anyone to raise it up; but it has been raised up through Christ, and has been transformed for the better, with the Gentiles having been brought into it, and the Church having been revealed in the world, ”which is the house of the living God,” of whose beauty the Lord and God of all has become a lover. For that the temple raised up in the last times, that is, the Church, is incomparably better than the first, he has fully assured us, saying through the voice of Haggai the prophet, ”Who ”is there among you that saw this house in its ”former glory? And how do you see it ”now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?

and after other things, ”For the latter glory of this house shall be greater ”than the former, says the Lord Almighty. But that it is senseless to understand such things historically, no one would doubt, having considered how the latter glory of the divine temple could be understood as superior to the first, if indeed the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar burned and plundered that one; and the one raised after that one, after the time of the captivity, the

Romans burned no less, laying waste along with it Jerusalem itself, and the entire land of the Jews. Therefore the historical interpretation is not sufficient for the truth; but the final glory is better and superior to the first, with the Church having been taken ”for a ”holy temple, for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. For we are built ”upon the foundation of the apostles ”and prophets,” ”’by every joint with which it is supplied, according to the ”working of each member,’ being fitted together” and composed, and somehow coming together with one another as by a unity of faith and love through the Spirit into a holy temple. For we are living stones. And so the divine Paul called the multitude of believers, at one time ”God’s field,” and at another time, again, God’s building; and ”as a wise master ”builder” he laid a ”foundation; and this is Jesus the Christ;

on whom indeed we all are supported, through whom we also stand, and are called temples, having him dwelling and abiding in our mind and heart through the Spirit. For who has despised the day of small things? And they shall rejoice, and shall see the tin stone in the hand of Zerubbabel; these seven are the eyes of the Lord, that look upon all the earth. The vision is not about things that will be immediate, but rather about things to be brought to completion, as in the times of the coming of the Savior of us all, Christ, which happened in the last times of the present age; but not at all after many years from the prophecy before us, that is, from the building of the temple raised by the hand of Zerubbabel. If anyone then, he says, should despise the small and few days in between, and should consider the delay short, not growing weary because of this, he will be completely and in every way full of all joy. For he will rejoice and will see the tin stone in the hand of Zerubbabel. And he called Christ the tin stone. And if anyone should wish to learn the reason, I would straightway say what seems right to some, and is supposed by us ourselves to be correct. For some say that tin has its composition from both bronze and lead; and for this reason it has neither been completely freed from being hard, nor has it refused to also be soft;

and we too, in some such manner, compose Emmanuel from both the unbreakable divinity, and from the, as it were, passible humanity. And it must be known that they say that even the adamant stone is easily shattered by lead, although it does not suffer this from any other material. We say therefore, that although being exceedingly good and Christ is all-powerful, and having no harshness as God, he shatters Satan like a diamond, concerning whom it is written, ”His heart is hardened like a stone, and it stands like an unhammered anvil. Moreover, it seems to others that tin, or simply lead, is necessarily used for the purification by fire of other material, and for those who are accustomed to working with silver this substance is both useful and necessary. And so God says somewhere through the voice of Jeremiah, again revealing this very thing enigmatically, ”The bellows failed from the fire, the lead failed; in vain the silversmith refines, for their wickednesses were not melted. Therefore, he compares Christ to tin, that is, to lead, as one who melts away filth, as one who removes impurities, as one who purifies spiritually. If, then, anyone should make light, he says, of the intrusion of the intervening times, and should consider as nothing the short days in between, he will rejoice and will see the tin stone in the hand of Zerubbabel. And

what is this 'in the hand of Zerubbabel'? The divinely inspired scripture accepts 'hand' as both power and authority.

In the power, then, or in the authority of Zerubbabel, that is, Christ, he will see the tin stone. For Zerubbabel, as I said, being from the tribe of Judah, has reigned over Israel. And in the same way, our Lord Jesus Christ also sprang from the blood and tribe of Judah according to the flesh, and he too has reigned over Israel, not in our manner, that is, having a kingdom that is measurable and limited by time, but as true God and extending into endless ages. And the blessed Gabriel will testify, saying to the holy virgin about him, that she will bear a son, and she will call his name Jesus. And adding that "The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will reign over the house of Israel forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. In the hand of Zerubbabel, therefore, that is, as in the power and authority of Zerubbabel, the tin stone will be seen at the proper times. And immediately the word of the prophecy adds to these things: These seven are the eyes of the Lord which look upon all the earth. And who might these be, again? For he has either called the seven lamps, which he saw with the lampstand, the eyes of the Lord, so that we might understand the saints, through whom the whole earth is illuminated, and having been deemed worthy of visitation from God, it appears;

or we will say, I think, that it signifies that the God and Father of all would not neglect his own creations; but as if surveying all things with many sleepless eyes, he will grant to those on the earth the tin stone, that is Christ, through whom has come to us also the manner of visitation, that is, of overseeing. "For the dayspring from on high has visited us," according to what is written. And if we are "the body of Christ and members in part," I think it is not at all unlikely to say that the holy mystagogues have been placed in the rank of eyes, as pre-eminent and superior to the others, and for this reason, I think, also named 'overseers' (episkopoi). And through them our Lord Jesus Christ watches over those who believe in him. Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ might be understood as a tin stone in another way. For tin joins together what has been divided, having a cohesive nature. And Christ has done something of this sort for us, if it is true that he "creates the two peoples into one new man, making peace, and reconciling both in one body," into the unity through the Spirit. Whence also he has been named the cornerstone, binding the two peoples into unity, as I said. He has also joined to angels those on earth; and also us to God the Father through himself, having torn down the sin lying between and long walling us off.

And I answered and said to him, 'What are these two olive trees, which are on the right of the lampstand and on its left?' And I asked again a second time, and I said to him, What are the two olive branches, which are in the hands of the two golden spouts that pour out and bring up the golden funnels? and he said to me, Do you not know what these are? And I said, No, Lord. And he said, These are the two sons of fatness who stand by the Lord of all the earth. The mind of the saints is exceedingly fond of learning. Therefore, the Prophet passes over nothing of the things shown in the vision, but is very fond of asking questions, and inquires subtly about each thing, as to what it might mean. It was necessary, therefore,

for one of such a mind, that it should be made clear to him through the voice of the Prophet of what the standing of the olive trees to the right and to the left of the lampstand would be a symbol. For this reason he investigates curiously and deems it worthy to learn. But see how he adds a second question, and indeed also somehow refashions the manner of the question into something precise. For at first he named two olive trees; but directing the eye of his mind somewhat more subtly to the things seen, he no longer named them olive trees, but rather branches of olive trees.

Therefore, to him asking skillfully, the blessed angel then reveals, and says, These are the two sons of fatness who stand by the Lord of all the earth. And as sons of fatness, he surely meant the two peoples, both Israel and the one from the Gentiles, as ones brought into spiritual fatness. For this reason he says they are placed in the spouts of the lamps, as rejoicing and delighting in the oil from Christ, and being richly fattened by the grace of the Spirit. For we have received mercy, "being justified freely" through faith, and shown to be partakers of his divine nature, through partaking of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the establishment and standing of the two peoples is in oil and in lamps. For our calling is in light, and as in oil from God; if it is precise to say, that we have received mercy, being delivered from death and sin and having released our neck from the former slavery; and again we have been enlightened, by acknowledging the one and by nature God, and having departed from the darkness of polytheistic error. But what would be the reason for this observation, and what then has persuaded the blessed Prophet not to call them olive trees any longer, but rather branches of olive trees, come now, let us examine. Therefore, the Synagogue of the Jews has been called a good olive tree, but the multitude of the Gentiles indeed a wild olive tree.

For thus the blessed Paul also makes mention of them, saying to those from the Gentiles who believed, "For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more will these, who are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree. Therefore, the Synagogue is a good olive tree, as I just said; and the flock of the Gentiles is a wild olive tree. For the one group, having the instruction through the law, were not without fruit; but the others were the habitats of wild wasps, having their mind full of demons and completely fruitless. However, neither the whole Synagogue of the Jews accepted the faith in Christ, nor indeed the whole multitude of the Gentiles. But as though plucked from each, many have received mercy, and have been called through faith to the enlightenment through the Spirit. Therefore, the ones plucked off might be reasonably understood as branches of olive trees, who have also received mercy through grace, and have come to be as in the light of the lampstand, that is, of Christ, and of the seven lamps shining together, that is, of the multitude of the saints. But see how the divine angel accepts the lampstand as an image and type of Emmanuel.

For with the branches being placed on his right and on his left, whom he also named the two sons of fatness, he says that they stand by the Lord of all the earth, with their standing by signifying very well in these things the spiritual affinity, and the readiness of mind for

the necessity of being subject to and serving him. For thus Christ might be understood as having presented to himself the Church gathered together from two peoples. according to I think in this way the divine Moses was also adorned by the name of 'standing beside', when God said to him, "But you, stand here with me. For the instruction through the law is not to be rejected, at least by the all-knowing God. For what reason? For it tutors us toward Christ, and as in types and shadows it travails to bring forth for us the truth itself. And the Son himself will confirm this to us, saying to the unbelieving Jews, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for "he wrote about me. And I turned and lifted up my eyes and saw, and behold, a flying sickle. And he said to me, "What do you see? And I said, "I see a flying sickle, twenty cubits in length and ten cubits in width. And he said to me, "This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth;

for every thief shall be punished by it even to death, and every perjurer shall be punished by it even to death. And I will bring it out, says the Lord Almighty, and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of him who swears falsely by my name, and it will lodge in the midst of his house and will consume it with its timber and its stones. The phrase 'I turned' again in these verses, I think one would not take in a local sense but rather as in a change to another vision. For as the first was cut off, as it were, and the sight shifted to another contemplation, by the name of 'turning' it indicates what happened. Therefore he lifts the eyes of his mind on high, then he sees a sickle, in the manner of a bird, both lifted up and, as it were, darting over the whole earth. And indeed it was very broad and long. For its length was twenty cubits, and its width was half of that. But when he asked what this might be again, and said he did not know, this, he says, is the curse that goes forth over the face of the whole earth, inflicting with fitting punishments the perjurer and with him the thief. And as far as a clearer declaration is concerned, at least of the things shown, there is nothing difficult.

For a divine curse will in every way and altogether be distributed among the thieves and, in addition to these, those accustomed to swear falsely, and, as it were, with a sickle cutting down the insolent, it makes them fodder for houses and gives them as food for fire, and it will rush into the house of such a man, and will consume him again, and will utterly shake him. But I think it is necessary to inquire diligently, with a love of learning, into the reasons for which the present vision now in our hands, has been brought in with the others as necessary; for on what account, indeed, one of the more reasonable might say, when there are very many sins in life, and indeed when the people of Israel were at that time in various charges, does he say that the punishment by the sickle is suspended over thieves and false swearers alone, that is, that the curse goes forth, cutting down those who are caught and completely consuming them? Indeed, to such things we say, that God spoke the things useful for each occasion through the holy prophets, always in some way benefiting the present circumstances. It was therefore necessary especially for those at that time for this vision to be made clear; and we shall bring forward the reasons, showing that it was most timely. For since the people of Israel, having with difficulty left the land of the Chaldeans, and having thrown off the yoke of slavery, returned to Judea, and were in Jerusalem;

when it was necessary to abstain from those ancient sins, and by a return to what is better both to correct past deeds, and to gladden the Redeemer, having chosen to fulfill what is pleasing to him, they were no less what they were then, heedlessly transgressing what seemed good to the law. For though Moses denied that they ought to intermarry with foreign women, they themselves, caring little for what was decreed, were entangled with the daughters of the neighboring nations, and were fathers of foreign children, and they again rendered the holy city full of an unholy seed. And there were some even of the more prominent among them entangled in such offenses, and when this had indeed happened, he indeed lamented Ezra, having reached the divine house, made supplications on behalf of those who had acted impiously. Then what happened, we will learn from the things written by him. It goes like this: ”And when Ezra was praying and confess- ”ing, weeping and prostrate before the temple, a very ”great crowd was gathered to him from Jerusalem, ”men and women and youths; for there was great weeping ”among the multitude. And Jechonias, son of Jeiel, ”of the sons of Israel, cried out and said to Ezra, We have sinned against the ”Lord and God, and we have married foreign women ”from the peoples of the land, and now there is hope over all Israel.

”In this let an oath be made by us to the Lord, to ”cast out all our wives who are from foreigners ”with their children, as it has been judged by you, and as many as ”obey the law of the Lord. Arise and accomplish it; for the ”matter is yours, and we are with you to act strongly. And ”Ezra arose and made the chiefs of the priests and Levites ”of all Israel swear to do according to these things, and they swore. Therefore, for those who had sworn to fulfill the things that seemed good to the law, it was somehow necessary to append the curse, which leaps harshly upon those accustomed to swear falsely, so that they might also become guardians of the things sworn. And since, while the divine temple was being built, there was a great collection of money, partly from what Darius granted, and partly from what the people had brought, it was then likely that some of those appointed to manage such things would misappropriate some of what had been brought for the glory of God; for this reason he says very well that the curse goes against thieves, so that they too, having become superior to shameful gains, might not touch the sacred funds, spending them for their own needs. This, then, is the occasion of the vision.

But I say that those accustomed to steal or swear falsely ought to fear the curse and the cutting of the sickle, understanding that in every way and in all circumstances God will bring to fulfillment the things decreed, and will spare neither thieves nor indeed the others. For he always makes them hated, those who despise his divine glory, and those who with insatiable mind desire things that in no way belong to them. And the angel that spoke in me went forth, and said to me, Lift up your eyes, and see what this is that goes forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is the measure that goes forth. And he said, This is their iniquity in all the land. And behold, a talent of lead was lifted up; and behold, a single woman was sitting in the midst of the measure. And he said, This is lawlessness; and he cast her into the midst of the measure, and he cast the stone of lead upon her mouth. I said previously, beginning the explanation regarding the Prophet, that after the return

from Babylon, the things he had seen during the time of the captivity, these he usefully relates to the redeemed. For since he saw that they were exceedingly negligent in fulfilling the customary things, and were uncontrollably turning aside to what was pleasant and dear to themselves, while caring very little for the laws given through Moses;

for they were involved with foreign women, and some, now going completely beyond what was proper, were initiated into idols, and besides these things they did certain things that are not even right to mention; the Prophet makes the narration of the visions necessary, so that the redeemed might know, having with difficulty gained this benefit through so many supplications of men and of holy angels, that they are again provoking the God of all against themselves, by becoming entangled in the snares of their ancient offenses. He said, therefore, that the angel who spoke in me went forth. But where did he go forth? For where was he at all? Therefore, from the showing of the sickle to the present vision, I mean the one concerning the measure, this act of going forth happened. Indeed, the Prophet lifts his eyes on high, to whom, having practiced darting upwards, it would be fitting also to be able to gaze upon divine mysteries. So he asked, then, what the thing being shown was. And he said to him, this is the measure that goes forth. This is their iniquity in all the land. And what the measure is, it is necessary to consider. And indeed we say, that the Master of all is by nature good and loving-to-man; for he is patient with sinners, and he endures transgressors, awaiting each one's repentance;

but if someone should go on for a long time in sin, and come at last to the end of the patience allotted to him, then at last he will be subject to punishments, and he will have no excuse for such a long indifference, nor could anyone release him from the necessity of receiving punishments equal in measure, to what he has clearly done. And so Christ said somewhere to the people of the Jews, who were rushing with unbridled folly to every kind of wickedness, "You also "fill up the measure of your fathers. Therefore, the thing seen was a measure, showing in itself the filling up of the people's sin. And in the measure was set a woman, filling the type of lawlessness, and as it were filling up through herself the space, perhaps even overflowing, and peeping out with the excess. But behold, he says, a talent of lead being lifted up and he cast it into her mouth. And the vision fittingly portrays lawlessness for us in the form of a woman. For a woman is a type of pleasure, and also of weakness; and all lawlessness would be done in no other way, except through some pleasure luring to evil, with weakness of mind also contributing to this. For if the mind were firm in itself and manly, it would not choose to suffer the inclination towards evil things; but if it should be softened and bewitched by pleasure, it will suffer what is grievous.

Therefore, and very rightly, the woman is depicted as lawlessness. And the talent of lead that is lifted up, and indeed that stops her mouth, could be understood as none other, I think, than our Lord Jesus Christ, who was lifted up on the precious cross, and "bore our sins in his body "on the tree," and has triumphed over the record of debt that was against us; so that, as the divine Psalmist says, "All "lawlessness may stop her mouth. And He himself is also compared to lead; for lead, as I said, is used by silversmiths for the purification of

things being smelted; and such in a way is also the power of Christ in us. For if he comes into the mind and heart, he certainly melts away all filth. But to some it seems that the lead was thrown into the mouth of lawlessness, as though God were stopping it up, and no longer permitting it to cry out against the sinners beyond measure; for in this way it is also bound by a measure, with God who has mercy on all, I think, measuring out the punishments for each one in accordance with the charges of their transgressions. And I lifted up my eyes and saw, and behold, two women coming forth, and wind was in their wings; and they had wings like the wings of a hoopoe, and they lifted up the measure between the earth and the heaven.

and I said to the angel who was speaking in me, Where are these carrying the measure? and he said to me, To build a house for it in the land of Babylon and to prepare it, and they will set it there upon its prepared place. What the pair of women might mean, or of what they might be a type, it is necessary, I think, to say before anything else. So then the God of all said to the prophet Ezekiel, ”Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one ”mother, and they committed fornication in Egypt, in their youth ”they committed fornication, there their breasts were handled. And he added to these things, making clear what was announced, ”And their names: ”Samaria is Oholah, and Jerusalem is Oholibah. For in the beginning the Synagogue of the Jews was one; but during the time of the reign of Rehoboam, the ten tribes broke away from the others and dwelt in Samaria, there they have committed fornication on account of the golden calves, which Jeroboam son of Nebat had made. However, the other was not without blame, that is, Jerusalem, for she also has committed fornication in many ways; on the one hand, with some having worshipped idols and sacrificing to Baal, to Astarte, to the high places, to the sun and moon and other stars; on the other hand, towards who readily go to every impurity, and hold as nothing the things decreed through the all-wise Moses.

Therefore, the vision again likens the two synagogues of Israel to two women, who it says also had the wings of a hoopoe, in order that it might signify very well the unclean mind within them and their readiness for anything whatsoever that is out of place. For the hoopoe is not an insignificant bird, but it is fond of filth and dung-eating, and savagely rages against swarms of worms, and is accustomed always to make the utmost impurity a delicacy. And such in a way is the mind that is upon idolaters. For it does not go anywhere straight toward what is fitting; but is carried outside of what is likely, it does not know the divine law, but is full of all impurity, and considers every form of wickedness a delicacy. For this reason the account of the vision said that the wings of a hoopoe were fitted to the women, teaching that the same mind as that bird’s was also in them. And they take up the measure filled with lawlessness. For each soul must be weighed down by its own burden, I mean, that of sin. And since the accusations of both are equal and sisterly, I mean of Samaria and of Jerusalem, for this reason also being weighed down in an equal manner by the measure and the lawlessness, with a wind falling upon their wings, they are carried in a swift and unimpeded course toward the land of the foreigners, clearly that of the Babylonians.

For as the unclean spirit pushed them into sin, and weighed them down with lawlessness, they were carried off into captivity, and have fallen under the feet of their enemies. And since the blessed angel says that they carry off the measure to build a house for it in the land of Babylon, it is necessary for us to understand that, which is a sign of the children of Israel spending a long time among their enemies, that a house is also built for lawlessness, and as it were a certain foundation and a station is made for it among their enemies. Which has indeed also been accomplished. For hardly when the seventieth year was fulfilled for them, were they released from the bonds of captivity. And I turned and lifted up my eyes and saw, and behold, four chariots coming out from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of bronze. In the first chariot were red horses, and in the second chariot black horses, and in the third chariot white horses, and in the fourth chariot dappled, ash-grey horses. And I answered and said to the angel who was speaking in me, What are these, Lord? And the angel who was speaking in me answered and said, These are the four winds of heaven, they go forth to stand before the Lord of all the earth.

The one in which were the black horses went out to the north land, and the white went out after them, and the dappled went out to the south land, and the ash-grey went out and were looking to go and patrol the whole earth. And he said, Go and patrol the whole earth; and they patrolled the whole earth. And he cried out and spoke to me, saying, Behold, those who go out to the north land have set my wrath at rest in the north land. He had shown beforehand that, caught in their own snares, and bound with the chains of their own sins, according to what is written, they departed into a foreign land, and have dwelt among enemies, enduring the unaccustomed yoke of slavery. But it was necessary to also be mindful of the times of redemption, and indeed he makes the declaration, with other things interwoven. For the Prophet was taught in summary all the things that would happen to the nation in due time. Therefore the four chariots, those between the bronze mountains, we say are again the more prominent of the other kingdoms, those in the four climes, or rather winds, which have been shown forth under heaven at various times. And I think the two divisions of the inhabited world are called bronze mountains. For some divide the whole earth into both Europe and Asia. And its parts are bronze, because of being fixed always and having an unshakeable nature and enduring no harm.

For somewhere the divine David also sings to the one of the Creator of all ”You established the earth and it abides. These, then, the kingdoms from the four winds, stronger than the others, as we said, and having obtained much glory, went forth to stand beside the Lord of all the earth. And the standing beside reveals to us the manner of servitude; for they have served His commands, and if they have become strong and renowned, they have gained this also through Him. But if they have done anything, and have overcome regions or cities, it was with His assent that they again came to this point of strength; for if the prophet is true in saying that ”There shall not be evil in a city, which the Lord has not done,” and by evil in these cases we mean affliction; how could those have prevailed over nations or regions, unless He again dispensed the power to prevail according to His plan? But what kingdoms these are, it is now time to say. Therefore in the first chariot, he says, were red horses,

prefiguring in themselves the cruelty of the kingdom of the Chaldeans. For redness would likely suggest to us the shedding of blood; for the Babylonians were extremely bloodthirsty; for they themselves took Judea and the cities in Samaria, with all mercy being cast aside. And in the second chariot were black horses. This seems to signify the kingdom of the Persians and Medes, I mean the one under Cyrus.

And he has assigned the color black to these, because, I think, they inflicted so very great and immeasurable a death upon the nations of the Chaldeans, and caused their whole land to be in mourning. The dark color would be a symbol of mourning and death. But he says that those in the third chariot were white, indicating perhaps the rule of the Greeks and Macedonians, or rather the kingdom of Alexander. And they are white, because the Greek nations are also delicate in their living, and for the most part in white robes; and because they are clear in their language, not having the as-it-were darkness of a barbarian tongue. And in the fourth chariot, he says, there were some dappled and ash-colored horses. But it should be known that the Hebrew version and some of the other interpreters have put 'strong' instead of 'ash-colored'. Nevertheless, we say that this is the Roman kingdom, which has always had in those who have reigned at various times a diversity with respect to intelligence and a certain depth of mind. For the most intelligent and, in addition to this, the most powerful, have been and are those who direct the powers of the Roman rule. And they are placed last after the first ones, at least according to the times. Let us see also the going forth of each of the chariots, that is, kingdoms, to where it is directed and against whom it comes. For thus the interpretation of the thoughts would become very clear to us.

For the Prophet says there are four, but he mentions three, and has been silent about the going forth of the first. But I will remind you briefly, as I said. For in the first, he says the horses are red; but he begins from the second, and says, "That in which were the black horses went forth to the land of the north, and the white went forth after them, and the dappled went forth to the land of the south. But if he should add the ash-colored, he will not be mentioning four chariots; for we have granted that they are the same as the dappled, for in the fourth chariot he says there were "dappled ash-colored horses. Therefore he mentions three, having been silent about the first. What then is the reason of the whole economy, come let us speak to the more learned as far as is possible. We affirmed that the red ones were the bloodthirsty rule of the Chaldeans, which also removed all of Judea, and having burned the cities in it, carried Israel away into captivity. And we accepted that the black ones were the kingdom of the Persians and of Cyrus. And in the white ones was described that of Alexander and the Macedonians. And both of these campaigned against the land of the Chaldeans, and took it by force. For first Cyrus, then after him Alexander, who also captured Darius himself near the place called Issus; and this is a city of the Cilicians; having slain countless myriads of Persians.

They say, at any rate, that a great heap of bones was gathered of the of those who fell there; and an inscription has been engraved, having such a meaning: "At Issus, on the shores of the sea, by the Cilician wave, we, the fierce myriads of the Persians, lie, The work of Alexander

of Macedon, we who then followed King Darius on his final path. For since it was likely that Israel would be no little grieved hearing about the kingdom of the Chaldeans, by which it had also been ravaged, for this reason, usefully, so that he might not seem to provoke to grief, and this out of season, the Prophet passes over the discourse about them. But what most gladdens them he explains brilliantly, I mean the things concerning the kingdom of Cyrus, and indeed of Alexander, who were all but sent to call to account the arrogance of the Chaldeans for their cruelty towards Israel. For this reason he added, as from the person of God, "Behold, those who go out to the land of the north have given my spirit rest in the land of the north. For their country is somehow more northerly than that of the Chaldeans; and the God of all was wroth with the Babylonians. And this would be clear again, as he says plainly, "I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, and I am very angry with the nations that are at ease;

for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. But since the land of the Chaldeans paid the penalties, with Cyrus first, along with the Persians and Medes, ravaging it, and Alexander after him, for this reason he says, "those who go out to the land of the north have given my spirit rest in the land of the north. However, the Prophet, having kept silent about the attack of the Chaldeans for a good reason; for he has run past, as I said, the red horses; he no longer keeps silent about the Roman empire. For the dappled ones, he says, went out to the land of the south. But observe how artfully and as if in passing he renders the account. For after the cross of the Savior, Vespasian and his son Titus overran the land of the Jews, laying it all bare, and burning the holy city itself. But the Prophet cleverly says "They went out to the land of the south," for the land of the Jews is most southerly. But these same dappled and ash-grey ones were commanded to go to and fro in the earth, and indeed they have gone to and fro; for they have gained power over the world under heaven, and have become masters of all the earth, with God assenting and kindling a brilliant glory for this, for those who direct the Roman powers; for He knew beforehand, as God, the greatness of their future piety.

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Take from the captives, from their chief men and from their useful men and from those who have known her, and you shall enter on that day into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, who has come from Babylon, and you shall take silver and gold and make crowns, and you shall place it upon the head of Jesus the son of Jozadak the high priest, and you shall say to him, 'Thus says the Lord Almighty: Behold a man, the East is his name, and from beneath him he shall spring up, and he shall build the house of the Lord; and he shall receive virtue, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and there shall be a priest at his right hand, and a peaceful counsel shall be between them both. And the crown shall be for those who wait, and for her useful men, and for those who have known her, and for a grace of the son of Zephaniah, and for a psalm in the house of the Lord. And those who are far from them shall come and build in the house of the Lord, and you shall know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you;

and it shall be, if you will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God.'" The word of God was to the blessed Prophet Zechariah, that is, through him to all concerning Zerubbabel, who was of the tribe of Judah, and was a leader of those from Israel, the ruling tribe calling him to this. And what were the things said about him by God, we shall of necessity recall beforehand. For he said, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands shall complete it. But there was with him founding the house and indeed also finishing it was Joshua, the son of Jozadak, the high priest. For this reason, the God of all commanded the divine Prophet to take the things from the captivity from its leaders and from its useful men and from those who had acknowledged it. But who these might be, and what things are from the captivity, I will relate as needed. For those of Israel were brought back from the land of the Babylonians, not in a disorderly or confused manner, but in good order and arrangement, according to clans and according to tribes, having appointed leaders, as it is written in Ezra. And when they finally arrived in Jerusalem, as God compelled them to raise up His temple, they established a treasury, so that a collection of money might be made for the construction of the works, and for the vestments of the priests, and for the sacrifices appointed to them according to the law.

And Josiah, son of Zephaniah, was appointed treasurer of the money. Therefore, the God of all commands that, from what was brought by the leaders of the captivity, which was also deposited with Josiah, he should take gold and silver, then, having made crowns, place them on the head of Joshua, the son of Jozadak, the high priest, and say to him concerning Zerubbabel: "Behold, a man whose name is Branch; but the Hebrew version has signified "branch" by the name of "shoot"; "and from beneath him he shall spring up," that is, from his own root he will cause many to grow. "And he shall receive virtue," that is, comeliness, or glory; for thus the other interpreters have rendered it. And he added to this, that both, Joshua and Zerubbabel, will sit upon the same throne, so that the kingship is common also to the one who has the priesthood in his hands, and that of the priest also belongs to the one who is king. And for both there will be one peaceful counsel, so that they are not seen to be of different minds in any way at all. Then he commanded the crowns to become a splendid offering to God, brought into His house, so as to become a grace, or a boast, for those who brought them, I mean Josiah and the useful men of the captivity and its leaders;

and to be dedicated, not in vain, but so as to become an occasion for an ode for the singers of the temple and the sacred psalmists. For then, he says, even those who are far from them, that is, those from the other nations, will come and worship the Lord. And such things will come to pass, he says, if they should choose to be adorned with the ornament of obedience, and to hear the voice of the Lord God; and then, when the things foretold have finally come to pass, they will know clearly that the Prophet was sent to make clear the things from God; and not indeed rather, like some of those accustomed to speaking falsely, speaking things from his own heart, but rather truthful, and not a false messenger. This then is the most ready and at-hand interpretation of the historical accounts; but it shows that the matter is a mystery of Christ, and if it were investigated subtly, no one would doubt. For we affirmed at the beginning that in Zerubbabel and indeed also in Joshua, Christ is prefigured, both

partially in each, and in both together, as one. For he is at the same time both king of Israel and the great ”high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled.

But since those from the tribe of Judah administered the thrones of kingship, while those of Levi were appointed to the priesthood, and it was not possible to see both kingship and priesthood in one person, for this reason Christ is wisely figured through the two as one. Therefore, if God should say concerning Zerubbabel, ”The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands shall complete it,” you will understand it more historically of that man, but you will refer the power of the mystery spiritually to Christ. For he himself has become our foundation, and on him we are all being built up spiritually into a holy temple; he is our beginning and our end; for he presents us sanctified in spirit, a splendid and holy dwelling for himself and for the Father, sin having been entirely removed, and the of corruption; he is Jesus, as I said, the great high priest. and Jesus is interpreted Salvation of the people; for thus also the divine Gabriel said to the holy virgin ”And behold, you will conceive in your womb ”and bear a son, and you will call his name Jesus; for he ”will save his people from their sins; but Josedech is understood as the Righteousness of God; for we have been justified in him through faith, and we have washed away the stain of our ancient faults.

he rescued us when we were captives and delivered us from spiritual slavery, and as if from a foreign and alien land of demonic deceit, he brought us back to the knowledge of God, and to the beautiful city of the saints, the truly holy Jerusalem, which is the Church. For this reason he is crowned by us with right and blameless faith, and with boasts in virtue, and with hymns of thanksgiving. And the crowns of that time were of gold and silver, and were made from corruptible material; but those woven and bound by us have nothing earthly, but are rather composed of the glory that befits God. For we offer up to him as gold the unerring contemplation of the doctrines concerning him; and as silver the spiritual brightness from good works. And in another way, the crown and glory of Christ is the salvation of those saved by him. And not one nation has been saved, as Israel was long ago through Moses, but henceforth the whole world under heaven; for this too was fitting for Christ. But observe how from the leaders of the captivity and from its useful men and from those who had experienced it, the things for the construction of the crowns are brought forward.

For the leaders of the peoples, who have been placed in such offices by God, and those who know the manner of our ancient captivity, who are useful to the redeemed as guides and teachers and are able to admonish and lead them well to a most lawful life, they themselves bring the gifts on behalf of all, fulfilling through themselves the weaknesses of the unable. And when the crowns were placed on the head of Jesus, it is said to him concerning Zerubbabel Behold a man, his name is the Branch, and from beneath him he will spring up. You have seen Jesus being crowned as priest, and see him again pre-eminent as in Zerubbabel and in royal glory; but understand that he is the Branch, that is, the shoot, concerning whom the divine Isaiah says ”And ”a rod shall come forth from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall spring up from the ”root. And we have blossomed from beneath him. For Christ became

the second root of humanity, that is, of those called through faith, and not like the first, I mean Adam, but in incomparably better ways; for we blossomed no longer for corruption and for death because of the curse, but for life and incorruption, having life as our root, that is, Christ. And just as he is ”the vine, and we are the branches,” attached to him through spiritual communion; so also he is the rod and the shoot, that is, the new growth and the branch;

and we have sprouted under him, have grown and blossomed unto incorruption, as I said, and life. He built the house of the Lord. And he is full of all virtue, that is, of the renown most fitting for God; ”For his virtue covered the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise,” as the prophet Habakkuk says. And the wise John also wrote somewhere that ”And we have seen his glory, ”glory as of the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and ”truth. He has sat upon a throne; for he has reigned as God, and is a co-counsellor with his own Father and co-ruler of all things. And that Zerubbabel and Jesus, brought together as if into one, very well signify Christ, he showed by adding, as concerning Zerubbabel And the priest shall be at his right hand; that is, in honor and glory; and there shall be a peaceful counsel between them both. For he is the same, as indeed already I have said before, at once king and high priest, as through two being depicted as one, the Emmanuel. Yet the labor is not unrewarded for those who crown Christ, but the fruit-bearing will run for them into unending memory. And that the word is true, he confirms by adding: And the crown will be for those who wait and for her useful ones and for those who have known her and for the grace of the son of Sophonias and for a psalm in the house of the Lord.

For it will be for the grace of those who have dedicated the things brought forward, and they will become an occasion for doxologies. For the piety of the leaders becomes a path of love for God for others. And when Christ is crowned by us, then also the flock of the nations will run to the knowledge of him, and those who are far off on account of their wandering will be called through faith, and they will build in the house of God. But what will they build? Themselves, obviously, fitting themselves together with the saints, and joining in faith for union with those from Israel, Christ being the cornerstone and binding together into one mind through himself the things formerly divided. For he created ”the two peoples into one new man, making peace, and reconciling all things in his body to the Father. When these things have come to pass, we shall vote for the truthfulness of the holy prophets, and we have known clearly that it was God in them who was speaking and revealing beforehand to us the mystery of Christ.

Book 3

And it came to pass in the fourth year of Darius the king, the word came of the Lord to Zechariah, on the fourth of the ninth month, which is Chisleu; and the king sent to Bethel Sarasar and Arbeser and his men to propitiate the Lord, saying to the priests who were in the house of the Lord Almighty and to the prophets, saying, ”Has the sanctification entered here in the fifth month, just as they have done now for a sufficient number of years? After the display of visions, other words came from God, with a short time having passed in between. For before the visions it is written that, ”On the twenty-fourth day in the eleventh month; this is the month of Sabat; in the second year of Darius the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the son of Barachias, the son of Addo the Prophet, saying: but in the contemplations before us, another time after that is specified: For in the fourth year on the fourth day of the ninth month which is Chisleu; according to the Hebrew tongue, that is; the manner of the divine vision for the Prophet has changed. But what is the occasion, the narrative of the history will make very clear. For some would not understand the meaning of what is set forth otherwise than in this way. For who at all are Sarasar and Arbeser the king and the men with him, how is it not necessary to learn this before all else?

And what is the sanctification in the fifth month; and indeed the very manner of the question, to what it looks, and what might be the purpose of those asking. Now when Hoshea the son of Elah was king of the ten tribes in Samaria, and had greatly inclined to apostasy; for he had served idols; God was provoked against Israel. Then Shalmaneser king of the Assyrians campaigned against the country, and he took Samaria, and he deported Israel, and he prepared certain people from the country of the Chaldeans to inhabit the land, so that it might become Persian, as having its inhabitants from there thenceforth. You have the history in the fourth book of Kingdoms. For it is written thus: ”In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea son of Elah began to reign in Samaria over Israel for nine years, and he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, yet not as the kings ”Israel who were before him; against him came up Shalmaneser king of the Assyrians, and Hoshea became his ”servant. And after other things again, ”And Israel was carried away ”from their land to the Assyrians unto this day. ”And the king of the Assyrians brought from Babylon ”men from Cuthah and from Avva and from Hamath and Sepharvaim, and they were settled in the cities of Samaria instead ”of the sons of Israel, and they inherited Samaria and ”dwelt in its cities.

These, then, who had taken the lot of the Samaritans, having inhabited the land and perhaps become fathers of children, also inclined to the customs of the Jews, having dreaded the attacks of the lions; from them came Sarasár and Arbeser, who was also named king, because he was then the leader of those who had been resettled in Samaria from Persia. And this about the men; but concerning the sanctification, come let us speak again what is fitting. Therefore, before Judaea was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, the blessed prophet Joel had proclaimed what was going to happen, and indeed he commanded the priests to mourn, and also the people under their charge, as Jerusalem was soon to be under the feet of enemies, and the divine temple itself was about to be burned down. And he spoke thus: ”Gird yourselves and lament, ”O priests; wail, you who minister at the altar; enter, ”pass the night in sackcloth, you who minister to God, for ”the sacrifice and the drink offering are withheld from the house of our God. ”Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders, ”all the inhabitants of the land, to the house of our God, and ”cry earnestly to the Lord, 'Alas, alas for the day!'” And this from the prophet; but in what manner the things foretold came to pass, I will clarify again, citing the sacred scripture itself. For it is written thus in the fourth book of Kings:

”And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the ”nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, ”Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, who stood before the ”king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem, and he burned the ”house of the Lord and the king's house and all the ”houses of Jerusalem, and every great house the captain of the guard ”burned. Then he appointed Gedaliah over the people of Israel who were left, whom, in the seventh month, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal seed, came upon and overpowered and killed; for it is written thus. Therefore, since it happened that in the fifth month and on the seventh day Jerusalem was captured, and the temple was burned down, and Gedaliah also died in addition in the seventh month, perhaps the remnant of the Jews, moved by the memory of the prophet's voice, established a custom for everyone from all the surrounding region in the fifth month and on the seventh day of the month to go up to Jerusalem, and to sanctify a fast, and to make lamentation as for a dead person and to wail for the temple lying in a certain manner, and for the burned city to pour a tear of afterthought. And they thought that this way of worship pleasing to God had been most wisely devised by them. But this was done while Israel was still under the yoke of captivity, and when no care had been taken of the divine temple.

But when they returned, having left the land of the Persians and Medes, and dwelt in the holy city, and then rebuilt the divine temple, the custom seemed to them to be no longer practiced at the right time and in order. For it was necessary rather, after what had happened, to turn to gladness, and to celebrate feasts, and to send up songs of thanksgiving to the one who had called them to freedom. Therefore, being in doubt, those of whom the account speaks, Sarasár and Arbeser, send some men to ask both the priests and the prophets if the sanctification has come here in the fifth month, as they have done now for many years, that is, if those accustomed to mourn have assembled in Jerusalem, and if they themselves should accept the custom, as in a manner of the sanctification that had taken place, although

the divine temple had also been raised and the ruin of the captivity. For they sanctified, as I said, a fast which they had done for many years. For while Israel was in captivity, they themselves also continued observing the time of mourning, and sanctifying the fast as I already said before. Therefore the question is from those who are in doubt, whether it is still necessary to fulfill the sanctification and the mourning, even after the raising of the temple; that is, to abstain henceforth, since the cause of the mourning has gone away. And the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying:

Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, saying: When you fasted or mourned in the fifth and in the seventh months, and behold for seventy years, did you fast a fast to me? And when you ate or drank, was it not you who were eating and you who were drinking? Are not these the words which the Lord spoke by the hand of the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous, and her cities round about her, and the hill country and the plain were inhabited? Some were asking, as I already said before, both the priests and the prophets about the so-called sanctification; then God answers, the priests and prophets having, as was likely, presented the supplications, and having earnestly sought to answer wisely those who chose to inquire about such things. Then what is the word from God? Both short and not long and having nothing convoluted; but, so to speak, bare and straightforward in the knowledge of what is beneficial. For what is the point, he says, if you have perchance fasted in the fifth and in the seventh months? Or what achievement of virtue is it at all, to wail ignorantly over stones and wood that have been burned? And in what way would God be pleased with the things done by you, when, having done none of the necessary things for benefit, you think among yourselves that you are achieving the best things of all?

For if I have need of such a fast, and a womanly lamentation is worthy of praise, for what reason have you continued this for seventy years, he says, without having fasted? For while they were still living among the Babylonians, they did not perform a public fast, nor would they be found to have been zealous to carry out any other of the customary and routine things, that is, according to the law of Moses. Then how did I have mercy, he says, and deliver them from the hand of their rulers? Therefore I have no need of such a fast, just as surely, if you should choose, he says, to eat and drink, you are not gratifying me but rather yourselves in the matter. Therefore, for one who fasts in vain and for no useful purpose, the tear is also useless and the sweat is without reward. Are not these the words of the former prophets when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous, abounding in good things, and still boasting in her own unharmed cities, both those in the hill country and in the plain. For the prophet Joel said that it is fitting for both priests and peoples to mourn, and in addition to these things also to sanctify a fast. And the purpose of the exhortation was calling to repentance.

For he did not want to wait for the experience of what had happened, so that you would mourn the temple after it was burned, but so that before the experience, as I said, by propitiating God with wailings and lamentations, you might escape the evils. Therefore are not

these the words of the former prophets, which you, being ignorant of, lament in vain, and shed the tear of ignorance over fallen stones, although it is necessary to correct the way of your own lives, and to walk the glorious and blameless path, having determined to perform well that which seems good to the law. And the word of the Lord came to Zechariah, saying: Thus says the Lord Almighty: Judge a just judgment, and show mercy and compassion each to his brother, and do not oppress the widow and the orphan and the sojourner and the poor, and let none of you remember the evil of his brother in your hearts. Having shown the mourning to be counterfeit, as useless and unprofitable, and having mocked their vain sweat, he henceforth directs them to that which is most conducive to benefit, and having made the path of the way of life that pleases him clear and plain, he makes white, as it were, the meaning of the law itself and of the prophetic proclamations. For the lawgiver delights in a right and blameless judgment;

and he has honored, and very earnestly, both mercy and love for one another, and he deems worthy of praise love for orphans, and compassion for women burdened by widowhood; but he shakes off greed as profane, and any crushing that might happen against the weaker, and he wishes those who have chosen to think his thoughts to be kind and not bearing grudges. And Christ himself also said somewhere, ”Forgive, and you will be forgiven; and indeed he also taught those praying to say, ”Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For the merciful God forgives the offenses of those who forgive others, ”but the ways of the resentful lead to death,” according to what is written in the book of Proverbs. And that love is the fulfillment of all law, how could anyone doubt, when the divine Paul has written thus? And the aforementioned are the fruits of love, and the doer of these things is a precise keeper of the law. And they refused to pay attention, and they turned a stubborn back, and they made their ears heavy so as not to hear, and their heart they made disobedient so as not to hear my law and the words which the Lord Almighty sent by his Spirit through the former prophets; and there was great wrath from the Lord Almighty.

And it shall be, just as he spoke and they did not listen to him, so they will cry out and I will not listen to them, says the Lord Almighty, and I will cast them out among all the nations that they did not know, and the land will be made desolate behind them, with no one passing through or returning; and they made the choice land a desolation. And through these things he has fully shown that they have not ceased to provoke the Judge of all against themselves. For though it was possible for them to obey the words of the holy prophets and, casting as far away as possible their noble opposition to the will of the lawgiver, to choose a glorious and most lawful life and to walk the blameless path, they became hard and held the teacher in no esteem, and they have had an unbending and unyielding heart. For they in no way ceased outrageously insulting the divine words, and terribly and unholily rebuking their messengers, who administered the office of prophecy, even though they spoke in the Holy Spirit; and they had already slipped to such a point of savagery and unadmonishable nonsense as not to choose to repent until the things foretold came to pass for them, and they have fallen under the things brought upon them by divine wrath.

But if God says in this that "I will cast them out among all the nations, and the land will be made desolate with no one passing through or returning," let us understand that such things were said again as in a prophetic foretelling; for they had been cast out among the Persians and Medes, and had already experienced captivity, and the land was deserted, and the best country of all was appointed, as the word says, for desolation, having no one passing through, that is, returning. For some were consumed by war; and others, burdened by the yoke of slavery, have run into captivity. Therefore, let us understand that these things too were said together with the others as in a foretelling. And that disobeying the divine words is harmful, or rather even a cause of destruction, one might see even from the things that happened to the ancients; and one would not need long arguments for proof, but the matter is clear to anyone, at least to one who once knows the good things that come from obedience. And the word of the Lord Almighty came to me, saying: Thus says the Lord Almighty: I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, and with a great wrath I am jealous for her.

Having sufficiently maligned the disobedience and stubbornness of the ancients from the very things that happened to them, and that he would be of all having shown them the cause of their evils, he transfers the discourse to the good things that come from gentleness, and from then on attempts to promise them seasons of prosperity, and to enrich them abundantly with wished-for goods, as having already paid the penalty for the things in which they unholily transgressed, and having been cleansed, as it were, of the accusations of their former wickedness by being punished by their enemies and enduring the yoke of slavery. And he cries out, as it were, against the cruelty of the Babylonians, who, going beyond all audacity, have done things to them that not even the divine wrath itself perhaps willed; for he said clearly, "I was a little angry, but they helped "forward the affliction. Therefore I am jealous for Jerusalem, that is, I have taken up zeal on its behalf, and with great jealousy I was jealous for her. It is as if he were to say, It will happen to the Babylonians to suffer in return things more harsh than what they have done, and upon those who have thus destroyed, I will bring the effects of wrath. Christ has fulfilled this.

For, being grieved for us who had wretchedly perished, and, as it were, being jealous for the Church, which was indeed foreknown by him, but not yet revealed in the world, he crushed the hordes of demons, and cast out the master of their folly from its tyranny over us and subjected him to the movements of wrath, and henceforth declared the assembly of those who worship him free from that one's wickedness. Thus says the Lord: I will return to Zion, and I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth, and the mountain of the Lord Almighty holy. God indeed fills all things, and all things are full of his ineffable nature. Yet he is sometimes said to depart from those who have sinned, not being divided by spatial separations—for it is utterly foolish to think this way—but by no longer wishing to be near and to deem them worthy of forbearance and love. And we say that the very manner of his wrath is of this kind. Therefore Israel turned to false worship, and Jerusalem has played the harlot. And the God of all departed, as it were, and subjected them to the evils that come from turning away. But since he now takes pity, he says, "I will

return," that is, I will cease from wrath, I will declare it worthy of my visitation, and I will make it my house again.

And just as, when he turned away, the holy mountain, that is, the temple in Jerusalem, no longer seemed revered by those who saw it burned; so indeed again, with God choosing to dwell in it, and it having been raised up, the reverence for it will rise again and be renewed, and Jerusalem will be true again, no longer as before offering its worship to gods not made by hands and to falsely named images, but serving the one God who is by nature and in truth with gentleness, by choosing henceforth to live according to the law, and with obedience in everything whatsoever. You might reasonably apply such words to the Word who for our sake became as we are, who, being in the form of the one who begot him and in equality in every way, "emptied himself, "taking the form of a slave,"" and became man, and "became "poor for our sake, so that we through his poverty might become rich. Therefore he who long ago justly turned away because of the transgression in Adam, and because "the "thought of man is set on evil "from his youth"" returned to us, as from his innate gentleness henceforth, and has dwelt in the Church, and has made the sanctified ones a city and a holy habitation. For he said somewhere concerning her—clearly meaning the Church—"Here I will dwell, because I have chosen her. And the blessed David also sings, "Glorious things have been spoken of "you, O city of God.

The prophet Isaiah also revealed this to us, saying, "For in the last days "the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, and the house of God "on the tops of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the "hills, and all nations shall come to it. For the Church of Christ is conspicuous, and like one set on a mountain, it is known to all everywhere. And it is also called true, least of all in types and shadows worshipping; but having rather received the truth, who is Christ, and fulfilling the worship in spirit and in truth. Thus says the Lord Almighty: Old men and old women shall yet sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each having his staff in his hand from abundance of days; and the streets of the city shall be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets. The war having consumed the nation of the Jews, it necessarily happened that their cities became empty of their inhabitants, and one saw houses cast down and the beauty of the structures in them. But behold, he promises to grant them a much-desired and long peace, which, and very rightly, the sons of the Hellenes call nurse of youths. For it brings those who are born to maturity, and for those who are already young men it in a way smoothes the path to old age, with no one ravaging, no war crushing, no consuming battle.

One must suppose therefore, and very rightly, that in peacetime cities, even if they are wide and long, are rendered narrow and are overcome by the multitude of their inhabitants. The passage before us again travails with some such meaning for us. For it said that old men and old women will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, with a staff barely mitigating the feebleness of old age, and having a staff to guide their old age; and this is a praise of warless times and of deep peace, which brings, as I said, infants to maturity, and sends to old age those who are already counted among men, who run the whole course of their life without a fight.

And if indeed young men were to dance in the city, and young girls to form choruses in the middle of the streets, this too would be clear proof that no bitter care hangs over them. For they would not have tolerated anyone playing, if it were a time of dejection. And Christ has become peace for us, who, having crushed every war, has rendered the Church full of the saints. And there are in it those gray-haired in mind, countless and excellent, to whom also the wise John writes, saying, "I have written to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning;

and like beardless boys and little girls is the more childlike multitude of those who have just believed, who with what are virtually spiritual leaps truly adorn the holy city, that is, the Church; to whom it would also be fitting to say, "Come, let us rejoice in the Lord, let us shout for joy to God our Savior. And if the elders should be said to lean on a staff, you will understand that Christ supports both small and great, the rod from Jesse, and the one named of power, which God the Father has sent to us from the Zion above, so that rejoicing in this we say, "Your rod and your staff, they have comforted me. Thus says the Lord Almighty: If it will be impossible in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be impossible in my sight? says the Lord Almighty. Great and extraordinary matters somehow tend to invite disbelief, and their course to completion is not without wonder. And so Sarah indeed laughs out of disbelief at the promise concerning Isaac, looking to her old age and contrasting the impossibility with the laws of humanity. Nevertheless she gave birth against hope, since God made the matter possible for her.

It was therefore very likely that those redeemed from captivity would be shaken with doubts and not be very confident that matters would advance for them to such prosperity, that Jerusalem would become full of the aged, and that choirs of boys and dances of girls would be seen in it, and that the good things of deep peace would come to be. For they were looking at walls thrown down, houses burned, and all the surrounding cities as habitats for wild beasts, on account of their being completely emptied of their inhabitants; and the fields, once all-bearing and flourishing full of thorns, having none of the ripe fruits, and the race of the rustics being utterly ruined. It was therefore, as I said, from this likely to disbelieve that the things promised would come to pass for them. For this very reason God does not allow them to be of two minds; but commands them to be of good courage and confirms it, saying, "If it shall be impossible in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, shall it also be impossible in my sight? says the Lord Almighty. For what is impossible among us, is quite easily achieved by the all-powerful God. For He is the Lord of hosts, fulfilling by His will even the most extraordinary things, and bringing to pass without delay what seems good to Him.

And somewhere God the Father said to the Jews, proclaiming beforehand the accomplishments from the coming of our Savior, "Behold, you despisers, and look, and perish; "for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not "believe, if one declares it to you. For as far as human reasoning is concerned, beyond wonder and reason is the very mystery of the Incarnation; and no less so are the accomplishments that have resulted for us from it. For

how is it not close to disbelief that the Word, born of God, was united to flesh, and came to be in the form of a servant, and endured the cross, and suffered insults and injuries, and the harms of the foolishness of the Jews? Or how would one not be utterly astonished at the outcome of the economy, where sin has been destroyed, death has been abolished and corruption driven away, and man, formerly a runaway, is now seen adorned with the grace of adoption? Therefore let Christ say concerning these very things, ”If it shall be impossible in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, shall it also be impossible in my sight? For all things are smooth and passable for Him, and when He wishes to accomplish any of the necessary things, there would be, I think, nothing to oppose Him. Thus says the Lord Almighty:

”Behold, I am saving my people from the land of the east and from the land of the west, and I will bring them in and I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness. God did indeed save of old those of the blood of Israel who were scattered by the war, gathering them to Jerusalem, and dwelling among them, by means of raising the divine temple, and allowing them again to be reconciled through the sacrifices according to the law, and to complete their vows and fulfill their feasts. However, the saying that He saves His own people from east and west, would fittingly apply to Emmanuel, who called all under heaven, catching in His net through faith those from the ends of the earth, and having gathered every flock of nations into the truly holy and renowned city ”which is the church of the living God,” and the heavenly Jerusalem. And that He dwelt in the midst of her, how is it not true to say? For He became like us, and ”dwelt among men” in the flesh. And this God proclaimed beforehand to us through another prophet, saying, ”Be of good courage, Zion, let not ”your hands be slack. The Lord your God is in you, ”a mighty one will save you; he will bring joy upon you and will renew ”you in his love. But He is also with us now;

for He has not left us orphans, but has sent to us the Paraclete in His place, and through Him is with those who love Him; and will fully assure us, saying, ”Behold, I am with you all ”the days, until the end of the age. We have therefore become His people, we who were once not a people, and we who were worshippers of stones; abhorring the ancient and profane error; we have acknowledged Him as God, and this in truth and in righteousness. For not like the friends of the letter are we attached to types and shadows, but rather having received into our mind and heart the brightness of the evangelical proclamations, we fulfill the true worship, and holding fast to the righteousness that pleases Him, we fulfill the worship in spirit. ”For God is Spirit,” as the Son Himself says, ”and those who worship Him must worship in ”spirit and truth. Thus says the Lord Almighty: ”Let your hands be strong, you who of those hearing in these days these words from the mouth of the prophets, from the day the house of the Lord Almighty was founded, and the temple from which it has been built. The God of all things often promises to those who love him things beyond hope, but he never speaks falsely, but by his own power and by certain ineffable operations he accomplishes in due season whatever he may wish, and very effortlessly.

It would be fitting for us, not being weak in faith, in every way and altogether to bear witness to him that he is able to accomplish all things easily; and to be courageous for works through which we shall be illustrious, and we shall gain the glorious crown of goodness; and to be persuaded by the words from him, and to be eager to make as guides those who may be at times for us the most unerring transmitters of the divine oracles. And our Lord Jesus Christ also promised through the holy prophets the good things from the incarnation, and insofar as it pertained to human thoughts, he did not place the account far from unbelief, as I said, narrating the greatness of the gifts. But in faith we have made acceptable the things beyond nature; and turning our mind to supernatural works, we have given the neck of our mind, in a way easy to handle and obedient, to the instructors of piety. And the fitting time for the provisions of good things and for the subjection from us ourselves is the manifestation of the Church. For see how the God of all things commanded even us to be strong and to fulfill works, and to be persuaded by the words of the prophets, from the day the house of the Lord Almighty was founded and the temple from which it has been built.

For before those days the wage of men shall not be for a benefit, and the wage of beasts does not exist, and to the one going out and to the one coming in there shall be no peace from the affliction; and I will send forth all men, each against his neighbor. The edition of the Hebrews does not render the words as if for a future time, but posits the time that has passed. For it says "before those days the wage of men was not for a benefit and the wage of beasts did not exist"; and again "To the one going out and to the one coming in there was no peace," and instead of saying "And I will send forth all men," they have put "I have sent forth all men. And the account is also very plausible, but the truth in these things the power of the narratives will establish. For it wishes to signify something like this. For those from Israel had come from Babylon to the holy city. But there was no place of sanctification for them, since the former temple was demolished; there was no sacrifice and libation, since the altar was not standing. Then the God of all things urged them to make the most pressing care of these things so necessary for them, and to rebuild the temple, and to erect the divine altar in it, so that they might be able to perform very well the customary rites, and to appease the God of all things.

But they delayed in various ways, at one time feigning a lack of money, at another making excuses of the malevolence of those hindering the building. Then, offending God because of this, they were struck with frequent and successive plagues, I mean indeed by lack of fruit and by blight and by the attacks and raids of the neighboring nations. And the God of all things made their sloth an accusation against them, speaking thus through the voice of Haggai the prophet, "This people say, 'The time has not come to build the house of the Lord.' Is it time for you to dwell in paneled houses, while the house of the Lord has not been built? But since they had relapsed, as I said, out of sloth, they were frequently struck with shortages of necessities, and with wars with their neighbors. But when they had raised the temple, the things from wrath ceased, and all things were sufficient for them, and a great breadth of prosperity was at hand. For this reason it says, "That before those days," that is, before the temple was raised, "the wage of men was not for benefit and the wage of the

beasts did not exist. For the farmers were without wages, and having gathered absolutely nothing, they departed from the fields along with the exhausted oxen. But there was no peace for those going out, or for those coming in.

And by those coming in and going out he sometimes means those going from city to city, or having a commercial trade, that is, also for the sake of other business. There was no peace for them either, since the neighboring nations, as I said, had raged against Israel, and each one looked upon the one near by blood, or a brother, or a neighbor as one of his greatest enemies. It should be known that before the Only-Begotten became man, and the Church was revealed, there was no wage for man, nor indeed for beasts. For the more rational in this life and those having a reputation for understanding, who indeed might be considered men, had an unprofitable and useless zeal in words, neither writing anything necessary, nor indeed being able to understand or speak to others. Likewise also those who led a herd-like and bestial life remained without wages. For it was not possible to work anything praised by God. But there was no peace at all on earth, as the herd of demons was confounding all things, and rendering the earth full of turmoil, so that the affairs of all and indeed their minds were as in a shaking and a swell, and had no firmness. And now not according to the former days will I deal with the remnant of this people, says the Lord Almighty; but I will show peace;

the vine shall give its fruit, and the earth shall give its produce, and the heaven shall give its dew, and I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of my people. He transfers along with his wrath the things that result from it, and says that the punishments will flee away along with the times of transgressions. For with sin having ceased, or rather with Israel having already paid the penalties for it, he said that the misfortunes would cease, quite reasonably, and the assault of grievous things would be ineffective. For he has planned for them things not akin to the first, but whatever looks towards gentleness. This was an increase of peace, and an abundant supply of the most pleasant things for them, so that the vine was seen full of clusters, and the arable land, growing deep with crops, would repay the sweat of the farmers, with heaven obviously, as it were, running along with them, and fattening the fields, clearly, and the things in them with dews. For heaven and earth, and creation simply, will surely follow the nods of the Master. And these things are an inheritance for Israel, with God broadening their prosperity and delivering them from everything that is wont to cause grief. This saying would be fitting for the Savior of us all, Christ. For before the times of his coming we each walked according to what seemed good to him, living a bestial and most irrational life, and yoked to the deceptions of demons.

But when the Father had mercy on us who were all but sold, and cast down to the earth, and under the feet of enemies, he no longer dealt with us according to the former days. For he did not overlook us any longer being taken advantage of, and acting under a cruel tyrant who was carrying us off to every one of the most shameful things; but rather he has given us the peace from heaven, that is Christ, who has also bestowed on us the supply of all spiritual fruitfulness. For we have been filled with grain and wine, and the true vine, that is Christ,

has given us its fruit, which makes glad the heart of man, according to what is written. And he, being both the grain of wheat and the sacred sheaf, was revealed to us as the bread of life; and he made us most flourishing, fattening us with dews from heaven, clearly the spiritual ones and through the Spirit, of which the divine David also makes mention, saying, “As the dew of Hermon that comes down on the mountains of Zion. And these things are to us in the lot of an inheritance from God and a good portion, since indeed we have become Israel, that is, a mind seeing God, for we have seen the Father in the Son.

and it shall be that as you were a curse among the to the nations the house of Judah and the house of Israel, so I will save you and you shall be a blessing; be of good courage and let your hands be strong. The people of Israel, having become captives and entangled in the greed of their captors, have also been called accursed, with some saying, as is likely, ”May I not become like Israel. But since the merciful God has saved them, and they are in their former good state, they have cast off along with their misfortunes also the appearance of being cursed. For they have been blessed, and have become no less enviable than they were of old, with God gladdening them with good things from above, and extending to them a share of all cheerfulness. And this very thing may be seen again to be true in our own case. For we were accursed, yoked to the herds of demons, and brought down to every form of wickedness through their perversity. But since we have known God, the creator of all, and have been known by Christ, then indeed we have been taught to sing over ourselves, ”Blessed are we by the Lord, who made heaven and ”earth.

Since, therefore, we have been called to this honor and glory, it is necessary to be diligent and to be manful against the passions, to make sin hateful, and to be seemly in the evangelical laws, so as to hasten to accomplish what is pleasing to Christ. For we have heard him crying out to us, Be of good courage and let your hands be strong, and we have received from Christ the need to be of good courage; for he has conquered the world for us, and has trodden on enemies, and showed his own temple to be stronger than death, and has stopped the mouth of lawlessness, so that we too through him in these things. For he conquered, as I said, not so much for himself, but for us who were weak, accomplishing the good things that come from victory. For thus says the Lord Almighty: As I thought to do you harm when your fathers provoked me to wrath, says the Lord Almighty, and I did not relent, so I have arrayed myself and have thought in these days to do good to Jerusalem and the house of Judah; be of good courage. That nothing withstands the divine thoughts, or rather counsels, he allows us to understand again from these things. For whatever God should resolve and choose to fulfill, this will certainly come to pass and will proceed to the end that seems good to him. Thus somewhere he also says through the voice of Isaiah, revealing the all-powerful nature of his own being:

”And I said, All my counsel shall stand, and all that I have planned, I will do. Therefore, from what they happened to suffer when the divine wrath was brought upon them, from these very things it is possible to understand, and very clearly, that for them the path of cheerfulness is also widened, since he is willing and permits them to prosper, or rather,

extending out of loving-kindness the need for them to be in every good thing. For just as, he says, nothing restrained him when he wished to harm you on account of your great sin, so also when he plans good things and wishes to pity those who have toiled sufficiently, there will be nothing to stand in the way. For I have set myself in array to do good to Jerusalem and the house of Judah. The word is very emphatic. For he did not say only that "I have planned" and "I have thought," perhaps, but "I have come to this point of judgment and of gentleness toward you, that I have even set myself in array. And this is a clear indication of intense deliberation. And he seals the promise as true by adding, "Be of good courage. So also does Christ make us secure, us who have been called through faith to the knowledge of the truth. For just as before the call, when we had slipped into every kind of wickedness, he gave us over to a debased mind, and afflicted us on account of uncleanness;

so also in these days he has both planned and set himself in array, as he himself says, to do good to the Church and the house of Judah, that is, us who confess him, and who honor him with praises as Master, as savior and redeemer; for Judah is interpreted as 'praise'. And the house of Judah may also be understood in another way as the Church. for it has been named the house of Christ, who "has sprung out of Judah," and so he is called also in the divinely inspired Scripture. And indeed the patriarch Jacob thus mentions him, saying, "Judah, let your brothers praise you," and again, "From a shoot you went up, my son Judah. For Christ sprang up from the root of Jesse, and as if from a shoot of the holy virgin, "A glorious rod and a staff of magnifi-"cence," according to the prophet's voice. To us, therefore, will be said, "Take courage," and very rightly so. For the Father has crowned us with the weapon of goodwill through the salvation and grace which is through Christ. These are the words which you shall do: speak truth each to his neighbor, and judge a peaceful judgment in your gates, and let each one not devise the wickedness of his neighbor in your hearts, and do not love a false oath; because all these things I have hated, says the Lord Almighty.

God does not promise to bestow good things from His own gentleness on those who choose to disobey and are accustomed to turn away to a worthless manner of life, and certainly not to be disposed to do them good from then on; but rather to those who have loved to walk the path pleasing to Him and have chosen to live piously. For He has commanded that they should by no means be seen as speakers of falsehood, but rather that they should speak their words with accuracy, and to love uprightness in judgments, and to bring forth a verdict on each matter that is straight and irreproachable in every way and entirely, not being overcome by shameful bribes, not looking to sordid gains, and for the sake of money misrepresenting the grace of the just man; but looking only to what is pleasing to God; and also forgiving brothers, if they should stumble at all either in doing or in speaking, and in addition to these things, strongly rejecting perjury. For He declares that He has hated such evils. But observe how He commands to do nothing of the things in shadows or types. For indeed He does not command that one must sacrifice oxen nor yet honor with incense, but He wills that one practice a life that is, as it were, lean and well-wrought, and all but evangelical.

For since no small discourse has been made by us in these matters concerning the advent of our Savior, for this reason a commandment is also necessarily introduced which speaks the ordinances through Him. For if indeed it is fitting for us, following the divine words, to speak the truth, we shall certainly speak of the things of Christ; for Christ is the truth. For this reason also the most wise Peter commanded us to be most ready ”for a defense to everyone ”who asks us a reason concerning the hope that is in us. And indeed those who are accustomed to speak the things of Christ, and have Him always on their tongue, and have made Him the meditation of their mind and heart, would surely be righteous in every way, and distinguished in uprightness in all things whatsoever, peaceful and gentle and, in addition to this, forbearing, and not knowing how to swear falsely, but rather not even swearing at all. For they remember Him saying, ”But let ”your word be 'Yes, yes,' and 'No, no'; for what is more than ”these is from the evil one. And the word of the Lord Almighty came to me, saying, Thus says the Lord Almighty: The fast of the fourth month and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth shall be for the house of Judah for joy and for gladness and for good feasts, and you shall rejoice, and you shall love the truth and peace.

I think it necessary for the studious to narrate again beforehand the causes of the fasts spoken of here, and which is the fourth, and which the fifth, and those after them, the seventh and the tenth. For thus we shall opportunely bring to bear, and in order hereafter, the force of the things commanded. Therefore, after the holy city was captured, and the temple was burned down, and Israel was carried away captive along with the holy vessels, those who were saved and left behind in Judea considered the days on which such things happened to be ill-omened and hateful, and indeed running together in a crowd, they made a lamentation and a dirge, abstaining from food as in fasts. But what were the things that happened, and as in each of the of the days just now named by us, come, let us speak from the holy scriptures. So then the blessed Jeremiah said, ”And it came to pass in the ”ninth year of his reign; it is clear, of Zedekiah;

”in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebu- ”chadnezzar king of Babylon came, and all his host ”against Jerusalem, and they surrounded it with a palisade and ”built a wall of four-foot stones around it, and ”the city came into distress until the eleventh year of king ”Zedekiah, in the fourth month on the ninth day of the month, ”and the famine was severe in the city, and there was no bread ”for the people of the land, and the city was broken up, and all the ”men of war went out by night by the way of the ”gate between the wall and the outwork, which ”was by the king's garden. Then inserting in the middle the slaughter of Zedekiah's sons, and his own blinding, he said again, ”In the fifth month, on the tenth day of the ”month, Nebuzaradan the chief cook, who stood before ”the face of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem, and ”burned the house of the Lord and the king's house, ”and all the houses of the city and every great ”house he burned with fire, and every wall of Jerusalem ”round about the host of the Chaldeans that was with the ”chief cook cast down. You hear how in the tenth year Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, then in the fourth month of the

eleventh year he says the city was broken up, and indeed in the fifth month he insists that the temple itself and the whole city was burned down by the chief cook.

Therefore they made the fourth and the fifth and the tenth day unlucky days, transferring the months into days. But what of the seventh, it is necessary to speak of it again. For when the chief cook had taken Jerusalem, he appointed Gedaliah as governor for the remnant of the Jews in Jerusalem. Then having done this, he departed for Babylon. But when the survivors from the Jews learned that this had been so done, they ran together in Jerusalem, and were in hopes of still inhabiting the land. But in the seventh month, as it is written, Ishmael killed Gedaliah; and all the people were scattered then, and fled to the land of the Egyptians, and perished there. Therefore they made the seventh day hateful, and the month itself for this reason. This then is the reason for the fasts. But since it was fitting, when the things from wrath had ceased and Israel had been brought back to Jerusalem and the sad things had passed, not to fast any longer and lament, he commands that mourning be transformed into gladness, and to rejoice rather in what they have, having received it from God, that is, to hold in memory the things for which they were punished from time to time, for having sinned unguardedly and shamelessly slipped into every kind of transgression. And Christ has done this for us also. ”For he has turned our mourning into joy, he has torn off the sackcloth and ”girded us with gladness,” according to the voice of the psalmist.

And we do not complain at all that, once not knowing God, and worshipping the creation rather than the creator, we have fallen under the feet of enemies and into a reprobate mind; but we rather give thanks for the things for which we have received mercy and been saved, and have been delivered from the hand of enemies, and inhabit the holy city, that is, the Church, and are deemed worthy henceforth to honor him with prayers and spiritual sacrifices, and we also love peace and truth, and we have been taught by the divinely-inspired scripture to count the matter a cause of the highest gladness. ”For he himself is our peace; he himself, as I said, is the truth; and through him we are in good hopes, and we ought to rejoice, all dejection being taken away. Thus says the Lord Almighty, There shall yet come many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities, and the inhabitants of five cities shall come together into one city, saying, Let us go to entreat the face of the Lord and to seek the face of the Lord of the Almighty, I will go also; and many peoples and many nations shall come to seek the face of the Lord Almighty in Jerusalem and to propitiate the face of the Lord.

As Christ transforms our mourning into joy and into a feast and into good gladness, and changes our lamentations into cheerfulness, no longer, he says, will the approach in faith and the intimacy with God through sanctification be for those called to salvation one by one; but the cities will then exhort one another to this, and all the nations will come in multitudes, with those who come second always crying out to those who have arrived first for this, ’I will go also.’ For it is written that ”Iron sharpens iron, and a man sharpens the face of another. For the zeal of some is always found to be a provocation to others to fulfill what is good. What then is the purpose for the cities or for the nations? To propitiate and to

seek out the face of the Lord, that is, Christ, who is the exact image of God the Father, and "the character of His substance," as it is written, and "the radiance of His glory," concerning whom the divine David also says, "Make your face to shine upon your servant. For the image and the face, as I said, of God the Father has shone upon us; having Him benevolent and propitious, we shall also escape the harms from sin, being justified through faith, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His great mercy; for He is compassionate and good and forgives the offenses of those who approach Him;

seeking Him with a love of learning and by the need to fulfill the established customs, we shall by all means and in every way find Him, and through Him we are joined to God the Father, for He is our peace, according to the scriptures. Thus says the Lord Almighty: In those days, ten men from all the languages of the nations will take hold, they will take hold of the hem of a Jewish man, saying, 'We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.' In what way the approach of those seeking the face of the Lord will happen city by city and nation by nation, he makes clear again. For this will be, he says, in those days, that is, at that time, in which ten men would take hold of one Jew, saying, 'We will go with you.' Through the ten, therefore, you will understand the perfect number of those who approach; for the number ten is somehow a symbol of perfection. That those from the nations, clinging to the holy apostles, attempted to walk the same path as they did, being justified through faith in Christ, he makes clear, saying also the figure, as if finely fashioned from an image of our own experience. For if small children should ever choose to follow their own fathers, taking hold of the hem and, as it were, being helped by their touch and hanging from their garments, they make their walk unerring and safe;

in the same way, I think, also those who have served creation rather than the Creator of all things, acknowledging as their genuine fathers the teachers of the evangelical doctrines, and being united through harmony of soul, they follow them, being still infants in their understanding, and they go on the same path, being revealed certainly as emulators of their way of life, and with constant progress toward the better, "ascending to a perfect man and to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. And for what reason do they follow? For they have been fully convinced that God is with them, that is, Emmanuel; for it is interpreted, 'God with us.' But that the call at that time will not be of those from the blood of Israel alone, but rather of all the nations throughout the whole world, he has indicated by saying that those who take hold of the hem will be from all the languages. But when were the nations called to the knowledge of truth, and when did they wish to seek the face of the Lord, and to propitiate it, and for the need to walk the same path as the holy apostles, unless when the Only-begotten came among us? who is the expectation of the nations; to whom also the divine David sings, "All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord; for through him the multitude of the nations has also been saved.

The burden of the word of the Lord in the land of Hadrach, and its resting place is Damascus; because the Lord watches over men and all the tribes of Israel; and Hamath in its borders. The subject before us is not harsh, but the very composition of the words is quite difficult

to grasp; nevertheless, it will be spoken by us as is possible. Indeed, it is necessary to fittingly declare in advance the things about which we believe these words were spoken, for only in this way can the meaning of the prophecy be understood, and with difficulty. Therefore, when Israel was at times released and freed from the bonds of captivity, and they finally came into Judea, and attempted to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, then indeed the neighboring nations, both those inhabiting Samaria and those occupying the cities of Palestine and also of Phoenicia, were consumed with envy, and at the same time they were afraid, lest their affairs should return to their original state, and the race expand to an innumerable multitude, and then, having such an impregnable and well-towered city, they might campaign against them again and, as before, raise an invincible hand against them, for this reason they wanted to hinder those wishing to build the wall, devising bitter deceits, and indeed also setting up raids against them. They came to such a point of malice and envy, that they also wrote to the one then reigning over the Persians the things contained in Ezra. And it reads thus:

"To King Artaxerxes, lord, your servants Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe and the rest of their council and the judges who are in Coele-Syria and Phoenicia. And now let it be known to the lord king that the Jews who have come up from you to us have come to Jerusalem, the rebellious and wicked city, they are building, and they are repairing its marketplaces and its walls and laying the foundations of a temple. If, therefore, this city is built and its walls are finished, they will not endure to pay tribute, but will even stand against kings, and since the work on the temple is proceeding, we think it well not to overlook such a thing. Therefore, since they immoderately mocked Israel when it had been captured and had suffered captivity, and when it had with difficulty been saved and released from its bonds they attacked it again no less, inflicting countless troubles upon it, plotting in many ways, and allowing them neither to raise the divine temple, nor indeed to wall the holy city, God was necessarily provoked against them, and he delivered them into the hands of Israel. For when the works were finished and the temple raised, having ravaged all their cities, they took under their hand those in them, and became masters of innumerable riches.

The burden, therefore, of the word of the Lord, it says, in the land of Hadrach and Damascus, that is, the word from God that is in our hands, will be against both the land of Hadrach and of Damascus, and indeed also of Hamath, which is in its borders, clearly of Damascus. The land of Hadrach is surely a country lying toward the east, whose neighbors are Hamath, which is now Epiphania, a little beyond Antioch, and Damascus, which is the metropolis of the Phoenicians and Palestinians; and the cities under them will clearly be subject to the metropolises. Why then is the burden against them? Because in them has occurred his rest, that is, of the God who rules all things. And he has rested because he has seen them punished. For he who watches over all things would not have been silent, deeming the chosen race worthy of forbearance and visitation, that is, Israel. For the God of all watches over men, and observes the path of each, and upon those who do wrong he brings the things of wrath, but he rescues the wronged. And it is necessary to remember that also

in the preceding sections, having introduced the account concerning the four chariots and the forms of the horses, he added again ”Behold, those who go forth to the land of the north have quieted my spirit in the land of the north.

And the Master’s wrath, which hates evil, is quieted, as it were, when those who have offended him have paid the penalty for their very great and unbridled sin. Tyre and Sidon, because they were very proud, and Tyre built strongholds for herself, and she treasured up silver like dust, and gathered gold like the mud of the streets. For this reason the Lord will inherit her, and will cast her power into the sea, and she will be consumed by fire. The account runs through the events that happened to the cities, against which he asserted ”the burden of the Lord” had come. He begins with Tyre and Sidon, which were indeed especially honored above the others, excelling in strength and wealth, and in the manliness of their inhabitants, and having the others, as it were, under their hand, and set before their neighbors. Therefore, since, he says, Sidon and Tyre raise a high brow, and think themselves to be formidable and unbreakable, and have trusted in strongholds, that is, in surrounding walls, or in other things by which a city might be well off and be saved, and have been greatly proud of their wealth, for this very reason they will learn by experience itself that the Lord will inherit her. For when those from Israel had sacked her, that is, perhaps, Vespasian and Titus, he says that she will be inherited from God. For it was he himself who delivered her and placed her under the hand of those who had taken her.

For the Romans, subjecting the whole earth to their own scepters, were gentle and mild to those who yielded without a fight; but to those who wished to resist, they themselves were harsh and warlike. Therefore, he says that she will be burned down, her strongholds having been cast into the sea, and her wealth plundered, even if her gold was like dust and her silver like the mud of the streets. For the inhabitants of Tyre have become formidable and exceedingly avaricious merchants, and concerning this a broad and long account has been made in the writings of the prophet Ezekiel. Therefore, nothing will ever benefit those who offend God, those who mock the saints, if indeed anything should happen to them, and who laugh broadly if God should test the faith of his own. For every stronghold of theirs will fail, that is, every enclosure and every means of safety; and wealth will be of no use at all, but will be sustenance for war and an even greater attraction for those accustomed to plunder. And one might see even now the children of the Hellenes being very proud of their worldly wisdom, and as it were on strongholds, on the deceptions from intricate syllogisms, and all but walling in their own error with the power of eloquence, and being exceedingly enriched with what is brilliant in speech [as silver], and what is precious in thought in the order of gold.

Yet even so, Christ has inherited them, for he has thrown down the strongholds, that is, the discoveries from deceit have fallen, and the gold and silver have been plundered. For indeed, those who from time to time have presided over the churches, eloquent and wise men, seizing for themselves the power of their eloquence, have made a sacred offering to God, contending with arguments for the faith, and making a very great and true denunciation

of their deceit. Those from Israel have done something like this. For having borrowed from the Egyptians vessels of gold and silver and having despoiled those who had taken advantage of them, they brought these things in the desert to the all-holy God, when the holy tabernacle and the sacred vessels in it were being constructed. Therefore, those who administer the Church through worldly wisdom and through brightness of speech, both plunder the children of the Hellenes, and as it were, having become rich with their gold and silver out of very great gentleness, they make it an inheritance of God, speaking to others for his glory, and destroying their strongholds, but building up spiritually the holy the city, that is, the Church. Ashkelon shall see and shall be afraid, and Gaza and shall be in great pain, and Ekron, because she was shamed of her hope; and a king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited. And foreigners shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will destroy the pride of the Philistines.

When the assault of war and battle overruns a country, the cities within it are somehow more courageous and at times have good hopes; for they think that they will overcome their enemies either by the multitude of their inhabitants, or by the strength of their walls and their knowledge of tactics; but if it should happen that one among them is captured, which might be called the strongest, then indeed then all cower in fear, and cast off their hope, I mean the hope of being able to escape, and mourn as if fallen. So then, when Tyre is captured, which is so distinguished and most mighty and boasts in its wealth, Ashkelon, he says, will be afraid, and Gaza will be in pain, and indeed Ekron too. These are cities of the Palestinians. And she will be in pain, because she was shamed of her hope. For they thought that the strength of the Tyrians would suffice to aid them. But since they have seen her laid low, for this reason they have finally lost their hope. And the leader of Gaza, he says, will be gone, having perished, clearly, and foreigners shall dwell in Ashdod, the natives having likely been consumed by the war. And he adds to this, that I will destroy the pride of the Philistines. And he usually calls the Philistines, that is the Palestinians, "allophuloi" (foreigners). But the statement might also apply, if one thinks so, to other nations that have wronged Israel, who were also neighbors and adjacent to the Jews.

But these things will be said by us again, with respect to the literal meaning. But it is necessary to know that when the Church, as I said, is at times persecuted by enemies, the enemies spring up terribly and grin, perhaps saying, "Aha, aha," as it is written. Nevertheless Christ defends her, and will shatter all their power, raising up His own temple, and bringing upon those who plot against her the things of unmixed wrath, and shaking the synagogues of the heresies like certain cities, and in addition to these, the unholy hordes of the idolaters. And I will take away their blood out of their mouth, and their abominations from between their teeth: and they also shall be left for our God, and they shall be as a chiliarch in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite. For these also devoured Israel, and like some wild beasts, had their mouths, so to speak, stained with blood. And since they were idolaters, and devoted to the worship of vain things, they always somehow had on their tongues, or rather between their teeth, the names of their own abominations, calling handmade things gods up and down, and saying to lifeless stones, according to the prophet, "You are my God,"

and ”You begot me. But they have paid the fitting and sufficient penalty, having savagely transgressed against Israel. Nevertheless, they have not utterly perished, God having foretold their future conversion in Christ in due time.

Therefore, he says, I will take away their blood out of their mouth, that is, even if like some wild beasts they as it were gulped down Israel, yet a time will come when they will be clean and freed from the charge for these things; for they too will be justified by faith, and will wash away the defilement from their ancient depravity. And I will also take away the names of their abominations from between their teeth. For they will no longer remember the falsely named gods, nor will they name them, and they themselves will be left for our God, just as Israel itself was; for its remnant has also been saved, although it had acted impiously against Emmanuel himself. And since the called multitude of the nations was spiritually joined to those who believed from the blood of Israel, Christ binding them into unity; ”For He is ”our peace, who made both one, and the middle ”wall of the having broken down the barrier, and creating the two peoples into ”one new man, making peace, and reconciling ”both in one Spirit to the Father; for this reason he says that they will be as a chiliarch in Judah, that is, they will advance to this point of genuineness, in faith and gentleness, I say, so that even from them leaders of Judah will arise. And Ekron, that is, the foreigner, from the land of the Philistines, will be as the Jebusite, that is, again, as the very people inhabiting Jerusalem.

For Jerusalem was called Jebus in the beginning; therefore, the Jebusite is here understood as the Jerusalemite. And many chiliarchs, that is, leaders and rulers of peoples, have come from the gentiles, and now exist throughout the whole world. But you will understand ”in Judah” to refer to those who are accustomed to praise, that is, us who have been called in faith, who are accustomed to crown Christ who has called us with unceasing doxologies. And I will encamp in my house as a garrison, so that none may pass through or return, and no more shall an oppressor come upon them, because now I have seen with my eyes. Behold, he clearly names Christ a garrison and a wall, through whom and in whom we have been fortified, clearly according to the good pleasure and will of God the Father. For the spiritual house and building of God, according to the voice of Paul, we are surely those who have believed, if it is true that he dwells in our hearts through the Spirit and lodges with those who love him. For he himself said through the voice of a prophet, ”For I will dwell in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Christ is therefore the garrison raised up for the Church by the counsel of the Father, so that no longer, as of old, certain ones may pass through and return among us, causing confusion and trampling a way as if laid waste, and filling our hearts with all harm. For he said somewhere concerning those of Israel, who was the ancient vineyard of the beloved, that ”I will take away its hedge and it shall be for plunder, and I will break down its wall and it shall be for trampling. But for us who have known his epiphany, Emmanuel himself has been raised as a wall and a hedge, surrounding with ineffable power and scaring away from our minds the unclean demons, and not allowing us to be subjected to their feet. Therefore

the prophet also says to him, ”And you shall be called,” he says, ”the builder of hedges, and you will put an end to the paths between. For just as those who are accustomed to fence in vineyards that have been laid waste put an end to the paths through the middle, no longer allowing them to be trodden by the feet of those who cause confusion; so also our Lord Jesus Christ, having placed himself around us as an unbreakable wall and fencing us in with angelic powers, has prepared us to be beyond being trampled. And he added to this, that no more shall an oppressor come upon them.

For formerly we were easily captured and quite easily carried away, and went readily to anything whatsoever that was amiss, as Satan led and carried us, and drove us, so to speak, from these things to those. But Christ put a stop to this also. For the plunderer will not come against us; he will not cast us out as before, to do his will. For we have been fixed in Christ, and have our heart secure and established, no longer shaken toward what is not fitting; not departing into polytheism; not being driven out into error, but as it were having embarked on faith and love for God, so that rejoicing in this we say ”And he set my feet upon a rock. And by saying, Because now I have seen with my eyes, he clearly showed that the time of the Savior’s advent is a time of visitation. ”For the dayspring from on high has visited us,” and as David says, ”The Lord looked down from heaven upon the earth,” although formerly, on account of the sin in us, he did not deem us worthy of oversight, nor of mercy or love, nor of anything else of the sort at all, but was as it were turned away; for this reason we were also troubled. and the blessed David will testify, saying, ”When you turn away your face, they will be troubled, and to their dust they will return.

But since now, that is, at the time of his sojourn, he has seen with his own eyes, we have been saved and have received mercy, and what indeed of things beyond words and truly worthy of admiration have we not gained?

Book 4

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; proclaim, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, the king comes to you righteous and saving, he is meek and mounted upon a beast of burden and a young colt. In these words he openly proclaims henceforth the manifestation of our Savior, so that nothing at all appears arduous. For he has necessarily commanded the spiritual Zion to rejoice, since indeed all our dejection has been taken away. For where is there still dejection, and for what reasons could we lament at all, when sin has been driven away, and death has been trampled, and human nature has been called to a free dignity, and crowned with the grace of adoption, and adorned with the gifts from above and from heaven? But observe that, announcing the coming of our Savior, he immediately calls Zion a daughter. He has therefore commanded her to rejoice very greatly indeed, and he urges Jerusalem to proclaim that her king will now be present and will be revealed in the flesh, righteous and saving. For Christ has justified us by faith, and he widens the path of salvation for those who come to him. And in addition to this he is also meek, not bringing legal severity, nor punishing with death those who transgress a commandment, but rather saving out of gentleness and raising up those who have slipped, and if anyone sins, he himself becomes an advocate with God the Father. And we have read that ”the letter kills, but the spirit gives life.

For the letter is the punishing law, the shadow and the type; but the life-giving spirit is Christ, for in spirit and in truth we have been taught to worship through the evangelical instruction. But that he also rode upon a young colt and thus entered Jerusalem will not require a long argument for confirmation; for the divine evangelist, having written such things, is sufficient for our faith. For Christ sat on the colt, and its mother followed; and what was done was for us a sign of a most necessary matter. For Christ rested upon the new people, that is, the one called to the knowledge of truth, which was once idolatrous. For it was like a colt, not yet tamed, nor knowing how to walk correctly; for it had not been instructed by the divine law. But he who leads all to spiritual skill, set the colt before himself. But that in due time the Synagogue of the Jews will also follow, he has given us to understand through the donkey that followed, although in the time of the calling it was the elder; for it was called beforehand through Moses and the prophets. But since it stumbled against the saving king—for it did not accept the faith—for this reason it justly comes with difficulty after the colt, and has become the tail, that is, an attendant and behind those

from the nations, and the first has become last. But observe how he who knows the reins and hearts showed human nature carried away to extreme irrationality.

For both the Synagogue of the Jews and the multitude of the nations itself are compared to the very irrational donkey. For the ones, having served the creation rather than God the creator, and the others, dishonoring the law which was their instructor, have become devoid of good sense and mind, and having inclined towards every form of wickedness, ”they were compared to mindless ”beasts, and were made like them,” according to the voice of the psalmist. And a donkey is in another way a symbol of uncleanness; for the animal is unholy, and has the condemnation from the law. Such are all those who go astray and are lovers of sin. And he shall destroy chariots from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be destroyed, and a multitude and peace from the nations, and he will rule the waters from sea to sea and the outlets of rivers of the earth. For the Only-Begotten, having become man, was about to bring under the feet of those who love him principalities and powers and the world-rulers of this darkness, that is, the abominable hordes of demons, and to subject to them every enemy visible and invisible, and to shatter all war, and to gladden them with the good things of peace, the prophetic word shows us enigmatically.

For from time to time the Babylonians went against Jerusalem, and indeed certain others of the neighboring nations, mounted on horses and in chariots, ”and shooting with bows,” as it is written, they thus subdued them and involved them in bitter toils. From what was accustomed to happen, then, it indicates the splendor of the accomplishments through Christ. For the savior, he says, the just and most gentle king, will indeed arrive, and not after a long time; yet not escorted by a great multitude of shield-bearers, not having ten thousand men who know tactics; but having practiced moderation in his character to such an extent, as to barely sit on a bare colt. Yet he will be so great in virtue, and will so benefit those who trust in him, as to remove chariots from Ephraim, and take away the horse from Jerusalem, and destroy the battle bow, and to spread deep peace from all the nations. And by Ephraim he means the ten tribes in Samaria, and by Jerusalem those who dwelt in it; these are Judah and Benjamin. Therefore the prophetic word brings to us a promise of security and peace. For the holy city, that is, the spiritual Zion, or Jerusalem, ”which is the Church of the living God,” would not, he says, become easily overrun by those wishing to do evil, and he who saves it so extends his own kingdom, as to rule over all of Judea, from the sea to the rivers.

For these are the outlets of the earth, that is, the ends. And somewhere the divine David also sings, as if speaking about the vine of the Synagogue of the Jews: ”She stretched out her branches to the sea, and her shoots to the rivers. For the country of the Jews is bounded by the sea to the south and the Indian sea, and by what is called the Middle of the rivers. But the kingdom of Christ is not within these borders; far from it; but the argument proceeds as from a particular example to the universal and most general. For he has reigned not only over Judea, but rather over all that is under heaven, and his authority extends from ends to ends. And you, in the blood of the covenant, have sent forth your prisoners from the pit

that has no water. You shall sit in a stronghold, prisoners of the synagogue, and in return for one day of your sojourning I will repay to you double. The discourse now passes to the just and saving king himself, and indeed also gentle, that is, Christ; and it makes manifest the splendid and admirable accomplishments of his coming. For the only-begotten Word of God willingly emptied himself, becoming man;

and he endured the cross, despising the shame, and laid down his own life as a ransom for the life of all, and he acquired for God the Father that which is under heaven in the blood of an eternal covenant, of which the type was that which was sprinkled upon the ancients through the all-wise Moses. For, he says, Moses, taking the blood, "sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, "saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which God has made with you.'" But those things were types, and a representation of the truth; but this at last is the truth, Christ, who purchased all of us in the blood of the covenant. For we have been redeemed, as his disciple says, "not with perishable things, silver or gold, "but with the precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, Christ. You therefore, he says, O most just and most gentle king, in the blood of the covenant your prisoners who have come to be; that is, those whom you have bound tight with bonds of love, and have clearly persuaded to submit to and be bound fast by your yokes the neck of their mind; you have sent forth, that is, you have brought out or led out or brought up from a pit that has no water; and we say that by this he means either hades, which has no life; for we shall take water as a type of life, for it is life-giving;

or we shall reckon as a pit, and very rightly, the deceit concerning the falsely named gods. For the thing is truly a pit, into which if anyone should slip at all, he will be deprived of the life in the age to come. That Christ, having died, has emptied hades, and opened the gates below to the spirits in prison, is clear to everyone. And the God of all said somewhere through the voice of Jeremiah concerning those of Israel, who had abandoned him, and had foolishly turned to idolatrous deceit: "The heaven was astonished at "this, and shuddered much more exceedingly, says the Lord; because "my people have done two evil things, they have forsaken me, "a spring of living water, and have dug for themselves broken "cisterns which cannot hold water. For just as the right and unerring knowledge concerning God is life-giving and a spring of life; so might the toys of idolatry, and the error concerning it, be understood as waterless and as it were broken cisterns. Then he speaks to the prisoners themselves, and encourages them to good hopes, saying, You shall sit in a stronghold, O prisoners of the assembly. And a stronghold, as I think, he calls the Church, as being walled in Christ, and unshakably firm; and sitting he says is being as it were established in faith. For it is written concerning God, "Because you sit for eternity," that is, having an established and unshakable nature.

You shall be therefore in safety, he says, having what is firm in faith, O prisoners of my assembly; and these would be the holy multitude of those justified in Christ. And that they will not have their patience in all the best things without reward, and indeed also their reliance on love towards God, he signifies, saying, And for one day of your sojourning I will

repay you double. And it is something like this that he wishes to say. For all the saints are sojourners and strangers on the earth, and the life in the body of every man is very short, and if one were to reckon it against the age to come, he would lament it as being altogether short, so as perhaps even to be compared to a single day. Therefore, for one day of your sojourning, he says, that is, for the short and compressed time of life in the body I will repay rewards twofold and in abundance. And Christ also said somewhere that, "A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, "and running over, will be poured into your lap. For we do not expect rewards of equal weight to what we may have done, but with much addition; for the giver is lavish. Because I have bent you, Judah, for myself as a bow, I have filled Ephraim.

In what manner indeed the flock from the gentiles will be called and will enter through faith, and how he who formerly lived in luxury, that is, Satan, will be afflicted, being driven out of the worshipers acquired by him through greed, he again makes clear in these things. Indeed he makes his discourse as if to the holy apostles, that is, the teachers from Israel, who also, traveling around the country of the gentiles, called and have drawn in a net those in it to the knowledge of truth. O therefore Judah, he says, I have bent you for myself as a bow, that is, through you I will shoot the adversaries; and you, O Ephraim, I have filled. And what this is, I will say again. For when those skilled in archery bring the string to the breast, and the iron of the bow close, then they are said to fill the bow, and thus they shoot something terrible and unavoidable and as it were leaping up and flying with irresistible impulses, the poison, that is, the arrow. Therefore, it is phrased in different ways. "I have made you a bow," he says, "O Judah, and I have filled you, O Ephraim. And Judah and Ephraim are the whole race of Israel.

Therefore, he has made, as it were, a bow of those from the Jews who believed before the others, and who had come to this resolve, to instruct the nations, and to drive away the herds of demons from those who had gone astray, and to strike down Satan and, in short, those who oppose the divine dogmas and fight against the initiations given through them. Thus somewhere the divine David also says to the Savior God of all things, "Your arrows are sharpened, O mighty one; peoples will fall under you, in the heart of the king's enemies. For "the arrows of the mighty one," that is, of Christ, strike the enemies of God and the Father in the heart and kidneys. And His arrows are again the mystagogues, and they strike those who have gone astray and do not know the God who is by nature and in truth, not to death, but bringing them to the love that is in Christ, so that they too might fall under him. such as the bride described in the Song of Songs, who says clearly, "For I am wounded by love. That the divine disciples became most mighty and strong, the most wise psalmist will confirm, saying about them in the Spirit, "Like arrows in the hand of a mighty one, so are the sons of those who have been cast out. For he calls those from Israel "cast out," as having fallen from divine grace because of their insolence toward Christ.

But the sons from them have become arrows, as sent from the hand of a mighty one. And Habakkuk also said somewhere, as to Emmanuel Himself again, concerning the holy apos-

tles, ”For your darts will go forth at the light of the lightning of your weapons. And I will raise up your children, O Zion, against the children of the Greeks, and I will wield you like a warrior’s sword. Behold, he clearly names the mystagogues from the Jews His own bow. For who are the children of Zion who rise up against the children of the Greeks, if not the divine disciples, and those who lead the churches from time to time, and who rightly divide the word of truth? For how could the spiritual Zion be understood as other than the Church? And they contend against the children of the Greeks, and they campaign against those who have gone astray, God having made them like a warrior’s sword. Thus also the divine Paul is seen adorning the soldier understood to be in Christ. For he puts on him the breastplate of righteousness in Christ; and indeed also the helmet of salvation. Then he gives the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Using this sword, therefore, against the children of the Greeks, they shear off the deceit sprouting in them, and bringing upon them the sharpest word of God, which is living and active, they cut out the evil and unclean spirit, so that they might be able, henceforth, with a pure and free mind, and one delivered from the oppression of demons, to receive the word of true knowledge of God. And the Lord will be over them, and His dart will go forth like lightning. By these words he indicates that the Lord God will be with them, and will shield them, and will help destroy those who resist; for he says the Lord will be over them, meaning clearly those who have resolved to rise up against those who minister His gospel. And each dart, that is, a mystagogue or apostle; for he again likens them to an arrow or a dart, with God sending it; it will run like lightning, he says, clearly meaning shining brightly, and falling upon the eyes of all without effort. For the divine disciples have become so brilliant, and the heralds of the Savior’s gospels, and those after them who led the peoples and presided over the churches, that no one could be ignorant of the brightness of the virtue within them. And the Savior Himself said this:

”No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or under a bed ”places it, but on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see ’the light.’ And again elsewhere, ’Let your light so shine ’before men, that they may see your good ’works, and glorify your Father who is in ’heaven.’ And the Lord almighty will sound the trumpet and will go forth in the storm of his threat. The Lord almighty will shield them; and they will consume them, and will bury them with sling-stones, and they will drink their blood like wine, and will fill the bowls of the altar. and the Lord will save them in that day, his people as sheep. The word, as I said, clearly presents God, who rules over all, as a fellow shield-bearer and comrade-in-arms for them, both arrayed for battle in this way and chosen to contend alongside them, so that he seems to be already equipped for war, and, as one about to advance against enemies, to use his whole power and the strengths inherent in him. Indeed he says he campaigns, not against those netted through faith for justification, but against those who have impiously opposed the divine proclamation, whom Paul also pointed out to us, saying ”For a great and ef-fective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. Therefore, he says, the Lord will sound the trumpet.

For Christ has spoken the evangelical proclamation, rushing into every place under heaven, for the mystery of Christ is audible to those everywhere. For Moses was weak of voice and slow of tongue; therefore he was scarcely heard in Judea alone; but the word from Christ is not at all like this. For it has cried out like a long and most melodious trumpet, sending forth a piercing sound into the ears of all. And he will go forth as in the storm of his threat, and so he will shield his own bodyguards, so that those who oppose him are consumed as if by fire, and all but buried by them, as they strike them nobly with slings. And they will drink their blood, that is, like beasts leaping upon them they will easily prevail, and will render them dead. And they will offer bowls filled with the blood of the fallen, as a libation upon the altar. For the death of those who do not allow the deceived to be saved is a sweet aroma to God and an acceptable sacrifice; for if it is not right to pity the murderers of bodies, but rather for them to be subjected to judgments, suffering the same things, what could one say about those who have become destroyers and corruptors of souls?

These again would be the choice spirits of the Greeks, and those who hold to the glory of the wisdom in the world, who name gods and goddesses above and below, and persuade people to worship the creation rather than the creator, and assign to each of the elements the glory due to God. These have deceived the world under heaven, and not only during the time of their life in the body; but also for the times that followed. For countless multitudes at various times have perished, overcome by their false speech, and paying attention to frigid and old wives' tales. Such men, then, have finally been destroyed. For the profanation of their writing is gone, the myths are ineffectual, and their blood has, as it were, been drunk up, and being struck down by the doctrines of truth as if by stones from a sling, they are buried, and the destruction of their garrulity has become, as I said, a sweet aroma to God. And the Lord has saved his people as sheep. For since he himself is the maker of all things, those who were formerly deceived might reasonably be called his people; except that Christ has saved them as a flock driven away by robbers, by casting out the false shepherds, and placing the human race under his own hand. For he is the good shepherd, who has laid down his life for the sheep. For holy stones are rolled upon his land.

For if there is anything good of his and if anything beautiful from him, grain for the young men and fragrant wine for the maidens. For we say that the saints at various times in the churches, who would become mystagogues and teachers, are named the holy stones rolled in the land of God. For they have become conformed to the choice, cornerstone, and precious stone, which was laid by God the Father for the foundations of Zion; and if the foundation is a stone, those who are joined and fitted together and rise up into a holy temple for God are fittingly called stones according to it. Moreover, he says they are rolled very well, signifying by this, I think, a certain nimbleness and quickness toward anything holy. For the round, that is, spherical stones, are somehow better than hesitation, and more ready for motion than others, if someone should choose to move them; and the mind of the saints is very easily led to what pleases God. Since the stones are thus for us, it would be fitting for us to be disposed firmly as well. Because if anything is good of him and if anything is beautiful

from him, it is clear that it is from God who distributes all things to us for godliness and life. And what are these? Grain for young men, and fragrant wine for virgins.

For to those who act manfully and with a youthful spirit have inclined toward what pleases him, and have chosen to fulfill what is good, even greater strength will be given by him, understood as in grain. For bread strengthens a man's heart. Indeed, to those who are already purified, and have an undefiled mind, who might also reasonably be compared to venerable and holy virgins, spiritual wine will be given, that is, the clear and unadulterated knowledge of God, which gladdens a man's heart. Therefore, young men and virgins, according to the words just given by us, will reasonably be called to a broad and abundant participation in the good things from above, and indeed they will hear God saying, "Eat and drink, and be intoxicated, my friends. For such people are near God; and not by spatial relations; for it is nonsense to think or say this; but by a disposition of mind that is most valiant, and by the desire for everything that is best and the love for him. For just as wickedness displaces us and, as it were, carries us far away, so virtue brings us near to God, causing that which separates and comes between us to be removed from our midst, I mean, sin. Ask for rain from the Lord in season, early and late.

For just as there would be no grain in the fields without toil, nor a vineyard rich in clusters and good wine, so also in us there would be no spiritual fruitfulness, unless God sends down like rain into the mind and heart his oracles. the revelation, and knowledge, as it were, instilling in us both the ancient and new scripture, that is, of the Law and of the Gospel; for such would be the early and late rains. And that the knowledge and spiritual contemplation of the law is not without benefit, but rather tutors us through type and shadow to the mystery of Christ, the Savior himself will confirm when he says to the Jewish crowds, "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you, Moses, in whom you have hoped. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me. And somewhere he also spoke about the scribes and Pharisees, as being called from the instruction of the law to something better, that is, to the Gospel: "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.

Therefore, asking from God both legal and evangelical knowledge, and having presented ourselves as worthy to receive it, we shall certainly receive it, and we will fill the inner treasures of the mind, collecting the old and the new, and filling the mind with the greatest possible spiritual fruitfulness. The Lord made lightnings, and will give them winter rain, to each one grass in the field. because the speakers have spoken troubles, and the diviners false visions and they spoke false dreams, they gave vain comfort; for this reason they were dried up as having no rain, and were afflicted like sheep? because there was no healing. The present text is in labor with some hidden meaning, which I think it is necessary to explain clearly beforehand, for they would understand thus the lovers of learning. For his discourse was about the saints, whom he also called holy stones, and he said that wheat was most fitting for them, as for those growing into men, that is, young men, and indeed

also fragrant wine, on account of their being virgins, that is, pure and undefiled. "For those of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires," as the divine Paul says. He has commanded to ask for them also both early and latter rain;

then, with the mention of the erring being inserted, he gives as it were the reason in these things, why they have neither wheat nor indeed wine, nor are they watered by the spiritual rains, so that from this they have no fodder in the field. And the discourse is composed as if about perceptible things; yet the spiritual contemplation in them is exceedingly subtle and has much purity. For he says that while God makes visions, that is, lightnings, and pours down the winter rain on the earth, which is also useful, and indeed also gives fodder to each, of the beasts in the fields, clearly, those who make pronouncements have led them astray, that is, the false-speakers and false-narrators and those who speak divinations from their own heart; these have spoken toils, that is, not things for the repose of those who believe them, but things through which it was necessary to grow weary, offending God and being overlooked; and the diviners also offered false dreams, sounding in them, clearly, what was pleasing to them, and fattening them with good hopes, but speaking nothing true; but carrying them off into deceit and error, and least of all showing them the giver and provider of spiritual things; but rather persuading them to ask for prosperity from the falsely-named gods. For this reason, he says, They were dried up because they had no rain, and they were afflicted like sheep. For there was no fodder, there was no healing.

For there was not among them the one who binds up the broken, who raises up the crushed, who restores the afflicted. One must pay attention, then, not to those who pronounce vain things, to the false-speakers and buffoons and dreamers; but rather to God, who makes the light of true knowledge of God flash into our mind, and who pours down spiritual rains, the consolations through the Holy Spirit, I say, and who makes fodder spring up for those in the field, that is again, who as it were pastures us in the most flourishing grass, the blameless knowledge of the God-inspired scripture. "For man, being in honor, did not understand; he was compared to the senseless beasts and was made like them; but if he should somehow take into his mind the knowledge of the divine oracles, and partake of spiritual nourishment, then indeed, then, having cast off sluggishness, he will be in honor again, governed by sound reasoning, and having recovered the mind that is proper to a man. My anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I will visit the lambs. In these words, as I suppose, he calls shepherds the false prophets and false diviners, and the teachers of deceit, who have become a destruction and a snare to some who, having sinned against the true glory of God, have assigned the honor and worship due to him to creation, "and they worshipped the works of their own hands," as it is written.

It is not unreasonable also to join with the false diviners the famous orators of the Greeks, who, being excessively conceited in their eloquence, have led astray those who adhered to them, and like certain not good shepherds have pastured them on thorns and into the great worthlessness of rotten thoughts; for what among them is profitable for the knowledge of truth? Against these also would be the things from divine wrath, and very righteously; for

they destroyed not only their own souls, but in addition to this also those of others. For they have led them astray, as I said, by the boastfulness of their diction, all but gilding over the lie and expending the use of speech on deceptions. Yet he visits the lambs, having compassion on them, clearly, and transferring them from deceit to the knowledge of the truth, and moving from being deceived into a straight path. For just as it was fitting for those who had wronged them to inflict the punishment appropriate to the wrongs; so again the philanthropic judgment for those who had suffered would in no way be deprived of God-befitting gentleness and a just vote. For it was necessary, it was necessary for the wronged to be saved, as God forgets wrongs and frees from punishment those who were subjected to their greed perhaps even unwillingly.

And the Lord God the almighty will visit his flock the house of Judah, and will set them as his comely horse in war, and from him he looked, and from him he appointed, and from him the bow in wrath, and from him every one that drives out will come forth in it. and they will be as warriors treading clay in the roads in war, and they will be drawn up for battle, because the Lord is with them. In what way He will bring upon the shepherds the things from wrath, but will visit and save the lambs, He makes clear. For having appointed from the Jews the mystagogues of the world, the holy apostles and evangelists, He contended through them against the wise men of the Greeks, and delivered the lambs from their babbling and, having freed them from the snares of deceit, transferred them to the true and blameless knowledge of God. He will visit, therefore, it says, His flock, the house of Judah. And He will make it like a comely and most warlike horse, upon which, so to speak, being spiritually carried, He will wage war against the tongue of the Greeks, as I said, and will write down the uncomeliness and uselessness of the wisdom within them. For that in the dispersions of the Greeks the divine disciples became like certain horses, so to speak, neighing against their babbling and God-hated deceit, how could anyone doubt?

Christ saying concerning the blessed Paul to Ananias, ”Go, for this man is a chosen vessel for me to bear my name before Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel. And Habakkuk also said somewhere as to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself that, ”You will mount upon your horses and your riding is salvation. Therefore, He will set him, it says, ”as a comely horse in war and from him He looked. Just as if one might say, As God He looked upon those fit for the ministry of the evangelical proclamations, and truly He made the chosen ones from Judah, and from him He appointed; for He chose them to be servants and ministers of His own will, and as it were mediators and deacons of the grace from Himself. And there is, it says, also from him, that is clearly from Judah, the bow drawn in wrath against the opponents. And from him again will come forth also he that drives out in it. And by ”he that drives out,” as I think, he means the one who plunders and takes captive. And the divine disciples also did this, seizing those from the Greeks, and bringing them to the great king, I mean Christ, so that they might be under Him, and choose to think His thoughts, having late and with difficulty shaken off the yoke of the devil’s greed.

And the divine disciples thus prevailed over the wise among the Greeks, so that it now seemed as if they were trampling on clay scattered in the crossroads. For the Lord was with them, who does "great and unsearchable things, glorious and wonderful, of which there is no number. And Christ also somewhere declared to those who believed in Him, "Behold I have given you to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. But it must be known that we, weaving a spiritual interpretation, say such things; but to the Jews the matter does not seem to be so, but they receive it rather historically, and say that after the times of the captivity Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes made war on them, having gathered a very great assembly of fighters from the land of the Greeks and indeed being puffed up by the auxiliary forces from them; but as they themselves say, Israel conquered, and carried off the better glory from his wickedness. for then it has happened that even those from the Maccabees who were martyred have bound on the crown of good repute. And they adduce, as proof of what seems right to them, the things just now said by us, and moreover the things a little later, which are as follows:

"For I have bent you, Judah, for myself as a bow, I have filled Ephraim, and I will raise up your children, O Zion, against the children of the Greeks, and I will wield you like the sword of a warrior, and the Lord shall be over them, and His arrow shall go forth like lightning, and the Lord Almighty shall sound the trumpet, and shall go forth in the storm of His threat. The Lord Almighty will defend them. And the riders of horses shall be ashamed, and I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will cause them to dwell, because I have loved them. Again, those who agree with the Jewish narratives say that when the battle against the Greeks was joined, their horsemen perished, but those of the blood of Israel prevailed, so that they inhabited the country, that is, Judea, free from all fear, and with no one at all being taken away, that is, having become a captive. But we, striving to make the interpretation of the thoughts consistent with and a sister to the former, say that the shamed horse riders are none other than those who presided over the Greek dogmas, and who were accustomed to contend for the God-hated deceit, and with them being shattered, Judah has prevailed, and the house of Joseph has been saved.

And through these are signified the blood and race of Israel, that is, the multitude of those justified in Christ and bearing the Jew in mind and heart, and having received circumcision in the spirit, and having a mind that sees God; for so is Israel interpreted. And since they have been loved by God, for this reason they have also been made to dwell, that is, they have had a firm permanence in all the best things. For it is written that "The Lord makes the solitary to dwell in a house. And the divine Isaiah also said somewhere concerning the one who practices the exceptional life, "He who walks in righteousness, speaking a straight path, hating lawlessness and injustice, and keeping his hands from gifts, making his ears heavy that he may not hear a judgment of blood, shutting his eyes that he may not see injustice, this one shall dwell in a high cave of a strong rock. And it is not implausible to say that the Church, that is, the mansions above, has been given as a house by God to the saints; and indeed the blessed David deems the matter worthy of all wonder, thus saying to the Savior and God of all, "Blessed are all who dwell in your house, they will praise you forever and

ever. and again, ”For one day in your courts is better than thousands; I have chosen to be an outcast in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tents of sinners.

And it shall be in the manner that I did not turn them away, because I am the Lord their God, and I will hearken to them, and they shall be as warriors of Ephraim. With the wise men among the Greeks, who were also named horsemen, having been put to shame, he promises to strengthen and cause to dwell those who have received mercy, adding ”Because I have loved them. And what they will gain from being loved by God, he explains again. For just as, he says, I did not turn them away. For I did not completely overlook them, but I visited them when they were in danger, because I am the Lord their God; for not ”the God of the Jews only,” but also of the gentiles, as the Creator and Lord of all. For this reason, he says, I will also hearken to them, that is, I will make their supplications acceptable. and they shall be as warriors of Ephraim. This is similar to if he should say again, Those who were once, because of weakness of mind and heart, as it were paralyzed and lying down, will now be brought into such spiritual strength as to seem to be ranked as equals with those from Ephraim who were well-pleasing, that is, with the apostles and evangelists from the Jews.

For such men have become spiritual warriors, contending against enemies, striking down opponents, and conquering principalities, and powers and lordships, and the things spiritual hosts of wickedness, and conquering without a fight those who opposed the divine proclamations. And from the multitude of the Gentiles there have also been men called through faith to the knowledge of Christ, holy men and spirit-bearers, and as warriors of Ephraim; for they have become imitators, as far as possible, of the way of life of the apostles, and tracing their virtue, they themselves also have acted manfully against the enemies of truth and passions and sin. And their heart shall rejoice as with wine, and their children shall see it and be glad, and their heart shall rejoice in the Lord. The mind of those who have drunk wine is always somehow careless, and a despiser of care. For it does not admit that which is accustomed to cause grief, but is released, as it were, and scorns all anxiety. If therefore they should become, he says, as warriors of Ephraim, then indeed they shall receive gladness for themselves, and as brilliant and renowned men they will be made glad by the hope of good things to come, and they will have imitators of their excellent way of life, namely, the sons born of them, spiritual sons, that is. Such also was the divine Paul, writing and saying to those called through him, ”For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you have not many fathers;

for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore the children who will be from them shall see and be glad. For having come into contemplation of Christ, and having learned the power of the mystery, and been enlightened by the gifts of the Spirit, they will act rightly, and they will receive gladness in Christ the Savior Himself, and will make Him the joy and delight and exultation of soul and heart. And this would be a clear proof of choosing to live in a manner pleasing to God. For those who assign the inclination of their own mind to the affairs of the world, and have inclined toward baser things, rejoice

in them, and make this their gladness, and are joyful in the pleasures of the flesh, and being accustomed to revel in the other luxuries of the present life, they consider the things of God to be of almost no account at all; but those who seek Him with their whole heart, and are enriched by contemplations of Him, and open wide the eye of their mind, will receive gladness in Him alone. I will signal to them and I will gather them, because I will redeem them, and they shall be multiplied as they were many; and I will sow them among the peoples, and those far away will remember Me, and they will raise their children and return.

He again remembers the flock of the Jews, and indeed He also promises to collect them who have been scattered, and to gather them from every land into Judea, so that absolutely no one is left behind. And in what manner the gathering will be, He indicates again. For they say that beekeepers make certain signs, either by whistling, or being accustomed to do certain other things, and so they collect the swarms of bees that have departed from the hives. And something of this kind has been said also through the voice of Isaiah, ”And it shall be, he says, in that day that the Lord will whistle for the flies that are in the part of the river of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of the Assyrians. But others say, also in times of war, if it should happen that the combatants are scattered somehow, either pursuing or being pursued, a certain sign is raised on high by the generals, and looking to it, they are gathered together and come back to the same place. And something of this kind is also suggested by that which is found in the prophet Isaiah, ”And it shall be as a mast upon a mountain, and as a standard bearer upon a hill. Therefore from that which naturally occurs He takes the likeness. For I will signal to them, He says, and I will gather them.

For a great and glorious sign has been raised among us, the cross of the Savior, through which we have also become acceptable to God the Father, and indeed we have also been redeemed, and we who have believed have run forth into an innumerable multitude. But since He has added that and I will sow them among the peoples and those far from them will come and will remember me, again we say that, and not from of the purpose; for the word has much probability; for the divine disciples and the heralds of the divine gospels were scattered as it were among many nations and in every country and city, and prepared those who had become furthest from God on account of the intervening sin and error to remember Him, and to take into their mind the Savior and Creator of all, although they had long attached their worship to creation, and for that very reason had departed from intimacy with God. And so the divine Paul addressed those called through him to the knowledge of Christ, saying, ”But now you who were once ”far off have become near. They shall come, therefore, remembering God. And the blessed prophet Jeremiah hints at something of this sort to us, saying as to Israel, ”You who are ”far off, remember the Lord, and let Jerusalem come up ”upon your heart.

And if indeed they remember God according to nature at all, then indeed they will advance to this spiritual strength, so as to become fathers of children, and to nourish their own children with words of piety, and to be proud of this very thing. And somewhere the divine

Paul also writes to those nourished by him and who have ascended to a perfect man, and have come to the measure of the stature of that in Christ, at one time, "My joy and my crown," and at another time again, "I protest by your boasting, brethren, which I have "in Christ Jesus. "For the crown of old men are the children "of children, according to what is written; and the boast of children are their "fathers. And I will bring them back from the land of Egypt and I will gather them from the Assyrians, and I will bring them into Gilead and into Lebanon, and not one of them shall be left behind. When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Judaea by force, and the divine temple was burned, and Jerusalem itself, then all Israel suffered miserably. For some were carried away as captives to the Assyrians and Medes; but others, having escaped their cruelty and having been able to flee, and fearing and shrinking from being captured in the same way, went as deserters to the Egyptians, and submitted to the yoke of servitude under them, an unwilling one, to be sure, but imposed by necessity.

Therefore, since he promised to gather them from everywhere, he also mentions the places to which they were carried away; some, having become captives, as I said, others being driven by unbearable fears to things contrary to their will. But since it is proper for those who are especially lovers of contemplation and spiritual to lay claim to the spiritual interpretation, we say that He promises to draw them out of the country, or rather the hand, of the invisible enemies, and to free them from every fear; and while they are captives, and as it were subject to others, to all but reshape them into freedom. Or also in another way he says that they will be delivered from darkness and confusion. For Egypt is interpreted as Darkness, and Babylon as Confusion. And the text often makes no distinction, reckoning Assyrians and Babylonians as one nation, because they were under one scepter, and one kingdom was established over them. Therefore, having been redeemed from the hand of the oppressors, he promises to bring them into Gilead; and this is the most fertile and fruitful portion of the land of the Jews; and also into Lebanon, and this is a great mountain, rich in timber, lying on the borders of the land of the Jews and Phoenicians. And through both of these, I suppose, that thing is signified.

For our Lord Jesus Christ, having delivered us as from Egypt and from the Assyrians, that is, from the oppression of those who took us captive—and these are wicked and unclean demons—has brought us into the Church, as into a land rich in timber and very fertile, in which the fruit of those who are well-pleasing is very abundant, and the heads of the saints are not easily numbered, and are lifted up on high through virtue, and have blossomed as in the rank of cedars, and concerning them could be said, and very appropriately, that through the voice of David to the God of all: "The cedars of Lebanon, which you planted. "of God for the admirable Paul also clearly names those who have been justified in faith "a field. And they shall pass through a narrow sea, and shall strike the waves in the sea, and all the depths of the rivers shall be dried up, and all the insolence of the Assyrians shall be taken away, and the scepter of Egypt shall be removed, and I will strengthen them in the Lord their God, and in His name they shall boast, says the Lord. The promise of assistance to those who believe in Christ is made by way of a likeness to the things gifted to those of old.

For just as Israel was brought across the Red Sea, having overcome the waves in it; "for the waters were solidified as a wall," as God miraculously accomplished the deed;

and just as they crossed the Jordan on foot; so, he says, those called through Moses to the knowledge of Christ, and who have been saved anew by the initiations of the holy apostles, will pass through the tempest of this present life as if it were a certain sea wildly surging with waves, and having been removed from worldly turmoil, they will serve at their leisure the God who is God by nature. And they will also cross temptations, like certain flooding rivers, so that greatly rejoicing in this very thing they say, "If it had not been that the Lord was with us, let Israel now say, if it had not been that the Lord was with us, when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their wrath was kindled against us, then the water would have overwhelmed us, a torrent would have passed over our soul, then our soul would have passed through the irresistible water. And just as, he says, Israel, having become captive, and carried away to the Assyrians and the Medes, escaped their insolence or greed; for it was brought back again to Judea, and just as it shook off the greed of the Egyptians, who were always attached to them and accustomed to making war on them;

in the same way, he says, those redeemed through Christ will be stronger than their enemies, both visible and invisible, of course, who almost forced them into unwilling servitude, and held them as captives with bonds of their own foolishness. But they will be stronger than these as well, and they will escape the insolence and greed from them, with God strengthening them, in whom they will also boast. For we think great things in Christ, and we have made Him our strength, and we have taken courage in Him and have all the hopes of our own life. "For not an ambassador, not an angel, but the Lord Himself saved us. And as the blessed psalmist says, "Our God is a refuge and strength, a helper in the troubles that have found us exceedingly. Open your doors, O Lebanon, and let the fire devour your cedars. Let the pine tree howl, because the cedar has fallen, because the great nobles have been greatly afflicted; howl, you oaks of Bashan, because the dense forest has been cut down. He transfers, therefore, the declaration of what is being said to another path of thoughts.

And having made a very sufficient narrative concerning the calling of the Gentiles in Christ through faith, he clearly narrates in advance the future disobedience toward Him on the part of those of Israel, at the time of the Incarnation, of course, and that for this reason both the temple itself and indeed also Jerusalem must be burned, and that the cities of Israel themselves must also be captured, and perish together with those who dwell in them. And these things were done by the hand of the Romans, when Vespasian and Titus were generals at the time. And it is superfluous, as it seems, to relate in detail each of the things that happened to the cities or peoples of the Jews, on account of their insolence toward Christ; it being possible for those who wish to encounter the writings of Josephus, to learn clearly in detail whatever they might choose. He transfers the discourse, then, to those of

the blood of Israel. And he likens Judea to Lebanon; for what reason? For Lebanon is a mountain with good wood and is covered with extensive forests.

And the country of the Jews is also most populous, and has a multitude of inhabitants beyond number, and like cedars or the tallest pines, those more conspicuous than others, I mean both the priests and those of the tribe of Judah who were kings from time to time, who, having also been exalted by the boasts of their rule, were well-known to those throughout the whole land, and held their glory lifted high. But since they acted impiously against Christ; for they took away "the key of "knowledge, and neither entered themselves, nor allowed those who were entering "to enter," and finally they crucified him, although they knew that he is the heir; for this reason they have justly been utterly destroyed along with their houses and cities and dearest ones. Therefore, enigmatically, as I said, he calls Judea Lebanon; and he likens those in it to the tallest trees, as being exalted above the others and far surpassing them. That it was destined to be captured easily, and, as a city without gates, to receive the pouring in of the Roman army, and to be consumed in this way, as if a forest with a flame brought upon it, he indicates, saying, Open your doors, O Lebanon, and let fire devour your cedars; let the pine wail, because the cedar has fallen. And the word has indeed been made by metaphor. For having named Lebanon, that is, having likened the country of the Jews to a mountain, he necessarily likens those in it to pine and oak.

That the word is about men, is easy to see; for he said immediately that greatly the great ones have suffered. And what manner of suffering might be understood, he showed by saying in one place, that let the pine wail because the cedar has fallen. For as the Roman hand ravaged the cities in Judea, it happened daily that the illustrious ones in them were captured. And those who had not yet suffered this, lamented the captured, and received the lamentation upon themselves, and were disheartened and terrified, as being about to suffer it themselves very soon indeed. This, I think, is what Let the pine wail, because the cedar has fallen signifies; indeed, he perhaps specifically calls the oaks of Bashan those in Jerusalem. For Bashan is a place in Judea, fertile and most fruitful, and it raises very tall trees. And since those in Jerusalem were better than the others, I mean the priests and the leaders of the peoples, he called them oaks of Bashan, who indeed have also lamented rightly, because of the tearing down of the kindred forest. For they learned that the multitude throughout the whole land, like a forest, has been consumed and, as it were, cut down by the axes of the enemies' savage attacks. And the kindred forest, which he says was torn down, you will understand to be no less than the multitude in Jerusalem itself; for they perished by both famine and war; while the oaks of Bashan, that is, the leaders, wailed for them.

A voice of shepherds wailing, because their majesty has suffered; a voice of lions roaring, because the pride of the Jordan has suffered. In these things, as I just said, he makes the declaration more manifest. For he no longer names pine or oak, but unveiled he signifies the teachers of the Jewish orders, whom he says lament, and as it were, raise their voices, bewailing that their majesty has suffered. For they have become pitiful and cast down,

wretched and most dishonored, although formerly they had a more conspicuous glory. But since the shepherds through Christ were revealed, that is, the divine disciples, the majesty of the false shepherds has rightly suffered. For the Master of the flock accused them through the holy prophets, saying thus: ”O shepherds who scatter and destroy the sheep ”of their pasture. and again, ”Because the shepherds became foolish ”and did not seek the Lord; for this reason the whole pasture did not understand ”and was scattered. And he promised to those who believe in him to reveal genuine shepherds, saying again thus: ”And I will bring you to Zion, and I will give you ”shepherds according to my heart, and they will shepherd you, ”shepherding with knowledge. And who are these again? the divine disciples and the leaders of the churches from time to time, ”rightly dividing the word of truth,” and knowing how to bring the flocks under their hand to everything that contributes to spiritual benefit. Therefore the false shepherds have lamented, because their greatness has been afflicted;

and he signifies this also in another way, immediately adding: A voice of roaring lions, because the pride of the Jordan is ravaged. For roaring is properly the voice of wolves, which they would make, wailing on account of famine and starvation. But the divine scripture also accepts this for lions. Therefore, the leaders of the Jewish orders were detected as roaring lions, that is, hungering and wailing, on account of not having the fruit-offerings from the peoples, tithes, first-fruits, thank-offerings. For since they have fallen away from the flock, they no longer rejoiced in the fruits from it. But if someone should think that the scribes and Pharisees also roared against Christ as in the rank of lions; for they cried out against him, and they let loose voices out of envy and malice and unrestrained madness, calling him a Samaritan, calling him a drunkard and one born of fornication, and ”Away, away, crucify him; he will think what is fitting even in this way. but even if they roared, they have been afflicted not moderately, and the pride of the Jordan has ceased. And what this is, I will say again. For the Jordan flows by Jericho, and very many lions are around it, roaring terribly and instilling an unbearable dread in the inhabitants. Such in their ways were the scribes and the Pharisees, roaring at the flocks, and terrifying the weaker ones with the fears from their authority. But the fear of the lions has been ravaged. And he says this is the pride of the Jordan.

And ”phryagma” (pride/snorting) is the sound of horses and mules sent through the nostrils and coming out with a wild snort; but it is also taken for being high-minded. For indeed the divine David said concerning those who had acted insolently toward Christ, ”Why did the nations rage, and the peoples plot in vain? Therefore, when he says ”the pride of the Jordan,” you will understand the mindset, and not entirely of the river, but of the lions around it; for sometimes things in places are signified by the places themselves. Thus says the Lord Almighty: Shepherd the sheep for the slaughter, which those who acquired them slaughtered and did not repent, and those who sold them said, ”Blessed be the Lord, for we have become rich,” and their shepherds did not suffer for them. The word is to them, the lamenting shepherds, and those roaring in the rank of lions, to whom he still permits to shepherd the sheep of slaughter, although they were exceedingly neglectful, so as not even to feel a little pain, so to speak, for those being sold and slaughtered. For just as the more

unreasonable of shepherds, looking only to things for their own pleasure, caring very little for the master of the flock, slaughter some fearlessly, imitating the attacks of wild beasts, and sell others, feeling, as I said, no pain at all, but exulting in the most extraordinary gains, and being overcome by such shameful love of profit;

in the same way, I think, the leaders of the Jewish peoples might also be caught, having shown no mercy for the flocks under them, and making their own wealth grow, and widening their purses as if with an insatiable hand. And indeed the Savior, reproving such men, said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: judgment and mercy and faith. For being so pedantic, so as even to rebuke down to the most trivial things those not bringing the tithes according to the law, they took absolutely no account of the weightier matters, that is, of the ordinances that were most necessary and profitable. And that they were not good shepherds, but rather looking only to profits, he will make clear, speaking also through the voice of Ezekiel: "O shepherds of Israel, do not do the shepherds feed themselves? Do not the "shepherds feed the sheep? Behold, you eat the milk "and clothe yourselves with the wool and you slaughter the fatling "and you feed on my sheep. Therefore, he says, you feed on the sheep of slaughter, that is, either those about to die by the hand of the Romans; or those that you yourselves slaughter, although holding the rank of shepherds. For the time is not yet at hand, in which they will come to slaughter.

For after the advent of the Savior, the multitude of the Jews was destroyed by the swords of the Romans, although God had been exceedingly longsuffering towards them. And that the people under their hand became the possession of the shepherds, he showed by saying, Those who possessed them slaughtered them and did not repent. For just as they made their own possession the spiritual vineyard, which was the master's, I mean Israel, or the man of Judah, the new plant, the beloved; so also they as good as took possession of the flocks, reaping the fruits from them, and always in some way making their possession from them in abundance, but abandoning them to those willing to plunder. Therefore, those who possessed them slaughtered them; and those who sold them said, Blessed be the Lord, for we have become rich. And these could also be understood as judges, who traffic in correctness in judgments, and all but bid farewell to the law through Moses, although it says clearly, "You shall not show partiality in judgment, for the judgment "is God's. For it was sweet and dear to them to sell the judgment on each matter to those who were willing. And this will be clear to us again through the voice of the saints. For one of the holy prophets said concerning Jerusalem, "Her leaders judge for a bribe; but the divine Habakkuk as good as cried out to God, saying, "How "long, O Lord, shall I cry, and you will not hear?

I will cry out "to you, 'Violence!' and you will not save? Why have you shown me "troubles and caused me to look upon toils, misery and impiety? "Judgment is against me, and the judge takes bribes. For "this reason the law is scattered, and judgment is not brought to a conclusion, "because the wicked oppresses the righteous; for "this reason judgment will go forth perverted. Therefore, those who gather wealth from unjust gains, and perverting

what is just, and selling, as it were, the judgments on each matter, would be the judges, as I just said. They also say, Blessed be the Lord, for we have become rich; but saying this most senselessly and most irrationally they would rightly be convicted. For they pretend to give thanks, as if God grants them to collect from injustices, and to grow rich from blood. But it were better to say that, having esteemed judging rightly: Blessed be the Lord, for we have been shown to be glorious and genuine guardians of the divine ordinances, bringing forth a right verdict on each matter. Therefore, fair speech is deceit and a blemish, if the things in which God would be pleased are not done by us. Therefore I will no longer spare the inhabitants of the land, says the Lord; and behold, I am delivering the men, each into the hands of his neighbor and into the hands of his king, and they shall smite the land, and I will not deliver them from their hand.

And I will feed the sheep of slaughter in the land of Canaan. He threatens the flocks with destruction together with exile and the disasters of war, because although it was possible for them to run under the hand of the chief shepherd of all, I mean Christ, and to be under him, they have instead ignorantly attached themselves to those who both slaughter and sell them. For the Only-begotten Word of God became man, and indeed he spoke clearly, pointing out both their awkwardness and the genuineness of the economy for us, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life "for the sheep; but the hireling and "he who is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees "the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; "and the wolf snatches them and scatters them; because he is a hireling, "and does not care about the sheep. I am "the the good shepherd. But the wretched Jews, although it was necessary to cry out against the hired shepherds, have not done this, but the good shepherd, who lays down his own soul as a ransom for the life of all, they have grieved in countless ways, stoning, reviling, and finally, opening a boundless mouth against him. For they have cried out together with their own teachers, saying to Pilate, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him," and they have even drawn the righteous blood upon their own heads. For they said again, "His blood be on us and on our children.

For this reason, therefore, he says, I will no longer spare the inhabitants of the land. For they are no longer deemed worthy of sparing from God; but rather each has been given into the hands of his neighbor and into the hands of a king, that is, his ruler. For they crucified Emmanuel, and have become slayers of the Lord, and full of all unholiness. Nevertheless, God called them to repentance, and did not immediately inflict the things of wrath. But when the thirtieth year had already passed, after the cross of the Savior, peace departed from the land of the Jews, and there were wars everywhere, city going against city, and those in each were divided into factions, and fighting one another, so that the things happening among themselves appeared an equal evil to those from the war. For the bravest of the Roman generals have taken possession of the land of the Jews, and burning cities with their men, they have subjected it to the yokes of slavery. But those who were able to escape have inhabited the lands of the nations, which can be seen even to this day. And I think this is what it means when it says, I will shepherd the sheep for slaughter into the land of Canaan, that is, into the country and land of the Canaanites. The Canaanites are the

nations, among whom the sheep for slaughter are somehow still shepherded by God even to this day, that is, they seem to be shepherded.

For they observe some of the things according to the law, and one would not see them as having completely neglected their ancient customs. And indeed they circumcise the flesh, and keep the Sabbath, and consider certain other things besides these worthy of care and consideration. And this was, then, what was said by God through the voice of the prophet, "And I will be to them a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall enter. But the civil wars throughout all Judea, and indeed in Jerusalem, and the things in each city, he who chronicled the tragedies of the Jews has clearly written down; this was Josephus, an eloquent and wise man. And I will take for myself two rods: the one I called Beauty, and the other I called a Cord, and I will shepherd the sheep. In many ways for us in the divinely inspired scriptures the rod is understood. For sometimes it signifies the kingdom, as when it is said to Christ, "A rod of uprightness is the rod of your kingdom; and sometimes strength, as in the saying, "The Lord will send forth the rod of power out of Zion; and you shall rule in the midst of your enemies; and sometimes it is taken for instruction and the pastoral science; indeed it has been said again through the voice of a prophet to the Son, "Shepherd your people with your rod, the flock of your inheritance.

But in the present context the rods signify for us methods of pastoral science, and a twofold form of instruction, according to what seems blameless. And the chief shepherd of all, "he who laid down his life for the sheep," that is, Christ, receives the rods, in order to shepherd his own sheep with them. For of old; that is, even before the times of the incarnation; being God and lawgiver, the Word from God the Father was tending Israel, using as it were one rod, the instruction according to the law. For he said somewhere through the voice of a prophet to him, "I shepherded you in the desert. But when he became man like us, he receives two rods. For he divides, as it were, his own worshippers, those clearly justified through faith, and sanctified in the Spirit, both by legal and evangelical decrees, not persuading to sacrifice oxen, nor indeed teaching to adhere to the offerings according to the law; but rather having commanded that the power of worship in the Spirit be made in the manner of a bloodless sacrifice. For the shadow has been transferred to the truth, and the things in types have been re-characterized into the refinement of the polity that is in Christ and of the Gospel. And the names for the staffs: for the one, Beauty, which is the new covenant, beautiful and admirable, of which the Son Himself spoke, "You are beautiful in your loveliness beyond the sons of men;

the other, indeed, was Cord, that is, a portion, so that we may understand the law, the cord set apart for God, which was accustomed to instruct. For it is written that, "When the Most High divided the nations, when he scattered the sons of Adam, he set the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the angels of God, and Jacob his people became the Lord's portion; Israel was the cord of his inheritance. With these two staffs, therefore, the great chief shepherd promises to tend his own sheep, and the word is true. For he gathered into one fold both those from Israel and indeed those from the Gentiles, setting before them

for their delight both legal and evangelical instruction, and supplying a certain spiritual pasture for their partaking, and richly fattening the souls of the saints. And I will cut off the three shepherds in one month, and my soul will be grieved with them, for their souls also roared against me. And I said, "I will not shepherd you; what is dying, let it die, and what is failing, let it fail, and let the rest devour, each one the flesh of his neighbor. For when the true and good shepherd had already been revealed, it was indeed very likely, or rather now also necessary, for the hirelings and false shepherds, that is, the teachers of the Jews according to the law, to be removed from the midst;

of whom some "slaughtered the sheep and did not repent," while others, "selling them, said, 'Blessed is the Lord, and we have become rich.'" Then why, one might say, does he call them three shepherds, and in what way are they cut off, as he says, in one month? Come, let us speak, setting forth what is from the holy scriptures for belief. I think, therefore, that he names three shepherds: those who served as priests according to the law, and those appointed as judges of the people, and in addition to these, the introducers of the letters, or the lawyers. For these, as it were, fed upon Israel. And those who had the glory of the priesthood were from the tribe of Levi alone, and concerning them Moses said, "The lips of a priest will guard judgment, and they will seek the law from his mouth; but those who were allotted the authority to judge, they too were chosen, yet they were appointed from every tribe; and in the same way, I think, the introducers of letters, that is, as I just said, the lawyers, always attended upon those appointed to judge, bringing the letters of the law for proof in each matter. That, therefore, as I said, the priests of the divine altars were from the tribe of Levi alone, would require no argument for proof.

But that the judges were also chosen from every tribe, as men learned in the law, the blessed Moses will confirm, saying in Deuteronomy to the sons of Israel, "You shall appoint for yourself judges and introducers of letters in all your cities which the Lord your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment; they shall not pervert judgment, they shall not show partiality, nor shall they take bribes; for bribes blind the eyes of the wise and subvert the words of the righteous. Moreover, Moses came to say such things and to command that they be fulfilled, following, admittedly, divine and secret commands, but not dishonoring the counsel of Jethro, who was also his father-in-law; for it is written that, "And it came to pass on the morrow that Moses sat down to judge the people, and all the people stood by Moses from morning until evening; and when Jethro saw all that he was doing for the people, he says, 'What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you sit "alone, and all the people stand by you from morning until "evening?"" Then when Moses said that, for the sake of judging justly and lawfully, he chose to undertake this labor, Jethro said again, "Now therefore listen to me and "I will give you counsel, and God shall be with you.

Be "you for the people in things pertaining to God, and you shall bring their "words to God, and you shall testify to them the ordinances "of God and his law, and you shall show "them the ways in which they shall walk and the "works that they shall do. And for yourself look

out from all ”the people able men, God-fearing, just men, ”hating arrogance, and you shall set them over ”them. Then what does the sacred scripture say? ”And Moses ”listened to his father-in-law and did all that he said to him, ”and Moses chose able men from all ”Israel, and made them over them rulers of thousands and ”rulers of hundreds and rulers of fifties and rulers of tens, and ”they judged the people at all times; every difficult matter ”they brought to Moses, but every light matter they judged ”themselves. There were, then, three kinds of shepherds: priests and judges and those skilled in the legal writings, that is, the lawyers. And we will find our Lord Jesus Christ himself denouncing separately the Pharisees and scribes and lawyers. For he would say, ”Woe to you, scribes ”and Pharisees. And as he said these things, one of the lawyers approached him, saying, ”Teacher, in saying these things you insult us ”also. But he said, it says, Woe to you lawyers also, ”for you load people with burdens hard to bear, and ”you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.

I know, therefore, that the kings who ruled from time to time in Jerusalem from the tribe of Judah also fulfilled the role of shepherds for the peoples under their hand. But since at the birth of Christ the line of kings had failed, that is, it had been cast out from the leadership; for at that time Judea was ruled by Herod, the son of Antipater, an Ascalonite, and Pontius Pilate; we have necessarily been silent about those from the tribe of Judah. For that they had failed at the birth of Christ, the scripture will confirm: ”A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a ”leader from his loins, until he comes for whom it is reserved, ”and He shall be the expectation of the nations. Therefore, since the expectation of the nations had now arrived and been born, that is Christ, a ruler from Judah and a leader from his loins has necessarily failed. Three shepherds, therefore, as I said, priests and judges and teachers of the law, who also remained in their own offices, that is, in their ranks and places, even up to the times of the visitation. These are also removed, and very justly, in one month. For since they killed the author of life, for this reason they are also cut off, and as it were in the month of new things, in which Emmanuel endured the slaughter for us.

For they remained administering Israel even after the cross of the Savior, while the God who rules over all was still being long-suffering and having pity on them, and calling them to repentance; but we say that they were removed, so to speak, according to the decree made by God for this purpose, at that time when, as I said, they handed over the Savior and redeemer of all to the cross. They were removed, therefore, in one month. And so much for the shepherds; but as for the flock, the judgment is this: I will not shepherd you, and this: that if they chose, they would devour and bite one another, and without any mercy would crush and consume. For since they were cast out of the divine fold, and were not deemed worthy of the mercy of the chief shepherd of all, they both devoured one another, and were given as a most ready prey to those who wished to plunder them. And he said, very fittingly, concerning the three shepherds who were also removed in one month, that my soul shall be weighed down over them, that is, I will bring a heavy judgment upon them, because their souls also roared against me. for being no different from wild beasts, they leaped upon very often to Christ, and finally they brought him to Pilate, saying ”Away with him, away with him, cruci- ”fy him.

And he remembers this also through the voice of Jeremiah, saying ”I have forsaken my house, I have left my inherit- ”ance, I have given my beloved soul into the hands ”of her enemies. My inheritance has become to me like a lion in ”the forest; she has uttered her voice against me, therefore I have hated ”her. And I will take my beautiful staff, and I will cast it away to break my covenant which I made with all the peoples; and it shall be broken in that day, and the Canaanites, the sheep that are kept, shall know that it is the word of the Lord. He calls the staff beautiful, meaning the instruction through the evangelical mystery, which is exceptional in its beauty, clearly, the spiritual beauty. But to say that he would both cast away and scatter it would likely signify not that he would send it away and disperse it, doing away with it, that is, destroying it as use- less; far from it; but I would say rather that we ought to understand the following. For those who are accustomed to watch over flocks, if they should see one of the sheep leap away from the flock, and get as far away as possible from the others, then they certainly cast the staff at it, and immediately drive it back to choose to flock with the others. The word of the prophecy, therefore, has observed the custom in the shepherds' skill.

For he says that the beautiful staff will be cast away, that is, it will be sent even to those who are furthest away, clearly, to the Gentiles, for they were the ones far off, but they have become near through faith. And he says that the staff will be cast away in such a way that it will be scattered throughout all the earth, that is, be distribut- ed, and the word concerning Christ, that is, the evangelical preaching, seem as it were to be scattered everywhere. For he says it will be scatter- ed in that day, that is, at that time in which Christ, having trampled the power of death, would live again, and say to the holy apostles ”Go ”and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ”in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy ”Spirit. For then the word of our Savior went about all the earth under heaven; and it is accurate to say concerning the holy apostles that ”Their sound went out into all the earth, ”and their words to the ends of the world. And that the casting away and scattering over the earth, that is, the distribu- tion in their own lands of the beautiful staff, which is the covenant that he no longer made with Israel alone but rather with all the nations, was not without profit for the Gentiles, we may observe, and very effortlessly, by understanding the word of the prophecy;

for he says, the Canaanites, the sheep that are kept, shall know that it is the word of the Lord. For he calls the Gentiles Canaanites. And these may be understood as the sheep that are kept. For they have been kept for Christ, for he himself is the expectation of the nations. And since the covenant with all was scattered also in their own lands, they have believed that he is the Word of the Lord. For we who are called from the Gentiles have been disposed through faith, that the Only-begotten Word of God, being God and having been begotten of God according to nature and existing, has himself through himself addressed to us the divine and evangelical laws. Therefore we have worshipped him, and we serve him, having put aside that ancient and inglorious deceit, and having been transferred from the opinion of many gods. And this, then, was what was sung to him through the voice of David ”All the nations you have made ”will come and worship before you, O Lord. ”For ”at the name of

Jesus Christ every knee should bow, of things in ”heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue ”should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of ”God the Father. And I will say to them, If it is good in your sight, give me my wages, or refuse. And they weighed out my wages, thirty pieces of silver.

And the Lord said to me, Drop them into the furnace, and see if it is approved, in the way that I was approved for them. And they took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them into the house of the Lord, into the furnace. Through the evangelical decrees, that is, through the beautiful staff, that is to say, of the excellent instruction, we have been taught the mystery of the economy in the flesh of the Only-Begotten. For we have heard and have believed, that being God, as I said, the ”Word” from God the Father, ”became flesh and dwelt among us,” and came down also in the form of a servant, and being in the form and in equality with the one who begot him, became ”obedient unto death, even death on a cross; and ”though he was rich, he became poor for our sakes, that we through his poverty might become rich. For he delivered us from the bonds of death, he freed us from sin, he made us sons of God; and what good thing has he not bestowed? And in addition to these things we have known that we were also bought with a price; ”not with perishable things, with silver or gold; but with the precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, Christ,” and so then we owe our own life to him.

For if ”One died for all, then all died” in him, and we ought to live no longer for ourselves, according to the probable and right reason, but rather ”for him who died for us and was raised. And for this reason he says, If it is good in your sight; it is clear that this means the mystery of the economy in the flesh; if you have been saved through him and have acted rightly, and have known me as Savior and redeemer, and the one who endured death for the life of all, give my wages, having set them, that is, having determined them, or refuse. But those from the nations are grateful. For they set the wage, in no way equal, but somehow resembling what we have received from him. For just as he died for us, so we also have laid down our lives for sincerity and love toward him; and it would be fitting for the holy martyrs to say, ”Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? For nothing has overcome the courage of the saints. Therefore, the likeness of the things that have come to us from Christ is somehow shown, by the saying that thirty pieces of silver were given to him as a wage. For the traitor and truly most abominable and God-hated Judas, having taken thirty denarii, betrayed Christ to his murderers, and has sold the author of our salvation to the sinners.

But thirty pieces of silver were brought by the nations to him as a wage, which also are cast by God’s command into the furnace, being very well tested, just as Christ himself was tested for us. For our faith will not be unexamined by the God who knows all things; nor indeed our life untested; but as the blessed Paul says, ”the fire itself will test what sort of work each one has done. And it is also written concerning Christ that, ”Suddenly the Lord whom you seek will come to his temple, and the angel of the covenant whom you desire; behold, he is coming, says the Lord Almighty. And who will endure the day of his coming?

Or who will stand when he appears? For he enters like a refiner's fire and like the fuller's soap, and he will sit refining and purifying as silver and as gold. And the divine David also sings somewhere, as from the person of everyone who has believed in Christ and wishes to live according to the Gospel, "Test me, O Lord, and try me, test my reins and my heart by fire. But that the furnace is in the house of the Lord, the Prophet says. For the Church of Christ tests the character of each person and the genuineness of his love for Christ, and "having the discernment of spirits," it knows precisely who speaks in the Holy Spirit, calling Jesus Lord, and who indeed in Beelzebul, calling him accursed;

and who are "the true worshippers," and who, on the other hand, are "wolves" coming to us "in sheep's clothing. And I cast away the second staff, the rope, to scatter the covenant between Judah and between Israel. He said Christ would take two staffs, and so would pasture with them his own sheep, clearly meaning the holy multitude of those called through faith. and we said the beautiful staff was discipline, that is, the evangelical proclamation; but the other, that is, the cord, the commandment through Moses, as given to the cord assigned to God, that is, to Israel, for a help, according to the prophet's voice, "For he says he has given a law for a help. Therefore, that the multitude of the nations was to be instructed not only by the evangelical teachings, but also by the commandments given of old and through Moses—the shadow in the law clearly being transformed into truth—he makes evident through what is set before us. For just as he said the beautiful staff was cast off and scattered—for the evangelical discipline was sown, as it were, in the lands of the Canaanites, being carried about, of course, by the holy apostles—so also the other staff, or discipline, that is, the cord, or the law, which was placed by God in the order of a covenant between Judah and between Israel, that is, of the entire race of Israel;

for by Judah he names the two tribes in Jerusalem, I mean Judah itself and Benjamin, but by Israel the other ten, who were settled in Samaria along with Jeroboam; so then the law has been given also to those from Canaan; for we are initiated, as I said, by both legal and evangelical ordinances. For this reason Christ also said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish "the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish, but "to fulfill. For I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, "not one jot or one tittle will pass from the Law "until all is accomplished. For he fulfills the law by teaching what is beyond the law, and not placing the one being instructed outside the law, as for instance in saying, "You have heard "that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders "will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is "angry with his brother without cause, will be liable to judgment. And again, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I "say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust, "has already committed adultery with her in his heart. For "You shall not murder" is perfected in refraining even from anger, which is the root and origin of murder.

And by not admitting desires at all, that is, by punishing pleasures, the practice of adultery is surely done away with, just as we say that when the roots are damaged, the shoots from them wither away with them, or rather, they would not spring up at all.

Book 5

And the Lord said to me, Take for yourself again the equipment of a shepherd of an unskilled one, because behold, I am raising up a shepherd over the land; he will not look after the one that is perishing, nor seek the one that is scattered, nor heal the one that is broken, nor guide the one that is whole, but he will devour the flesh of the choice ones and tear off their hoofs. When the good shepherd, wise and knowledgeable, that is, Christ, cast off and scattered the two staffs in the lands of the Canaanites, in the ways already previously explained; some have known that it is the Word of the Lord. For they have believed, as I said, that although the Word who is from him and in him was ineffably begotten by God the Father, since he became as we are, and has been named chief shepherd of all, he set forth to them for initiation and for accurate knowledge of the mystery concerning himself, both the evangeli- cal instruction and illumination, and indeed also the legal one. For we said that these were the two rods, by which Christ shepherds us "in good pasture and in a rich place" as it is written.

But the Jews, not understanding the mystery, and being ignorant of the good rod, that is, the evangelical proclamation, and in addition to these dishonoring the other rod, whose name is Cord, that is, the law through Moses, did not accept the faith, and are ignorant of the one foretold through the law and the prophets; and the Savior himself clearly said this to them: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you, Moses, in whom you have hoped. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? It is therefore in no way debatable that they have believed neither the writings of Moses, nor indeed the words of the Savior. But since they did not receive the knowledge of the truth, for this reason, as the most wise Paul says, "God will send them a strong delusion, so that they may believe the lie; and he says that the antichrist is the working of error, to whom the Jews, having attached themselves, will be condemned. And the Savior will confirm it, saying to them who have chosen to disobey, "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

That the Jews, therefore, were going to readily receive the son of lawlessness who had appeared in due time, "who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God," him

who does not know how to shepherd correctly and skillfully, God commands the Prophet to prefigure, saying thus: Take for yourself again the equipment of a foolish shepherd. For the most gentle of shepherds, and those knowledgeable in the tasks at hand, have slender rods, so that if there should be an occasion for striking, the one being struck might not be shattered. But if someone should be one of those who does not know the business, and is situated as far as possible from the science of shepherding, he crushes them with the thickest clubs. And these, I think, are the pastoral implements of the foolish shepherd. But since in due time the son of lawlessness, clothed in royal honor, was destined to appear to be shown in the rank of a shepherd to those on earth; yet deeming the people under his hand, or even those outside his hand, worthy of no mercy, for this reason he says: Behold, I am raising up a shepherd on the earth, who will not visit the perishing. It is as if he were saying: The one who has slipped into little faith, he would not strengthen with initiations;

the scattered he will not seek, that is, he says, the one that has wandered from the straight path, and is accustomed to leap away from the flock, he will not seek, that is, he would not convert it to what is better and right. The broken he will not heal. And one is broken, either being overcome by evil pleasure, and as it were not bearing the weight of the love of the flesh; or rather, having been carried away by the deceits of the unholy heretics, and not having a sound mind for the necessity of believing rightly. This again the good shepherd heals, but the foolish one no longer. He will not guide the sound one, but he will even devour the flesh of the chosen, and will dislocate their ankles. For the son of lawlessness will war against the saints, and unleashing his unrestrained anger upon them, he will all but cut up and devour their flesh like a wild beast. And he will dislocate their ankles, so that no one may be able to walk uprightly; for he will compel them to worship him, striking them with awe by his wonders. For he has ”his coming in the activity of Satan,” and in Beelzebul he will perform ”wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect,” and as the Savior says, ”No flesh would have been saved,” while his greed rages against all; ”but for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short.

”For the Lord will slay him with the spirit, and will destroy him ”with the manifestation of His coming. O you who shepherd vanities, and you who have abandoned the sheep, a sword upon his arm and upon his right eye; his arm shall be completely withered, and his right eye shall be completely blinded. The word having once been spoken concerning the worthless shepherd, he all but scowls, then, at the shepherds who are not good, and uses, in a way, a most general discourse, proclaiming in advance the things that will happen to those of such a mind. For observe how, as if they are already paying the penalties for their laziness, he perhaps even feels compassion because of his innate gentleness, and he accuses them, on the one hand, that they have become shepherds of vanities, that is, caretakers of temporary things, and so lazy as to rejoice over the sheep that have miserably perished. For those who sold them said ”Blessed is the Lord, and we have become rich; and they slaughtered them and felt nothing for them; for of the need to shepherd rightly there was no account at all among them. Such were the leaders of the Jews, shutting up the kingdom of heaven, as Christ says, and neither entering themselves, nor allowing others to enter; but traversing

”the sea and the dry land, in order to ”make one proselyte, and if he becomes one, making ”him a son of Gehenna twofold more than yourselves. What then will happen to such evil shepherds?

A sword, he says, upon his arm and upon his right eye. And the arm is taken to signify both power and a type of spiritual energy. And indeed, even of the animals being slaughtered in the holy tabernacle, the arm was a choice part for the divine altar and a sacred offering to God; the law, I think, indicating through a riddle that one must dedicate one’s own strength, both physical and spiritual, to God. But that the arm signifies power, one of the saints will confirm, having addressed the God of all: ”By the greatness ”of your arm let them be turned to stone. And the eye is taken as a type of the mind. Therefore, he who does not shepherd rightly will suffer the maiming of both arm and eye, that is, he will be destitute of spiritual strength. For he will not be able to accomplish any of the good things if God does not strengthen him; and he will be darkened in mind, being and being considered devoid of the divine light. For he will not be able to say with boldness, ”For you will light my lamp, O Lord; my God, you will enlighten ”my darkness. And it is the right arm that is cut with the sword, and indeed the eye that is blinded. For there is nothing right among the peoples of the Jews, no good deed, no strength in these things, nothing from the divine light for the mind and heart.

For as Paul says, ”To this day, whenever ”Moses is read, a veil lies upon their heart. And David also somewhere sings concerning them, ”Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see. Therefore, all things among them are left-handed, whether you speak of conduct, or thought, or anything else believed to be present. For the removal of the left-handed things would, I know, benefit those who endure it; for the rejection of left-handedness would release them from every cause and blame. But the putting away of right-handed things would injure them not moderately; for it leads in every way to the most shameful and abominable things. But for the Jews, it would be fitting, and very likely, to be in a state of deprivation of right-handed things; but for us who are in Christ, to be in a state of rejection of left-handedness, and to take pride in right-handed things. An oracle of the word of the Lord concerning Israel, says the Lord, who stretches out heaven, and lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him. Having made a very sufficient narrative concerning, I say, the good shepherd, that is Christ, and moreover concerning the worthless and most cruel shepherd who devours the sheep; and this we say is the antichrist; he usefully also mentions the persecutions that will be from time to time against Israel; and not of course, of the one according to the flesh, or rather of the spiritual;

and of the truly holy Jerusalem, ”which is the church of the living God. For just as we say there is a spiritual Jew, the one having a circumcision in the heart, which is by the Spirit, and not at all the one in the flesh by the letter; so also one might say that Israel is understood, not at all as the one from the blood of Israel, but rather that one who has a mind seeing God. Such rather are all those who through faith in Christ have been called to sanctification, having known through him and in him God the Father. For this is the

one sure and excellent way of seeing God. Therefore, the word is taken for the Israel just mentioned by us. And that the Creator of all is all-powerful, who makes for us the prediction concerning these things, he reveals, saying: Stretching out heaven, and founding the earth, and forming the spirit of man within him. For, he says, God who is all-powerful receives the oracle of the word against Israel, "stretching out the heaven like a curtain," according to the voice of the psalmist, and having made the earth so very firm, so as to have it unshaken always and forever, although founded upon the seas; for thus the divinely inspired scripture said. he himself who forms the spirit of man within him. And how could the creator and craftsman of such great things not accomplish what seems good to him without toil and very easily?

But the spirit of man is formed by God in him, not being called into the beginnings of existence, even though it came to be through him, but as if being transformed, from weakness to power, from cowardice to patience, and simply being changed spiritually from the more shameful things to the better. And the divine David also sings somewhere, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within my inward parts. And surely one would not say, if he had any sense, that he wishes to receive a heart or a spirit, as if not having one from the beginning; but he would rather suppose he is asking for a clean heart and a right spirit to be created in him. And this is the transformation. And it is a custom for the holy prophets, if they are about to make a prediction of no contemptible matters, to try to show beforehand the God of all as all-powerful and most mighty, so that their word might in every way have certainty for faith, even if they should say something beyond hope, and which, as far as our thoughts are concerned, is beyond reason and disbelieved. Behold, I make Jerusalem like a threshold being shaken for all the peoples round about, and in Judea there shall be a siege against Jerusalem. And it shall be in that day that I will make Jerusalem a stone trodden down by all the nations;

every one who tramples it down will mockingly be mocked, and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered against it. In the things already announced, the war against Judea that was to be by the army of the Romans was clearly spoken of. And so he said, "A voice of wailing shepherds, because their greatness is laid waste; and after other things again, "For this reason I will no longer spare the inhabitants of the land, says the Lord; and behold, I am delivering the men, each into the hands of his neighbor and into the hands of his king. And they will cut down the land, and I will not deliver them out of their hand. But in the present matters, he clearly foretells the persecutions that have happened against the Church. For they have warred against those who have believed in Christ; for before all others, the leaders of the synagogue of the Jews, commanding the holy apostles not to speak in the name of Christ, flogging them also in the councils, arranging for them to be stoned, and what of the most unholy things were they not doing and saying?

But since the word concerning Christ had also gone out into the countries of the nations, and those in them had become hearers of the evangelical preachings, other persecutions again have happened through those who held power at various times and in various places

who, of the profane and abominable idolatry eager to transform themselves and having become ministers of diabolical impiety, have killed the saints, calling them to the contests for martyrdom. And somehow the Church seemed to suffer easily, with no one defending her, and to resemble shaken and falling gateways, or even a stone trodden underfoot. For although the Savior of all is powerful and could easily quell every war, or rather, even remove it entirely from those who worship him, and make them superior to every temptation and to the overpowering hand of their enemies, he allowed them providentially to be made glorious through sufferings, so that having become conformed to him, they might be glorified with him and reign with him. For if we suffer with him, "we shall also "reign with him," according to what is written, and if we are "partakers of the sufferings," so also shall we be of the glory. Behold, therefore, he says, I make Jerusalem like a shaken gateway. And if this should happen, and the encirclement, that is, the siege by all, were placed around her, and when she seemed to be like a stone trodden underfoot, then everyone who mocks is mocked.

And this has been done, as I just said, in the persecutions from time to time. For they attacked the saints, tormenting them in many ways, and perhaps the wretches even smiled upon them as they were dying. For they did not know, as is likely, the glory that comes from suffering, and that the labor would certainly lead to their everlasting joy. See, then, how he says it is not the work of the strength of the nations that the Church will be trodden underfoot, but of his own will allowing it, as I said, for his own worshippers to be perfected through sufferings. For behold, he says, I make Jerusalem like a shaken gateway for all the peoples round about. Similar to this, I think, is that which was very clearly spoken by the voice of the Savior to Pilate: "You would have no "authority against me at all, unless it had been given to you "from above. And the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, the Church, might reasonably say in turn to the persecuting world: You would have no authority against me at all, unless it had been given to you from above. On that day, says the Lord Almighty, I will strike every horse with bewilderment and its rider with madness; but upon the house of Judah I will open my eyes, and I will strike all the horses of the peoples with blindness.

That he will quell every war, and render the attacks of the persecutors ineffective, he gives us to understand by saying he will strike both horse and rider with bewilderment and madness and indeed with blindness. And I think that to suffer bewilderment is the same as to endure madness. For to be out of one's mind would be understood as bewilderment, and very reasonably so. When this has happened and has befallen the murderers, it will certainly be left for the saints to say concerning those who fought against them: "Our "enemies are foolish," and indeed: "Some in chariots and "some in horses, but we will be magnified in the name of the Lord our God. "They were entangled and fell, "but we have risen and stand upright. And in another way he who impiously attacks the forbearance of the saints might go mad, and he will endure an unexpected bewilderment, or rather, amazement, having seen that they conquer in adversities, and are crowned when they fall, and even if they seem to be defeated, then indeed they prevail all the more; if indeed it is true, that in their very suffering they are seen as glorious, and with the greatness of their labors they have the accompanying grace from above. Then how would the blessed martyrs not astonish those

who fought them, conquering even Satan himself, and rebuking wicked and unclean spirits; instilling great wonder at their inherent glory, sometimes even in those who had killed them?

Therefore, he promises to strike both rider and horse together, so that we may understand the phalanxes of the enemies, arrayed against the gentleness of the saints. But upon the house of Judah, he said he would open his eyes. and Judah in these things, the one from the root of Jesse and He names Christ as the one who appeared from the tribe of Judah; and his house, the Church, that is, the holy multitude of those justified in faith. But the opening of the eyes I think means this, that He will look very abundantly and as it were with a whole gaze; and this would be a clear sign of His benevolence towards them and indeed of His mercy and love. For it is written, ”The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous. And upon whomsoever He might look, these He declares thrice-blessed in every way, if it is possible to say without falsehood, that He punishes the insolent and the sinner with turnings away, but He gladdens the pious and virtue-loving with His visitations. And so the divine David, making clear both the loss from the turning away and the gain from the visitation, at one time said, ”Turn not thy face away from me, and do not ”turn away in anger from thy servant; and at another time again, ”Look upon me and have mercy on me. For wrath and the things that result from it will certainly follow the turnings away; but in His looking upon is the necessity of receiving mercy.

And all the chiliarchs of Judah shall say in their hearts, We shall find for ourselves those dwelling in Jerusalem in the Lord almighty, their God. We say that the chiliarchs of Judah are named the holy apostles, those who have been ordained as it were in the rank of generals by Christ, and have been appointed to lead Judah, that is, those called to confession and praise. For Judah is interpreted as praise. And these would be all those from the nations, to whom the divine psalmist also commands that they must glorify Emmanuel, saying in spirit, ”Bless ”our God, O nations, and make the voice of his praise to be heard. Judah, therefore, in these matters, are those called through faith to praise and confession; and the chiliarchs are those set over them, the commanders and leaders, the divine disciples. So it is possible to see them, as to certain soldiers, crying out to the worshipers of the Savior and saying, ”Stand therefore, having girded your loins ”with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ”and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel ”of peace, in all things taking up the shield of faith, ”with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts ”of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, ”and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And that we must be seen as glorious and accomplishing a reputable life, the divine Paul also said, ”Through the ”weapons of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,” and in addition to these things, he pointed out as it were the phalanxes of the adversaries, saying, ”For the rest, be strong in ”Christ and in the power of His might. For ”our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the ”principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of ”this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the ”heavenly

places. The chiliarchs, therefore, and very fittingly, are the divine disciples, who, he says, will also say in their hearts, We shall find for ourselves those dwelling in Jerusalem in the Lord almighty, their God. For the divine disciples desired to see the truly holy Jerusalem, that is, the Church, filled with worshipers, and like some illustrious and famous city to be greatly dignified by a populous multitude of inhabitants. And so they proclaimed the faith, they evangelized Jesus, sealing their words with signs and wonders. Yet they did not persuade Israel; for it remained hard and unbending and like a horse that has thrown its rider. For this reason, then, they sought for themselves those who inhabit the holy city in the Lord almighty, their God, that is, in Christ, and indeed they turned to the nations, exclaiming to the peoples of the Jews, "It was necessary "that the word of God should be spoken first to you;

but since you thrust "it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal "life, behold, we turn to the nations, for thus "God has commanded" us. From there they sought the citizens of the Church, of which the divine David also makes mention, saying, "Glorious things have been spoken of you, O city of God. And having sought, they have become rich, and they have gathered a multitude beyond number, and indeed they say to the holy city, "Enlarge the place of your tent and of your curtains, fix them, do not spare, lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes, spread out still to the right and to the left. And she rejoices in the multitude of those who dwell in her, and all but marveling at the assembly of her own children, she says, "But I was childless and a widow, who has borne me these? and where were these for me? In that day I will make the captains of Judah like a firebrand among wood and like a torch of fire in stubble, and they will devour all the peoples round about, on the right and on the left. By "captains of Judah," as I have already said before, he calls the holy apostles, or even simply all the leaders of the holy churches; and he said that the word from them, that is, the mystagogy, would so overpower the heart of the nations, that it would seem like a firebrand had fallen upon wood, and a torch into easily flammable stubble.

For "they will devour," he says, "all the peoples on the right and on the left round about," that is, wherever they might wish to go, in every way and by all means they will prevail there, calling them to understanding and, as with a divine and spiritual fire, warming those who have grown cold. The God of all said something like this also to the blessed prophet Jeremiah: "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth as fire, and this people as wood, and it will devour them," instead of "He will call to understanding those who have grown cold in sin, and will make them fervent again in spirit. For the heart of those who are astray has grown cold, and their mind is dead, worshiping "the creation rather than the creator" God, and offering veneration to wood and stones. But when they receive the divine word, they are made, as I said, fervent in spirit, ardent for righteousness; for we have been baptized, as the divine John says, "with the Holy Spirit and with fire," the spiritual fire, which is accustomed to consume, like some rubbish, the sin that dwells in our souls and to melt away the filth of the love of the flesh. Indeed, it was said to someone through the voice of Isaiah, "Because you have coals of fire, sit upon them, these will be a help to you;

and indeed he himself also says concerning himself, ”And one of the Seraphim was sent to me, and in his hand he had a coal of fire, which he had taken with tongs from the altar, and he touched my mouth and said, ’Behold, this has touched your lips, and will take away your iniquities, and will cleanse your sins.’” saying that the coal is, in all likelihood, the divine and most holy Christ who melts away sin. Therefore the divine disciples have become like a firebrand among wood and like torches of fire in stubble, and have devoured the nations round about; yet not consuming them to destruction, but rather burning up the foul and profane dogmas of the falsely-named knowledge within them, and melting away the filth of the ancient deceit, and not allowing the mind of those who have once believed to grow cold any longer toward unprofitable and vain counsels, so that they leap up within themselves, saying to Christ the Savior of all, ”Your word is exceedingly refined, and your servant has loved it. For that the word of God is fervent and very sharp would be clear from his saying to Jeremiah, ”Are not my words like a burning fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock? For the all-powerful Word of God possesses, and very aptly, the ability to rekindle a mind grown cold in sin, and to easily unfold one that has, as it were, hardened and become compressed;

for it is ”living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of of soul and spirit, of joints ”and of marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intentions ”of the heart; and it has been said somewhere also through the voice of prophets to the harsh and unyielding Jew, ”Be circumcised to our God, ”and take away the hardness of your hearts, O men ”of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. ”Rend ”your hearts and not your garments. And Jerusalem shall yet dwell by itself, and the Lord will save the tents of Judah as from the beginning, so that the boast of the house of David and the pride of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not be magnified against Judah. He says that the Church will not always be in turmoil, nor indeed endure endless persecutions; but will be at rest at times, and will dwell by itself, that is, alone, with no one disturbing it, no one bringing affliction, no one inflicting terror, no one heaping up the despondencies from temptations; for the Lord will save the tents of Judah as from the beginning. For the Lord of all, clearly Christ, will thus defend His own churches, that is His own tents, as to bestow on them a care equal to that formerly granted to those of Israel who were redeemed from Egypt.

For the God of all brought Israel out of the house of bondage, and ”from the iron ”furnace,” as it is written, and from unbearable greed, ”with a mighty hand and with an outstretched ”arm,” when He also ”drowned the pursuers in the Red ”Sea; the deep covered them, and they sank like lead ”in the mighty water; and the redeemed were brought across. A pillar of fire led them by night, showing the way, and a cloud also hung over them by day. Then they ate bread from heaven, escaped the bites of serpents in the wilderness, were stronger than their enemies, were brought across the Jordan, were circumcised with stone knives, and entered the land of promise. These things Christ will grant to those who seek His tents, that is, the Church; thus He will also save them, having freed them from the bondage under the devil, I mean, and having delivered them from demonic greed, having brought them as if through a sea of the distractions and vain turmoil in this world, having set Himself up for

them as a brilliant pillar and foundation, illuminating those in darkness, and like a cloud watering with intelligible dews; and having become for them also the bread of life, having rendered the bites of the intelligible serpents ineffective and inert, and having brought them across the Jordan, and showing them to be clean through circumcision by the Spirit, and bringing them also into the kingdom of heaven.

These things He will grant to His own worshippers, and He will save them in certain ways such as these, so that the boast of the house of David, that is, the leaders of the Jews, may not be magnified; nor indeed may there be pride, that is, occasions for pride, for the inhabitants of the perceptible and earthly Jerusalem against Judah. For they were haughty and looked down excessively on those who had believed in Christ, and against Immanuel Himself, putting forward high and low the things granted through Moses to the ancients, and alleging the mercy bestowed upon their fathers. And so at one time they were saying, ”What sign then do you ”perform, that we may see and believe you? What do ”you do? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, ”as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven ”to eat; and at another time again, ”We know that ”God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where ”he is from. Therefore, the God of all will work wonders for us too, even if not visibly, just as He certainly did then, but at least intelligibly, and thus He will save us who are in His own tents, so that the Jews, that is, their leaders, may not be haughty against us. For I think this is what the boast of the house of David signifies. And it shall be in that day that the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem;

and the one who is weak among them in that day shall be as the house of David, and the house of David shall be as the house of God, as the angel of the Lord before them. ”With the shield of good will for us” God and Father has crowned us. For He has given us His own Son as a defender and champion, through whom we have also been saved, easily escaping every temptation; and being accustomed to triumph over the war from enemies and the brutishness of persecutors. But in the present matters something of this sort is indeed indicated, though one might perceive the meaning to be overshadowed by much obscurity. For the God of all said that He would defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and not rather those who sojourn in it. And admittedly, Jerusalem in these passages is understood to be the Church of Christ. He sojourns in it who is not very secure, but is, as it were, shaken and easily carried away to what is not right, or is otherwise lazy in the love of learning; but he, on the other hand, dwells in it who is firm and established in the love that is for Christ, and always devoted to the benefits from the divine teachings, so as to be able to say in the words of David, ”How sweet are your words to my throat, more than ”honey and the honeycomb to my mouth.

He will defend, therefore, he says, the inhabitants, and the one who is weak among them in that day will be as the house of David. And we say that by the house of David in these passages is meant the most honored among the Jews. For from the tribe of Judah, from which came Jesse and David, they ruled from time to time in Jerusalem. But by the weak one from among the inhabitants of the holy city, the spiritual Jerusalem, which is the Church,

he perhaps means the one who is still a catechumen, who has not yet been baptized, but is still sick, as it were, weighed down by the burden of sin, and has not been delivered from his old infirmities, that is, passions. But even being in this state, because he has only believed, and has departed from the shadow of the law, and has fully inclined to choose to fulfill the life in the spirit and the glories of the life in Christ, he will be, he says, as the house of David, that is, in no way inferior in understanding to the wise and most honored among the Jews. The most wise Paul also alludes to something of this sort, when speaking to the Jewish people. For he spoke thus: ”For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what ”the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law, ”they who show the work of the law written on their ”hearts.

And again: ”For circumcision indeed is of value, ”if you practice the law; but if you are a transgressor of the law, your ”circumcision has become uncircumcision. So, if a man who is uncircumcised ”keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision ”be counted as circumcision? Then he who is physically ”uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and ”circumcision but are a transgressor of the law. For no one is a Jew ”who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical, ”but a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by ”the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man ”but from God. Therefore, the one who has rejected circumcision in the flesh as obsolete, but has rather loved that which is in the spirit, and who bears about the inward Jew, ”whose praise is not ”from men, but from God,” how is he not better and in no way inferior to the experts in the law and the most honored among the Jews, even if he happens to have a remnant of weakness, as not yet having been baptized? For by the sound part of his own heart, that is, by faith, he will in every way differ from the one who does not accept the faith.

But if one of those from the house of David, that is, of the illustrious and most honored among them, should accept the faith and, understanding very well the mystery of Christ, become His worshipper, this man will be both as the house of God and as an angel of the Lord before them. The Savior Himself is also found saying something of this sort; for He said that ”Therefore every scribe who ”has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master ”of a house, who brings out of his treasure ”new things and old. For the one who already has treasured up within himself the knowledge of the law, if he should also receive the knowledge of the gospel, will be rich in understanding, contemplating new things and old, just as from storehouses, setting before those who love learning; what sort of man the divine Paul was, at one time attempting to establish the word concerning Christ with legal proofs; at another, also with initiations beyond the law, in a way compelling his hearers to choose to be glorified in faith in him. For at one time he would say ”Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But he who was of the slave woman was born according to the flesh, and he of the free woman through promise; which things are an allegory;

for these are the two covenants, one from Mount Sinai, which gives birth to slavery, which is Hagar; for Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother; and at another time, concerning the Son, ”Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high. Do you understand, then, how with old and new teachings at the same time he benefits the souls of those being initiated? Therefore, he says, the house of David shall be as the house of God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication: and they shall look upon me. My purpose, he says, will be to destroy all the nations that have fought against the holy city, that is, the Church; but to surround with grace and compassion the house of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that is, the citizens of the Church, and those numbered among those who ought to give praise;

and these would again be those who worship Christ, and who have chosen to follow the evangelical decrees, achieving a glorious and blameless life. For that the enemies of the truth were destined to fail in their cowardice in every way, the Savior himself will make clear, saying: ”You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And by gates of Hades, he says, he means those who wish to persecute it, being like destructive and ruinous forces, and accustomed to bring down to the pit of Hades those attached to them. Therefore they will indeed grow weak, or rather they will even be destroyed, who have warred against her, and they will go to destruction. ”For many indeed are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord will deliver them out of them all. and it is true that ”All who desire to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted. But Christ renders the plots of those who conspire against them useless and ineffective, and even their attempts, who has given ”us authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy,” and encourages us, saying, ”In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. Therefore, those who from time to time rise up against the Church are removed, but upon those in it, that is, those who have believed, is poured out abundantly a spirit of grace and compassion.

For God the Father crowns us with good things from above, and fills us with spiritual gifts, so that raising the eye of our mind to him, we might have all our hope in him. For this, I think, is the meaning of ”they shall look upon me. And being so disposed, we rejoice in ourselves, and then we say, glorifying God: ”Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from corruption, who crowns you with mercy and compassion, who satisfies your desire with good things. Because of those whom they have mocked, they shall make a lamentation for them, as for a beloved one, and they shall be in sorrow, as for a firstborn. The Hebrew version begins of the preceding chapter, the phrase ”And they shall look upon me”; but it does not agree with the tradition and interpretation of the Seventy. For the Hebrews say, ”They shall see,” instead of ”They

shall look upon," and instead of "They have insulted," "Him whom they pierced. However, we do not say that either the Hebrews' or the Seventy's version misses the mark; for the Jews insulted Christ, and in addition to this, they also "pierced" him. For Pilate's soldiers pierced his side, as it is written. Therefore, we rightly apply this saying to the person of Christ.

But we say that this is what it means to declare, "They shall look on him whom they pierced," that is, whom they insulted, "and they shall mourn for him as for a beloved one, and they shall grieve with a grief as for a firstborn. For having nailed the divine temple to the wood, the crucifiers stood around, impiously mocking. For some were saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself. and others again, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. But when he had laid down his own life for us, and had preached to the spirits in Hades, and had come back to life, an earthquake having occurred, those who were watching by the monument were astonished, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God. And there was great repentance among many. But when the war of the Romans also fell upon them, their country being laid waste, and cities burned, and houses deserted, and Jerusalem itself being already besieged, and famine wasting them from within, some were with difficulty called to an awareness of their audacities against Christ, and they knew at last the causes of their suffering, and that their impieties against him had become the pretext for their suffering. Therefore, since they insulted him, "they shall mourn for him as for a beloved one, and they shall grieve with a grief as for a firstborn.

For indeed an unbearable tear is always shed by parents for a firstborn and beloved son lying dead, and beatings and lamentations that do not cease completely, but surely a long and, as it were, continuous grief, wasting the soul with certain sharp and unbearable assaults. And that the Jews were about to come to the experience of such evils, Christ foretold, rebuking the women weeping for him and saying, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. In that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be great, like the mourning for a pomegranate grove being cut down in a plain, and the land will mourn, tribe by tribe; a tribe by itself, and their women by themselves; the tribe of the house of David by itself, and their women by themselves; the tribe of the house of Nathan by itself, and their women by themselves; the tribe of the house of Levi by itself, and their women by themselves; the tribe of Simeon by itself, and their women by themselves. All the tribes that are left, a tribe by itself, and their women by themselves. When all of Judea was being laid waste at times by the Roman army, and Jerusalem itself was being besieged, he says that the mourning among those in it will be such as a farmer would make for a pomegranate grove being cut down. For the plant is beautiful, and sends up many straight and very tall branches from the root.

And if indeed it is also adorned with its fruits, then especially it is held in great admiration. For the pomegranate is a lovely thing, excelling in natural beauty and hanging from the shoots, and having the appearance of its rind reddened by the seeds within. But it is a terrible and grievous thing, as I said, for the plant to be cut down together with its fruits.

But one could see something like this happening to the Jews. For as far as the honors from the law were concerned, the prominent among them could rightly be compared to fruitful pomegranate trees; for those from the tribe of Judah, administering the thrones of the kingdom, were held among them as an inheritance of renown, and those from the tribe of Levi, very well crowned with the glories of the priesthood, were both splendid and famous; but what could I say judges and lawyers and those resplendent with other honors? But since they have behaved insolently toward Christ, they have been given to their enemies, with Vespasian and Titus ravaging their country, and Jerusalem being besieged, and everyone in it perishing from famine, everything was filled with lamentation and wailing. Josephus will also bear witness, for in composing the books of the *Jewish War*, he said somewhere concerning Jerusalem in these very words: "Wailings were everywhere throughout the "city, and piercing shrieks, and commanded "lamentation. And just as he called it Lebanon and a forest, saying, "Open your doors, O Lebanon, and let the fire "devour your cedars.

Let the pine howl, because the cedar "has fallen, because the mighty are mightily distressed; howl, "you oaks of Bashan, because the dense "forest has been cut down; so also he calls it a pomegranate grove being cut down. And the divine John will also confirm the account, having addressed the people of the Jews: "And now also the axe "is laid to the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not "produce good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire," "and is burned. Therefore, he says, the wailing in it will be so great, such as would be the wailing for a pomegranate grove, its fruit clearly having blossomed and being cut down unexpectedly. And the land shall mourn, tribe by tribe, and their women by themselves. And we do not say that the blessed Prophet means to indicate that the male part in each tribe stood separately, and the female part in turn separately, and they will make their wailing; for, as it seems, the matter is superfluous and ill-advised; but rather he teaches that each tribe with its women will have its own particular cause for lamentation. For this reason he says that the tribe of the house of David by itself and their women by themselves. And now let us speak, as we can, of the sorrow of each. For those from the tribe of David, that is, of Judah, falling from the kingdom, will lament uncontrollably, as being deprived of such conspicuous glory;

while those of Levi, being cast out from the honors of the priesthood, will make their wailing together with their wives. And those from the tribe of Nathan; now this was a prophet, and not entirely true; they will mourn again. For it was no longer possible for them to prophesy unjust things and to speak from their own heart, and to sell their own words to the foolish as if from God, and to collect shameful gains from it. And tradition has it, that the Jews received the judges appointed from time to time from the tribe of Simeon, as it had the most intelligent and law-learned men, and far superior to the others in choosing to live lawfully. For this reason he says that the tribe of Simeon will mourn by itself. And their lamentation is also a particular one. For they did not judge rightly, nor indeed, yielding to the divine laws, did they strive to accomplish what was pleasing to God, but were rather avaricious and most corruptible, and as the prophet says, "Her "judges are like wolves of Arabia. And it was somehow necessary for the other tribes to mourn with them, since they were being

cast out from their most pleasant customs and places, and rather, with death itself hanging over their heads, as the sword of the enemy and famine itself arrived. In that day every place shall be opened in the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem both for removal and for sprinkling.

He runs over in his account the things that will happen again after this "to those "who have loved the appearance" of Christ. For those who have become insolent through disobedience, he says, will be in sieges, and will lament over their own evils. But in the spiritual and holy Jerusalem in truth, and in the house of David, that is, the Church of Christ who appeared from the seed of David according to the flesh, every place will be opened, that is, a certain great spaciousness and as it were a relaxed way of life, most desired and most effortless. It must be known that the Hebrews again have rendered the saying differently. For instead of *Every place shall be opened*, that there will be a spring they themselves said was gushing forth. And it is very likely, and that the purpose of the interpretation of the Seventy tends toward this very thing, even if the manner of the pronunciation of the words were otherwise, so that the meaning might be something of this sort. For the disobedient and stubborn Jerusalem, the wicked and apostate one, "who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her," will pay penalties corresponding to her own audacious deeds; for she will be cut down like a pomegranate tree.

But for those who dwell in the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, the house of Judah, which is Christ's, every place will be opened, that is, in every place a fountain gushing forth the water of purification, clearly that of holy baptism, so that it is useful for believers both for removal and for sprinkling. And what is the removal? For the Jews, from the legal discipline to the life in Christ, from shadow to truth, from type and letter to spiritual worship; and for the Greeks there is a removal for those coming from unbelief to believing in Christ, from their former ignorance to a pure knowledge of the truly existing God, from darkness to illumination; and a common removal, fitting henceforth for everyone called through faith, both Jew and Greek; from minding the things of the flesh to choosing to live holily and purely, and to walk in the Spirit, according to the voice of the blessed Paul; from honoring the things in the world to loving the things beyond the world. And that by receiving the divine and holy baptism we are sprinkled with the blood of Christ for the cleansing of sin, how could anyone doubt? Therefore, the way for removal and for sprinkling for those in the house of Judah is the saving baptism, that is, every place being opened, or every fountain being widened and gushing forth the water of purification.

And it shall be in that day, says the Lord, I will destroy the names of the idols from the land, and there shall be no more remembrance of them; and I will remove the false prophets and the unclean spirit from the land. All things have changed for the better in Christ, and the things in him are a new creation, having cast off the blemish of the ancient decay. And one might see that the word on this matter is accurate, if one wished, even from the facts themselves. For before the times of the visitation, when the Only-begotten had not yet become as we are, nor yet was illuminating all things with the divine light, there was still

mist and darkness in the hearts of the nations. For they served idols, and had sunk into such ill counsel as to offer reverence to wood and stones, and to attach to unclean demons the honors due to God.

And these were the crimes of the folly of those who were led astray, but among Israel, who was both chosen and ”the Lord’s portion,” according to what is written, and the ”line of his inheritance,” there was such a corruption of character and ways, that the Law was deemed of little account, though it had been given to them for assistance and was not incapable of instructing them on the necessity of living rightly, but they rather inclined to the necessity of foolishly being carried away with the errors of the nations and slipping into the superstitions of their neighbors. For they were attached, and very excessively, to the divinations of the false prophets. For the worshipers of idols, having settled in profane precincts, were both oracle-mongers and speakers of falsehoods; while others, having ”The Lord lives” on their tongue, and pretending to be pious, and as it were concealing the wolf with a sheep’s skin, these wretched ones put upon themselves the name of prophecy, and unholily seizing the glory for this, they would blurt out whatever they pleased, and said that the thoughts of their own heart were the divine will. Concerning those accustomed to dare such things, the prophet Jeremiah also said to the God who holds power over all things, ”O Sovereign Lord, behold their prophets prophesy and say, ’You will not see a sword, and famine will not be among us, for I will give truth and peace upon the land and in the in this place.

And to these things God ”The prophets, He says, prophesy lies in my ”name. I did not send them, nor did I command them, nor ”did I speak to them, because they prophesy to you false visions ”and divinations and omens and the preferences of their own heart, they ”prophesy to you” and again ”I did not send the ”prophets, and they ran; nor did I speak to them, ”and they prophesied. For they were liars, as I said, and, overcome by shameful gains, they spoke to their hearers things ”from their own heart, as it is written, and not ”from the mouth of the Lord. Then, although the Jews ought to have been indignant at these things, they did the opposite, making them venerable and striving to crown them with the highest honors. But when at last the Only-begotten Word of God appeared to us, the frigid and childish toys of idolatry were entirely gone and utterly destroyed, and along with it was taken away the outlandish and impious practice of the false prophets, who were filled with an evil and unclean spirit, and would be detected, and quite rightly, as suffering from a delusion that was sister and neighbor to that of the idol-worshippers. For the overseer of the impiety of both is one, that is, Satan.

Therefore, He says, I will remove from the earth the names of the idols and there will be no remembrance of them in that day, that is, at that time when the divine and heavenly light shall shine, and the spiritual morning star shall rise in the hearts of those who were deceived, according to what is written, and the day shall dawn, the old night and the things done in it having been driven away; so that, with the ancient impurity removed, the true and holy worshippers might at last appear, having taken up the boasts of a holy way of life and honoring the life in Christ. And it shall be, if a man prophesies any more, that his

father and his mother who bore him will say to him, 'You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the Lord.' And his father and his mother who bore him shall bind him when he prophesies. So great, he says, will be the reverence for the divine among the people of that time, and they will so care for the utmost decency and an admirable life, that even parents themselves will be sharpened against their own children, if they should choose to emulate the liars, pretending to prophesy, and should utter something from their own hearts as if God had spoken.

For 'they will bind him,' he says, that is, they will tie him up as one out of his mind and mad, and without any delay, they will even sentence him to death, if he should make his disease on this point persistent and shameless. For it is enough for them for the necessity of determining the child's entire punishment that he has spoken lies in the name of the Lord. But consider how true the saying is, and what certainty for belief the prophecy holds. For who among us in the present time would tolerate someone prophesying? Or how would one not immediately consider such a person to be out of his mind, and how would one not make him hateful for being of such an opinion? And what father would leave a child unrebuked, if he were caught in such terrible offenses? This, I think, would be a proof, and a very clear one, that we must firmly believe that the nature of our affairs has changed much for the better, with God refashioning it to what seems good to Him and to what is well, than before. And indeed, the things formerly honored and admirable to many are now hateful and accursed and not tolerable to the decent, and not lacking the need to be punished. And it shall be in that day that the prophets will be put to shame, each one from his vision when he prophesies, and they will put on a hairy cloak because of the lies they told.

And he will say, 'I am not a prophet, because a man begot me from my youth.' And I will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your hands?' And he will say, 'Those with which I was struck in the house of my beloved.' That the things once marveled at are considered by us worthy of penalty and justice, and from the meaning of the things set forth, it is easy to see. For, as I said, the false-speaking and deceiving ones prophesied in Israel, and were accustomed to lead astray "for a handful of barley and a piece of bread" according to what is written. Then when they dared such things, no one rebuked them, nor wished to restrain them as those who had chosen to be impious, but rather the wretched ones deemed it right to crown them with praises and the highest honors. For this reason they also went to the worse, as the disease was nourished in them, as it were, through the frivolity of those who admired them.

But in the present time he says they will be put to shame, clearly because their false prophecy is not accepted, but rather is rebuked, and from those who are accustomed to dare such things, penalties are exacted for their folly, so that having been convicted they might immediately abstain from evil, and put on a garment of hair for the lies they told, that is, to mourn for the evil and to lament over their transgression, repenting, because they had slipped into such ignorance of reasoning as to speak falsely against God, but blushing not at all to confess their sin and ask for forgiveness, saying clearly I am not a prophet, for a man

begot me from my youth, that is, I have become the child of a man. But nature is very weak and quite easily led astray to what is not right, and somehow more ready for sins. Such would be the voices of those repenting. But if I should wish to ask him, he says, What is this matter of the wounds or stripes seen in your hands? he will answer again that I was struck with them in the house of my beloved, clearly his father and mother having bound his feet and exacted penalties for his rashness. For the beloved house for each of us is that of our parents. See, therefore, how great a difference there is between the affairs of old and of now.

For the false prophets among them were admired, and were held in glory and good esteem, and doing these things they did not even repent; but in the present time, if some should ever choose to follow their madnesses, they are rebuked, they are put to shame, they are punished by the judgments of their parents, they repent as having sinned and they mourn and weep, they ask forgiveness, confessing the weakness of human nature and its proneness to slip into sin. For "the unclean spirit" has been "taken away from the earth," by the power and authority of our Savior Jesus Christ. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man who is his fellow, says the Lord Almighty, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will bring my hand upon the shepherds.

God the Father has given his own Son for us, allowing him by his economy, although he was God and ineffably begotten from him according to nature, both to come in the form of a servant, and to become a man like us, and to endure a cross, that he might save the world and remove Satan from his ascendancy over all, and destroy profane idolatry, and abolish divinations, false prophecies and deceptions from the heart, and take away "the unclean spirit from the earth," and in addition to these things, that he might conquer the world under heaven, transferring the deluded to the knowledge of God, persuading them to choose a pious and seemly way of life, and to be seen honoring every form of virtue. Therefore for this cause he willingly endured death on the cross, although it was exceedingly ignominious, "despising the shame," as it also seemed good to God the Father. And the Son himself reveals something of this sort to us, saying, "Because I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that of all that he has given me, I should lose nothing from it, but should raise it up on the last day. For as the divine Paul writes, "For this reason Christ died and lived, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

He therefore willingly laid down for our soul, and all but delivering Him up as a man by the proper will of God the Father, and, as it were, permitting, as I said, that with precious blood He purchase the life of all. And so the Savior replied to Pilate, who thought he had authority over Him, saying, "You would have no authority over Me at all, unless it had been given you from above. Having then foretold through the voice of the Prophet that there would be a very great change of human affairs for the better when He suffered death in the flesh, He all but hastens the manifestation of the time when these things would be, and has commanded the mystery of the passion to be enacted, enjoining and saying to the sword

itself, ”Awake against my shepherd and against the man who is his fellow,” says the Lord Almighty. And we say that 'sword' in these words signifies the temptation, as a type of a knife, or even the suffering itself brought upon Emmanuel by the madness of the Jews. For the righteous Simeon seems to have understood and even spoken thus, when the holy virgin brought Jesus at eight days old, ”And a sword will pierce through your own soul also. For she was all but slain by a sword, seeing the one born of her, I mean according to the flesh, being crucified.

O sword, then, 'awake,' he says, 'against my shepherd,' that is, let the saving passion now be enacted, and let the time for the manifestation of good things come. For Christ has been set over us as chief shepherd, and under Him are all of us who have believed, yet not outside the hand of God the Father. For He rules over us in the Son, and through Him and in Him we have been saved and have received access. And so the Savior said, ”My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one. The Son, therefore, is the proper shepherd of God the Father, not pasturing another's flock, but rather His own and the Father's, not understood as one of the hireling shepherds, who used to slaughter the sheep, all mercy being removed, 'and selling them they said, ”Blessed be the Lord, for we have become rich.”' Moreover, the citizens, that is, the household and acquaintances of the good shepherd, are those appointed under him, and before all others the divine disciples, who, when the shepherd was struck, were scattered and fled.

For when the officers of the Jews arrived, and with them the traitor along with the cohort to seize Jesus, 'they all left him and fled.' For thus the evangelical text says. And that God the Father, by giving His own Son to death for us, is said to have struck Him in a way, by permitting Him to suffer at all, the Son Himself will confirm, speaking through the voice of the psalmist concerning those who committed impious acts against Him, clearly the Jews, ”For they persecuted him whom you had struck, and they added to the pain of my wounds. Add iniquity to their iniquity. He made His suffering voluntary, then, as I said, so that the achievements resulting from His suffering might be revealed. But that this matter would be a cause of destruction for those who crucified Him, and that the leaders of such a plan and of these undertakings would be subjected to evils from divine wrath—and these were the leaders of the peoples—He makes clear by saying, 'And I will bring my hand against the shepherds.' For ”they have destroyed His vineyard,” according to the voice of the prophet, ”they have made His desirable portion into an impassable wilderness, it has become a desolation of destruction. Moreover, God brings His hand upon the shepherds, as if striking with the sword, and demanding penalties for their impiety, not only because they themselves behaved outrageously toward Christ, but because in addition to this they also became the beginning for others and a path of unrestrained madness.

For as the blessed evangelist Matthew says, when Pilate had set before the Jews both Christ and Barabbas, and had addressed them with, ”Which of the two do you want me to release to you,” ”the chief priests and the elders persuaded the ”crowds that they should ask for Barabbas, but that they should destroy ”Jesus; and they further persuaded them to shout, ”Crucify, ”crucify him. Therefore, what was said through the voice of the prophet is true: ”For the shepherds have become foolish, and have not sought the ”Lord; therefore all their flock did not understand, and they were scattered. For just as the vigilance of good shepherds benefits the flock, so negligence corrupts it, and what is under their hand completely follows in the footsteps of the shepherds. And it shall be in that day, says the Lord, that two parts shall be utterly destroyed and shall fail, but the third shall be left in it; and I will bring the third part through fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and I will test them as gold is tested; he will call on my name, and I will listen to him, and I will say, This is my people, and he will say, The Lord is my God.

When the divine hand has been brought upon the unholy false shepherds, who have corrupted the Lord’s vineyard, he says that not even those who most unwisely collaborated in their unholy schemes will be outside of punishment and judgment, that is, clearly, the peoples of the Jews and the common multitude under their hand. For they have been consumed by war, and the cities have been utterly destroyed along with their inhabitants, and the villages with their men, being burned in utter destruction, and the remnant has barely been saved, understood as a third part of the whole multitude, for Israel has not been completely destroyed, since God has had mercy on account of the fathers. The blessed Isaiah himself also says this: ”And if the Lord of Sabaoth had not ”left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have been made ”like Gomorrah. However, the third part, that is, the remnant, namely those who have believed from the blood of Israel, he says he will bring through fire, and refine them like silver and gold. For the life of the saints is not without hardship; and it is true that ”All who desire to live godly in Christ ”will be persecuted. And the divine disciples have appeared most tested, and all who became their co-workers at that time, and labored with them as they ministered the gospel of Christ to the nations.

For they were called to the trial of many afflictions and persecutions, and were, so to speak, refined, being tested through trials, so as to be able to say with confidence, ”For you have tested us, O God; you have refined us as silver is refined. What then is the benefit from this? Or what will be the reward for those who have so labored and been tested? They have become members of the household of God, known and beloved. For they were reckoned as ”a holy nation, a royal priesthood, ”and a people for his own possession, that they might proclaim the excellencies ”of him who called them out of darkness into his marvelous ”light,” who once were not a people, but have become a people. And once they used to hear, ”When you stretch out your hands to me, ”I will turn my eyes away from you; and if you multiply ”your prayer, I will not listen to you; but now he says that he will call on my name and I will listen to him and I will say, This is my people. Therefore they have become the own inheritance of God the Father, and have been given to the Son; for he rules over all things

together with the one who begot him; and they have the Creator and Master of all things as benevolent and gracious.

Book 6

Behold, the days of the Lord are coming, and your spoils will be divided in you, and I will gather all the nations to war against Jerusalem, and the city shall be capturedand their houses will be plundered, and their women will be defiled, and half of the city will go forth into captivity. Declaring the revered and salvific passion on the cross, he said a little before ”Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, says ”the Lord Almighty, strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. that the multitude of the Jews will be subjected to the most extreme punishments, and quite reasonably; for the all-daring one has committed deicide. he taught, adding ”And I will bring my hand upon the shepherds, and ”it shall be in that day, says the Lord, that two parts ”shall be destroyed and shall fail, but the third part I will bring through ”fire, and I will try them as silver is tried, ”and I will test them as gold is tested. In what manner such things might be understood, we have also spoken, not outside of what is reasonable, at least as far as is possible. And now the purpose of the present matters is turned towards Jerusalem, which acted impiously without restraint, and it signifies to us the manner of its capture. For behold, he says, the days of the Lord are coming, that is, which he himself brings by a just vote and a holy judgment.

For it is true what he also says through another prophet, ”Shall there be evil in a city, which the Lord has not done. For nothing could happen of those things that are able to harm a whole city, which we say is not done without his permission, and his willingness to demand penalties for transgressions from those who rush to evil deeds with unrestrained impulses. Therefore he says the days are his, because they are brought on by his wrath. For they have no longer behaved insolently in a tolerable manner, having killed the prophets, and adding to these also the Son. And what will be in those days, he clarifies, saying And your spoils shall be divided in the midst of you, clearly with all the nations gathered together and plundering the houses, and dragging away women along with infants. For then indeed, he says, half of the city will go forth into captivity. For they say that the Romans, having taken the city, and having disregarded the shamelessness of those fighting against them, burned down both the temple itself and the houses of the city. But they spared those of the inhabitants of the upper city and the temple who fell at their feet. But see how he says the victors will arrive at such a point of audacity, that having plundered the houses, they

would not immediately depart with the spoils, and make the division at leisure when they had arrived at their own tents;

but would do this in the captured city itself, which would not have happened at all if there was anyone helping those who had fared miserably and fighting against the plunderers. And he says the women will be defiled, unwillingly being dragged off to others and falling from the customs of modesty, and often in the sight of those to whom they were lawfully married. Such are the sufferings of war, and calamities fitting for those who have once been captured and are entirely without help. But the remnant of my people shall not be utterly destroyed from the city. This, I think, is nothing other than what I just said, that there was some sparing of the inhabitants of the upper city, and a part of Jerusalem was saved. For the Roman generals checked the fury of the combatants, if indeed they saw any weeping and falling down and approaching without a fight. Either, therefore, he calls those in the saved part of the city the remnant of his people; or perhaps those who have believed in Christ the Savior of all, concerning whom he also says, that they would not be destroyed from the city. For they will always be citizens of the Church, even if they fall away from the earthly and destroyed Jerusalem, but they have the city above, about which the divine Paul also writes ”But the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother ”of us all.

And the blessed David also seems to hint at something of this kind, saying somewhere as follows ”He that dwells in Jerusalem shall not be moved for ever. For if the Church is unshakable, ”and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” according to the Savior’s voice; for it has him as its foundation; it is in every way necessary that henceforth those be seen as superior to destruction inhabiting it, and accounted as the people of God, numbered with the true. And the Lord shall go forth and shall set his battle array against those nations, as his day of battle array in the day of war. and his feet shall stand in that day on the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall be split, half of it toward the east, and half of it toward the sea, a very great chasm; and half of the mountain shall incline toward the north, and half of it toward the south; and the valley of my mountains shall be blocked up, and the valley of the mountains shall be joined on to Asael, as it was blocked up in the days of the earthquake, in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. The word is composed as if about one of the most noble generals, sharpening for battle those who fight with him, and rousing the fighting force against the phalanxes of the enemy;

but it is understood as about God, who is, so to speak, present and fighting alongside the nations that are ravaging Judea, and who have sacked Jerusalem itself. We remember that even in the gospel parables he says something like this. For the king who was holding the wedding feast for his son, sent his servants to gather those who had been invited. But they, having impiously insulted and killed those who were calling them to the festival, finally laid hands on the son himself. Then what does the account of the parable say? ”But the king was enraged, and sending his armies ”he destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Therefore, he says, it will be in the same way for those who in the day of battle-array

nobly rise up against and destroy the enemy. This is a proof of the cessation of wrath and of the highest commotions, and of him inflicting a balanced justice on those who have acted insolently toward him. For they killed, as I said, the author of life. But since things beyond words and wonder would be fitting for the queenly nature of the universe to be able alone to accomplish, for this reason he says that his feet will stand, clearly those of Christ, in that day on the mount of Olives; and it will endure four cleavings, two, toward the dawn and toward the evening, that is, toward the sea; for it is the custom of the divinely-inspired scripture to call the place of the evening thus;

and the other two somehow inclining, one toward the north and the bear, and the other to the southern region. He said that the peaks themselves would also be broken down, so as to fill the valleys between, unexpectedly shaken down as far as Asael; this is a village lying, as the story goes, at the furthest extremities of the mountain. Moreover, he compares the severe earthquake here to the one that happened in the times of Uzziah, who is also Azariah. For when he was governing the thrones of the kingdom in Jerusalem, since he was also from the tribe of Judah, he unlawfully dared to take up the ministries of the priesthood, he was immediately made a leper, and with God then showing his anger at these things, the land of the Jews was terribly shaken, and Jerusalem itself, and indeed they also say that mount Zion endured such a convulsion that it was rent into two parts, and its peaks were cast down into the adjacent valleys. Through these things the Prophet seems to us to indicate the earthquake which the ministers of the evangelical proclamations say happened at the time of the precious cross. For the Prophet mentions what happened more broadly in these things; but our most wise Matthew, summarizing the narrative, says thus: ”And Jesus, crying out again with a loud voice, ”yielded up his spirit.

And behold, the veil of the temple ”was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth was shaken, ”and the rocks were split, and the tombs were opened, ”and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. But since it is necessary to apply a plausible account to the events, it seems to signify that the rocks being broken down, and the valleys being blocked up [symbolize] both the hardening of the Jews, and the change for the better of those who had served idols course. For those who worship the creation rather than the Creator have, as it were, a heart of stone, hard and unyielding, and like rocks that bear no fruit. But what did God say about them through the voice of Ezekiel? ”And I will take away their heart of stone from their ”flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh, that they ”may know Me, that I am the Lord. Therefore, the hearts of those who had gone astray were rent, God opening them up, so that they might receive the word of the saving proclamation. and he indicates something of this kind through the voice of Jeremiah, saying, ”Are not My ”words like a burning fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer ”that breaks a rock in pieces? ”For the word of God is living and ”active and sharper, and piercing even to the division ”of soul and spirit.

Therefore, as I said, the tearing of the rocks would be a very clear sign of the change for the better of those who had gone astray. But the blocking up of the ravines, as I said, indicates

the hardening of the Jews. For the divine Isaiah also said something of this kind: ”And it shall be in that day that the Lord will block up ”from the channel of the river to the brook of Egypt,” that is, the mind of those throughout all Judea will be blocked up, ”so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not hear, ”nor understand. ”For a veil lies upon their heart, ”as it is written, at the reading of the old ”covenant. And the shaking of the earth might signify, I suppose, the transition from one thing to another. And so the divine David cried out, saying, ”You who are enthroned upon the Cherubim, let the earth be shaken. And we do not say at all that he exhorts the world under heaven to be shaken bodily and perceptibly; for that would be foolish, and bring us no benefit; rather, the Spirit-bearer intended this, that the earth should be changed from worshipping idols to knowing at last the God who is by nature and in truth, from thinking carnal things to desiring to live spiritually, and simply from earthly things to heavenly things.

And if indeed he says that the very tombs of the departed were opened, we say that death itself had to be seen as conquered, when Christ died in the flesh for us according to the economy, ”that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. And the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with him. In that day there will be no light, and there will be cold and frost for one day, and that day will be known to the Lord, and it will be neither day nor night, and toward evening there will be light. Having spoken cursorily of the impious deeds of the Jews against the Savior of us all, Christ, and of the capture of Judea and of Jerusalem itself, he now comes to the very end of the present age, and usefully relates the descent of Emmanuel from heaven. For he will descend with the holy angels in the glory of God the Father, in order ”to judge the world in righteousness; for as the divine Paul writes, ”For we must all ”appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one ”may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether ”good or bad. He will come, then, he will come, he says, and all the saints with him, that is, the most pure multitude of his own angels, surely attending him as a bodyguard and bringing their ministerial presence.

For Emmanuel is Lord of all, and is glorified by all as God and co-ruler with the one who begot him. But if someone should say that the saints themselves will stand with him, having been caught up ”in the ”clouds to meet him in the air,” after their resurrection from the dead, as seems right also to the most wise Paul, he would in no way miss the fitting quarry. For the divine Isaiah also said something of this sort concerning them: ”There the harts ”met and saw one another’s faces; they passed by in ”number, and not one of them was lost, another did not seek ”for her mate, for the Lord commanded them, and his Spirit ”gathered them. And somewhere the divine David also sings to us, the proclaiming beforehand the descent from heaven of the Savior of us all, Christ, ”For the Lord will not cast off ”his people, and his inheritance he will not for- ”sake, until righteousness return to judgment, and they that ”hold to it are all the upright in heart. For he calls Christ righteousness, and says that he will return to judgment. For having trampled on death, he was taken up, and ascended to the Father and God in heaven; but he will return at the appointed time for judgment, and with him all the upright in heart, that is, the saints, as I just said.

But that at the time of the consummation there will be a different state of the visible creation, and that it itself will be transformed for the better, being renewed through Christ, the Prophet will confirm, saying In that day there will be no light, but cold and frost for one day, and that day is known to the Lord. For now day and night are distinguished, and they have been allotted their times by the will of the maker, and the light of day dawns, then night follows. But when the Judge comes, who refashions all things according to his will, creation, as I said, will receive a different ordering; for there will no longer be light and cold and frost for one day. And by light he signifies the day, but by frost and cold the night, for the night-and-day period has been reckoned as one day. It is as if he were to say, for instance: At that time, when having come from heaven, he remolds and refashions all things for the better, as Creator, there will not be light nor night, for one day. The blessed prophet Isaiah says something similar: ”And the sun shall no longer be for you a light ”by day, nor will the rising of the moon give you light by night; ”but the Lord will be for you an everlasting light, and God your glory.

And that at the appointed time the need for the elements themselves will cease, Christ himself will confirm, saying ”Immediately after ”the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and ”the moon will not give its light. For Christ will suffice for us as an eternal light, and he himself will be a long and continuous day. And he says that day is known to the Lord. For only God the Father knows the day of the consummation. And the Son himself confirms this for us, saying ”But concerning that day or that hour ”no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the ”Father alone. For in so far as he is understood as a man like us, he would not know the things in the Father; but in so far as he is God by nature, and has appeared from him, he surely knows the last day, even if he says he does not know it because of his humanity. And the Prophet, interpreting for us and making clearer what he said, adds to this: And it will be neither day nor night, but towards evening there will be light, that is, in the time of night there will be light again through Christ and it will illumine what is under heaven, with darkness being completely abolished, and no longer prevailing before the eyes of the saints. And it is indeed reasonable to think that creation itself is being reshaped for the better.

And reliably the disciple of the Savior, saying that the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements will be dissolved by burning, and the earth and the works in it will all be burned up, and that we expect new heavens and a new earth and his promises. Nevertheless, we shall also proceed to this from necessary reasonings. For if our state will certainly be in newness of life, we also need a new creation. For as the divine Paul writes, ”creation itself will also at the appointed time be ”set free from its bondage to decay into the freedom of the ”glory of the children of God. In that day living water will go out from Jerusalem, half of it to the former sea, and half of it to the latter sea, and so it will be in summer and in spring. And the Lord will be king over all the earth. He explains again to us enigmatically, that the [gift] of the Holy An outpouring of the Spirit will be distributed to the saints, especially at that time when they might be brought up to a holy and unending life, I mean, that which is in the age to come. For now,

through faith in Christ, we have been enriched with the first-fruits of the Holy Spirit as a pledge;

but after the resurrection from the dead, with sin being completely destroyed, the divine Spirit will no longer be in us as a pledge and in measure; but abundantly and lavishly, as I said, we will then fully delight in the gifts that are through Christ. He therefore calls the Spirit living water, which he also says will come forth from the Jerusalem above. For since the God-inspired scripture said that the God of all dwells in the heavens, even though He is everywhere and has filled all things, for this reason it says that the life-giving Spirit will also come forth from heaven. That it is the custom of the sacred writings to compare the divine Spirit to waters, the Giver of this, that is, the Son, will Himself confirm it, saying, "He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his belly will flow rivers of living water.'" And interpreting this and making it clear, the divine evangelist says, "This he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive. For since the Spirit is life-giving, it is for this reason compared to water, which gives life to bodies, and very rightly so.

That the need to partake of the provision of the Holy Spirit will be richly available to those deemed worthy of the holy life, and to be filled, as it were, with life-giving waters, he implies by saying, that of the water expected to come forth from Jerusalem in due time, half of it will go towards the first sea, and half towards the last sea. And what is this? The divine scripture often compares the many nations of men and the multitude beyond number to seas and waters. Thus it says somewhere through one of the holy prophets, "For the whole earth was filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as much water covers the seas. And the divine Daniel also said somewhere, foreseeing the things that would happen in the last times to those throughout the whole world, "I, Daniel, was watching, and behold, the four winds of heaven were striving upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, different from one another. But making this same thing clearer, the blessed David sings, saying, "This is the great and wide sea, in which are creeping things innumerable, both small and great animals. There the ships go, this dragon which you have formed to play in it. For what dragon do we say is in the perceptible sea, formed to be played with by the God who rules over all? It is therefore the custom of the sacred writings to compare both the whole world and sometimes a great multitude of people to seas.

That the grace of the Spirit will therefore be distributed by God in equal measure to those who have believed from Israel and to those from the Gentiles, he implies by saying concerning the life-giving water, that half of it will go out to the first sea, and the other half to the last sea. And he calls the first sea Israel; and the last, the multitude of those who believed after them, that is, the Gentiles. And we do not say at all that the Holy Spirit is divided, and will be incomplete in each because it is understood as half; far from it; but we shall rather suppose that the Prophet wishes to indicate this, that the distribution will be allotted to both these and those in equality of grace. For the half and half will be indicative of the equal-weighted honor and of the equality. That the grace is continuous, and the participa-

tion at all times, is easy to see, from his saying again, that it will be so both in summer and in spring. But it should be known that instead of "In spring," the Hebrew version says "In winter. Therefore, he says, it will be according to these things, and likewise the outpouring of the spiritual waters, in winter and in summer, that is, at all times. It makes no difference to say 'spring' instead of 'winter', according to the writing of the seventy;

for it is placed as participating in both winter and summer, so that if one were to assign it to the times of winter, one would not violate the probable, or even correct, reasoning. But if someone should wish to understand what is said about the spiritual water in another way, that half of it will go out to the first sea and half of it to the last sea, and in summer and in spring it will be so, he will admit some such interpretation of what is set forth. For he calls the 'first sea' that which is probably situated toward the dawn, I mean beyond the limits of the whole earth; and the 'last sea', that which is at the very extremities of the west; for he defines the east as, in a way, the face and beginning of the inhabited world. And I suppose he calls the hot and southern parts of the inhabited world 'summer', and again, the northern and cold parts 'spring'. For thus also the divine David, wishing to signify the four climes under heaven, cried out to God, 'Summer and spring you have made them,' and again, 'The north and the sea you have created.' Therefore, he says, the living water will go out in equality and with equally distributed grace both to the first sea and indeed also to the last sea, that is, to the east and to the west, and in summer and in spring, that is again, to the south and to the north.

For the world under heaven will be filled with the gifts through Christ, and the gift will certainly remain with those who have received it. Then indeed, then, And the Lord will be king over all the earth. For we shall be under him alone, and he will rule over all things, when the world-rulers of this age have been completely brought to nothing, and every evil power has been triumphed over, and Satan himself and the evil powers with him have been cast out from their advantage over us. In that day the Lord will be one and his name one, encircling all the land and the wilderness from Gebal to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Ramah shall remain in its place, from the gate of Benjamin to the place of the first gate, and to the gate of the corners, and to the tower of Hananeel, to the king's winepresses; they shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more a curse, and Jerusalem shall dwell securely. The word of the holy prophets is always somehow obscure, and this, I think, is wisely arranged by God, so that holy things may not be set before dogs; nor indeed, cast carelessly before the feet of swine, the truly precious pearl be treated with contempt. But Christ in the Spirit reveals knowledge to the worthy, and makes the powers of the age to come manifest.

And for the most part, the hidden and spiritual things are prefigured in sensible things, and the visible things become, as it were, a body for the more invisible ones. He said, therefore, that in that day, that is, that time, when our affairs have been transformed into newness of life, and creation itself has been reconstituted for the better than before, the Lord will be one and his name one, encircling all the earth. For there was always and is and will be one Lord, the God of all things by nature and in truth, who brought into being things that

once were not. But since the inventor of sin, that is, Satan, has deceived the world under heaven, we wretched ones have been carried astray into false and profane worship, and we continued in the world blind and foolish, calling our deceivers lords, and ignorantly applying the name of divinity to unclean demons. And we have been called to the knowledge of truth even in this world through Christ, but when the present age has passed away and already come to an end, then indeed, then, when all madness has been removed from us, and the enemies have already been placed under Christ's feet, there will finally be one Lord over all the earth, with no one seizing the glory of lordship over him. And in another way Christ will be one Lord, when every earthly kingdom has become inactive, and to him indeed alone the of that which is under heaven ascribing dominion over all.

And the most wise Daniel said something of this sort. For recounting the manner of the visions, he says, "Just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain without hands, and it broke in pieces the clay, the iron, the bronze, the silver, and the gold. The great God has made known to the king what must happen after this, and the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy. Therefore He will be one and alone, and He will fill the holy city with His glory, that is, the spiritual Jerusalem, whose breadth and length he shows again as a type in the earthly Jerusalem, saying that it will be widened from Gebel to Remmon. and Gebel or Geba is a village and an inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin; and they say it lies in the more northern parts of Jerusalem. And Remmon, on the other hand, is a certain rock, in the southern desert. Therefore the breadth of Jerusalem is from Gebel to Remmon. And he defines the length also, saying thus: From the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hanameel to the king's wine presses. and the First Gate, and indeed the Corner Gate; thus were certain gates in Jerusalem named; and there was a tower in between called Hanameel, after which were immediately the king's wine presses; these are places marking the length of Jerusalem as in a type.

For just as the God of all commanded the blessed prophet Ezekiel to measure the house with a reed, darting here and there, indicating, that there are many mansions with the Father, and countless are the dwellings of the saints; so also here it seems to me that through visible places he describes for us the breadth and length of the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, the Church of Christ, to which also the divine Isaiah cried out, saying, "Enlarge the place of your tent and of your curtains, fix them, do not spare, lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes, still spread out to the right and to the left. Therefore the saints will inhabit the holy city, widened and extended to a fitting length, and there will be no more curse, he says, that is, in no way will it be alienated from God; for He will grant it a steadfast love; and they would no longer fall into offending God, since sin, as I said, has been utterly destroyed, along with the tempting satan. "For there shall be no lion there, nor any of the evil beasts shall go up on it, nor be found there. Therefore they will dwell in confidence. But since it is placed in between, "But Ramah shall remain in its place," we say this again, interpreting the meanings of what has been said, as far as possible. Ramah is a small town, or a village, an inheritance for those of the tribe of Asher;

and there is another Ramah besides this for those of the tribe of Naphtali. And a holy Prophet also mentions either one of these, or another Ramah. For he said that ”A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and weeping and mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be comforted, because they are no more. We say such a thing was done in Bethlehem, when Herod had ordered the infants in it to be killed. Therefore he names Jerusalem Ramah, because of the great lamentation that occurred in it at its capture. For the prophet Jeremiah has introduced her, as it were, shedding tears and wailing for her own lost children. For he said that ”She wept bitterly in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks. And what was the lament? ”My virgins and my young men have gone into captivity; by sword and by famine you have slain, in the day of your wrath you have slaughtered, you have not spared. But if someone should wish the name to be applied to the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, the Church, and for it now to be called Ramah, we say that the argument is very correct. For many are those who weep in the churches, and have ”godly sorrow, which produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret. And Christ Himself accepts such people thus saying ”Blessed are those who mourn now, for ”they shall be comforted. and again ”Blessed are those who ”weep now, for you will laugh.

Therefore, even if the Church were called Ramah through the voice of the Prophet, the word would in this way also carry plausibility. But he says it will remain in its place, that is, it will not be shaken. For it is established, as I said, and the Church of Christ is unshakable. And this will be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the peoples who have campaigned against Jerusalem; their flesh shall rot away while they are standing on their feet, and their eyes will rot out of their sockets, and their tongue will rot away in their mouth. ”You will have tribulation in the world,” Christ proclaimed to those who believed in him; but he makes them more courageous, usefully adding, ”But take heart, I have overcome the ”world. ”For I have given you to tread upon snakes and ”scorpions and upon all the power of the enemy. Who then are the scorpions and who are the snakes, if not clearly the foul and bloodthirsty ranks of the wicked demons, and of those who persecute the saints, who have also become ministers of the unrestrained madness of the spirits in the world, which also roam about this whole universe, plotting against the saints in many ways, although they have been triumphed over through Christ, who nailed the record of debt against us to his own cross, so that he might deliver us from their greed?

Therefore, since he said that Jerusalem, which is the Church of the living God, would be inhabited with confidence, and it was indeed right to expect this to be accomplished with the enemies being destroyed, and those accustomed to persecuting her being overthrown, he makes the narration of these things also necessary for us. For this, he says, will be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the peoples who have campaigned against Jerusalem; their flesh shall rot away, and their eyes will rot out, with their tongue also wasting away. For this common death which is according to nature wastes away the flesh of all, and empties the eyes, and causes tongues to decay; but it would reasonably be a dreadful sign of the coming disaster for the flesh of those still living and standing to waste away, and their eyes to fall out, and their tongues to be punished. And he says that such things will

very rightly happen to those who have practiced a God-hated and accursed life. For they will pay penalties, not only for the wrongs they have committed against the saints, but also for the love of the flesh which they have had in this world; which also became for them the cause of neither accepting the faith, nor choosing to live piously, and to love the glory of the life in Christ. For they became, as I said, uncontrollably inclined toward unnatural pleasures; and they have had unrestrained eyes, all but greedily pouring out desires for each of the things seen.

For they also sharpened their tongue against Christ, and have made unholy denunciation of the sacred doctrines of the Church. Reasonably, therefore, they have received their justice in their flesh and eyes and tongues. For just as the woman who drinks the water of conviction and has sworn a false oath was punished in her thigh, in which the sins of fornication would also occur; "For it says, her thigh will swell "and fall away; in the same way, I think, for those who persecute the holy city, the punishment is in the flesh and eyes and tongues; for for them the love of flesh, sensual pleasures, and besides these, the sins through the eyes, and the voices of an uninstructed tongue. And on that day there will be a great panic from the Lord upon them; and each will seize the hand of his neighbor, and his hand will be raised against the hand of his neighbor. And Judah will fight in Jerusalem, and will gather the wealth of all the surrounding peoples, gold and silver and clothing in very great abundance. In these words he again calls the fear, that is, the astonishment, a panic.

Therefore, he says, at that time, when the enemies of the Church would look at one another, with such falling under terrible judgments, they will be struck down by terrors, and thus finally ceasing to dare to persecute the holy city, they will depart as fugitives, all but wringing their hands, and seeking help from one another in vain, they will be wretched and cast down and under the feet of the saints. But Judah, he says, that is, those justified through faith in Christ and bearing the spiritual Jew about them, and having been enriched with the circumcision in the Holy Spirit, will draw up for battle in Jerusalem, that is, they will campaign against their enemies, they will act youthfully against those who oppose them, trampling them like scorpions, and treading upon the asp and the basilisk, they will utterly disregard the lion and the dragon; and they will be brilliant and admirable, collecting the wealth from such achievements as gold and silver and clothing. For that the meaning of the prophecy is not in sensible things, how could anyone doubt? For the wealth of the saints is not corruptible and earthly, but spiritual and heavenly and everlasting, which those who teach and are esteemed in other ways in the churches gather for their own souls. For they plunder, as it were, the strength of all the peoples, bringing the choice things of the nations to Christ through faith. For thus He himself also said that he had plundered the goods of the strong man.

But if someone should say that Judah gathers the strength of all the peoples round about, gold and silver and clothing, so that we may understand that by collecting the wisdom in the world they are illumined by it, striving for the doctrines of piety, the sense would have a probable reason. For once the wise women of Israel despoiled the Egyptians, having

asked ”from their neighbor and from her who dwelt with them articles of gold and silver, and clothing. Therefore, as in sensible things and as in visible materials, the splendor of spiritual goods is signified. And the wealth of teachers is especially their students. And so the divine Paul addressed those who had been saved and had come to believe through him, saying, ”I protest by your boasting, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus; and again he called them his own ”crown and joy. And this shall be the plague of the horses and of the mules and of the camels and of the donkeys and of all the beasts that are in those camps, like this plague.

Having already defined the ways of punishment, which in every way and altogether those who have campaigned against the holy city, having become persecutors and insolent men, will at times endure, abominable and contentious, and speaking injustice against God, and lifting up their horn on high, according to the voice of the psalmist, he usefully adds that This shall be the plague of the horses and of the mules and of the camels and of the donkeys and of all the beasts. But by the beasts of burden he indicates those who ride them. For they attacked the Jews and Jerusalem itself, both the farthest and the neighboring nations; some riding on horses, like the Babylonians and Syrians and indeed the nations of the Egyptians; others having yoked camels and donkeys and mules, such as the Moabites, and the nomads of the desert, of whom the prophet Isaiah also makes mention, saying, ”In the affliction and the distress, a lion and a lion’s cub, thence also vipers and the offspring of flying vipers, who carried their wealth on donkeys and camels. and he says elsewhere that he saw ”a rider of a donkey and a rider of a camel. He describes, then, the enemies of the truth as in the type of the nations, who always warred against the earthly Jerusalem, so that from them we might understand our visible and invisible enemies, against whom we have the battle.

And if someone should wish to refer the characteristics of the beasts to the characters of the enemies of the Church, there is nothing wrong in saying and thinking that; as some have become impetuous and bold, like horses, for instance; one might also very reasonably attribute to them love of pleasure and madness for women; others, in the manner of mules, are savage and harsh, but it is customary for the Greek poets also to call them wilder; but those who are like camels in disposition, that is, both uneven and boastful, having their minds lifted up from madness; but others, differing in nothing from donkeys, have been afflicted with the utmost irrationality; for the donkey is sluggish and slow of perception, and an image of the utmost irrationality. But it should be noted that he compares those who have warred against the Church to none of the tame and clean animals, such as a sheep, I say, and an ox, but rather likens them to the abominable and untamed ones, which were also condemned by the words of the law as profane and unclean. And it shall be that whoever is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem, shall go up year by year to worship the King, the Lord God Almighty, and to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be that whoever of all the tribes of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord God Almighty, these also shall be added to those.

Having said that those who have warred against the churches, and who have raised a high and boastful brow against holy Jerusalem, will be ensnared in the punishments befitting them, he foretells the worship of those who have been left after them, clearly that which is in Christ through faith. For he is the expectation of the nations according to the voice of the patriarch. And he has been set ”for a light to the nations, and for a covenant of the ”people, to open the eyes of the blind, and to bring out ”the bound from bonds, and those sitting in darkness from the prison ”house. That therefore, having left the mist of idolatry, and having broken the bonds of the devil's wickedness, those from the nations will come to the light of truth, and will submit to the yoke of the Savior, he will make clear, saying that the remnants of the punished, that is, of those who have fought against the churches; and these are beyond number; will go up year by year to worship the Lord God Almighty and to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. For the law through Moses commanded that the feast of tabernacles be celebrated on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when the abundance of the fields has been gathered into storehouses. For this reason he calls the feast an ”exodus,” as the works in the fields have already come to an end.

And he commanded to take ”ornaments of palm ”trees and fruit of a beautiful tree, and branches of a thick tree ”and willows and chaste-tree branches,” and to drink water from a torrent, and to rejoice over it. And the law made the pretext for the feast the dwelling of Israel in tents, having been delivered from the greed of the Egyptians. But the matter was, then, a type of the mystery concerning Christ. For we ourselves have also been delivered from the greed of the devil, and we have been called, as I said, to freedom through Christ, and we have come under him who is King and God of all, having disregarded the wickedness of those who formerly held power. And we celebrate the true feast of tabernacles, that is, the day of the resurrection of Christ, when the bodies of all are, as it were, fixed in him, although they have been loosed by corruption and held by death. For he is the resurrection, he is the life, as it were a first-offering from the dead and ”the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep; who fills us with spiritual fruits, and prepares us to store up, as it were, the labors gathered from the fields in the storehouses above. He will give us the way of life and delight in paradise, clearly a spiritual one, to those who have conquered sin, who are spiritually fragrant, who have the beautiful and lovely fruit of the evangelical life, having lived purely and holily.

And a sign of this again would be the having of ornaments of palm trees and fruit of a beautiful tree bound together with the other branches. He is the torrent of delight with which God the Father has given us to drink; he is the fount of life, and the river of peace, who has inclined to us who have been called from the nations ...ing. We have spoken about these things briefly in other places. Therefore, those who go up to worship the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the feast of tabernacles, are those who have been justified by faith in Christ. But he threatens destruction to those who do not go up, and the same punishments that their persecutors and insolent abusers would endure. For they will lie in the same lot as the enemies, those who have chosen not to love. And this, I think, is what Christ himself said: ”He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not ”gather with me scatters. But

if the tribe of Egypt does not go up and does not come there, upon them also shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the sin of Egypt and the sin of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the feast of tabernacles.

As from one nation, that of the Egyptians, I say, it makes clear concerning those who have reached the extreme of error, and who have chosen to practice idolatry in an excessively strange way, that for them a terrible and inescapable judgment and cause of destruction will be their not choosing to honor the worthy grace of salvation through Christ. For they might almost be convicted as murderers of their own souls, if it is true that, while it was possible for them to lay hold of eternal life and the gentleness from above which is set forth for participation by those willing to choose it, and indeed also to cast off sin, they have died in their own errors, and have kept the stain from their wandering and the pollution of their transgression unwashed, and they have also continued in error; and this, although the divine light shines around all things, calling to sight those in mist and darkness. And I would say also concerning each of such persons, ”An untimely birth is better than he; ”for it came in vanity, and departs in darkness, and in ”darkness its name will be covered. ”For it would have been good for ”them if they had not been born,” according to the voice of the Savior.

But that the saying is not against the Egyptians only, but will also come against all the nations, which will be punished in every way and altogether, for having disregarded the salvation through Christ, and not having honored the festival in Him, he will confirm by saying: This shall be the sin of Egypt and the sin of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. For before the advent of the Savior, perhaps there was still, in part, a reasonable excuse for the nations, saying they had been called by no one; for no one had preached to them. Therefore the Savior also, showing this very thing to us in the gospel parables, said that the laborers who were called about the eleventh hour said this: ”No one has hired us. But since Christ has now shone forth, has bound the strong man, has delivered those who were under his perversity, has justified by faith those who come to him, has laid down his own soul for the life of all, they will no longer find any sufficient reason for excuse, who have not accepted so venerable a grace. Therefore Christ will indeed speak the truth concerning them also, if he should say of the nations: ”If I had not come and ”spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse ”for their sin. In that day that which is on the bridle of the horse shall be holy to the Lord Almighty.

Since all war has now been calmed, and battle has been taken away, and enemies have been driven off, and an unbreakable peace now crowns the holy city, that is, the Church, he says that the instruments of war, both trappings and bridles, will now be useless. For what need at all will the horse-master have of such a thing, he who knows how to excel in battles, if there is no one at all to lead out against him? Therefore, he says, the things useful to warriors will be sacred vessels and offerings to God. For since he himself is the awarder of peace, to him rightly will be dedicated the now superfluous and henceforth useless instru-

ments of war. For just as the blessed prophet Isaiah said concerning some, that "they shall beat their swords "into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and "nation shall not lift up against nation a sword, and they shall not learn any more "to make war," the times of peace almost persuading them to devote their military implements to the needs of agriculture, and to turn, as it were, to other pursuits, having neglected the study of tactics; so also the divine Zechariah, as if peace, now unbreakable, has been given by God, says that the useful implements for those who fight will be refashioned into a votive offering to God.

For the warlike spirit will certainly be idle, caring not for horse, nor for bridles, nor for trappings, but rather inclining toward choosing what is necessary for the pursuits that excel in virtue and piety. But to some, it seems that the power of the prophecy has been fulfilled in another way as well. For they say that in due time the wood of the cross was found, still having the nails pierced into it; and the pious Constantine, taking one of these, had it made into a bridle for his own horse, believing that he was blessed by God through this as well. And one might say this is not improbable, if it is so, and it would not be considered unreasonably outside of fitting discourse, that the most pious king was both remembered by God and honored in prophetic utterance. For the Word made mention and proclamation of very many people through the holy prophets at various times, as, for instance, of Josiah and certain others. And sometimes the gentleness and piety of the times are signified through those who rule in them. There is nothing unlikely, then, if the Prophet Zechariah now also recalls a most noteworthy matter, both truly beloved by God and of a pious kingdom, and of times dedicated to the love for Christ. For what else could the nail taken from the precious cross adorning the horses of kings suggest to us, if not the very great and truly admirable piety of the rulers?

And the cauldrons in the house of the Lord shall be like the bowls before the face of the altar. There were cauldrons in the holy tabernacle, and in the temple built after these things, in which the flesh of the sacrifices was boiled, which the priests consumed in a holy place, as the law commanded this to be done, so that the sanctified things might not be carried out anywhere from the sacred precincts. But since those ancient customs have ceased, the mysteries have passed over for us into another manner of worship, and we have been taught through faith to honor the God of all no longer with the slaughter of sheep and with incense, but rather with bloodless sacrifices, and we spiritually minister in the churches to Christ Himself, the Savior of all, we use other sacred vessels instead of the cauldrons, which indeed the Prophet here calls bowls. And these are vessels most necessary for those who drink. And the wise listener will surely understand the power of what is signified, even if our account has been made somewhat more obscurely than it should, because it is necessary to make the narration of the hidden things with reserve. Therefore, at that time there were cauldrons, but now there are bowls before the face of the altar. And every cauldron in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy to the Lord Almighty; and all those who sacrifice will come and take from them and will boil for themselves.

He calls the mystical vessels cauldrons, still using the ancient names, vessels which are holy, august, and precious, both for those in Jerusalem, that is, in the Church, clearly the divine ministers, and also in Judah itself, that is, again, for those who have received the circumcision in the spirit. And these would again be the ones who have believed. For the vessels of the holy altar are not taken by anyone at all for common use, but are, as I said, holy and kept for the glory of God, and are accustomed to serve only the needs of the holy table, and through them and in them the sacrifices of those who offer are accomplished, not with each person bringing his own vessel, but with all using only the sacred ones. For every cauldron, he says, shall be holy to the Lord. Therefore, the Prophet is speaking as if still on the subject of the sacrifices according to the law, mentioning cauldrons and boiling and He names those who offer sacrifice, but we shall fittingly understand it of the times through Christ and the worship accomplished by us in the Spirit. And we say that the word of the holy prophets was made obscure by divine economy, and not simply set forth for all, lest their holy things be thrown to the dogs, nor indeed should the word fitting only for saints be revealed to the profane and most abominable. And there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of the Lord Almighty in that day.

One might perceive the mind of the ancients to be corrupt and easily broken, and quite effortlessly. For the children of Israel were redeemed from Egypt through Moses, and they shook off the yoke of unbearable slavery, and after very many and admirable signs had been performed for them, they barely came out; and they were brought through the sea itself, and they had eaten the bread from heaven, and they have drunk water unexpectedly brought forth from a rock in the wilderness. What then, the wretches? In Moses' absence they made a calf, and as the prophet says, they took up "the tent of Moloch and the star "of their god Rephan, the figures which they made "to worship them. But they indeed were destroyed; for their bodies fell in the wilderness, as it is written. But when those after them had crossed the Jordan, with Joshua as their general, again as time went on, having come under judges, they served idols; but also in the times of the holy prophets they sacrificed to the golden heifers, which the accursed Jeroboam made for them, and in addition to these, still erecting precincts and altars, they no less worshiped Baal, Chemosh, Astarte, and Baal-peor. And what is still beyond these evils: for we do not say that only the common and vulgar multitude was involved in these things; but indeed we shall also find many from among the priests themselves who had turned aside. Therefore God also said through the prophet: "The priests did not say, Where is the Lord?

and "those who handled my law did not know me, and the shep- "herds acted impiously against me, and the prophets prophesied by "Baal, and went after what does not profit. And the prophet Ezekiel also saw "about twenty-five men from the "elders of Israel, with their backs only toward the "temple of the Lord and their faces opposite, worship- "ing the sun toward the east. And it would not be at all difficult to pile up very many other examples in these matters; but I think these will suffice for a refutation of the ignorance inherent in them. Therefore the mind of the ancients was shaken, and was quite easily led astray. Therefore God also said concerning them: "They have loved to move their feet and have not

refrained, and ”God was not well pleased in them. For they were easily carried away into strange idolatries and, being of the blood of Israel, they were eager to imitate the foreign Canaanites. But since the Only-Begotten Word of God has come among us, and having justified by faith, has sealed with the Holy Spirit those who approach his grace, our mind has become steadfast, secure and unshakable, and fixed in piety. For no one will persuade the sanctified to know another god besides the one who is by nature and truly God, whom we have known as God in Christ. For he showed us the Father in himself, saying, ”He who has seen me has seen the Father.

Therefore, he says, ”in that day,” that is, at that time, there will not be a Canaanite, that is, a foreigner and an idolater, in the house of the Lord Almighty. For we are established, as I said, in faith, and we have been crowned with boasts of security through Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Commentary on the Prophet Zephaniah

Book 1

The word of the Lord, which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah. The blessed Zephaniah prophesies in Jerusalem, not being of obscure birth according to the flesh, nor yet being among those whose custom it was to speak falsely, and to invent divine words for their listeners, concerning whom the divine Ezekiel also said, "Woe to those who prophesy from their own heart, and see nothing at all," and indeed God of all Himself said through the voice of Jeremiah, "I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied. But he was truly a prophet, conveying the words from the mouth of the Lord, and being filled with the Holy Spirit, pouring forth good things from his heart as from a good spring; for the tongue of the saints does not know how to speak falsely. Now, the purpose of the prophecy contains a rebuke of the two tribes that were in Jerusalem; I mean Judah and Benjamin. For it is written of them as having been impious, and having unholily assented to the deceits of idols, and as rushing eagerly to anything whatsoever that is displeasing to God;

and the time of the reign has also been usefully added, during which he spoke such things to those who had offended, so that by examining the state of affairs at that time, we may then understand for what reason and how great the movement of divine wrath against them was. Therefore, for I will relate in detail the things that will also benefit those who read them; Hezekiah reigned at that time in Jerusalem, a man most especially beloved of God, a lover of piety, a champion of righteousness, an enemy of deceit, and one who cut away the harm from idolatry; for the sacred scripture has clearly testified such things of him. while he was governing in royal honor to Jerusalem, Sennacherib, the tyrant of the Assyrians, went up, and he captured Samaria, and deported Israel; that is, the ten tribes; to the mountains of the Persians and Medes, and having also burned not a few cities of the kingdom of Judah, he did not take Jerusalem, since God was its defender. But it is necessary to pass over the account of the history, being clear. Then, when Hezekiah died, Manasseh, his son, succeeded to the kingdom, who was so impious as to leave no form of wickedness unpracticed. And it is written thus about him in the fourth book of Kings: "And he did "evil in the sight of the

Lord, according to the abominations of the ”nations whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel.

”And he returned and built the high places which Hezekiah his ”father had torn down, and he raised up an altar to ”Baal, and made groves, as Ahab king of ”Israel had done, and he worshipped all the host of ”heaven, and served them; and he built an altar ”in the house of the Lord, of which He had said, In Jerusalem I will put my ”name, and he built an altar to all the host of ”heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord, and he made ”his sons pass through the fire, and practiced augury and divination, ”and appointed a sorcerer, and multiplied diviners to do ”evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. And ”he set the carved image of the grove in the house of which the Lord said ”to David and to Solomon his son, In this ”house and in Jerusalem which I have chosen out of all the ”tribes of Israel I will put my name there for ”ever. While Manasseh was impiously doing these things, God of all, then, was indignant, and very rightly so, and he clearly threatened to bring upon Jerusalem the consequences of his wrath. And it is written thus again:

”And the Lord spoke by the hand of his servants ”the prophets, saying, Because Manasseh the ”king of Judah has done these wicked abominations beyond ”all that the Amorite who was before him did, and has made ”Judah also to sin with their idols, not so, ”thus says the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil ”upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, ”both his ears shall tingle, and I will stretch over ”Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house ”of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man ”wipes an alabaster jar, wiping it and turning it upside down ”before them, and I will cast off the remnant of my ”inheritance, and deliver them into the hands of their enemies, ”and they shall become a spoil and a prey to all ”their enemies, because of all the evil they have done in ”my sight. And these things, as I said, God threatened he would bring not long after upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem. But when Manasseh was already deceased, Amon his son reigned, in no way inferior to his father in impiety of ways, but competing so with his impieties, as perhaps even to surpass him then. And when he also died, Josiah reigned, his son, but one who emulated the piety of Hezekiah, and an excellent lover of his ways.

For he tore down altars and precincts, and having declared the divine temple clean of Manasseh’s abominations, he commanded the priests according to the law to perform the customary rites for the glory of God; in addition to this, he burned the chariot of the sun, he drove out of Jerusalem false prophets, diviners, and wonder- workers, and indeed also soothsayers; and having slaughtered a great number of the temple priests, he burned them on the altars of the idols; and he overturned the altar of the calves in Bethel, which Jeroboam had made. And since he was so pious and good, God postponed his wrath, and brought none of the things he had foretold. But when Josiah also died, Jehoahaz reigned, whom Pharaoh Necho captured and made a prisoner, crowning with the honor of the kingdom Jeconiah, again a second son of Josiah, during whose reign Nebuchadnezzar marched against Judea, who having ravaged the whole country he took Jerusalem, and having burned the divine temple, along with the sacred vessels he carried off Judah and Benjamin as captives to his

own land. It is necessary to know, that the cruelty of the Babylonian also crushed and ill-treated the cities of the foreigners, those situated by the sea, I mean Gaza and Ascalon and others with them, and the Idumeans and Ammonites. For the word of prophecy also recalls this. Let all things utterly fail from the face of the earth, says the Lord;

let man and cattle fail, let the birds of the air and the fish of the sea fail, and the impious shall grow weak, and I will remove the lawless from the face of the earth, says the Lord. As their country was to be completely desolate, and was on the verge of being destroyed with all its inhabitants, in these things he makes the word of his foretelling hyperbolic. For we do not say, if we are of sound mind, that the God of all unleashes his wrath also on irrational animals and swimming and flying creatures; but rather he persuades his hearers to understand this, that there will be no sparing of anything at all; but just as when a ship is sunk along with its sailors, no remnant is left behind; so, he says, when Judea is captured, there will be nothing saved, not man, not beast, not bird, not swimming creature. But since it was very likely that there were some in it living lawfully, practicing a noble and admirable way of life, so that he might not seem to be unleashing his wrath upon all simply and indiscriminately, destroying the just with the unjust, and corrupting the pious with the profane and impious, for this reason he makes it clear against whom the things from wrath would go. For he said that And the impious shall grow weak and I will remove the lawless from the face of the earth.

And they will grow weak, falling under the hand of enemies, and are removed either by dying and becoming the work of the sword, or by being carried off as captives and serving their captors. But if someone should choose to cleverly reinterpret man and cattle and the rest into morals and manners, he will understand men as those living according to the flesh, and having an earthly mind, and fixed upon temporary things, to whom also the divine word has addressed: ”I said, you are gods and all sons of the Most High, but you die like men. For the life of the saints is no longer human, but rather more divine and spiritual; if indeed it is true that though they walk in the flesh, they do not live according to the flesh, as it is written; but rather have their citizenship in heaven; and cattle, in turn, those accustomed to live in great ignorance, and dull of mind, about whom he says through the voice of David, ”Man, being in honor, did not understand; he is compared to the senseless cattle and is like them; and he further commands, saying, ”Do not be like the horse and the mule, which have no understanding. And birds we shall reckon to be those having an exalted and, as it were, lofty mind, and who have practiced carrying their intellect on high, and refuse to be drawn down by humble things. Such, in a way, is the boaster, and one completely entangled in the crimes of God-hated arrogance.

You will take fish also for the most irrational multitude; for the species of fish are most voiceless; such also are the many, who, as if poured around by some sea of life’s turmoil, and feeding on the salty and bitter pleasure of the things in it, are kept for the nets of death, having destruction as the end of their life. These, therefore, will fail, God sending punishment upon them, and having chosen at last to punish them as those treading a wan-

ton and dissolute life, and not refraining from provoking him. And I will stretch out my hand upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and I will remove from this place the names of the Baalim, and the names of the priests, and with the priests those who worship on the roofs the host of heaven, and those who swear by their king, and those who those turning away from the Lord and those not seeking the Lord, and those not holding fast to the Lord. He thus clarifies what was obscurely said, and clearly states that the things from wrath will happen against the tribe of Judah and against Jerusalem. For he says that his own hand will be stretched out against her, as if seizing and striking, and subjecting them to what is imminently expected, those who are about to ravage and carry them away from the land that bore them, entangled in the snares of slavery.

And he lays bare the charges, and says that the names of Baal will be taken from their midst, and the names of the priests will be gone along with them. And by this he signifies that the multitude of venerated objects among them was great, and the manner of their error was varied. But that they will be consumed by war, and the nations of the Jews will come to such a lack of men that there will perhaps be none to name Baal, or able to sit in the precincts of the idols, he has cleverly indicated, by saying that the names of their idols, and indeed of the priests, will be removed. And he says ”names” instead of ”memorials,” or ”glories. For thus also the most wise Solomon interprets it, saying ”A good name is to be chosen, rather than great riches. And along with the priests and the names of the Baalim, he says that those who worship on the rooftops will be utterly destroyed; and these would be those who are accustomed to worship the moon and the bear and the rest of the host of heaven. And I will likewise remove, he says, both those who swear by their king and those who turn away from the Lord. For it was a custom for some of those who had gone astray to make heaven an object of their oath, and to let their tongue loose upon it; and, as it were, most ambitiously to cry out, By the king and master, the sun.

For those who have chosen to do this, it is necessary also to depart fiercely from the love of God, although the law has clearly stated, ”You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve, and by his name you shall swear. And so the prophet Jeremiah once bore witness to those of Israel concerning the observance of the command through Moses, and said to God, deflecting the wrath against them, ”They say, ’As the Lord lives.’” But those not seeking the Lord, nor indeed practicing to hold fast to him, would reasonably be understood as those living a worthless and unseemly life, and who have honored a polity outside the law. For the God of all is sought by us not so much spatially, but, I think, in actuality, through true knowledge, and that which has in itself what is irreproachable, through faith and gentleness, and through zeal and eagerness for everything whatsoever that is holily admired and pleasing to him. But it is necessary to know that these things were accomplished also by the one who was reigning in Jerusalem, I mean Josiah, in whose time the word of the prophecy also came. For he himself also tore down altars and precincts and handmade things; he slaughtered the priests, the false prophets, the diviners.

But the Prophet seems not to be declaring things present at all, nor making his words about things already done, but rather to be foretelling that these things will be at certain times, which indeed were also accomplished through Nebuchadnezzar, who acted not for the glory of God; for how or from where, since he even burned the divine temple? But rather destroying and burning along with the idols those who worshiped them. Be reverent before the face of the Lord God, because the day of the Lord is near, for the Lord has prepared his sacrifice, he has consecrated his called ones. He usefully intertwines exhortation with the threats, and having terrified them with fears, he urges them toward what is better, bidding them to be circumspect; for this, I think, is what "to be reverent" is: the God of all, and to hasten to set right the paths of life, and without delay to turn toward what is dear and pleasing to him. And he says that such people must be seen before the face of the Lord, according to what was said by the voice of Isaiah, "Wash yourselves, be clean, remove the wickednesses from your souls before my eyes; cease "from your wickednesses. For it is not at all the same thing to remove wickedness from human eyes and from before the face of God, but the difference in the matters is very great.

For sometimes a man who is wicked and not good in his ways, puts on the appearance of piety and fabricates a name for goodness, although in truth he is not this; and indeed Christ says, "Beware of those who come "to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous "wolves. Such a one is pious in the eyes of men, but not at all in the sight of God; but he who is truly without malice before the face of God not only puts on outward goodness and the appearance of being good, but rather has an unprofaned heart, and is indeed seen as such. For Solomon somewhere said, "For the ways of a man are before the eyes of God, "and He looks upon all his paths. He calls the time of the capture the day of the Lord, which he also says is near, not allowing the more careless to perhaps consider and think among themselves that the postponement of the things foretold will be long, and that they will outrun the suffering, having reached the end of their own lives. For it was the custom of the Jews in the prophecies of the most gloomy things to think and say such things. And indeed God somewhere said to the blessed prophet Ezekiel, "Son of man, behold the provoking house of Israel, "saying, they say: The vision that he sees is for many days to come, "and he prophesies of times far off. Therefore say to them, Thus "says the Lord Adonai:

None of my "words which I shall speak shall be prolonged any more; for I will "speak the word and will do it, says the Lord Adonai. This is what he says now, as I think, affirming that the day of the Lord has drawn near and that his sacrifice is being prepared, and his called ones are being consecrated. And he calls the slaughter of the impious, which will be done according to his will, a sacrifice; and the called ones, the Chaldeans, whom he says he also consecrates, not as having become holy, but rather as having been appointed and called by God to burn Judea, and with all mercy removed, to destroy those in it. The sacred scripture says something like this elsewhere. For the Persians and Medes and those who fought with Cyrus were called against Nineveh. And the God of all said about them, "They are consecrated, and I am bringing them; giants are coming "to fulfill my wrath, rejoicing and at the same time insolent. Therefore, consecration in these cases would not signify a

putting away of wickedness, nor indeed a participation in the Holy Spirit, but rather that some have been predestined and assigned, as it were, to the fulfillment of some such deed. And it shall be in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's house, and all that are clothed with foreign apparel;

and I will punish all those openly at the gates in that day, who fill the house of the Lord their God with impiety and deceit. These are the three things through which cities and countries, kingdoms and the orders of authorities under it, and the renowned priesthood, might be well. And if these things are in good order, according to what is fitting for each, the affairs under them would also be well, and the subject people is saved. But if indeed they should choose to honor the perverted path, and should indeed hasten along it, everything will at once go toward what is unseemly, and it is all but drunk with destruction. For just as when a pain occurs in the head of the body, it is necessary for the rest of the members to feel with it and be sick with it; so also when the leaders have turned to what is base and are sick with an inclination toward what is worse, it is necessary that those who are yoked under them are somehow destroyed along with them. For the subject people is somehow wont to follow and be carried along by the opinions of those who have been allotted to rule. In the day, therefore, he says, of the sacrifice pleasing to God, that is, in the time in which there would be of the most terrible things the slaughter of those who have sinned, upon the very first things, which are pre-eminent in glory and set before others, will the things of wrath proceed.

And these are: the house of the king; and the neighbor right next to those held in glory and splendor; and third among them, the one more honored by God than the others, that of the sacred ministers; and they too are rulers, and leaders of the peoples, according to the order of the priesthood. And He accuses them exceedingly, as wearing foreign garments, that is, as having come to such a point of godlessness, and having chosen to despise the ordinances given of old through Moses, so as not even to keep the very vestment of the priesthood, when the occasion called them to perform the sacred rites. As, therefore, those who were from Aaron were consumed by fire, and the charge and accusation against them was that they offered strange fire on the altar; in the same way, I think, these also, about whom the discourse was, are called to account, because having neglected the seemliness proper to them, they were not arrayed in a sacred manner according to what seemed good to the lawgiver, but being clothed in foreign garments, they dared to perform the sacred rites. And this is also proof of the utmost contempt and that the law was considered of no account among them. Then how was one to think that the observance of the law would be a concern to the others, if their leaders had no regard for it? Therefore He says, I will take vengeance openly upon the gatehouses; and what He means to declare is something like this.

When Israel sinned many times, and did not yield to the words of the prophets, He called them to repentance, correcting them like a father with external sorrows, and sometimes even touching their bodies; for example, I say, He struck the fruits in the field with blight,

or at other times sent the locust and the grasshopper, or heaped up the caterpillar, or what is called mildew; and He has afflicted them "with blasting and with jaundice," according to the prophet's voice. Bringing these things upon them from time to time, He struck them, as it were, secretly; but now, He says, I will take vengeance openly upon the gatehouses, that is, I will not bring the things of wrath secretly, it will not be the locust and mildew against you, not a bodily sickness; but the naked, gleaming sword of the enemies, threatening destruction to those who have been impious toward me, and cruelly destroying in the very gatehouses of the temple those who fill the house of their God with impiety and deceit. What then is the impiety? And what is the deceit? Another prophet will make it clear to us, saying about Jerusalem, "Her leaders judged for gifts, and her prophets divined for silver; and indeed the wise Isaiah somewhere addresses her and says, "Your rulers are disobedient, companions of thieves, loving gifts, seeking reward, not judging for orphans, and not attending to the judgment of the widow. Therefore, the ministers of the divine altars must take heed, lest they somehow fall into such accusations.

For in a typical manner, those of old received the vestment proper to the sacred rites. But since the time of worship in spirit is at hand, let there be for each of those called to the ministry a splendid garment and a vestment, as it were, sacredly fitting: right and blameless faith, an evangelical life, a venerable and most lawful conduct, and an upright character, not overcome by shameful gains, a care that looks to virtue, and that considers what pleases God to be of all account. And it shall be in that day, says the Lord, a sound of a cry from the gate of those who slay, and a wailing from the second, and a great crash from the hills. He clearly describes the calamities of the war, and shows some falling and perishing and lamenting for themselves, so that, overcome by the magnitude of the evils to come, they might choose to turn to hasten to do what is better and more fitting, and thus finally be carried out of the wrath. For the Creator is good, and does not desire "the death of him who dies, as that he should turn from his wicked way, and live," according to the voice of the prophet Ezekiel. Therefore, at that time, he says, from one gate of those who pierce, that is, of those who slaughter those who fall in their way, there will be a terrible and grim outcry.

For somehow, in cities that are being captured, the enemies, bursting in, raise a terrible cry, breaking down those within them into fear, and as if headlong sharpening one another to cruelty. But from the other gate, he says, there will be wailing and tears, as the captured are pushed against each other, and each one hastens to leap out of the city as if from a sunken ship. And he says there will also be a great crashing from the hills, perhaps calling the so-called upper city in Jerusalem "hills," that is, naming Zion, or indicating something else. For somehow, in the raids of wars, the inhabitants always flee to the tops of the mountains, thinking that the difficulty of the places will be an obstacle to their enemies and will check the assaults of their pursuers. And so our Lord Jesus Christ once proclaimed to the peoples of the Jews, "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Therefore, when God strikes, and demands justice from those who have chosen to despise what they have sinned, nothing will help the sufferers, not a city with the finest towers, not unshakable circuits of walls, not the heights of mountains and

the wildness of rocks, not untrodden, difficult terrain; but only repentance saves, pleading with the Judge, and calming His anger, and into the gentleness befitting Him calling the Creator, who is by nature readily good. And it is better to avoid offending Him with all one's might;

but since human nature always inclines to evil, and "in many things we all stumble," having nothing steadfast at all toward virtue, let us at least strive to correct our own intentions by returning to what is better, and by repentance call to gentleness the Master of all, who is good by nature, as I just said. Wail, you who inhabit the one cut down, for all the people of Canaan have become alike, all those who are lifted up by silver have been utterly destroyed. That the sword will spare none of the Babylonians, but will utterly destroy those throughout all Judea, he signifies through these things. And he has commanded those left behind in Jerusalem, who were strong enough to escape, to lament greatly for Judea as destroyed, and for the city renowned among them that has been cut down; because all the people in it competed with the ways of the Canaanites, and chose to emulate their ways, and were thus so equal to them in all things as to perhaps even surpass and leave them behind. But the Canaanites were foreigners, God-hated and sinful and idolaters, and among those most slandered for all the most outlandish things. And so, in the sacred writings, someone is reproached, hearing, "Seed of Canaan, and not of Judah.

And that their wealth is useless, a rotten and easily-broken support, he explains again, affirming that those who are lifted up by silver will be destroyed, that is, those who are accustomed to being proud of their wealth and possessions, and who raise a haughty brow for this very reason. For since, being overcome by shameful gains, and gaping for this, "the house of their God," as He himself says, "they filled with impiety and deceit," for this reason, wealth is rightly exposed as inert and useless, and knowing how to save no one. "A good name is therefore to be chosen rather than great riches," according to what is written; "for treasures will not profit the lawless, but righteousness will deliver from death," and "Truly a small portion with the fear of God is better than great revenues with injustice. And it shall be on that day, I will search Jerusalem with a lamp, and I will execute vengeance on the men who are contemptuous of their own watch-posts, who say in their in their hearts: 'The Lord will not do good, nor will he do evil.' Whatever the enemies, using unrestrained madness against the captured, were about to do, God applies this to his own person, not as though he himself were the worker of such monstrous things, but rather as justly permitting the effects of wrath to come upon the impious. For what Solomon said enigmatically in Proverbs is true: "For not unjustly are nets spread for the winged;

for they who partake of murder treasure up evils for themselves. For when it is possible to be far from both punishment and justice, having chosen virtue over evil things, they themselves sharpen wrath against themselves, and sending their own souls to a self-invited destruction, they would be caught by those who know how to judge rightly. Therefore Jerusalem is searched with a lamp. For the Jews suffered something like this from the Romans, which they happened to suffer when Jerusalem was captured by Vespasian and Titus; for as Jose-

phus relates, who lamented the sufferings of the Jews with ten thousand mouths, after the slaughters in the wars and the innumerable multitude of those who perished throughout the city, searching with a lamp for those who had fled into the caves and sewers and bringing them to light, they slaughtered them cruelly and savagely. And he says that he will take vengeance on them as having despised their ordinances, that is, either the laws appointed for each of the things to be done, which they transgressed and were impious, considering their observance to be nothing; or, specifically, he calls the customs of the priests ordinances. For very great according to the law was the care for their vestments and sacred forms and also for the sacrifices. For they did not bring the victims to the altar in one single way. And one might learn the difference in these things by encountering the writings of Moses.

But they had no regard for the ordinances, because of having reached such a point of nonsense and chilling thoughts, as perhaps even to suppose and to dare to say that the God of all takes no account of any of our affairs; and so to disregard earthly matters as neither to praise the good and give them rewards worthy of their uprightness, nor to be sharpened against sinners and bring upon them punishments equal to their unholy deeds. This, I think, is the meaning of 'The Lord will not do good, nor will he do evil.' Therefore, what is being rumored is a lack of providence and nothing else. And the dogma is so shameful and hateful, that it did not even please the wise men of the Greeks. For they called the introducer of such things an atheist; this was Epicurus, one of those renowned among them for wisdom. Therefore it is possible to say that "The ways of a man are before the eyes of God, and he looks upon all his paths. And he deems the workers of virtue worthy of rewards, but he makes the sinner exceedingly hated, and repays each according to his work, as it is written.

Therefore, we must make our paths straight, and make the way that is pleasing to God, the Master of all, thus living lawfully and truly pursuing the most excellent life, in order to have the Master of all be gracious and well-disposed, and not to allow him to be embittered against us, by refusing what is evil and hastening to correct by repentance the faults of slumber and sloth. And their wealth will be for plunder, and their houses for destruction; and they will build houses and not dwell in them, and they will plant vineyards and not drink their wine. Perhaps even now it will be said by us at the right time, "Treasures will not profit the lawless. For wealth is always a runaway, and it has no stability; rather it intoxicates and inclines toward apostasy, and has unsteady feet. And indeed to wish to be proud on its account is utterly foolish. For it will least of all deliver those under divine wrath, nor would it free anyone from accusations when God decrees punishment, and what is fitting for sinners bringing punishment. What then is wealth? It serves the flesh alone and is a servant of unholy and abominable pleasure, and a father of arrogance, and a root and genesis of pride, and it procures the possession of fleeting glories, which pass by their possessors like shadows. For it is true that, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.

That the pursuit of wealth, therefore, is entirely unprofitable for the impious, he teaches by saying that their power will be for plunder by the Chaldeans. For they are those about whom it might be said, and very fittingly, what is sung in the Psalms, "Behold, the man who did not make God his helper, but hoped in the abundance of his wealth, and was strengthened in his vanity. And if they have also built for themselves lavishly adorned houses, they would not be their own, for they will be burned down; and if, in addition to this, they have become cultivators of vineyards, they themselves will not drink. How so? For they will be gone as captives, leaving their homes behind and deprived of everything that knows how to bring joy. And God made this clear through the voice of Jeremiah, saying to one of those who had reigned in Samaria, "You have built for yourself a well-proportioned house, airy upper rooms with latticed windows and panelled with cedar and painted with vermilion. Will you reign, because you are provoked in Ahab your father? They will not eat and they will not drink. It was better for you to do judgment and good justice. Therefore, we ought to desire none of the things on earth, but to cast as far away as possible the delighting in temporary things and the pursuit of fleeting wealth which, in a time of wrath, can profit its possessors in no way;

but to make our boast the life in Christ, and the glories of an exceptional way of life, and to consider nothing better than intimacy with God, and to cry out and say, "O Lord God of hosts, blessed is the man who hopes in You; and in addition to these things, that "One day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I have chosen to be an outcast in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tents of sinners. Because the great day of the Lord is near, near and coming very swiftly; the voice of the day of the Lord is appointed bitter and hard, mighty; that day is a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of ruin and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and cry against the fortified cities and against the high corners. He cuts off again the hope of those who are sometimes disposed to think the words will run to a long postponement. For he shows the punishment to be, as it were, at the door, and the disaster from the war running at their heels. He calls the time in which such things will be, the day of the Lord. And indeed he also named it swift, as coming without any delay, and to be seen before long; and he says its voice is hard and most powerful, hinting, I suppose, at the war-cry of the enemies;

a day, he says, of wrath and tribulation, of desolation and ruin, of darkness and gloom. For what of such things will not happen to those who have come to such a point of misery, as to be in the very terrors of death, and to lie in the worst of evils? And when enemies have captured a city, what will not happen to the captives? Or what excess of outrage will not be practiced? Are not young boys destroyed, and young girls cast down dead, like plants uprooted before their time? Does not despondency, like some night and darkness, blacken the heart of the captured, so that they are at a loss for counsel and thought; all but overshadowing the mind of each with mist and clouds, not even allowing them to think where on earth they are. Then how is this doubtful? And that the attack of the enemies will be unbearable both for populous cities trained in tactics, and indeed for others, which might be girded with

surrounding walls, he has indicated by adding that it will be of a trumpet and A day of clamor is the day of the Lord against the fortified cities and against the high corners. For, as I said, He calls fortified those that are populous, and have a very great fighting class; and high corners, those that are walled.

For the corners always somehow rise up in the circuits of the walls, and stand as towers, higher than the others. 'It is a fearful thing, therefore, to fall into the hands of the living God,' according to what is written. For no one at all will be set against Him; for He Himself is the Lord of hosts. And I will distress men, and they shall walk as blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; and I will pour out their blood as dust, and their flesh as dung. and their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath, because in the fire of his zeal all the earth shall be consumed, for he will make a final end and a haste upon all who dwell on the earth. The meaning of the preceding is very clear, and would require, as I think, no word for clarification. Nevertheless, we will speak summarily. For He threatens them with things beyond all evil, and darkness in their mind;

and He immediately relates the cause, adding, 'Because they have sinned against the Lord.' It is as if He said, 'Having acted insolently toward their brothers, they have also unguardedly acted impiously against the Master of all Himself and would be caught rising up against the divine glory.' If it is indeed entirely discordant and unholy to deprive Him of His own honors, and, as it were, to drive Him from the thrones of divinity, and to enthrone for themselves creation and the forms of irrational beasts. For some attached their worship to calves; others to a certain Astarte and Baal-peor; others to the moon and stars. For this reason, then, He threatens to bring upon them the calamities of war, both a final end and a haste. And the 'final end' would signify the utter destruction of the land of the Jews; while 'haste' signifies that the things foretold would happen, as it were, with speed and without delay. And the word 'haste' often indicates in the sacred writings also an assault of tumults. It is therefore a very terrible thing to sin against brothers; but if indeed the transgressions of some should proceed to such a point of depravity as to grieve even the ineffable nature itself, no means will avert the consequences of wrath. It is therefore fitting that one should lament the God-hated heretics, who sharpen their tongue against the Son of God, and say that He is created, and indeed in lesser things than those in which the Father is.

And they themselves fashion an idol, as it were, according to what seems good to them, and command that this be worshipped. For if the Son has fallen away entirely from being God by nature, and is a created being, yet is worshipped both by us and by the holy angels, how are we not clearly worshipping creation, just like the children of the Greeks, who fashioned an idol in the form of the sun, or of some other created thing, out of senselessness and vanity of reasonings? Be gathered and be bound together, O undisciplined nation, before you become as a flower that passes away by day, before the wrath of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you. Having shown very well the savagery of the war and the magnitude of the coming calamity, he opportunely turns his discourse

again to the need to call them to repentance, at a time when it was easy to persuade them, since they were presumably afraid. For when the mind has at times been hardened and has inclined very much toward the more shameful and abominable things, we do not easily accept even choosing to repent, but fear often compels us to it, even unwillingly. He calls them, therefore, to intimacy with Himself. For just as we say that they fell away and became alienated, having worshipped idols and given their mind to their own passions;

so again we shall understand it as going back, as it were, and taking hold of intimacy with God, choosing to worship Him alone, and to follow His ordinances. And He calls the race of Israel an undisciplined nation, as also dishonoring the ancient commandment itself, and impiously rejecting the law that trains and is able to bring forth every kind of goodness. But He threatens again, that if they are not bound to Him, in the ways we have just mentioned, they will differ in nothing from the flowers in the fields, which are both rotten and quick to wither, and they will surely fall under those things that come from wrath. Therefore, "As long as we have time, let us do good to all. As long as the Master, being long-suffering as God, grants it, let us repent, let us offer supplications, let us cry out with tears, "Do not remember the sins of my youth and my ignorance," let us join ourselves through sanctification and sobriety; for thus we will be sheltered in the day of wrath, and we will wash away the stain from our transgressions before the day of the Lord's anger comes upon us. For the Judge will surely come from heaven at the appointed times, and will repay each according to his work. Seek the Lord, all you humble of the earth, work judgment, and seek righteousness, seek meekness, and answer for them, so that you may be sheltered in the day of the Lord's wrath.

In what way indeed they might be bound to Him, though being an abominable and uninstructed nation, He clearly indicates. For He commands to seek the Lord, to work judgment and righteousness and to answer for them. God, therefore, is sought by us through choosing to thirst to do what seems good to Him, with all laziness set aside; and we will work judgment, carrying out His divine law, and most unweariedly practicing virtue; and we will gain again the glory of righteousness, being very well crowned with boasts from good works, and treading the truly glorious and blameless path of piety toward God and love toward brothers; "For love is the fulfillment of the law," as it is written. But I think one must add to what I said, the "answer for them," that is, to also speak to others and to admonish brothers; for in this way and not otherwise will we be perfect for virtue. So also our Lord Jesus Christ said that the one most approved in deed and word will be called great in the kingdom of heaven; but least, the one who has practiced teaching and is sufficient for this, but is not yet willing to do what he thinks is right, and commands some to practice it. Does he not somewhere also pronounce woe upon the teachers of the Jews? saying thus, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders;

but you yourselves," he says, "will not so much as touch them with the tip of your finger. Therefore, the proof of the most perfect piety is to both practice virtue and to teach others

the things through which they might become illustrious. And that the labor for this is not without reward, the disciple of Christ will make clear, saying, "That he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. But if anyone should think that "answer for them" indicates that it is proper to make a study of them, let him understand it in this way too. For the law of Moses also commanded concerning the oracles of God, that "you shall talk of them when you sit down, and when you walk in the marketplace, when you lie down and when you rise up. And David also sings, "And I will meditate on your statutes always. Because Gaza shall be plundered, and Ashkelon to destruction, and Ashdod shall be cast out at noonday, and Ekron shall be uprooted. The word again manages something and clearly foretells things that will happen in due time for the encouragement and comfort of those from Israel. And what is this, I shall say.

When Jerusalem was sacked, and all of Judea had been seized by Nebuchadnezzar, the neighboring cities of the foreigners rejoiced over those who had suffered and mocked the vanquished, and they sacrificed to their own gods, as though they had destroyed a race hateful to all; and they dared to say that their trust in God had been proven useless by their circumstances, and they thought that the aid from above was also stronger and better than that of became the hand of the Babylonians. But if anyone from Judea, having left his home and fled his native land during the time of war, arrived among his neighbors expecting to be saved, this one was in a worse state, having encountered men more savage than the Babylonians, those who ought to have shown pity. Therefore, the wretches were insolent against the glory of God, and met those who had fared miserably with harshness and inflexibility, refusing to share their pain; but rather, also savagely burdening the captives with their own coarseness. What then? After this, the people of Israel returned in due course from captivity, when Cyrus reluctantly permitted it, and having come to Jerusalem they were rebuilding the city's wall, and they also rebuilt the divine temple, and were now at last somehow in hope of prospering, with God as their champion.

But when they learned that these things were being done, the Gazans and the Ashkelonites, and indeed the Azotians, and those from the city called Ekron, the Moabites and Idumeans and Ammonites, and certain other nations besides these, were consumed by the flame of envy, and wished to hinder them from enclosing the city with the wall, and so, having gathered together, they campaigned against those who had been recalled from captivity. And the battle was joined in the valley of Jehoshaphat; and they fell and were destroyed, as God strengthened Israel. And they took the cities of the nations by force, so as to reduce them to complete desolation, and to make them pens for flocks. He now recalls this history, as it contains a promise, first of the return from captivity, then of future glory and of victory over all. For he says that Gaza will be plundered, that Ashkelon will go to destruction, and that Azotus will be cast out at noonday; "at noonday" meaning openly and not in the manner of robbers, but clearly and by the law of war; and that Ekron will be uprooted. And he makes the threat very cleverly in relation to the meaning of the name; for Ekron is interpreted as "uprooting. This very thing he says it will suffer, as if having in its name the indication of

the calamity that would be brought upon it. Woe to the inhabitants of the sea coast, settlers from Crete; the word of the Lord is against you, Canaan, land of foreigners.

Having threatened sufficiently, and having foretold what was about to happen to the inhabitants of Palestine—I mean the Gazans and the Ashkelonites, along with the Azotians and those from Ekron—he weaves a similar discourse also against the Phoenician cities, and especially those among them that are situated by the sea. For this reason he says, "Woe to the inhabitants of the sea coast. And since many of the cities in Palestine also dwell by the sea, distinguishing as it were the ones being indicated, he now calls them "settlers from Crete," so that from this we might understand the inhabitants of Phoenicia, whom, as I said, he names settlers from Crete for the following reason. Cretans and Libyans are separated from one another, with the sea lying between them, by very small distances. For as the common account has it, when the wind blows, sometimes the scents of the plants from Crete dart across and kill the wild beasts in Libya, I mean both reptiles and the tribes of venomous creatures. So then, Libyans and Cretans were ranked as one nation. From there, having at various times sent out a colony, they inhabited and built the cities in Phoenicia, just as, of course, the Cappadocians at various times did for the cities of Palestine. And indeed God says somewhere through the voice of Amos, "Are you not as sons of the Ethiopians to me, O sons of Israel? says the Lord.

Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt, and the foreigners from Cappadocia, and the Syrians from a pit. And he calls the Palestinians "foreigners," but the Phoenicians "Syrians," whom he also claims to have brought up from a pit, calling Libya, I think, a pit, because the country is perhaps somewhere both hollow and low-lying. For the sea beside it widens into bays, almost as if it were retreating behind the mainland, and penetrating into the very southernmost regions. But it should be known that instead of "From a pit," the other interpreters have named Cyrene, because the Phoenicians are more clearly shown to be colonists of the Libyans; for Cyrene is a most notable city of Libya. Therefore, he says, the word of the Lord is upon you, O sojourners of the Cretans, that is, Libyans; and he says "sojourners" instead of "colonists" and "migrants. And again he calls them Canaan. For all who inhabited the cities of Phoenicia were Canaanites, even if they were from the beginning colonists of the Cretans. But it should be known that again the other interpreters, instead of "sojourners of the Cretans," have published, "The word of the Lord is upon you, a nation destroyed. But since it was necessary to follow again the writing of the Seventy, we have brought forward what is from history, which tradition brings to us, and which the word of the prophet has also sealed as true.

And I will destroy you from your dwelling, and Crete shall be a pasture for flocks and a fold for sheep. Behold, again he speaks to them as settlers, and discourses to them as migrants, and has testified to the truth of the history; for he says he will destroy them from their dwelling, that is, from the land in which they have both sojourned and settled; he says that their cities will come to such a state of desolation as to become a pasture and a fold for flocks. And again he calls Phoenicia, or those in Phoenicia, "Crete," as being from Crete,

which borders on and is a neighbor of the Libyans. And in ancient times they were one, and the races were mixed with one another in blood and customs and laws. And the seacoast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; upon them they shall pasture in the houses of Ashkelon, in the evening they shall lie down from the presence of the sons of Judah, because the Lord their God has visited them, and has turned back their captivity. I have already said before, that all the nations, inflamed with envy, were gathered together, and were marching against Jerusalem after the time of the captivity, and indeed, when war broke out in the valley of Jehoshaphat, those who impiously plotted against the redeemed were defeated and have fallen.

Therefore, having conquered, those of Israel grazed upon the fields of the foreigners as if they were deserted, and used the desolate cities of the Philistines, that is, of the Palestinians, as enclosures, because all in them had been utterly destroyed. Therefore, he says, the seacoast, that is, the cities of the Palestinians by the sea, which were once populous, the fearsome and hard to conquer, shall be a pasture for flocks for the remnant of the house of Judah. For those who were saved from captivity and scarcely left over, they themselves have conquered, they themselves also will lie down in the houses of Ashkelon in the evening. For towards evening the shepherds shut the herds of livestock up in the enclosures. What then is such great power? Or how will this be, which is beyond both faith and all reason? Because, he says, the Lord their God has visited them and has turned back their captivity. It is as if he were to say: He has ceased His anger against them, He has forgiven them their offenses and arms Himself alongside those of Israel, as of old, and He grants the victory over their adversaries, and this, effortlessly. Therefore, whenever God turns away from us as we sin, we will lie under the feet of our enemies, and there is no one to save or to defend.

But if He should again watch over those who strive for virtue and wish to live according to the law, we shall be superior to every war, and we shall very easily prevail over our adversaries, and He himself will give full assurance, saying about every righteous person: ”Because ”he has hoped in Me, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because ”he has known My name. He will cry to Me, and I will hear ”him; I am with him in affliction; I will rescue him and ”I will glorify him. With length of days I will satisfy him, and ”I will show him My salvation. I have heard the reproaches of Moab and the buffetings of the sons of Ammon, with which they reproached my people and magnified themselves against my borders. For this reason, as I live, says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, For Moab shall be as Sodom, and the sons of Ammon as Gomorrah, and Damascus abandoned, as a heap of the threshing floor and made to disappear forever; and the remnants of my people shall plunder them, and the remnants of my nation shall inherit them. When Jerusalem was sacked, and those of Israel had fared miserably, the neighboring nations, as I said, mocked them, and they thought that the capture of Judea was the work of their own falsely-named gods, since the hand that had always from the beginning helped them was completely overturned and gone, perhaps, to nothing—I mean, of course, that of the all-ruling God.

For it is not at all unlikely that some should arrive at this foolishness, as having been deceived, having served wood and stones, and having been ignorant of the God who is by nature and in truth. Therefore, he says, I have heard the reproaches of the Moabites and the buffetings of the sons of Ammon. For I think that he who strikes the suffering with reproaches, and opens a unbridled mouth against them, will differ in no way from one who strikes them, perhaps with a rod or a stone, belching out and saying things by which it was likely that some would be embittered to despondency and grief, and he makes the assault of the calamity more burdensome. But since they were also convicted of speaking rashly against the divine and ineffable glory itself, for this reason, he says, having endured the justice of the Sodomites, they will go to destruction, and perhaps making the sufferings of Gomorrah seem small by their own calamities, and late and with difficulty they will know through the events themselves the power of the one who punishes. Damascus, indeed, the illustrious and conspicuous metropolis of the Phoenicians, in which are the palaces, will be a heap of straw, having no ear of grain, of which there is no account, but its end is for burning, that is, for scattering. For the gusts of winds scatter the heaps of chaff everywhere;

and in the same manner, the forces of the captors scatter everywhere those in the captured cities, falling upon them like the most violent winds. But that the accomplishment of such evils will at the right times be not for another, but for the very people who have suffered and been reproached, he implies, saying, The remnants of my people shall plunder them and the remnants of my nation shall inherit them. For, as I have already said, he calls the remnants of the nation those who were saved from captivity, who have prevailed over the nations, and having captured the cities of the foreigners, have reduced them to complete desolation. Therefore, when the God of all economically disciplines the Church, either by bringing on tribulations, or by allowing persecutions to take place, when enemies attack her, either Greeks perhaps, or unholy heretics, let no one smile scornfully, but rather let him await the end of the entire struggle. For those who laugh broadly at times, and all but reproach Christ, as not defending his own, that is, as they think, being too weak for this, will suffer the passions of the Sodomites, and will be food for fire, and in addition to this, they will find those whom they considered to be defeated to be victorious. This is for them in return for their insolence, because they reproached and magnified themselves against the Lord Almighty. The Lord will be manifest against them, and will destroy all the gods of the nations of the earth.

This, he says, is their portion and this their lot. For they have behaved insolently even against the ineffable glory itself, the wretches speaking rashly and uttering reviling words, and they all but rose up against the One who is beyond all things, using a terrible and unbridled audacity for this. But since they attributed the glory for being able to do all things to their own gods, the Lord will be manifest against them, that is, he will show them his own power, by destroying all their gods. For their temples have been destroyed and have fallen by the hand of Israel, and the handmade idols have become the work of fire everywhere and in every nation of the captured. Where then of the gods the power? Or how could they save others, who are not even able to defend themselves? Or rather, what is

deaf and senseless matter anyway? ”The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands,” and if it is not offensive to say, or rather, it shall be said, ”What profit is a carved image, that they have carved it, a molten image they have cast, a false vision,” according to the voice of the prophet? and as the divine David says, ”May all who make them become like them, and all who trust in them. And each one from his own place will worship him, all the islands of the nations.

We say that the Lord was revealed upon them, as one who has destroyed all their gods, long ago through those from Israel who vigorously burned along with the cities of the foreigners both the statues in the sanctuaries and the altars in them. But at the time of the Incarnation of the Only-begotten, one might see this having happened more truly, when the Word, being God, became like us and was revealed; and so the divine disciples said that they had touched with their hands and seen with their eyes the very one who is from the beginning, whom they have heard. For he who as God is beyond being seen became manifest, and David somewhere psalms, ”God will come openly, our God, and he will not be silent. But since he became manifest ”and was seen upon earth,” as it is written, ”and lived among men,” then the abominable and profane herds of idols perished; and the power of the devil has been completely destroyed, and from now on each of those brought to the knowledge of the truth through faith in Christ offers worship through him and with him to God the Father from his own place, and God is no longer known only throughout Judea, but also the lands and cities of the nations, even if they are separated from Judea by an intervening sea, no less do they approach Christ, they offer prayers, they lift up doxologies, they honor him with unceasing praises. For long ago ”his name was great in Israel;

but now it has become most known to those everywhere, and earth and sea are full of his glory. And this, then, was that which is said, ”As I live, says the Lord, surely all the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord. So then, he says, each will worship from his own place. For the law, prefiguring the beauty of the Church, erected for those from Israel that ancient tabernacle; as a type of which that famous temple was also raised in Jerusalem. And the divine Moses, or rather God through him, commanded the ancients that those from all the land of the Jews who wished to worship should go up to Jerusalem, and so to sacrifice and worship God, and death was the penalty for those who sacrificed outside the temple. But since the time of the shadow has passed, the things in types have ceased, and we have now come to know that the divine is not in a place, nor indeed does ”the Most High dwell in temples made with hands,” but rather he fills the heavens and the earth and the things below; for this reason, believing him to be everywhere and in all things, wherever each one happens to be, there he makes his worship, as having near the God who says, ”I am a God at hand, says the Lord, and not a God far off.

But it should be known that sometimes the sacred writing calls the churches islands, as if lying in the sea in this world, and being poured around by the bitter waters of the tribulations in it, and all but being struck by the most violent waves of persecutions, yet unshakeably established and holding up high, and not being submerged by the afflictions. For the churches

are unshaken through Christ, ”and the gates of Hades will not prevail against them. Therefore, if someone should wish to understand ”islands of the nations” as the churches from the nations, he will not depart from a fitting purpose; as being washed about by the billows of temptations, but having their stability in Christ, to whom be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. OF THE SAME AUTHOR, ON THE SAME PROPHET, BOOK TWO. And you, Ethiopians, are the slain of my sword. He remembers every people, that is, nation, that warred against Israel and prattled against the divine glory. He proceeds therefore from the Idumeans and Ammonites to the Ethiopians, or those situated to the east and south, and inhabiting the neighboring land of the Persians; that is, the Egyptians, as being adjacent and neighbors to those of Israel; and the land of the Egyptians is also a part of Ethiopia; and indeed, it is the custom of the sacred writings to call the rivers of the Egyptians the rivers of Ethiopia.

For they themselves also drink from the Geon, concerning which the scripture says, ”This is it which compasses the whole land of Ethiopia. You Ethiopians therefore shall also be the slain of my sword. And he calls the sword of the Jews his own, as he himself brings it against those who have acted unholily both against his glory, as I said, and indeed against Israel. But since the divinely inspired scripture also knows of spiritual Ethiopians, let us say something about them as well, not departing from the meaning of the things set forth. Somewhere the blessed David, singing as if to our Lord Jesus Christ, said, ”You ”broke the heads of the dragons on the water. You crushed the ”head of the dragon, you gave him as food to the Ethiopian ”peoples. And also elsewhere, ”The Ethiopians will fall ”down before him, and his enemies will lick the dust. And somewhere the bride prefigured in the Song of Songs confesses to be both black and beautiful. Therefore, Ethiopians should be understood as those having, as it were, a dark and unilluminated mind, those not yet enlightened, and not having the divine light. But those who fall down before Christ, just like the bride, are made brilliant by him, for they have cried out in prayer, ”And let the brightness of the Lord our God be upon us; but those who have an uncleanness that is hard to wash away, and have remained in their blackness, will indeed feast upon the heads of the dragon;

for the apostate dragon is their food; and they will be subject to the sword. And I think the power of the saying is most fitting for the unclean spirits, which Christ has wounded, having cast them out of their tyranny over us, and destroying with them the father of darkness, the inventor of all sin, the one who darkens ”the minds of ”the unbelievers, so that the light of the Gospel of the ”glory of Christ might not shine. And this, I think, is what the wise Isaiah also said to us: ”And it will be in ”that day, God will bring his holy, great, and strong ”sword upon the dragon, the crooked serpent, upon the ”dragon, the fleeing serpent, and he will destroy the dragon. And I will stretch out my hand against the north and destroy the Assyrian, and I will make Nineveh a desolation, waterless as a desert. and flocks shall feed in the midst of it, and all the beasts of the earth, and chameleons and hedgehogs shall lodge in its carved ceilings, and beasts shall cry out in its breaches and ravens in its gateways. I will lay hold, he says, of the lands and cities to the east and north, and with the others I will destroy the Assyrians and the desolate cities, and I will add to them the renowned Nineveh, the

metropolis of the Chaldeans. It will be waterless, like impassable and uninhabited lands. And it is likely again that the saying compares the multitude of inhabitants to waters;

for this is a custom of the sacred writings. And indeed, concerning the attack of the Assyrians, which they made against Jerusalem, another of the holy prophets foretold, saying, "Behold, "waters are coming from the north, and will become a flooding "torrent. Therefore, when he says that Nineveh will be waterless, I would say that he means it will be empty of its inhabitants; but that flocks will feed in the midst of it he asserts, setting this I think as a sign of its complete desolation and of no one dwelling in it; for things of the fields do not grow in a city. But if indeed grasses should perchance grow even in a city, what is happening is a sort of clear admission that it is completely bereft of men. And he adds a not moderate number of other signs. For he says that all the beasts of the earth will lodge in it, and that chameleons and hedgehogs will lie down in its coffered ceilings; and indeed also in the burrows, that is, either in pits, or even in caves, the wild beasts will cry out, and ravens will lodge in its gateways. It is doubtful to no one of sound mind that neither would hedgehogs lodge in houses, nor indeed would beasts make their lairs in the middle of a city, nor would night-ravens frequent the gateways, unless there were the greatest possible leisure, very pleasing to those of such a nature.

For somehow beasts, and indeed the other things of which we speak, do not like to lodge with men; how could they? but rather wherever there might be a great desolation, and the way of life is completely at leisure, and the breadth of the desolation all but guarantees safety, and removes it from all fear. But if it is necessary to say something more about these things, let us secure our own hearts, and with all our strength let us refuse to offend God in any way at all, so that we may not become a dwelling place for wicked and savage beasts, I mean of the unclean spirits, with all virtue having been removed from us. And this I think is what was spoken very well and wisely through the voice of Jeremiah to Jerusalem: "You shall be chastised with toil and scourge, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from you, lest I make you an impassable land, which shall not be inhabited. For when our God removes virtue, abominable and unholy passions will by all means rush into the mind and heart, and will dwell there like certain beasts, and the wild multitude of unclean spirits will also rush in with them. Because her stature is a cedar. This is the scornful city, that dwells in hope, that says in her heart, "I am, and there is none after me. How has she become a desolation, a pasture for beasts; everyone who passes through her will hiss and shake his hands.

As always choosing to be proud, and as arrogant and boastful, Nineveh is portrayed. And this was true, as she raised a most haughty brow against every nation and every power, and considered the strength of others to be of little worth at all. And the prophet Habakkuk also testified to this, saying of the king of the Assyrians, that "And he will revel among kings, and tyrants are his playthings, and he will mock every fortress. That the metropolis of the Chaldeans, then, was exceedingly haughty, and lifted up on high, and greatly tending toward insolence, he again makes clear, likening her to the stature of a cedar, and calling her scornful. And you may learn that this was said rightly and accurately from the words

of the Rabshakeh; who, when he had come into Judea, and then attacked those on the wall, prattled on about the highest glory. For he said, "Thus says the king: Let not Hezekiah deceive you with words, which will not be able to deliver you, and let not Hezekiah say to you that God will deliver you. and a little later, "Have the gods of the nations, each one, delivered his own land from the hand of the king of the Assyrians? This, then, is the scornful city, that dwells and says, "I am, and there is none after me.

Since, then, she loves to make such shameful and accursed arrogance a matter of glorious boasting, for this reason she will finally descend to such a state of misery, that it will be necessary to say of her, How have you become a desolation, a pasture for beasts; and the "how" would not be of one asking and wishing to learn, but rather of one marveling at the change beyond hope. For great and unexpected evils are not without wonder, and they are wont somehow to astound those who see them, or those who have learned of them. Thus also will everyone hiss at and will move his hands, striking them against each other, as I suppose, and applauding out of amazement, and sending forth a sound from his mouth, one with a hiss and rather indistinct. And through these things he depicts for us very well, as it were, one who is dumbfounded at unexpected calamities. "God therefore opposes the proud; and I say that the command is wise and worthy of acceptance, "Do not exalt yourself, lest you fall," and again, "He who makes his house high seeks destruction. For just as buildings raised to a great height and beyond measure are somehow more prone to shaking, and are afflicted with the greatest suspicion of collapsing upon themselves; so also the soul of a man, swelling up to arrogance with the vanity of his thoughts, is unsound and easily overturned and quick to fall.

But if indeed the matter were to be done against God, then at that point there is no support left. O the glorious and redeemed city, the dove. He immediately proceeds to the remembrance of the Jews, I mean of Jerusalem, which, since the Assyrians captured it, has paid the penalty. And the rest of the nations have also been punished for mocking the glory of God, and he grieves, as it were, for her who suffered things beyond hope, and for the incurable calamity he does not ascribe the causes to anyone else, but says that she herself has been her own solicitor. He laments therefore and says, O the glorious and redeemed city, the dove. For why, he says, have you become altogether most dishonored, pitiable and captive, you who were so brilliant and illustrious, who ruled over every nation, and conquered without toil those who resisted, ever harsh and hard to encounter for those wishing to lead out against you, fully equipped according to the law of war; you who were redeemed from the bondage of the Egyptians by many signs and wonders and who loosened your neck from their unbearable oppression; for whose sake rivers were changed into blood, and hail and darkness ravaged the land of the Egyptians, with whom the sea also took up arms, drowning the pursuers, and countless other memorable things happened besides these? O city, the dove, that is, the most beautiful. For the divinely-inspired scripture somehow always takes the bird as a symbol for beauty;

just as, for example, the bridegroom wished to dignify the bride depicted in the Song with the name of the dove, saying, "Arise, come, my neighbor, my beautiful one, my dove. And Jerusalem was exceedingly beautiful, because it was illumined by the divine law, and was seen to be distinguished by the glories of the priesthood, and to practice righteousness, and to worship the God who is by nature, and to perform the services to him. And this is a spiritual beauty. But you might also understand Jerusalem to have been called a dove in another way. For it is always the custom for the bird, even if someone should carry it very far away from its beloved nest, and then give it the opportunity to fly, to run back home again and be brought back to its own. which indeed we will find happened in the case of Jerusalem itself. For having piety from its forefathers, it went down to Egypt; but departing, as it were, from the worship of its fathers, it worshipped idols there; but it was called through Moses, and flew away, in a certain manner, from the error in Egypt, returning back to God. But what, he says, is the reason that the redeemed city was captured at all, and came under others again? She did not listen to a voice. For she heard God on Mount Sinai saying, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, nor any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth. But disregarding what was commanded, she foolishly slid into polytheistic error. Therefore, she did not listen to a voice, namely, the one that came to her on Mount Sinai; or rather, we shall take 'voice' to mean 'admonition'. She did not receive instruction. For treating with insolence the law that was a pedagogue and brought her to righteousness, she turned to "teachings, the commandments of men," and following her own opinions, outside has departed from the straight path, and has remained ignorant and without a share in the divine teachings. She has not trusted in the Lord. For when war was afflicting, and the contest was at hand, and dangers were hanging over, it was necessary for her to love and imitate the piety of her ancestors, and to trust in the one God who saves, she "called upon Egypt," according to what is written, "and they went to the Assyrians," and hired Syrians, that is, Arabians, almost dishonoring the divine power. And she has not drawn near to her God. We draw near to God through all reasonableness, and having chosen to do what is pleasing to him. and we draw near in another way, believing him alone to be by nature and in truth God and king of the universe and creator, and accepting no other at all besides him.

Her rulers within her are like roaring lions. He enumerates the accusations, and brings forward the reasons for which he has been rightly moved and inclined to anger, so that he might then appear to be punishing in justice the impious who have sunk to this point of wickedness, so that the matter has become somehow unbearable even for God himself. Therefore, he says, her rulers were like lions. And what do they do? When hunger whets them, and calls them to a desire for food, they run strongly around mountains and valleys, roaring terribly and discordantly; and if they should see anything suitable for food, as if thundering, they bring about such fear that it seems to be paralyzed, and as if bound by fetters, to await the devourer. And some of the leaders in Israel were doing this, threatening at times to inflict the death prescribed by the law for transgressors even on those who

had done nothing wrong, if they did not choose to do what was pleasing and dear to them, and they accuse others who yield, that is, those who are stepping away from their own possessions for the judges themselves. For he records such evils of theirs also through another prophet, saying; and this is Micah; ”They became ”those who devise troubles and work evil on their beds, ”and with the daylight they accomplished them, because they did not ”lift their hands to God.

And they coveted fields, ”and they plundered orphans, and oppressed houses, and ”they plundered a man and his house, a man and his ”inheritance. And in like manner do the inventors of heresies roar against those who have chosen to live in simple faith, and opening a mouth hateful to God, they almost devour those who know nothing, making them more ignorant, and instilling in them cold and perverted thoughts, and so telling them myths, and persuading them to think what is supposed by them to be right, so that those caught in their snares seem already to have perhaps died, and to differ little from senseless stones, to whom one might cry out, and very fittingly, ”Awake, you who are sleeping, and arise from the dead, ”and Christ will shine on you. But, as the blessed David says, ”God will break their teeth in their ”mouth, the Lord has shattered the molars of the lions. Her judges are like wolves of Arabia, they did not leave anything over for the morning. They say that the wolves in Arabia go beyond every beast in ferocity, and are exceedingly sick with insatiability for food, and are so swift in running as to easily escape every pursuer. For he said somewhere through another prophet concerning the horses from Babylon, ”swifter than the ”wolves of Arabia.

He therefore takes for the present the greediness of the wolves as a type of the judges, as if with whole mouth and insatiable teeth consuming those being judged, by demanding very many things and things beyond their means for the perversion of justice, and so that what is pleasing to the divine law might be impiously bent to what is pleasing to certain others. But it were better for them to understand that, as the writer of Proverbs says, ”For one who receives gifts in his bosom, his ways do not prosper. ”For gifts blind the eyes of the wise and ruin ”just words,” according to the it is written. For what at all is the excess from bribery? And how will shameful little gain profit those who love it? Rather, what loss would it not work for them? For blessed Paul is true in saying, ”But those who want to be rich fall into temp- ”tation and a snare and many foolish and ”harmful desires, which plunge men into ruin ”and destruction. ”A good name is therefore to be chosen rather than great ”riches,” and the saying is truly very wise and precise. Her prophets are spirit-bearing men, despisers. It is well said ”her” prophets here, because they have not become God’s, speaking perilously the things ”from their own heart and not from the mouth of the Lord,” according to what is written. But the saying speaks ironically, calling them spirit-bearers;

not as if they had truly been partakers of the Holy Spirit, but as daring to feign the business of prophecy, and not hesitating to say that they are full of the Holy Spirit. Wishing therefore to be, he says, both prophets and spirit-bearers, and thus fashioning the august name around their own heads, they have become so contemptuous as not even to know what mod-

eration is, but also to destroy others to whom they spoke things from the heart, and this, the wretches, for some small and most worthless gains, and as the prophet Ezekiel says, ”for a handful of barley and ”a piece of bread. And to this they have slid into madness, so as to say that their own counsels are those of the ineffable glory, and to insist that the words bubbling forth from their own opinion are divine oracles. And so He said of them through the voice of Jeremiah, ”I did not send the ”prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, ”yet they prophesied; and when the prophet himself cried out clearly and said, ”O Sovereign Lord, behold, ”their prophets prophesy to them and say, ‘You shall not see ”the sword, and there shall be no famine among you, for I will give truth and ”peace on the land and in this place;’” God of all all but cried out in response, saying, ”The prophets prophesy lies ”in My name; I did not send ”them, and I did not command them, and I did not speak to ”them;

for they prophesy to you false visions and divinations and omens ”and the preferences of their own heart. ”If they are prophets, and if the word of the Lord is in them, ”let them meet with Me. What is the chaff to the wheat? So ”are my words, says the Lord. Are not my words like a ”burning fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock? For the word from God reaches to the depth of the mind, and all but breaks the heart of the hearers; but cold and weak is the word from human counsel, such as was that of the unholy false prophets. Her priests profane the holy things and do violence to the law. Nor has the chosen race itself been found blameless, that is, the one from the tribe of Levi; for he says that they too profane the holy things and do violence to the law. For it is written, ”For the lips of a priest will guard judgment, and they will seek ”the law from his mouth. But as the Master of all says somewhere again, ”The priests did not say, ‘Where is ”the Lord?’” For not wishing to make the law clear to those who do not know it, nor indeed hastening to lead the people under their hand to what is pleasing to God, this, I think, is what it means to do violence to the law. And their offenses do not stop here; for he also says that they profane the holy things.

For the law through Moses has much observance concerning sacrifices and offerings, both when each should be offered and in what manner it must be completed; but they, as was likely, offered the sacrifices, but carelessly and negligently, not deigning to observe the proper time or the prescribed forms, but perhaps not even purified, nor indeed arrayed in their proper vestments and performing the sacred rites in an orderly manner, but dishonoring as something useless the so venerable and admirable liturgy. Therefore it must be guarded by those of the to the ministers of the Church, not to profane the holy things; and the manner of profanation is not one, but varied and many. For it is necessary to be purified in both soul and body, and to shake off every form of loathsome pleasure, and rather to be adorned with zeal for good works, remembering the words of the inspired Paul ”Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out ”the desire of the flesh. But the Lord is righteous in her midst, and He will not do wrong; morning by morning He will give His judgment, and not unto victory, injustice. The righteous is somehow always incompatible with the unrighteous, and the pure would not go together with the profane. ”For what ”communion

can light have with darkness? For such things are in conflict, and one might see them as far removed from friendship with one another.

Since, therefore, God who rules over all has loved righteousness and has not known injustice, how were the utterly wicked crimes of the Jews to prevail always, that is, to be carried through to the end, without being checked completely? And it seems somehow to be a kind of injustice, not to subject the sinner to penalties, and not to demand justice of one who has chosen to live wantonly and unholily, who has cared nothing for the laws, but has so inclined to injustice as to consider nothing better, and to make a brilliant boast of things for which it was fitting to be seen blushing. Since, therefore, the Lord is righteous in her midst and will not do wrong; for He would not tolerate those accustomed to do wrong; morning by morning He will execute His judgment, that is, at dawn and openly and as in the day at last, no longer holding back the things that come from His wrath, but bringing them into the open, and making them manifest, and, as it were, placing in sight the things that were foretold. For he will not allow injustice to run on to victory. And "unto victory" signifies unto complete victory, that is, to the uttermost. For when the impious have been punished, the way of injustice will certainly cease; for it no longer has those who practice it. It is necessary, therefore, for those who are truly sound of mind to consider that the Master loves justice, and would not tolerate those who sin unrestrainedly.

But if one should turn to repentance, and shed a tear over his own sins, he will meet with a most gentle one, and will ask for amnesty, and will escape the snares and the necessity of being punished. But if one should be unyielding, and have a mind difficult to change towards choosing what is more fitting, he will sit in his own failings, or rather he will be destroyed at last, and will be under the master's movement, because He does not tolerate sinners forever. In corruption I have torn down the proud, their corners have vanished; I will make their ways desolate altogether, so that no one passes through; their cities have failed, because there is no one and no inhabitant. For since, as I said, the priests were profaning the holy things, and some were acting impiously even against the law itself, "but the Lord is "righteous in her midst; morning by morning He will execute His judgment. And what is this? He tore down the proud in corruption, that is, He delivered the arrogant and insolent to destruction. For are they not arrogant, who are accustomed to fight against God, and who, as it were, set their own will against the ordinances given through Moses; and who have cared very little for the divine laws, but turn aside to what is excessively unbridled and say to the Lord, "Depart from me, I do not want to know Your ways"?

Then how could one doubt, if he is poor in spirit and humble in heart, according to what is written, that the one who is bright and well-reined and looking much to obedience is the one whom He deems worthy of His oversight? And indeed, through one of the holy prophets the God of all said, "And upon whom will I "look, but upon him who is humble and quiet and "who trembles at My words? Therefore, the arrogant race was torn down to destruction, and their corners also vanished. And by corners I think the walls are now meant, and the enclosures of the cities. For the corners are somehow always high, having very prominent

towers. It is therefore perhaps as if he were to say again, The cities among them will be bereft of walls. And in addition to these things, he threatened to make his ways desolate, clearly those of Israel, so that no one would pass through at all. And it seems to me that he wishes to indicate something of this sort: the law which he commanded through Moses, that if the feast of tabernacles were celebrated at the proper times, they were to go up to Jerusalem from all the land of the Jews, and fulfill the customary rites there.

Therefore, when the cities were shaken, those in them perished, then we say that the ways were made desolate, as no one was any longer coming through them, and especially for the purpose of fulfilling the feast appointed for them, as they had formerly done, speeding along. For the companies of the Jews have fallen into such misery that there are no feast-goers, nor can those who have barely been saved and have survived the war be in good spirits. And so the prophet Jeremiah made this matter a part of his laments, saying, "The ways of Zion mourn because there are none who come to the feast. But that the word is true, the text before us will again make clear to us; for it immediately adds, "The cities have failed, because there is no one and no inhabitant. "It is therefore a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. For when we provoke him by choosing to transgress, and this without restraint, then indeed, and very justly, being as it were entangled in the accusations of arrogance, we are dragged down to destruction, and we will be naked of the garment from above, and we will find our heart in ourselves as easily captured and unwalled, and in addition to these things, we will not find the ways of righteousness; but one who has chosen to follow the Lord's will, and who submits to him the tender neck of his soul, would easily turn away from such evils.

I said, "Surely you will fear me and receive instruction, and you will not be destroyed from her sight, all that I have executed upon her. That they would again be caught pouring out the things of wrath upon their own heads, he tries to teach. For He has often admonished, having commanded that it is necessary to live in the fear of God, and that it is fitting to receive instruction, that is, clearly, the instruction through the law and the prophets. For it was in this way, and not otherwise, that they could shake off wrath and ward off what had happened. But since Israel was unbending, hard, and intractable, he has fallen away from instruction, that is, he has become outside of being wise, and has been destroyed as if from her sight, although it was necessary to always linger among good instructions and to be ready for anything whatever that is pleasing to God. For in this way, he says, it was possible to turn aside all the things that I have executed upon her. Therefore, when we cast out the divine fear from our own mind, when we refuse instruction and consider being wise of little or no account at all, then we will surely suffer those things which would befit those who are accustomed to show contempt; then God will also take vengeance, and will demand an account for the acts of unholiness. It is necessary, then, to remember someone saying that "The fear of the Lord makes life.

"The fear of the Lord is glory and a boast. And it is also "pure," that is, purifying, "enduring forever and ever," according to the voice of the psalmist. Prepare, arise early, all their

gleaning has been destroyed. For since you did not receive, he says, instruction from me, but have rejected and hated both living in fear and in equity, prepare yourself for flight and to suffer now the things which it was possible to escape, if you had been a lover of virtue and wise. And indeed he commanded to rise early, showing that the time of the calamity was at the gates, and as it were coming tomorrow, and that it would certainly be present at the beginning of dawn. And this was to cut off the hope of postponement, and not allowing them to think that there will be some truce and delay and that a long time will pass in between, perhaps passing on the things of wrath to their descendants. Therefore, as for a necessary matter, prepare yourself and rise early for flight. For you will go as a captive to your enemies, and having left the land that bore you, you will be miserable among others. Then the God of all says to the Prophet, all but scowling at those who have been captured: all the gleaning has been destroyed of them. What this might also mean, we will say as we can.

The tyrants of the Babylonians have sacked Samaria and other cities of Judea besides, first Pul, then after him Shalmaneser, and third Sennacherib. And just as if having harvested a vineyard, they returned again to their own land, leaving Israel with very few remnants, and as it were having left them only a gleaning. We say a gleaning is the small clusters of grapes, consisting of a few berries, which, being hidden in the leaves, often escape the eye of the one gathering. And another of the holy prophets says something like this: ”Woe is me, my soul, for I have become as one gathering stubble in the harvest, and as a gleaning in the vintage, there being no cluster to eat the first-ripe fruit. Therefore they indeed harvested, but Nebuchadnezzar, having arrived after them, destroyed even the gleaning itself, and having gleaned the small remnant of Israel, he returned home, and continued boasting greatly. And so the prophet Jeremiah lamented captured Jerusalem, saying of those who had laid it waste, ”Let all their wickedness come before thy face; and glean them as they have gleaned me; and again, ”Behold, O Lord, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat the fruit of their womb? The cook has made a gleaning.

Whenever, therefore, we provoke God, then deprived of all help and stripped of mercy, we will be given over to our enemies, and no remnant of virtue or goodness will remain in us, as Satan gleans all that is good in us, and as it were gathering up a gleaning, perhaps even the very desires in the mind that lead it to choose to practice virtue. Therefore wait for me, says the Lord, until the day of my resurrection for a testimony. For since, having disregarded the divine commandments, they have been given over to their enemies, and have fallen into the hand of him who destroyed even the gleaning itself, he commands them now to wait and to endure, suffering their servitude with strength, until he should be roused to help them, which help he, through the holy prophets, almost testified to and clearly foretold, that it would be in due season. Therefore, ”the day of resurrection for a testimony” signifies the time of help, which he testified beforehand would surely come. And this is the historical account; but we say that the contemplation of the preceding things has turned out to be a declaration of the mystery concerning Christ, and that it intends to make clear the time of redemption, that which is universal and most general, that is, the one through Christ.

For long ago, when the seventy years were completed, the God of all was raised up for the help of those who had suffered those things, but in the last times of the age the Only-begotten became man, not only to deliver Israel, but so that, leading away all the nations from slavery under the devil, he might declare them free, and release them from corruption and filth and sin, and above all else from worshipping creation rather than the creator. And since he became man, "He endured the cross, despising the shame," so that by his own blood he might acquire for God the Father both those still living, and those whom "death had already swallowed up," according to what is written. "For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. Reasonably, therefore, was it said to the ancients, Therefore wait for me, says the Lord, until the day of my resurrection for a testimony. and Christ's coming back to life is like a testimony that death has been abolished, with whom we ourselves have also been raised, justified through faith, and escaping together with death the mother of death, sin. Because my judgment is for the gatherings of nations, to receive kings, to pour out upon them all the wrath of my anger; because in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed.

To those of the Chaldeans He threatens the nations with devastation, that which came about through Cyrus and all who were his fellow soldiers and invaded with him, overrunning the cities of the Babylonians and having a most dreadful assault against all. Therefore, He says, My judgment will be for the assembly of nations, so as to receive kings; it is clear that He means those named; to punish through them also the assemblies of nations, which were very much defeated by their hand and strength, and enduring every kind of cruelty; for I will pour out upon them, He says, all the anger of My wrath. For it is true that God does not punish great and excessive transgressions with moderate movements; but for whatever transgressions one might be caught, He always brings punishments of equal weight. And that the affairs of the Chaldeans were about to be almost utterly burned, He made clear by saying, For in the fire of My jealousy all the earth shall be consumed. And what kind of jealousy, or over whom at all, the prophet Zechariah will clarify by saying, "Thus says the Lord Almighty: I have been jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, and with great anger I am angry against the nations that are at ease; for whereas I was but a little angry, they furthered the disaster. Thus indeed we will approach the preceding things historically; but they might also be understood otherwise, with the contemplations transferred to the mystery of Christ.

For He said, through what has already been read before, Therefore wait for Me, says the Lord, for the day of My resurrection as a testimony; because My judgment is for the assemblies of nations, to receive kings, to pour out upon them all the anger of My wrath. For Christ rose again, having despoiled Hades, since it was not possible, being Life by nature, for Him to be held by death, according to what is written. Indeed, He did not leave under the hands of the devil those who were accepting faith in Him; but He makes a holy and God-befitting judgment upon the assemblies of nations, that is, the herds of demons, and those very ones who once held power and reigned over the lost, as it were receiving and shutting them up, and casting them into the lowest abyss, that is, into Hades, and pouring out all His

wrath upon them, and almost consuming them with fire, by His ineffable and divine power, moved by great jealousy. For He Himself was angry a little, because of the transgression in Adam; ”but they furthered the disaster,” at once turning all under heaven away from God, and stifling the mind of those under their hand with the wages of sin. Therefore the Word of God was jealous for the spiritual Zion, that is, the Church. For He delivered her, and He Himself ”presented her to Himself,” as the blessed Paul writes, ”not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but rather holy and blameless.

For then I will turn to the peoples a language for its generation, that all may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him under one yoke. From the ends of the rivers of Ethiopia they will bring sacrifices to Me. He says, that when that of the Babylonians has been ravaged, and the arrogant have been cast down in destruction, the nations will recognize the power of God that shakes them. And those who once laughed at Israel falling and perishing, when they see him going home brilliantly, and returning again to the holy city, while those who formerly ravaged him have utterly perished, then they will change their tongue and will henceforth dedicate it to praises for God, although they formerly shook their heads, thinking and saying that Judea was captured, because the tyrant of the Babylonians perhaps prevailed over the one helping them, that is, God. When therefore they see the turn of events to the opposite, then they will convert their tongues according to their generations, that is, according to tribes and races, to doxologies to God; and they would choose, I think, to serve under one yoke, and to offer sacrifices, even if they were situated far away in the position of their countries, and inhabited the lands of the Ethiopians. And let these things, for now, be said again concerning the letter; but we say that the has come to pass A word concerning the times of the visitation, and he sets forth a clear sign of the change of tongues.

for it is written in the Acts of the holy Apostles, that during the days of the holy Pentecost they were all gathered together ”in one place, and behold, there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting, and behold, there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and it sat upon each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. At that time, therefore, he says, I will change the tongue for the peoples. For they all heard them speaking ”in his own language,” ”Parthians and Medes and Elamites,” and the other nations. But observe the careful wording. For he said he would change the tongue for its generation, that is, remaining thus with those who once spoke until the end of their life, or generation. For the sign came to them, on whom the sacred writing also said the tongues rested; for this reason he says that I will change the tongue for its generation. For this thing has not happened again to those after them. For what reason, let the wise Paul teach us. For he said that ”Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers. For it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet for all that they will not believe.

In what way, then, is it profitable, that the tongue be changed for its generation, he himself again clarifies for us, saying That all may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him

under one yoke, from the ends of the rivers of Ethiopia they shall bring sacrifices to me. For since they saw the Apostles speaking with other tongues, holding the strange event in no small wonder, they have believed in Christ, and many and innumerable of those at that time called upon the name of the one who is by nature and truly God; they submitted their neck to the evangelical decrees; they have served Christ. And they offer sacrifices from the ends of the rivers of Ethiopia. And the race of the Ethiopians extends from east to west, and they drink from the Gihon; "For it is the one that encompasses the whole land of Ethiopia. And so the word finally arrives at the truth of the prophecy. For not only in the land of the Romans has the Gospel been preached, but it also now goes about among the barbarian nations. And indeed there are churches everywhere, shepherds and teachers, guides and mystagogues and divine altars, and the lamb is sacrificed spiritually by the holy ministers both among Indians and Ethiopians. And this was what was clearly spoken through the voice of another prophet, "For I am a great King, says the Lord;

and because my name has been glorified among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name and a pure offering. In that day you shall not be ashamed of all your practices in which you acted impiously against me; for then I will take away from you the vileness of your arrogance, and you shall no longer presume to boast upon my holy mountain. The God of all speaks again to two persons at the same time. But it is necessary, I think, to apply a subtle mind to what is being said, for thus we will find the contemplation within them unconfused. Therefore he promises an amnesty for transgressions, and the forgiveness of past offenses to those of Israel, affirming and saying that they would no longer be ashamed because of their practices and the impieties formerly committed against God; but he threatens, as it were, the Babylonian and says that he would no longer be proud, having ravaged the holy city dedicated to him, that is, Zion, which he also calls a mountain. For after the return, I mean from the captivity, Jerusalem remained unravaged, and henceforth inexperienced still of the inhumanity of the Babylonians. That at the time of the visitation an amnesty and forgiveness has come to all who have believed, no one would doubt. For we have been justified "not because of works of righteousness "which we have done, but according to his great mercy. And we have been delivered from shame;

for he who honored faith said somewhere to us, "Do not fear, because you were put to shame; "nor be confounded, because you were reproached. For he has restored us to confidence, who for our sake was among the dead, and for our sake is in heaven, in the sight of the Father. For Christ ascended as a forerunner for us, "now to appear in the presence of God. Therefore he has removed the accusations of all, and has delivered believers from the shame and disgrace of their offenses. And it has been said by him to Satan, who long held sway, That I will take away from you the vileness of your insolence, and you shall no more boast upon my holy mountain. For he will no longer despise those on earth, as being very sick with weakness, nor will he insult the sanctified, easily shaking them to what seems good to him. For the old things have passed away, and nature has passed over into a newness of things, Christ reconstituting them for this, making what was sick quite strong, strengthening for piety what was susceptible to sins, and making firm what was shaken. Therefore the vileness of

insolence, that is, of the devil, has been removed, and he will no longer think great things against the holy mountain, that is, the spiritual Zion, "which is the church of the living God. For it has been founded on the "rock; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail "against it.

And the prophet Isaiah also called the Church a mountain for us, saying, "That in the last "days the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, and the house of God "on the tops of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the "hills, and all the nations shall come to it, and many nations "shall go and say, Come, let us go up to "the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob, and "he will declare to us his way, and we will walk in "it. And I will leave in you a meek and humble people, and the remnant of Israel shall be in awe of the name of the Lord, and they shall not do injustice, nor shall they speak vain things, and a deceitful tongue shall not be found in their mouth. He speaks again to Zion, that is, the holy city, I mean Jerusalem, in which he also promises that a most meek and humble people will be left. For the Synagogue of the Jews acted insolently toward the Savior of all, Christ, and was revealed as the slayer of the Lord, and it pays the penalties for this, but not all of it has perished; for the remnant has been kept and the remainder has been saved. For no small number of them have believed.

And these were the meek, not staking themselves out for the angers against Christ, just as indeed those who then brought him to Pilate, crying out and saying, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him; and adding to this, "If you do not kill this man, you are not "a friend of Caesar. For what could be more harsh than such things, or what more savage in anger? They who, having drawn even the righteous blood upon their own heads, said without concern, "His blood be on us and "on our children. Meek then is the people, that has not partaken of their savagery; and humble again, in that it is subject to Christ, and has submitted the necks of its mind to the yokes under him, and has obeyed most gladly out of love him who says, "Come to me, all you who labor and "are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke "upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and "humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Therefore, they are conformed in this also to Christ, who for our sakes became poor, and not only that but also disregarded God-befitting glory and natural preeminence, in order to undergo the measure of servitude according to the economy. Therefore, those who are instructed by his laws are humble-minded according to him. These also will be in awe of the name of the Lord.

For they have become of the very of the most God-contemplative, and before all others, the divine disciples, who have also been set as a light of the world. But the God-loving and good, he says, will renounce injustice and idle speech; for they will not speak vain things; and a tongue that is not true; for this is the deceitful one. But this is a spiritual adornment, and like a crown very distinguished indeed for the boasts that come from virtues. For where there is gentleness and humility, and indeed a longing for justice, and a tongue that has unlearned idle talk, and is least of all given to sinful speech, but is rather upright and a worker of truth, there, surely, has virtue appeared bright and most perfect. Such would be fitting for those in Christ; because the beauty of piety is not seen in law, but rather flashes

forth as in the power of evangelical instruction. Because they themselves will pasture and lie down, and there will be no one to make them afraid. For of old the flocks of the Jews were tended inactively by the scribes and Pharisees. for they had been appointed by the law to lead the peoples, because they had been honored with the dignities of the priesthood. therefore, they were indeed shepherds, but hirelings nonetheless, and as if set over the livestock of others, they saw the wolf coming, and left the sheep, according to the voice of the Savior.

But that they were very unsparing of the rational livestock and abandoned them to wild beasts, they would be caught, or rather having become wolves themselves, one could easily perceive from the things spoken through the voice of the prophets. For one said, as from the person of God, "O shepherds, "who scatter and destroy the sheep of their pasture," and another again "Thus says the Lord Lord, O "shepherds of Israel, do the shepherds feed themselves? Do not "the shepherds feed the sheep? behold, you eat the milk "and clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the fat one, "and you do not feed my sheep. The weak you have not "strengthened, and the broken you have not bound up, and the "wandering you have not brought back, and the lost you have not "sought, and the strong you have worn down with toil; and "my sheep were scattered because there were no shepherds, and "they became food for all the beasts of the field and "for the birds of the sky; and he says somewhere to the shepherds themselves "Feed the sheep for slaughter, which "their possessors slaughtered, and did not repent; and those "who sold them said, Blessed be the Lord, for we have become "rich. Therefore the shepherds were destroying the flocks of the rational livestock, not needing wild beasts, but rather themselves imitating the ways of wild beasts.

But when at last Christ shone forth, the good shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep, we have been pastured in gardens, and have been fed among the lilies, according to what is written; and we have lain down in pens; for we have been sheltered in churches and holy temples, with no one terrifying and snatching us away, no wolf leaping upon us, no lion trampling us, no thief digging through, no one coming upon us any longer, "to steal and kill and destroy. but we continue rather in safety and security, and in participation of every good thing, having him as our overseer, the Savior of all, I mean Christ. And this God the Father made clear to us through the voice of Ezekiel, saying "Thus "says the Lord, I will save my sheep, and I will judge "between ram and ram, and I will raise up over them "one shepherd, my servant David, and he will be their "shepherd. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, proclaim, O daughter of Jerusalem, be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord has taken away your iniquities, he has redeemed you from the hand of your enemies; the Lord will reign in your midst, you will not see evil any more. Insofar as it pertains to the historical account, it clearly promises peace to them after the return from Babylon, when their ancient accusations were forgotten, God promises both to be with them and to defend them;

but insofar as it pertains to the innermost meaning, both to rejoice greatly, and to be exceedingly glad, and indeed also with all He has commanded the heart to rejoice necessarily, since its sins have been taken away, that is, through Christ. For the spiritual and holy Zion has been justified, that is, the Church, or the holy multitude of those who have believed, in Christ indeed and alone, and we have been saved through Him and from Him, escaping the harm of the invisible enemies, and having in our midst Him who has appeared in a form like ours, the king and God of all, that is, the Word from God the Father; through whom we have no longer seen evils, that is, we have been delivered from everything that has the power to do evil. For he is the weapon of good pleasure, the peace, the wall, the bestower of incorruption, the giver of crowns, the one who drives out the war of the spiritual Assyrians, and lightens the plots of the demons; the one who gives us "to tread "upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the "enemy," through whom we have stepped on the asp and the basilisk, and we trample on the lion and the dragon; through whom we have come to have good hopes of incorruption and life, of adoption and of glory; through whom we shall no longer see evils. In that time the Lord will say to Jerusalem, "Be of good courage, Zion, let not your hands be slack.

The Lord your God is in you; the Mighty One will save you. He will bring joy upon you, and He will renew you in His love, and He will rejoice over you with delight as on a day of festival; and I will gather your broken ones. Clear, then, is the proclamation that we must be of good courage; and He who promised is true; and we have heard this from Christ Himself speaking, as if renewing the ancient oracle, or rather, placing before our eyes what had been promised. For He said, "In the world you will have tribulation; but "be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. For when He was "in "our midst," then we no longer had slack hands, nor paralyzed knees; but we have rather been turned to works and labors for good accomplishments and of which it is said and is the "glorious fruit; then we have also taken courage, because Christ in us, being all-powerful as God, rescues and saves those who believe in Him; for He has dwelt in our hearts through the Spirit, and He has brought upon us this spiritual, that is, and precious joy. For what else could it be to partake of the Holy Spirit, than delight and joy and every kind of gladness?

When, therefore, He brought upon us gladness through the Spirit, then He also renewed us in His love, that is, at the time of His advent in the flesh, when "one died for all," truthfully saying, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone "lay down his life for his friends. And since He laid down His life, and was among the dead for our sake, being life by nature, He lived again, reforming the nature of man to newness of life, and reforging it to its original state. "For if anyone," he says, "is in Christ, he is a new creation. For God the Father was pleased, in Him "to sum up all things," according to what is written. But that which is summed up is in a way taken up again and, as it were, brought back to its original state. And since He renewed us, then Christ also rejoiced over us, as with delight, and as on a day of festival; for how could the divine not be gladdened by our affairs, when we have been delivered from sin, and have become superior to death and corruption, and are in participation of the Spirit and of sanctification. Then He also gathered the broken ones.

For as the wise Paul writes, ”Christ came into the world to save sinners; and He Himself somewhere says, ”I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to ”repentance.

Therefore, Christ gathered those whom Satan, having crushed through sin, had rendered slack, and who knew not how to walk uprightly, nor to go on the paths of righteousness; but though he crushed them, Christ bound them up. For He has healed the sick, and ”He Himself takes ”away our infirmities,” according to what is written. Woe, who has received reproach against her? That of the Savior the cross raised for the life and incorruptibility of the world, we who have chosen to think rightly will affirm to be the boast of the Church; and the most wise Paul himself confesses, having written thus: ”But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of Christ, ”by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Yet he himself said again that the cross has become ”a stumbling block to Jews ”and foolishness to Gentiles. For the wretched ones laugh broadly, being completely ignorant of the power of the mystery; but they will not be outside of justice; how could they be? Nor indeed will they laugh back at Christ, that is, at the churches; but in due time they will be food for untamed fire, and the work of a long and unquenchable flame. For some among the Greeks have arrived at such a point of madness and foolishness of mind as to sharpen a licentious tongue against the divine and evangelical proclamation, and to leave behind their denunciation written in books;

so that not only might their sins go before them to judgment, but might even follow them when they are dead, on account of having left behind their sin as if it were a living thing. He therefore deems wretched, and very rightly so, those who have received reproach against the holy Church, to whom the 'Woe' would indeed very fittingly apply. Behold, I am doing in you for your sake in that time, says the Lord, and I will save her that was oppressed, and her that was cast off I will receive, and I will make them a praise and renowned in all the earth. And they shall be ashamed in that time, when I shall do well by you, and in the time when I shall receive you. Again the discourse has turned to the person of Zion, and it promises the things wonderfully accomplished through Christ, concerning both the flocks from the Gentiles and the rejected Israel. For he says, ”in you for your sake I will do [it]. For since some were carried away by greed into drunkenness, while others were ignorant of the God who became man for the salvation of all, the Creator of all lavishes his mercy on both, and for our sake has worked wonders in us. For she who was oppressed has been saved, that is, the multitude of the deceived, once afflicted, and brought to such a point of misery by the oppressing Satan as to lose all vital moisture; for a wandering mind is dead;

and she who was cast off, the Synagogue of the Jews, will also be received. For she had behaved insolently toward Christ; for this reason she was justly sent away, and had slipped from hope, and was estranged from intimacy with Christ; yet she too has been shown mercy; for she will be called to repentance and to purification through faith in the last times of the age. They will therefore be a boast and renowned and as far as possible from shame. And who are they, but that by all means the two peoples are no longer divided, and holding incompatible opinions with one another, and parted into different beliefs concerning God,

as they were of old; but rather tightly bound by the unity that is through the Spirit to one mind and one faith. For it is written that "Of the multitude of believers, "the heart and soul were one. And Christ also created "the two peoples into one new man, "making peace, and reconciling both in one "Spirit," as it is written. If, then, they become objects of emulation, then he says the enemies will surely be put to shame, being astonished at the greatness of the glory given, and the unshakeable nature of their prosperity, and the steadfastness of their hope. And one might see the promise to be true already from the events themselves. For the Church of Christ has been glorified, and being full of splendid boasts is admired by all. Yet he also defines the time in which such things will happen;

for he says, "in the time when I receive you. For the things that come after faith do not come before faith, but rather would reasonably be understood to come after it. We have been called, therefore, in the times of the economy in the flesh of the Only-Begotten. For then, indeed, then the fulfillment of the promise came to pass in truth. Because I will make you renowned and a boast among all the peoples of the earth, when I turn back your captivity of you before you, says the Lord. He recapitulates in a way the purpose of the God-befitting munificence, and in what things the believers will surely be, through these He clearly shows us. For He says they will be renowned, and within splendid boasts, and in better things than every nation. And again He adds at what times such things will be, everywhere mindful of the economy in the flesh of the Only-Begotten, when, as I just said, the manifestation of every good thing, and whatever of the things marveled at, has come forth to us. For then, then He paradoxically delivered those acting under the devil's hand and yoked to the passions of the flesh; then He freed them from polytheistic error and transferred them to the truth; then He delivered them from the bonds of death, giving Himself as a ransom for us, and acquiring for God the Father the world under heaven.

For we have been called through Him, and we have been enriched with access and intimacy in the Spirit through Him, I mean Christ, through whom and with whom to God the Father be the glory, with the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages, Amen.

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.