Commentary on Romans (part 2 of 2)

Origen of Alexandria (c. AD 185–253)

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Commentary on Romans — Book 7

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BOOK 7

[§1] Just as we have shown that in this Epistle diverse laws are mentioned by Paul under the single word "law," and that diverse deaths are named under the one designation "death," so now we also see diverse spirits indicated under the one name of "Spirit. He says, then, in the present chapter: "For whoever are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God"; and in this he certainly means the very Spirit of God. And again in what follows: "For you have not received," he says, "the spirit of bondage again in fear. In this he shows that the spirit of bondage is other than that which he called above the Spirit of God. And therefore he adds: "But you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, in which we cry: Abba, Father. In this he shows that the spirit of adoption is the same as that which he called above the Spirit of God, concerning which he also repeats: "For the Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit" — that is, the very Spirit of God, in which we cry out to God as Father, bears witness to our spirit. And this spirit of ours is without doubt other than either that spirit of bondage which is given in fear, or this one which bears witness to it concerning the invocation of the Father. All human beings, therefore, as it appears, are led by some spirit, just as Paul himself wrote:

"But you also know that, when you were Gentiles, how you were led to mute idols. In this he shows that even the Gentiles are led to idols by some spirit. There is, then, the Spirit of God, who is the same as the Spirit of Christ, and this same one is also the Holy Spirit. But the spirit of adoption too seems to be called the same, as the present apostolic discourse declares. David also, who says, "Take not your Holy Spirit from me," and, "Strengthen me with your principal Spirit," seems to be speaking of the same one; and I think that Spirit was called "principal" for this reason, that it might be shown that there are indeed many spirits, but that among

them this Holy Spirit — who is also called ”principal” — holds the primacy and dominion. For just as there are many sons of God, as the Scripture says, ”I have said: You are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High,” yet there is one who is by nature Son and Only-begotten of the Father, through whom all the others are called sons, so also there are indeed many spirits, but there is one who truly proceeds from God himself, and who bestows on all the rest the grace of his own name and sanctification. And that there are many spirits, the same Apostle declares, writing to the Hebrews and saying: ”Are they not all ministering spirits, sent for service on account of those who receive the inheritance of salvation?

But David too says: ”Who makes his angels spirits. And Daniel likewise bears witness and says: ”Bless the Lord, you spirits and souls of the just. And in the present passage Paul says, ”The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit”; and in another place: ”That your spirit whole and entire, and soul, and body may be preserved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no doubt that all these things are said of rational spirits. Besides these, evil spirits and evil angels are named, as David also says: ”He sent forth upon them the wrath of his indignation, a sending forth by evil angels”; and as it is written of Saul in the books of Kingdoms: ”And the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord choked him”; and as it is reported in the book of Judges: ”And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem. This evil spirit, then, who is said either to have gone forth to choke Saul, or to set Abimelech and the Shechemites at odds, and is recorded to have gone forth and been sent from the Lord, is to be understood as a kind of executioner sent to exact punishments from sinners.

And although they are called evil on account of their own purpose and will, nevertheless in the case of those who are worthy of punishment they render service to the divine will — like that lying spirit of whom the prophet Micaiah reports, who, when it had been said by God, ”Who will seduce Ahab for me? answered: ”I will seduce him. And the Lord said: By what means? And he said: I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets,” and I will say that he should go up to Gilead, and there he will fall. ”And the Lord said: Go; you shall seduce him, and indeed you shall prevail. Thus, then, even those who are called evil spirits perform a service for God in the matter of punishments. There are besides other spirits also, of whom David says: ”With a violent wind you shall shatter the ships of Tarshish”; and there are said to be ”spirits of the tempest” and ”a spirit of burning heat. These, however, I should call material rather than rational spirits.

[§2] Having therefore first set out such a distinction concerning the term ”spirit,” let us now see what the meaning is of what he said: ”For you have not received the spirit of servitude again in fear, but you have received the spirit of the adoption of sons, in which we cry: Abba [Father]. It is written also in the prophet Malachi: ”A son honors his father, and a servant his master: and if I am a Father, where is

my honor? and if I am a Lord, where is my fear? says the Lord almighty. But it is certain that a person becomes a son of God through the spirit of adoption, and a servant of God through the spirit of servitude. The beginning, therefore, of serving God — since ”the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord” — is fulfilled through the spirit of fear, while one is still called a little child. And for little children fear is indeed a tutor. Whence the Apostle also says concerning such a little child: ”As long as the heir is a little child, he differs in nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but he is under guardians and stewards until the time predetermined by the father; so also we, when we were little children, were in servitude under the elements of this world.

You see how Paul, according to the wisdom granted him by God, has here called the spirits that are given in fear the guardians and stewards of little children — spirits which keep each one of us, so long as he is a little child, in fear according to the inner man, until he comes to that age at which he may deserve to receive the spirit of the adoption of sons, and may now be a son and lord of all. ”For all things,” he says, ”are yours,” and together with Christ God has given us all things. This, then, is what Paul teaches: that after we have died together with Christ, and his Spirit has come to be in us, we have not again received the spirit of servitude in fear — that is, we have not once more been made little children and beginners, but as men already perfected we have received once for all the spirit of adoption, ”in which” spirit ”we cry: Abba, Father. For no one calls him father except a son. But as for his adding ”Abba,” he repeated the very same thing in the vocabulary of his native tongue, as if he had said: Father, father.

[§3] ”For the Spirit himself renders testimony to our spirit, that we are sons of God. But if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, but coheirs of Christ: if however we suffer together with him, that we may also be glorified together with him. Therefore the spirit of adoption itself, through which a person is adopted into sonship, renders testimony and confirms to our spirit that we are sons of God, after we have passed from the spirit of servitude into the spirit of adoption, when now there is nothing of fear within, that is, when we do nothing on account of dread of punishment, but accomplish all things on account of love of the Father. And it is well said that the Spirit of God renders testimony not to the soul, but to the spirit, which is the better part in man. But for the distinction between those who are led by the spirit of servitude in fear and those who are led by the spirit of sons, this too may be taken up: that Abraham gave his inheritance indeed to Isaac, but to the sons of the handmaids or concubines he is said to have given not an inheritance but gifts or presents. In which without doubt this is foreshadowed: that not even those are utterly despised who still serve God in fear, but for them there are gifts and there are presents; the inheritance, however, through which they are glorified together with Christ, belongs to those who deserve to receive the spirit of adoption.

After this the Apostle now weaves a syllogism from what follows, and says: If we have received the spirit of adoption, then we are sons. But if we are sons, without doubt we are also heirs. For a servant awaits wages, a son hopes for an inheritance. And again he adds another enlargement of the conclusion: ”Heirs indeed of God, but coheirs of Christ. One becomes an heir of God when he deserves to receive the things that are God’s, that is, the glory of incorruption and immortality, the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge; but a coheir of Christ when ”he will transform the body of our lowliness to be conformed to the body of his brightness,” and also when he has deserved to obtain that which the Savior himself says: ”Father, I will that where I am, these also may be with me. There is besides that dignity too of the coheirs of Christ, that the Father indeed ”has given all judgment to the Son. But the Son also says to his coheirs: ”You also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And in this way Christ brings his coheirs not only into a share of the inheritance, but even into a partnership of power. ”If however,” he says, ”we suffer together with him, that we may also be glorified together with him. He suffers together with Christ who says: ”I have been crucified together with Christ”; and: ”But I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me”; and again he who says:

”If we have died together with him, we shall also live together with him; if we endure together, we shall also reign together”; or also he who is able to say that ”what was lacking of the sufferings of Christ, I fill up in my body. And just as God supremely exalted Christ, because he had humbled ”himself, made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and gave him a name which is above every name,” so also those who suffer together with Christ, and imitate the example of his sufferings, God exalts with him in glory. For this is the way which Christ opened to his coheirs, that they should be exalted neither from strength nor from wisdom, but from humility, and should attain the eternal glory of the inheritance from patience under tribulations. 4. ”For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come which shall be revealed in us. For the expectation of the creature awaits the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willing it, but on account of him who subjected it in hope: because the creature itself also shall be freed from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. For we know that every creature groans together and grieves together even until now.

If anyone should consider that, in exchange for a person’s being made a son of the most high God, and an heir of his goodness and glory, and a coheir of Christ the only-begotten Son of God, even if he should remain without complaint in the observance of all the commandments and the justifications of the Lord, and should persevere in these with ever-watchful mind; if also he should endure all kinds of punishments which can be inflicted on human nature from within or from without; or even if someone should so endure the things which are recorded as having been

written concerning Job, where Satan destroyed not only those things which seemed to be outside himself, in his goods and his children, but even touched his very bones and flesh, and struck him with a most grievous wound from his feet to his head, so that, taking a potsherd, he scraped off the pus flowing from his sores — if, I say, there can be still heavier things than these which he endures who in this most brief life suffers tribulation in all things, who is tormented in soul and body, and if he compares these things with the future glory which ”shall be revealed” in the saints, and with those things which ”eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it ascended into the heart of man” — he can understand how Paul, considering these matters more deeply, says:

”For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the future glory which shall be revealed in us. For nothing worthy can be found or compared to the future glory. For in what respect would you compare mortal things with immortal? or visible with invisible? or temporal with eternal? or perishable with everlasting? If, however, there are certain things in the present life which can be gathered as, so to speak, seeds of the future glory, these seeds, I say, are gathered from tribulations and sufferings, as the same Apostle also says in another place: ”For that which in the present is momentary and light in our tribulation works for us beyond measure an immense weight of eternal glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For by these words he shows that he who looks at those things which are not seen, and which are eternal, counts every tribulation, of whatever kind it may befall him — however savage, however long it may seem — as momentary and light:

even if he be subjected to torments, and goads, and iron claws, at that very time when his body is fixed under punishments, if he looks to the future glory which is to be revealed, and considers how after such great torments this body of his lowliness will be transformed, so that it may become conformed to the body of the glory of the Son of God, he counts the present tribulation momentary and light; but the weight of the future glory he reckons heavy, that is, great, and eternal: and the more he sees the penalties of tribulations multiplied for himself, the more fully he understands that a weight and magnitude of glory is being heaped up for him. And that from the quantity of tribulations a certain measure and magnitude of glory is gathered, I think the prophet David also indicates when he says: ”According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, your consolations have gladdened my soul. Whence I think that in the present life the consolation which is given to the just is given according to the measure of their torments and wounds; but the future glory, of which the Apostle says that it ”shall be revealed in us,” is not according to the measure of the sufferings: ”for the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the future glory which shall be revealed” in the saints;

but, as we quoted from what was said to the Corinthians, from the momentary and light labor of our tribulations certain seeds gathered will prepare for us beyond measure an immense weight of eternal glory.

That divine consolation is truly bestowed upon the just even in the present life according to the measure of their sufferings, the same Apostle confirms when he writes in the second letter to the Corinthians: ”For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also does our consolation abound. And he did not say: It abounds beyond measure, or immeasurably; but rather, as great as the sufferings are, so great also are the consolations. But as to what he says, ”in comparison with the glory to come, which shall be revealed in us,” I think that above we have already shown sufficiently concerning the difference of glories — what that glory is which has already been revealed, and what that is which is yet to be revealed; and how the things which we now see, ”we see through a glass and in a riddle, but then,” when the Son of Man shall have come in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels, ”we shall see face to face,” just as John also said: ”For we shall see him as he is. But that too may be regarded as the glory which is to be revealed, when the account of each and every one of the principles of the world, or of those things which are above the world, shall begin to be known as doctrine, and the treasures of his wisdom and knowledge shall be revealed. After these things he says: ”For the expectation of the creature awaits the revelation of the sons of God.

Wishing to show how great and of what sort is the glory which is to be revealed in himself, or in those who shall have sweated out to the full the contests of Christ, the Apostle says that the creature also, inasmuch as it is rational, has a certain expectation, and bears a hope of that time in which the glory of the sons of God is to be revealed — that is, when those things shall be revealed which have been prepared for those who shall have deserved to be sons of God, or certainly when, the veil being taken away by which they are covered, they themselves shall have been made manifest as being sons of God. But what is the creature which awaits the revelation of the sons of God? That, he says, which now ”is made subject to vanity”; and it is made subject ”not willingly,” nor of its own accord, but by the will of him who dispenses all things. Therefore it has been made subject on his account; yet made subject not on this condition, that it should remain forever subject to vanity, but with a certain hope. And what that hope is, he recalls, saying: ”Because the creature itself also,” he says, ”shall be freed from the servitude of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God.

Now Paul says that he and those like him know ”that every creature groans together and suffers pain together until now,” or, as it is found in other copies, ”groans together and is in travail until now. But to groan together and to suffer together is to groan or grieve along with another who grieves or groans — that is, when one has himself no cause for groaning or grieving, yet he groans on behalf of him who

has cause for groaning or grieving. And he says that the creature does these things because it has been made subject to vanity and has been placed in the servitude of corruption. Let these things stand as expounded, so far as pertains to the order of the apostolic discourse itself. [Now, taking up the matter again, let us examine more attentively what that vanity is to which the creature is said to be made subject, and what that corruption is from whose servitude it hopes to be freed. It seems to me that these things are said concerning this material and corruptible substance of the body. For corruption holds dominion over nothing else save the body. For that interior man who was created according to God, and made after the image of God, is incorruptible and invisible, and according to his own proper principle may even be called incorporeal. But the exterior man is called both corporeal and corruptible; on which account Paul said of him: ”For even if our outward man is corrupted, yet he who is within is renewed.

But the renewal of the interior man, inasmuch as he is rational and is mind, consists in the knowledge of God and in the capacity for the Holy Spirit. But that we may commit to paper, briefly and summarily, at least something concerning matters so profound, let us gather from the very substance of the interior man — that is, of the soul and of the mind — an image of how ”the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but on account of him who subjected it in hope”; and let us set Paul himself, if it seems good, in the midst, whose soul indeed, or mind, which is his interior man, surmounts and ascends above everything that is corporeal, everything visible, everything that lies beneath sense and sight, and is made capable of the divine nature itself. Yet this substance of his soul, so great and of such a kind, which holds the principles and understandings of heavenly and divine perceptions, has been made subject (for what causes, God will have seen) to the servitude of the corruptible body, and is bound fast to its vanity. For consider the necessities of the body: the appetite for food, the shame of digestion, the embarrassment of repairing posterity — how offspring is sown, how it is brought forth, how it is nourished;

and see how much vanity is held in these things, how much corruption, to which the creature, a noble and rational soul, though unwilling, is made subject — yet made subject in hope, hoping, that is, for the time in which it may be set free, when the time of the liberty of the sons of God shall have come. This, then, is what the Apostle also said in other places more openly concerning himself, that ”while we are in this dwelling, we groan. This too Wisdom said through Solomon, that ”the corruptible body weighs down the soul, and the earthly habitation presses down the mind that ponders many things”; and the same Paul: ”For while we are in the body, we are pilgrims from the Lord,” and he desires rather to be a pilgrim from the body and to be present with the Lord. He indicates this, and it is set forth much more openly also in that place where he says: ”But I am pressed between two, having a desire to return and to be with Christ, for that is far better; yet to

remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. In which he plainly shows that it was not willingly — so far as concerns those things of which his soul was conscious — that he served this corruption and vanity, but on account of him who so willed these things, and on account of us, that we might be able to be saved. Therefore he remains in the flesh for our sake;

but when the sons of God shall have been revealed, and gathered into one through the Church which he established "to present a chaste virgin to one husband, to Christ," then he too shall be freed from the servitude of corruption, just as he himself says: "But I am already being offered up, and the time of my dissolution is at hand. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: for the rest there is laid up for me a crown of justice. This is to be freed from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. But from these examples, if it seems good, ascend also to things higher, and see how the ministries of the sun itself, and of the moon, and of the stars of heaven, and of the whole world are made subject to vanity and are enslaved to corruption. For they nourish the crops for the uses of men, they bring forth the fruits of trees and the grass of the fields; and they roll around the same circuits of the year, returning upon themselves. For they restore the things that pass away, and again they permit to pass away the things that have been restored.

The angels themselves too, if you look to that opinion of Paul's which says that "they are all ministering spirits sent for service on account of those who receive the inheritance of salvation," you will understand that they perform something of this kind, and that they are subject to this corruption: I believe indeed that they too are so not willingly, but on account of him who subjected them in hope. "For who resists his will? I too am invited by the prophetic utterances to understand something of this sort concerning the archangels. For what would you find of such vanity and such corruption as to wage wars in this world, and to stir up conflicts of kings and nations against one another? See, therefore, that among these matters also is reckoned a chief office of archangelic work, as the prophet Daniel testifies when he says that an archangel spoke to him, who told him that he had fought against the prince of the Persians, "and no one," he says, "was a help to me, except Michael your prince. Through these several points, then, it is discovered that the rational "creature" is "subjected to vanity not willingly, but on account of him who subjected it in hope. For the hope is that at some time there is to be a ceasing from these bodily and corruptible things.

For this rational creature holds this expectation, that there may come the revelation of the sons of God, on whose account the angels are sent into ministry, so that they too, together with those to whom they have ministered, may receive the inheritance of salvation, so that of things earthly and heavenly there may be made one flock and one shepherd, and that "God may be all in all. And in order to confirm

more evidently the things he had said, he added: ”For we know that every creature groans together and suffers together until now. Above he had said: ”For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy of the glory to come”; and whereas there he said that he ”reckoned,” in these words he says that he ”knows” that every creature groans together and suffers together — namely, so that in this matter no doubt whatever may be entertained. For the creature, although it has been subjected unwillingly, nevertheless, since it yields to the will of him who subjected it, displays also a certain affection and charity toward those for whose sake it seems to have been subjected, and it grieves for their griefs, and groans for their groans. But if, as is found in other copies, we read it thus, ”groans together and is in travail,” we shall take ”is in travail” according to that sense in which the Apostle says that he begot through the Gospel those whom he brought forth to the light through faith in Christ;

or as he said elsewhere concerning others: ”My little children, of whom I am again in travail, until Christ be formed in you. The creature, therefore, also travails with those whom it regenerates unto salvation. But if it should also seem to readers a thing to be inquired into, why in the foregoing he three times named the creature and nowhere said ”every creature,” while at the last he says: ”For we know that every creature groans together and suffers together” — it can be understood thus: that it is not every creature that groans and grieves, that is, that which lies subject to the necessity of a corruptible body; but it is every creature that suffers together with those who grieve, and groans together with those who groan. Now every higher creature looks upon our contests and struggles, and grieves when we are conquered, but rejoices when we conquer; and much more than is the case with us, there is in them to rejoice with those who rejoice and to grieve with those who grieve.

[§5] ”And not only so, but we ourselves also, having the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, awaiting the adoption of sons, the redemption of our body. For by hope we have been saved. But hope that is seen is not hope. For what a man sees, why does he hope for it? But if we hope for what we do not see, we await it through patience. We have often taught that it is a habit of apostolic speech that, when he says ”And not only so,” and adds nothing to which it ought to be fitted, it must be referred to the things said above — as is given us to understand in the present passage also. For what he seems to be saying is of this sort: Not only does every creature groan together and suffer together; but we ourselves also, having the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves. For we too await the adoption of the sons of God, and the redemption of our body. Although by this very fact that we believe in Christ we already know that salvation has been granted us, nevertheless that salvation is still in hope, not in the sight of things visible. For if it were already seen, it certainly would not be hoped for. For a man

hopes in order that he may see. But if he sees the things he was hoping for, it is superfluous to hope any longer for what he sees.

We, however, do not have our hope in the things that are seen, lest our hope be empty, but in the things that are not seen. And therefore, because we hope for the things that are not seen, and they are so great and so glorious that they are obtained only through many labors and many tribulations and dangers, for that reason we await them through patience, as things that will scarcely come at some time. These things we have said by way of giving a certain direct and clearer order to the apostolic words themselves. Now, if it seems good, let us see what he indicates by this new expression, in which he said: ”But we ourselves also, having the firstfruits of the Spirit. For we know that it is written in the Law: ”You shall not defraud the firstfruits of the threshing floor and the firstfruits of the winepress”; and again: ”You shall bring the firstfruits of all your crops into the house of the Lord your God. What then? Just as the firstfruits of the threshing floor and the firstfruits of the winepress are of the same crop as the rest of the threshing floor is, or of the same liquid as the winepress is, will it likewise seem that what he calls the firstfruits of the Spirit is some one preeminent spirit out of the many remaining holy and blessed spirits? Or shall we rather understand this:

that, according to what we have discussed above, there are many ministering spirits serving in ministry on account of those who receive the inheritance of salvation, under whom each of the believers is placed and trained as under guardians and stewards until the time prefixed by the Father — that is, until the soul arrives at the lawful age of perfection, where a man, having now passed beyond the spirit of bondage which he had received in fear, by which he was kept as by a tutor, is made worthy to receive the spirit of adoption, the firstfruits of the Spirit, through which, adopted into a son, he may also be joined to the company of the firstborn of the Church which is in the heavens? And just as it differs greatly to be a son rather than a slave, so the Holy Spirit differs greatly from the ministering spirits — the Spirit whose firstfruits Paul says that he and those like him possess. Let this be one way by which we have been able to track out the understanding of this saying. Let us now see another as well. We read in the apostle Paul himself that the gifts or graces of the Holy Spirit are called many spirits, as when he says: ”But now, since you are zealous for spirits, seek that you may abound unto the edification of the Church”; and likewise elsewhere:

”The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets” — calling the spirits of the prophets subject, not as though they were inferior to a better one, but for this reason, that one who has the spirit of prophecy is not compelled to speak unwillingly, as those are who have unclean spirits, but he speaks when he wills and when reason demands; whereas when it does not seem opportune to speak, he keeps silence, knowing well that there is a time for keeping silence and a time for

speaking. And therefore it is not said to their reproach that the spirits are subject to the prophets, but with a view to the dispensation — just as we also take that saying about the Savior, that ”then the Son himself also will be subject to him who subjected all things to himself. For here too ”subject” is not said as though he were inferior. For how can he be called inferior who is the Son and is all the things that the Father is? ”For all things,” he says, ”Father, that are yours are mine. But in those whom he subjects to the Father, namely those who believe in him — since he says that he is in each one of them, and says that he hungers and thirsts and is naked in them, and professes that he is fed and clothed in them — for that reason he too is said to be subject in them. But let these things be said by way of a certain digression.

Now, however, let us return to the matter proposed. The diverse gifts of the Spirit, then, are called by Paul many spirits. And of these many gifts, whatever is highest and greatest the apostles without doubt obtained, so that they might be fit — as Paul himself says — ministers of the New Testament, and so that they might be able to fulfill the Gospel from Jerusalem round about as far as Illyricum. This gift of the Holy Spirit, therefore, which was conferred upon them more sublimely and more splendidly than upon the rest, he rightly called the firstfruits of the Holy Spirit. And therefore he says, ”but we ourselves also. In which he seems especially to designate the apostolic dignity. ”We” therefore, he says, ”ourselves” — that is, the apostles — ”having the firstfruits of the Spirit,” we who have been chosen for this, that we should receive the firstfruits of the Spirit, ”even we ourselves groan within ourselves. To such a degree, he says, is there no creature that is free from griefs and groans, that even we ourselves, who have received the highest and choicest gifts from the Holy Spirit, nevertheless, awaiting the adoption of sons — that is, the perfection of those whom we have been sent to teach and instruct — until we see them advance so far that they deserve to be adopted as sons, necessarily grieve and groan.

So long, then, I say, as we who are being instructed by them are negligent, and delay, and put off the time of our amendment further, so long as we do not seek the invisible things but take delight in the visible, we stir up griefs for the apostles, and rouse, so to speak, the mourning and groans of the whole creation. For the whole creation groans together and suffers together, sighing over the losses caused by our hardness and dissembling. This is another order of explanation for us concerning the firstfruits of the Spirit; you will see whether it presents itself as one to be approved. But we shall still add a third as well. The same Apostle says again concerning the Lord Jesus Christ that he is ”the firstborn of every creature. Perhaps, then, just as he is called ”the firstborn of every creature,” by some such reasoning the Holy Spirit too is called the firstfruits of the many spirits. Let this also be a third mode of exposition. But let the reader judge which of these better agrees with the apostolic sense. If, however, you take what he said, ”And we

ourselves having the firstfruits of the Spirit," as said of all who are seen to have obtained the grace of baptism, then that must be hoped for which the same Apostle said: "But if the firstfruits are holy, so also is the lump; and if the root is holy, so also are the branches.

And even if this be so, nevertheless of that very lump, in which the multitude of the faithful seems to be indicated, the firstfruits will necessarily be seen to be placed in the apostles.

For thus it is written, that "in the Church God has placed first apostles, second prophets, third teachers. Those therefore who have been appointed in the first rank are fittingly believed to have the firstfruits of the Holy Spirit's spiritual grace. Now let us see how he can say that he awaits the adoption of sons, when he said in the passages above that "the Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are sons of God"; and again, how he can hope for the redemption of the body, when he says elsewhere: "Christ has redeemed us. But, as it seems to me, he himself resolves this by the words that follow. For he says: "By hope we have been made safe. That we are sons, therefore, and that we have been redeemed, and that we have been saved, stands in hope. "For now we see through a mirror, and in an enigma; but then face to face": through a mirror, then, and in an enigma we receive both adoption and redemption. For "the fullness of times has come," and "God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive the adoption of sons. We receive adoption, therefore, but that adoption which is through a mirror and in an enigma. But when the things that are perfect have come, then we shall obtain adoption "face to face.

As for his saying "the redemption of our body," I think that he indicates the body of the whole Church, just as he says elsewhere: "But you are the body of Christ, and members in part. The Apostle therefore hopes that the whole body of the Church is to be redeemed, and he does not think that the things which are perfect can be given to the several individual members, unless the entire body has been gathered together into one. But it can also be understood in this way, that he calls "the redemption of our body" that redemption which is to come at the resurrection, when not only souls but bodies also will come "before the tribunal of Christ, that each one may carry back the proper things of the body according as he has done," and according to that which was said: "Fear rather him who is able to destroy both body and soul in Gehenna. And therefore each one must grieve in this world and groan, lest perchance through evil deeds and the negligence of the present life he fail to deserve to obtain the redemption of his body, but instead that sentence find him which condemns body and soul to the fires of Gehenna. After this he says: "For by hope we have been made safe. But hope that is seen is not hope.

Just as he had said above concerning the creation, that ”it was subjected to vanity on account of him who subjected it in hope,” so here too concerning himself and whomever he knows to be counted together with himself, he says: ”For by hope we have been made safe”—just as he also joined his own groanings to the groanings of the creation. But how salvation lies in hope, and how hope is not placed in those things which are seen but in those which are not seen, we have already taught above. This alone we shall briefly add: that both from these words, and from those in which he says, ”Not looking at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen,” he teaches us that among the good things to come we ought to hope for none of those things which are now seen, or which can be seen—not even if you look at this visible heaven, not even if you look at the earth. Hear concerning these things, that ”heaven and earth will pass away,” for they are visible; and what you see, why do you hope for it? Nothing at all, therefore, is to be hoped for in the future from the things which are seen. For ”the eye has not seen what God has prepared for those who love him. But the eye does see heaven and earth; it is not right, therefore, to believe that this which is seen has been prepared by God for those who love him;

but rather a heaven—or rather heavens far more eminent and lofty than that firmament which can be seen with the eyes. But an earth too is to be hoped for, yet not this one which is called dry land and lies open to the eyes, but that will be the land of the meek which the eye has not seen. For the Apostle’s meaning is plain, teaching that in the things to come we are not to hope for things visible and corporeal, but for things spiritual and eternal: since ”the things which are seen are temporal,” and come to an end with time, ”but the things which are not seen are eternal,” and these the Apostle teaches are to be hoped for. For this reason also the very restoration of our body is effected from corruptible into incorruptible, and from mortal into immortal, and from weakness it is restored into power, and from an animal body a spiritual body is made, so that, when it has been made spiritual, it may be able also to enjoy the invisible goods: which goods, not seeing them in the present age, we hope for through hope, and await through patience.

[§6] ”Likewise the Spirit also helps our weakness. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with unutterable groanings. And he who searches hearts knows what the Spirit desires; because he intercedes for the saints according to God. When he had said in the preceding passages that every creature groans together and suffers together with those who are set in the contest of this life—that is, labors along with them and lends them strength—and had then also recalled that Paul himself and those like him utter groanings on behalf of those who labor, so that by these things he might console those set in the struggle, when they saw all the saints and the whole creation laboring with them in affection and joining their groanings to theirs: he now adds something higher and more sublime. Do not think it a small thing, he says,

that all creation groans and suffers together with us; let it not seem a small thing that we ourselves groan for your labors. Even in the divine nature itself there is a certain affection of compassion toward our struggles (for I join myself also with you), and the Spirit himself ”helps our weakness. In short, we do not know what we ought to pray, what we ought to ask from God. For sometimes we desire things contrary to our salvation, weakness compelling us.

For just as one who is set in a bodily illness asks of the physician not the things that befit or conduce to health, but the things that the craving of his present sickness has suggested: so we too, languishing in the weakness of this life, sometimes ask of God what is not expedient for us. In short, I myself, Paul, who speak these things to you—when, on account of the sublimity of the revelations, lest I be exalted, there had been given me by the Lord ”an angel of Satan to buffet me, three times I asked the Lord that it might depart from me,” not knowing what I was praying: and therefore, because I did not know how to pray as I ought, the Lord did not hear me, but said to me: ”My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. So then, ”we do not know what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with unutterable groanings. Paul perceives something great, I know not what, in groanings: for behold, this is now the third time he sets down groanings. For he says both that ”the creation groans together,” and that ”we ourselves groan,” and that ”the Spirit himself intercedes with God by groanings on behalf of the saints. He has indeed added, concerning these groanings which he says are offered to God through the Spirit, that they are unutterable. But this he said neither of the groanings of the whole creation nor of his own.

And consider whether in these groanings we can understand a great deal of confidence and freedom in the sight of God—namely, that the prayer which is offered to God with sorrow and groaning receives from the Holy Spirit the confidence to ascend to God. In short, Adam, when he had sinned, lost his confidence, and hid himself from the face of God. But holy David says that ”my groaning is not hidden from you. But let us see what it is that he says: ”The Spirit himself intercedes for us. For John too indicates that Jesus does this, when he says: ”Little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin; but if any of us has sinned, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus the just, who also intercedes for us. And here, the Spirit intercedes for us. And this the Spirit does by helping our weakness. But what our weakness is, the Lord himself teaches when he says: ”The spirit is ready, but the flesh is weak. Therefore our weakness descends from the weakness of the flesh. For it is the flesh that lusts against the spirit; and while it presses in its own lusts, it impedes the purity of the spirit and clouds the sincerity of prayer. But when the Spirit of God has seen our spirit laboring in resisting the flesh and in cleaving to him, he stretches out his hand and helps its weakness:

and just as a teacher, taking on an untrained pupil who is wholly ignorant of letters, in order to be able to teach and instruct him, must needs bend down to the pupil's beginnings, and himself first pronounce the name of the letter so that the pupil may learn by answering, and the teacher himself becomes in a certain way like the beginning pupil, speaking those things and rehearsing those things which the beginner ought to speak and rehearse: so also the Holy Spirit, when he has seen our spirit disturbed by the assaults of the flesh, and not knowing what it ought to pray as it ought, himself like a teacher leads off the prayer, which our spirit—if indeed it desires to be a pupil of the Holy Spirit—may follow after: he himself offers the groanings by which our spirit may be taught to groan, that it may render God propitious to itself. But if the Spirit indeed teaches, and our spirit—that is, our mind—does not follow, then by its own fault the teacher's instruction becomes fruitless for it. And Paul, knowing that this mystery is enacted within a person, used to say: "For if I speak in tongues, my spirit prays, but my mind is without fruit"—calling his spirit the grace of the Holy Spirit which is given by God to human beings. Whence also, exhorting us not to have this benefit of the Holy Spirit fruitless, he adds and says: "What then is it? I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the mind:

I will say a psalm with the spirit, I will say a psalm also with the mind. Therefore, although Paul himself has marked these things as unutterable, and as being enacted with unutterable groanings, nevertheless, so far as it was possible for us, we have set forth a certain image of the things which are divinely enacted and which he himself brings forward rather covertly. But let the one who is spiritual examine all things, and if he can investigate anything deeper than these, let him keep it with himself: for "the faithful man conceals matters in his spirit. Yet those must be admonished who ask of God prosperity for themselves in the present life, and health, or riches, or honors, that they do not know what they pray as is expedient. For it often happens that these present gains and worldly dignity turn out to the harm of the soul or to its everlasting reproach. And therefore that must rather be held to which the Lord taught us to say in prayer: "Your will be done. "And he who searches hearts knows what the Spirit desires, because he intercedes for the saints according to God. He shows indeed that by God not so much our words in prayer are weighed as the heart and the mind: for it is he who searches hearts and reins. But as to his saying a second time that "the Spirit intercedes," this is what he teaches: that no small dispensation is enacted among human beings through the Holy Spirit also.

For although the only-begotten Son of God was incarnate and suffered for the salvation of the human race, and by his death destroyed death, and by his resurrection restored life, nonetheless magnificent things are no less actively enacted through the Holy Spirit as well, apart from incarnation. Only this much is different: that he died for the ungodly (for so Paul himself shows when he says: "For while we

were yet weak, Christ in due time died for the ungodly”), but the Holy Spirit no longer intercedes for the ungodly, but ”for the saints”: and he intercedes not according to the flesh, but ”according to God. Christ, however, is not said to have died according to God, but according to the flesh. Therefore the Spirit is said to offer his intercession for the saints not in words, but ”in groanings”: and not in these common groanings, but in ”unutterable” ones. For how can what the Spirit of God speaks to God be narrated, when sometimes not even our own spirit can set forth in speech what it feels and understands?

[§7] ”But we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who according to purpose have been called saints. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he himself might be the firstborn among many brethren. If the Spirit, he says, intercedes for us with unutterable groanings, and the whole creation groans together and suffers together until now — creation which will then at last be freed from the slavery of corruption, when the liberty of the glory of the sons of God shall have come — how shall it not be fittingly declared that ”we know that all things work together for good to those who love God”? For to such a degree do all things work together for good and labor together with those who love God, that even the Spirit himself helps, nor does the divine nature disdain to be the guide of the journey toward the good. Nevertheless, if there are some who have the spirit of slavery in fear, while others are superior to these, who receive the spirit of adoption, in that they now venerate God not with fear but with love, and because ”perfect charity” in them ”casts out fear” — it must be considered whether perhaps not all things work together for good for those who still remain in the spirit of slavery; but rather that some things indeed work together even for them, yet not all things;

and I do not know whether these lead them to the good itself, or rather, so to speak, to the doors of the good. But for those who love God and cleave to him with the whole affection of charity, all things, as we have said, labor together and help, and contribute something of their own zeal, so far as to establish them in that good itself which can never admit change. But if those who love God are one set, and those who receive the spirit of slavery another, it must be considered whether perhaps this too which he says, ”To those who according to purpose have been called,” and, ”Whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son,” does not apply to those who are in the spirit of slavery. For they too can indeed be called ”called,” yet not called ”according to purpose”; and, in consequence of their still being in the spirit of slavery, they cannot be placed among the many brethren whose firstborn is the Son of brightness, and ”the image of the invisible God,” and ”the firstborn of every creature. But as for this too which he said, ”Conformed to the image of his Son,” I wish to inquire to which form they are said to become conformed. For we read that the Son of God was placed sometimes in the form of God, sometimes in the form of a servant.

To which, then, of these two forms the Apostle says that those who love God and for whom all things work together for good will be conformed — this seems to me no idle distinction. I judge, therefore, according to those things which the same Paul indicates elsewhere, where he says, ”My little children, of whom I am in labor again, until Christ be formed in you,” that he means Christ to be formed in those who tend toward perfection: according to that whereby he is the Word, so that the sincerity of the Word of God may be purely formed in them; and according to that whereby he is truth, so that truth may stand in them without any admixture of counterfeit; and according to that whereby he is wisdom, so that the wisdom of God in them — that wisdom which Paul speaks among the perfect — may be preserved pure and without any bypath of error. So also, according to all those things which Christ is, whether justice, or sanctification, or whatever other virtues, if these be formed in them to full clarity, such persons will be seen to have been made conformed to the image with respect to that form which is in the form of God.

But if anyone still dwells among the beginnings (and ”the beginning of wisdom is the fear of God”), and, still placed in fear, receives the first elements of the worship of God, then those who receive the first beginnings in the fear of God are to be understood as becoming conformed according to the form of a servant, which he took upon himself for this purpose, that he might teach the untrained and ignorant by the fear of God. Because, he says, ”whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. Let us not pass over what he said either: ”He foreknew and predestined. For I think that, just as he did not speak of all when he spoke of those who are predestined, so neither did he speak of all whom he foreknew. For we must not suppose, according to the common opinion of the crowd, that God foreknows both good and evil things, but we must think according to the usage of holy Scripture. Let him who is diligent in the Scriptures observe whether anywhere he finds Scripture saying that God foreknew the wicked, as in the present passage it plainly says of the good, that ”whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.

For if those whom he foreknew, these he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, and no wicked person can be conformed to the image of the Son of God, it is manifest that he speaks of the good only: ”He foreknew those whom he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son”; but of the rest God is said not only not to foreknow, but not even to know. For ”God knows those who are his”; but to those who are not worthy to be known by God the Savior says: ”Depart from me, for I never knew you, workers of iniquity. So then in this present passage also, those whom God ”foreknew,” these same he ”also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. But the rest are not said to be foreknown — not because anything can lie hidden from that nature which is everywhere and is nowhere absent, but because everything that is evil is held unworthy of his knowledge or foreknowledge. ”Whom” therefore ”he foreknew, he also predestined. But

consider this too: whether God can be said to foreknow and predestine concerning those who do not yet exist, or rather concerning those who do indeed exist but are not yet conformed to the image of his Son; and whether foreknowledge is more fittingly said to lie in this than in the fact that what does not yet exist will come to be.

For in the latter case there is the will of the Creator rather than his foreknowledge. For in what will foreknowledge be seen, when that which is to be depends upon the judgment of the maker? Perhaps attentive readers will see that this too must be inquired into: why he did not say ”conformed to his Son,” but ”conformed to the image of his Son. For he who raises these questions will say that, just as the Son himself, who is called ”the image of the invisible God,” is — as far as regards person — other than him whose image he is, so here too that which is called the image of his Son ought to be other than him whose image it is. And although these matters seem steep and difficult, nevertheless see whether we can say this: that although everyone who has cultivated himself unto that form which we set forth above is an image of God, that is, an image of the Son of God, nevertheless the special and proper image of him — the one which received him wholly and entirely and formed him within itself — must be said to be the very soul of Jesus, which so fitted itself in all things to the Word and Wisdom of God that in nothing at all was it held discolored from his likeness;

so that whoever pursues the height of perfection and blessedness may stretch toward the image and likeness of that soul which is set in the first place and above all others as the image of the Son of God, ”that he himself may be the firstborn among many brethren” — namely among those in whose conformation to the image of the Son of God he holds the primacy,

[§8] «But those whom he predestined, these he also called; and those whom he called, these he also justified; and those whom he justified, these he also glorified.» Above he had said: «Those whom he foreknew, these he also predestined,» and now he adds: «But those whom he predestined, these he also called; and those whom he called, these he also justified.» And if we take «he foreknew» and «he predestined» according to the common opinion, it will certainly seem that the one who has been justified was justified for this reason, that he was called; and that the one who was called was justified for this reason, that he was predestined; and that the one who was predestined was predestined for this reason, that he was foreknown. And again you will understand the converse: if anyone has not been justified, he has not been justified for the reason that he was not called; and the one who was not called was not called for the reason that he was not predestined; and the one who was not predestined was not predestined for the reason that he was not foreknown. And see into what an absurd opinion those men fall who take God’s foreknowledge in this sense only, as though he knows beforehand the things that are afterwards

to come to pass. For it is found, according to what we set forth above, that God did not foreknow those whom he did not predestine.

And again, if what he says — that «those whom he called, these he also justified» — be referred to the common understanding, we shall open an enormous window to those who deny that it lies within a man's power to be saved. For they say: If God predestined those whom he foreknew, and called those whom he predestined, and justified those whom he called, then those who are not justified bear no blame, since they were neither called nor predestined nor foreknown. And then there is also this which plainly stands against us, that not all who are called are also justified. For Judas too was called as an apostle, yet he was not justified. And even if someone should contend that he was justified by the very fact that he was called, he certainly was not glorified. But also those of whom the Apostle says that they «made shipwreck concerning the faith» had indeed been called, but were not justified. And according to the parables of the Gospel, those to whom the servants had been sent and who excused themselves were called, but were not justified; and the man who entered the king's banquet and did not have a wedding garment was called, but was not justified. Since, then, each of these things stands thus, how will the Apostle's word appear to be true, which he set down concerning foreknowing, or predestining, or calling, or indeed justifying?

But I, in accordance with what we set forth above concerning how God knows or foreknows, think that we must return to the customary usage of Scripture, which is accustomed to employ this word — that is, "to know" — with a kind of idiomatic sense: as when it says, «And Adam knew Eve his wife,» meaning that he had intercourse with his wife. And again it says of Rebecca: «She was a virgin, no man had known her.» But of the sons of Levi it is said, when they were punishing the transgressors, that no one of them knew his own father or his own mother — in which without doubt this is shown, that he did not join his affection and love with father or mother. But you will find many things said in the Scriptures about knowing according to this sense; and therefore in the present passage too it is agreed that the Apostle used the word "knowing" according to the custom of holy Scripture, so as to show those to be foreknown by God upon whom God, knowing what sort they were, had set his love and his affection — according to which this too is written: «The Lord knows those who are his»; since assuredly, so far as that common knowledge is concerned, God is ignorant neither of those who are his, nor of those who stray from him. But he is said to have known his own, that is, to have held them in love and joined them to himself.

Thus, then, «those whom» God «foreknew, these he also predestined; and those whom he predestined, these he also called; and those whom he called, these he also justified.» There still remains for us the resolution of that question, how «those whom he called, these he also justified,» when, according to what we said above, it

is established that many are called but few chosen. But it seems to me that there is a certain difference of calling, according to what we set forth in the earlier chapter, namely that all indeed have been called, yet not all have been called «according to purpose.» For those who are called in accordance with a good purpose and the good will which they bear toward the worship of God — these are they who are said to be called «according to purpose,» and these are they who, being called, are justified. For to their good purpose the calling alone was lacking. But those who do not have a good and fixed purpose either toward the divine worship or toward good work — these too are indeed called, lest an excuse be left them and they be able to plead this very thing when they are judged, saying: We too, if we had been called, could surely have been justified, and not only justified but even glorified. For this reason, then, these too are indeed called;

but, as when seed is sown on rocky ground, it springs up quickly indeed, yet when the sun of tribulations grows hot, because they have no deep root of good purpose, they immediately wither and perish. And these are they of whom the Apostle says that they «made shipwreck concerning the faith.» Those, therefore, whom he called — that is, whom he called according to a good purpose — these he also justified. And even if «according to purpose» be referred to God, that is, so that they are said to be called according to God's purpose, who knows that there is in them a religious mind and a desire for salvation, this will not appear to be contrary to the things we have set forth. In this way, then, neither does the cause of our salvation or our perdition lie in God's foreknowledge, nor will justification depend on the calling alone, nor has being glorified been taken utterly out of our own power. For even if we understand foreknowledge in the common sense, a thing will not be for the reason that God knows it will be; rather, because it will be, it is known by God before it comes to pass. For even if, for the sake of argument, we should imagine that God did not foreknow something, what is would nonetheless without doubt have been going to be, just as it is: as, for instance, Judas became a traitor, and the prophets foretold that this would so come to pass.

It is not, then, because the prophets foretold it that Judas betrayed him; rather, because he was going to be a traitor, the prophets foretold those things which he was going to do out of the wickedness of his own purpose — since assuredly Judas had it in his power to be like Peter and John, had he willed; but he chose the greed for money rather than the glory of apostolic fellowship, and the prophets, foreseeing this future will of his, handed it down in the records of their books. But that you may know that the cause of salvation for each one is not placed in God's foreknowledge but in his own purpose and acts, see how Paul, fearing lest perhaps, when he had preached to others, he himself should be found reprobate, wore down his body and subjected it to servitude. Further, against those who raise questions of this sort against us we can also say this: If he predestined those whom he foreknew, but did not predestine all, then he did not foreknow all — and according to them

there will be some things of which God is ignorant. But if foreknowing be taken in the sense we said above, that is, to receive into affection and join to oneself, it will be true that, just as he did not predestine all, so neither did he foreknow all. For in this way Jesus too is said not to have known sin.

Shall we then say that Jesus did not know what sin was — that is, that he did not know that murder is a sin, or adultery, or theft, and things like these? Or is this what is meant by not knowing sin, that he did not mingle himself with sin, nor did sin cleave to him? So too it is written elsewhere: «He who keeps the commandment shall not know an evil word,» that is, he shall not receive an evil word, nor believe it, nor gladly hear it, nor allow it to enter his mind. «Those,» therefore, whom God «foreknew» in this manner, «these he also predestined; and those whom he predestined, these he also called,» with that distinction of calling which we have described; «and those whom he called, these he also justified; and those whom he justified, these he also glorified.» Concerning glorification we can speak even in the present age, according to what the Apostle says: «But we all, beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory into glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.» There is, then, this glory also which all who are justified receive in the present life; and there is that other which is hoped for in the future, when this body of our lowliness, which «is sown in dishonor, shall rise in glory»;

and when, «as there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, and as star differs from star in glory, so also will be the resurrection of the dead.»

[§9] ”What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how will he not also with him grant us all things? How God is for us is plain from the things which he has set forth above — that is, that the Spirit of God dwells in us, and that the Spirit of Christ, or Christ himself, is in us; or that the Spirit of him who raised Christ from the dead dwells in us; or that we are led by the Spirit of God; or that we have received the spirit of adoption; or that we are sons of God and heirs and coheirs of Christ; or that we receive the firstfruits of the Spirit; or that the Spirit himself intercedes for us with unutterable groanings; or that the whole creation groans together with us and suffers together with us; or that all things work together for good to us who love God; or that we have been called according to his purpose, and foreknown, and predestined, and justified, and glorified. For making, as it were, an epilogue of all these things, and at the same time gathering them all up again, he says: ”What then shall we say to these things?” — that is, to all these things which we have said above;

for if God is for us in such a way as to have granted us all these things, who will be able to be against us? Not that he says there is no adversary at all to us; otherwise,

how will that stand which was said by Peter: ”Your adversary the devil goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”? But this is what he shows: that when God acts on our behalf, our adversary is made contemptible and comes to nothing. Similarly David also says: ”The Lord is my light and my Saviour, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? He does not therefore say that there is no one whom he fears and who opposes him, but although, he says, ”my enemies who trouble me draw near against me to eat my flesh,” nevertheless, since the Lord defends my life, ”they were weakened and fell. Moreover he gives the greatest proof of God’s immense love toward us, who, he says, loved us so much that he did not spare even ”his own Son, but delivered him up to the passion for us all. And that he might bind us with greater wonder, he added a phrase privy to a mighty mystery, saying that ”he did not spare his own Son. For he had said above that we too, who receive the spirit of adoption, are sons of God.

Therefore, lest by this common appellation of sons he should be thought to have delivered up some one of those who appeared to have been adopted into sons, he added ”his own Son,” so as to point out him who alone is begotten from God himself by an ineffable birth. ”For us all, therefore, he delivered him up” — not by that delivering up of which it is written: ”But brother shall deliver up brother to death, and parents their children” — but he is said to have delivered him up in this very thing: that, whereas he was in the form of God, he suffered him to empty himself, and to take the form of a servant, and to come even to the death of the cross; so that in him he might set an example of obedience for all, and open the way of resurrection for the dead. ”For all, therefore, he delivered him up. Not only for the saints, not only for the great, but also for the least, and for absolutely all who are in the Church, the Father delivered up his own Son: and therefore even if anyone injures one of the least and the weak, wounding his weak conscience, he is said to sin against Christ, since indeed he scandalizes a soul for which Christ died. Since therefore the Father delivered up his Son for us all, no one at all, not even the least who is in the Church, is to be despised: and therefore the Lord himself said:

”If anyone shall scandalize one of these little ones, the least, it is expedient that an ass’s millstone be tied about his neck, and that he be cast headlong into the sea, rather than that he should scandalize one of these. God therefore, who made us precious by pouring out for us the precious blood of his own Son, ”how will he not with him grant us all things? For there is nothing, whether of visible or of invisible creation, that can be made equal to the Son: for in no way can the creature be compared with its creator; and if the creator himself has been given to us, how will not the whole creation be given to us along with him? Although this saying can be understood in two ways, that is, that ”with him he will grant us all things. For this too can be seen: that if we have Christ in us according to that which he is Word and

wisdom and truth and justice and peace, and all the other things which are written of him, then together with this fullness of virtues all things will be granted to us, so that we shall no longer hold one out of all creatures and this little place of earth which we now seem to inhabit, but shall possess together with Christ all things whatsoever God created, visible and invisible, hidden and manifest, temporal and eternal. But it can also be understood in another way, what he said:

”With him he will grant us all things” — that is, that to him indeed as heir, but to us as his coheirs, the whole creation will be given to be enjoyed equally with him.

[§10] ”Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies; who is he that condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died, yes rather, who rose again, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. It seems to me that when he says, ”Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? he is speaking of the devil. For there is no one so elect and so great whom that one does not dare to accuse, except only him ”who committed no sin,” who also said, ”Now the prince of this world comes, and finds nothing in me. But although that one puts forth the wickedness of his design, yet since God justifies and blots out the iniquity of his elect like a cloud, and their sins like a mist, and whitens them as snow from their former offenses and makes them like white wool, what will the accuser gain? And moreover, since Christ has died for them, or rather has risen from the dead, and stands at the Father’s right hand, and intercedes for them, who will be able to condemn them? In the passages above, ”the holy Spirit,” he says, ”intercedes for us with unutterable groanings”; here it is ”Christ Jesus who died and rose again,” he himself ”intercedes for us. God, who handed over his own Son for us, himself justifies the elect — who then will there be who dares to condemn?

But look more carefully at how the Apostle nowhere in his discourses departs from the caution native to him. He did not say, ”Who shall bring a charge” against the called, but ”against the elect”? For unless you are elect, unless you show yourself approved before God in all things, you will have an accuser. For if your case is bad, if your own crime binds you fast, what good will an advocate do you, even if it is Jesus who intercedes? For Jesus is truth: truth therefore cannot practice deceit on your behalf. In this the advocate will assist you: that you not be entangled in the accuser’s slanders, that past sins, which have been blotted out through baptism, not be reckoned against you. But if after these things you sin again, and wash these away with no tears of repentance, you will give your accuser material for arraigning you; and although Jesus intercedes for us, yet Jesus cannot say that darkness is light, nor that bitter is sweet. If therefore you wish to prevail when you are judged, do what is written concerning the just man: ”Order your words in judgment. Prepare your works for your departure. Remember your last ends, and you shall never sin”; lest there befall you that which is written of a certain man:

”When he is judged, let him go forth condemned. But see how you are to hear that Jesus ”intercedes for us.

For he is the one of whom it is also written elsewhere, that ”the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son”; and just as he himself is both victim and priest, and he himself is both in the form of a servant and in the form of God, so he himself is both advocate and judge.

[§11] ”Who then shall separate us from the love of God? Tribulation? or distress? or persecution? or famine? or nakedness? or peril? or the sword? (as it is written: For your sake we are put to death all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. But in all these things we overcome through him who loved us. In return for all these things, he says, which we enumerated above — that is, that we are no longer in the flesh but in the spirit; and that the Spirit of God dwells in us; and that Christ is in us, through whom the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of justification; and that we are no longer debtors to the flesh, to live according to the flesh, because by the spirit we have mortified the deeds of the flesh; and that through the spirit of adoption we have been made sons of God, and if sons, also heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; and that the whole creation groans together with us and suffers together with us, awaiting the revelation of the sons of God; and that for us who love God all things work together for good;

and that he foreknew and predestined us, who are called according to his purpose, to be conformed to the image of his Son — since for all these benefits, he says, which we have obtained, we are fixed and rooted in the love of God, who will be able to separate us from it? If tribulation comes, we shall say to God, ”In tribulation you have enlarged me. If there is distress of the world, coming from the necessity of the body, we shall seek the breadth of the wisdom and knowledge of God, in which the world cannot straiten us. For I shall return to the most ample fields of the divine Scriptures; I shall seek the spiritual understanding of the word of God, and no distress will confine me in it. For I shall ride through the most spacious expanses of mystical and spiritual understanding. If I suffer persecution, and confess my Christ before men, I am certain that he too will confess me before his Father who is in heaven. If famine is present, it cannot disturb me: for I have the bread of life which came down from heaven and refreshes hungering souls; nor can that bread ever fail: for it is perfect and eternal. Nakedness does not confound me: for I have put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and I hope to put on over it our habitation which is from heaven: ”For this mortal must put on immortality, and this corruptible put on incorruption. I shall not fear peril:

”For the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? and ”The Lord is the defender of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? An earthly sword cannot terrify me: for I have with me a stronger one, ”the sword of the Spirit, which is the word

of God," and with me is "the living and effectual word of God," which is "more piercing than any two-edged sword. If therefore the sword of the world comes upon my neck, it wins for me a greater love toward God. For I shall say to him that, "as it is written: For your sake we are put to death all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. For it does not suffice me to die for Christ for one hour, or to be tortured, but "all the day long," that is, for the whole time of my life. For if I pass my whole life in persecutions and perils, I shall say that "the sufferings of this time are not worthy of the glory to come, which shall be revealed in us. For brief is the time of this life, and slight is what we spend in persecutions; but eternal and perpetual is what we await in glory. And therefore "in all these things," he says, "we overcome," not by our own strength, but "through him who loved us. For while we hang upon his love, we do not receive the sensation of pain.

For his love, by which he loved us, and which has caught up our affection to himself, makes us not feel the torture of the body and the pain. Therefore then "in all these things we overcome. Something of this sort the bride too says to the Word in the Song of Songs, that "I am wounded with love. In this manner, then, our soul also, having received from Christ the wound of love, even if it hand over the body to the sword, will not feel the wounds of the flesh in comparison with the wound of love. 12. "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The Apostle seems to have shown two orders of those things which are accustomed to stir up temptations for men. And in those which we discussed earlier, the order of human temptations is understood to be described: concerning which he also said to the Corinthians, inasmuch as they could not bear greater things: "Let no temptation take hold of you but such as is human: and God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted above what you are able. But now in these words which we have in hand, he indicates not human temptations, but ones greater than human.

And therefore I think that in the earlier ones, when he had enumerated each single thing, at the end he says: "But in all these things we overcome. But in these temptations of the second order he does not say so confidently, "We overcome," but says very slightly that none of these "will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. For concerning human temptations, as being small and light, he confidently declares that we overcome them; but as for those higher ones, and more than human, even if we are not strong enough to overcome and lay them low (for this is the work of Christ alone, who "stripped the principalities and powers, triumphing over them in himself"), yet even this stands in the place of a victory, if, when they have hurled all the engines of their assaults against us, they nevertheless are not able to separate us from the love of God. But now let us try

to examine the individual items, and to open up as far as our strength allows what is to be thought about each expression of the Apostle.

Although the Apostle seems to have concealed in these things matters deeper than the power of our exposition suffices to bear, or than the requirement of brevity admits, let us nevertheless inquire whether all those things which the Apostle has enumerated, or only certain of them, carry this zeal or intention, that they strive to separate human souls from the love of God, and for that reason contrive against us all the things we suffer. For it seems that death perhaps can do this, that we be separated from the love of God, and angels, and principalities, and powers opposed to us without doubt, and things present, which are certainly slippery and perishable. And depth also can be understood similarly. But life, and things to come, and height, and any other creature — how these should contend to separate us from the love of God does not seem idle to explain. Unless perhaps someone should say that the Apostle speaks hyperbolically, that is, that not only by those things which can happen, but not even by those things which cannot happen at all, are we in any way turned aside from the love of God: for example, that if another life were given us than this which has been given by God, or if another hope of things to come were promised us, or another height, or even another creature than that which groans and suffers together for our sake — which certainly cannot happen — not even these could separate us from the love of God.

This, then, is one manner of exposition. Let us see, however, whether perhaps this other understanding may also be admitted. The ”death” of which he here speaks is to be taken as that one which we expounded above to be called the last enemy of Christ to be destroyed. And it is surely called death for this reason, that just as this common death separates the soul from the body, so also that one strives to separate the soul from the charity of God — and this indeed is the death of the soul. It can therefore come about that there is also some life belonging to that party which acts together with it to separate us from the charity of God: and this life is the life of sin. For unless this life were evil, the Apostle would never persuade us to die to sin, and to be baptized into the death of Christ, and to be buried together with him. It can be, then, that this is the life of sin, by which it desires to separate us from the charity of God. But I for my part think that each and every individual sin also has some life of its own within us: for every single vice is a life of sin. Therefore, the more vices are detected within us, the more lives of sins will appear to be in us. And perhaps it is for this reason that it was said: ”for your mercy is better than lives. ”Neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers.

It is readily at hand to understand those angels for whom eternal fire is said by the Savior to have been prepared along with the devil; and by principalities and powers, without doubt those against which we have our contest; or else those principalities and powers of which he says: ”But when he shall have destroyed every principality,

and power, and might. Among these there is also one called the prince of this world. After these he says, ”Nor things present,” or ”things at hand. This may seem to have been said of those whom the same Apostle elsewhere named ”the rulers of this world and of darkness”; or else that the pleasure and delight of present things, and the empty glory of this world, strive to lead us away ”from the charity of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. After these let us see what ”things to come” are, which indeed wish, but are not able, to separate Paul and those like him from the charity of God. This too seems to me to be twofold. For ”things to come” can be understood from that time in which he was writing these things, so that he would seem to say this: If any temptations, if any tribulations should come upon me, they will not be able to separate me from the charity of God.

Or else understand as ”things to come” those things which are going to meet those departing from this world, when the prince of this world, and the other powers which are under him, will contend to hold back the soul as it sets out from the body — but they will not be able to hold back those in whom ”perfect charity,” which is in Christ Jesus, ”casts out fear. And this sense will seem to be confirmed also by that Scripture which says: ”For while we are in the body, we are pilgrims from the Lord: for we desire rather to be pilgrims from the body, and to be present with the Lord”; and, ”we strive, whether absent or present, to please him” — calling us absent when we are placed in the body, and showing us present when we depart from the body; and he urges that the saints, even as they go forth from the body, strive to please God. If therefore perfect charity be in them, none of the things which are to come, in which God is to be pleased, will be able to separate them from it, since assuredly those will not please God who are so unstable in the charity of God that they can be separated from it. Let these things be said by us in a twofold manner concerning things to come. But it may be that there is also some third manner, higher than these, which whoever is able to investigate may judge worthy to be preferred to these.

Then he adds: ”Nor powers. This appears to be one species out of the many rational creatures, not leading its life in a mortal body, but like the angels, yet of another order than the angels are. These powers, then, also have their contest to separate us from the charity of God; but not even they, he says, will be able to, if it be rooted and founded. Likewise both ”height” and ”depth” assail us, as David also says: ”Many are they that make war upon me from on high” — doubtless when he was being pressed by the spirits of wickedness in the heavenly places; and as again he says: ”Out of the depths I have cried to you, O Lord” — when he was being assailed by those who are consigned to hell, and by the spirits of Gehenna. But not even these, says Paul, will be able to separate us from the charity of God. ”Nor,” he says, ”any other creature. It can be understood that he spoke of another creature besides this one which we see: for there is another, now invisible to us. But it can also be taken thus: Besides those things which I enumerated above, that is,

angels, and powers, and if there is any other creature — lest by enumerating each thing according to its species he should seem to draw out a long and superfluous discourse. Or else in another way.

Since indeed Paul knew that the creatures of God are many and innumerable, of which he himself had received not complete but partial knowledge, and of which not only the species but even the names are unknown in the present age — concerning which the same Apostle says elsewhere that the Savior was seated ”above every principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come” — on account of these, then, which he knows can be named not only in the present age but also in the age to come, he will be seen to have said: ”Nor will any other creature be able to separate us from the charity of God. Nevertheless, by all these things Paul shows the confidence of his own salvation, when he says that neither with angels opposing, nor with powers assailing, nor with things present or things to come struggling against him, nor with any creature whatsoever set against him, can he be torn away from the charity of God, nor does he conceive any fear of so many adversaries — so that he might truly show that perfect charity has already cast out fear from him as well. For he too once had fear, and was afraid lest perhaps he should fall:

and this man who now did not fear the wars of the heavenly powers, should they be stirred up against him, once feared his own flesh, and dreaded the snares arising from it, when he said, writing to the Corinthians: ”I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway. And therefore, above all other things, the snares of the flesh are to be dreaded, and that enemy who proceeds from ourselves is himself to be guarded against, until the soul comes to such progress that, bound fast to God by the sweetness of charity, it shudders at the blandishments of the body and the enticements of the flesh, having been made one spirit with God.

[§13] ”I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sadness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I myself was wishing to be anathema from Christ for the sake of my brothers, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, whose is the adoption of sons, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service, and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is God over all, blessed unto the ages. Paul, seeing that if, according to those things which he set forth above, he could be separated from the love of Christ by no power, whether heavenly or earthly, present or future, opposing him, it would seem contrary and incredible—what he was now proposing to say: that he wished to become anathema from that Christ whom he loved so inseparably, that is, to be made a stranger to him—lest he should seem to incur the mark of a lie,

he sends ahead a satisfaction, so that his word may in no way be doubted, and he says: ”I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit. But let us see why he said, ”I speak the truth in Christ,” as though showing that there is some truth which is not in Christ.

And see whether we can in some such way distinguish the truth which is in Christ from that which is not in Christ: for elsewhere too the same Apostle says, ”The truth of Christ is in me, that I do not lie. The truth of Christ, therefore, must be believed to be there where the remaining virtues also are, which are described as being Christ: that is, where righteousness is, where peace is, where the Word of God is, there also is the truth of Christ. But there is truth even in injustice: as if, for example, we should say that that demon of Python, which in the Acts of the Apostles is reported to have dwelt in a certain servant girl and to have cried out after the apostles, that ”these are servants of the Most High God, who announce to men the way of God”—there was truth in these words, for what was said was true; but that truth was not in Christ; and therefore Paul, turning to her, said: ”Be silent, and come out of her. But that also was truth which Caiaphas said: ”It is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish”; but nevertheless that truth was not in Christ. And therefore the Apostle, to distinguish it from that truth which is outside Christ, says that he speaks the truth in Christ. But this also, which he says, ”my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,” seems to me to bear a similar understanding.

For conscience renders testimony even to the Gentiles, according to what the same Apostle says in the earlier passages: ”their conscience rendering them testimony, and their thoughts among themselves accusing or even defending one another. In those, therefore, in whom their own thoughts have something to accuse, and conscience comes forward for testimony, it cannot be said that for evil deeds conscience renders testimony in the Holy Spirit. But in the Apostle, where thought no longer has anything to accuse, rightly does conscience render testimony in the Holy Spirit. Consider, however, the greatness of the apostolic breast. He cannot be separated from the love of God; what he speaks, he speaks in Christ; what he holds in his conscience is contained by the Holy Spirit. What heavens, I ask, what thrones, what most ample minds of the heavenly powers will be able to contain the whole Trinity in seats so ample? ”For,” he says, ”I have great sadness and continual sorrow in my heart. Very well, you have sadness; very well, you take sorrow at the perdition of your brothers ”who are kinsmen according to the flesh”; but is it to such a point that you wish to become anathema from Christ? And what does their salvation profit you, if you are separated from salvation? And how will you save others, if you yourself perish? It is not so, he says: rather, I have learned from my Master and Lord that ”he who wishes to save his soul will lose it; and he who loses it will find it.

What wonder, then, if the Apostle wishes to become anathema for his brothers, who knows that he who was in the form of God emptied himself of it, and took the form of a servant, and was made a curse for us? What wonder, then, if, when the Lord was made a curse for his servants, a servant should become anathema for his brothers? And this, I think, is what Moses also said to the Lord when the people had sinned: ”And now, if indeed you forgive them their sin, forgive; but if not, blot me out of the book of life which you have written. What then? Do you wish Paul to seem inferior to Moses? He asks to be blotted out of the book of life for his brothers; ought Paul not to wish to be anathema for his brothers? But perhaps someone may say that Moses, in offering this, deserved to obtain salvation for the people, whereas Paul indeed wishes it, but was not heard. What if I show you that Paul was heard even more than Moses? For all those who had gone out of Egypt through Moses fell in the desert. But the descendants of those who received the land of promise even now wander from it, exiles and outcasts. But hear what Paul says about Israel: ”I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, that blindness in part has befallen Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles should enter in, and so all Israel should be saved.

You see, therefore, that Paul was heard, and that because he offered himself as anathema, he deserved salvation for his brothers. And therefore it seems to me that he set down all those things beforehand—that he could by no power be torn away from the love of God—so that when he offers himself as anathema for his brothers, you should not judge his fall to be possible: but just as he who is inseparable from the Father by nature, and immortal, came into death and descended into the lower regions, so this man too, imitating his Master, though he cannot be separated from the love of Christ, becomes anathema from Christ for his brothers—by devotion, certainly, not by transgression. But that the Israelites are Paul’s ”kinsmen according to the flesh” needs no exposition. ”Whose,” he says, ”is the adoption of sons. For the sons of Israel were adopted by God at that time ”when the Most High divided the nations, and scattered the sons of Adam according to the number of the angels of God, and the Lord’s portion was Jacob, and Israel the cord of his inheritance. This, then, is the adoption of sons. ”And the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law. Concerning the glory of the law that was given, it has often already been said, as the Apostle himself also says: ”For if that which is being abolished is through glory,” that is, the Old Testament, ”much more is that which remains in glory,” namely the preaching of the Gospel.

But as for what he says, ”the covenants and the giving of the law,” it might perhaps seem that he is saying one and the same thing. For the law which was given is itself also called a covenant. But I think the distinction is this: that the giving of the law was indeed one, and took place once through Moses; whereas covenants were established frequently. For as often as they sinned and were cast off, so often do they appear to have been disinherited. And again, as often as God, being

made propitious once more, called them back and led them into the inheritance of his own possession, so often must he be believed to have restored the covenants and to have written them down as heirs. ”And the worship, and the promises. By ”worship” he means the priestly offices; by ”the promises,” those which were made to the fathers, and which are hoped to be given to those who through faith are called sons of Abraham. Yet it is certain that also according to the flesh, from that very race, that is, from the Israelite race, there came not only the fathers but also Christ, as he says too through the prophet: ”Woe to them, for my flesh is from them. But why ”woe to them”?

Because Jesus was born ”for the fall and for the rising again of many,” and because he was rejected by those whose flesh he was, and was received by the Gentiles by whom he was not known, as he says also through David: ”A people whom I did not know has served me. Of them, therefore, is Christ also according to the flesh. ”Who is God over all, blessed for ever. That Christ is one thing according to the flesh and another according to the spirit, he had already indicated in the earlier parts of this Epistle, where he says: ”Who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was designated Son of God in power, according to the spirit of sanctification. And how he is Son of God according to the spirit, and son of David according to the flesh, we expounded there more fully as far as our powers allowed. Him, therefore, whom he there called Son of God according to the spirit, here, as the order of teaching advances and his hearers make progress, he declares to be himself God, ”who is over all, blessed. And I wonder how certain people, reading what the same Apostle says elsewhere: ”One God the Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things,” deny that the Son of God ought to be professed as God, lest they should seem to speak of two gods.

And what will they do with this passage of the Apostle, in which Christ is openly declared to be ”God over all”? But those who think thus do not notice that, just as he did not say that the Lord Jesus Christ is one Lord in such a way that on this account God the Father should not be called Lord, so also he did not say that God the Father is one God in such a way that God the Son should not be believed to be God. For the Scripture is true which says: ”Know that the Lord himself is God. Yet both are one God, because the Son has no other beginning of divinity than the Father; but the Son is, as Wisdom says, the ”purest emanation” of that one Paternal fount itself. Christ, then, is ”God over all. Which ”all”? Those, without doubt, of which we spoke a little before: ”above principalities, and powers, and virtues, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come. But he who is over all has no one above himself. For he is not after the Father, but from the Father. And this same thing the Wisdom of God gave us to understand concerning the Holy Spirit also, where it says: ”The Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole world; and he who contains all things has knowledge of the voice.

If therefore the Son is called ”God over all,” and the Holy Spirit is recorded as containing all things, while God the Father is he ”from whom are all things,” it is plainly shown that the nature and substance of the Trinity is one, which is over all.

[§14] ”But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are of Israel, these are Israelites; nor are all sons because they are the seed of Abraham: but ’In Isaac shall your seed be called’: that is, not those who are the sons of the flesh, these are the sons of God; but those who are the sons of the promise are reckoned as the seed. Since he had said above that for his brethren, ”who are his kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites,” he would wish even to become anathema, on the ground that theirs was both the adoption of sons, and the giving of the law, and the promises — concerning these he now says that the word of God has not failed, that is, the promise which was made to them has not come to nothing. For whoever shall have been the true Israel — not one deriving his descent from Abraham merely by carnal lineage (”For not those who are the sons of the flesh, these also are the sons of God”), but one who descends from Abraham according to the promise of faith — he it is who also obtains the promises of God. For of the race of Israel there are many, but not all are called Israel. For Israel was so named from seeing God. For thus Jacob himself says: ”I have seen the Lord face to face, and my soul has been saved. Therefore, because he saw God, he was called Israel.

But whoever does not see him who said, ”He who sees me, sees the Father also,” cannot be called Israel. ”Nor are all also sons because they are the seed of Abraham. This, evidently, was already being signified then in Abraham, when, though he had many sons — whom the Apostle calls sons of the flesh — the posterity of his seed was placed in Isaac alone, who was the son of the promise. And so now too, those who after the manner of Isaac are sons of the promise — that is, of that faith through which Abraham deserved to receive the promise of the future inheritance — they alone are reckoned as the seed; for in them the succession of the inheritance is declared.

[§15] ”For this is the word of promise: At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only so, but Rebecca also, having conceived by one act of intercourse, from Isaac our father. For when they were not yet born, nor had done anything good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said to her, that the elder shall serve the younger, as it is written: Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated. The Apostle set out to pursue this point: that although the people of Israel has been rejected through unbelief, nevertheless those promises of God which had been made toward them have not fallen away and been rendered void; and he teaches that, although Abraham had many sons, the promise was made in Isaac alone. ”For not they,” he says, ”who are the children of the flesh, these are the children of God. And he strives to show how Isaac is not a son of the flesh, but is a son of God; and

he returns to those things which are written about him in Genesis. ”This,” he says, ”is the word of promise: At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son. Therefore, he says, Isaac is not born through the origin of a fleshly nativity, seeing that Abraham’s body was already accounted dead, and Sarah’s womb was already dead, as was said above;

but through the power of him who said, ”At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son. Rightly, therefore, he is called not a son of the flesh but of God, who is born from the coming and the word of God. This reasoning, then, he says, must be received not only concerning Isaac, but concerning Jacob as well. For Rebecca too, he says, did not bring forth her offspring according to the order of fleshly nativity. For when she had conceived twins from a single act of intercourse with Isaac, before the birth had yet taken place, and before any deeds of the boys, good or evil, had been done among men, the divine election is held toward Jacob, and it is said, ”that the elder shall serve the younger,” and, ”Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated. And why these things were so spoken, he teaches: ”That according to election,” he says, ”the purpose of God might stand, it was said not of works, but of him that calleth”; that is, that not those who are children of the flesh, but those who are children of God, these should be reckoned for the seed. For just as there, out of many children of the flesh, Isaac is chosen by God to be adopted into a son of God, so also here, out of two, the younger, Jacob, is chosen, to be adopted into a son of God;

and thus it becomes true that the promises of God stand firm not in the children of the flesh, but in the children of God. But all these things look to this, that the Apostle may prove this: that if either Isaac or Jacob had been chosen by God for those merits which they had acquired while placed in the flesh, and had deserved to be justified through the works of the flesh, then surely the grace of their merit could pertain also to a posterity of flesh and blood. But as it is, since their election was made not from works, but from the purpose of God, and from the free decision of him who calls, the grace of the promises is fulfilled not in the children of the flesh, but in the children of God — that is, in those who, like them, are chosen from the purpose of God, and adopted into sons. For in these also is fulfilled that which we have already expounded above, that ”whom he foreknew, them he also predestined; and whom he predestined, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. And whatever we have expounded above concerning these words, the same suffices fully and abundantly for the explanation of the present passage also, lest by repeating the same things we should beget weariness in our readers.

[§16] ”What then shall we say? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he says to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will show compassion to whom I will show compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth,

nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: For this very purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show in thee my power, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. Therefore he has mercy on whom he wills, and whom he wills he hardens. You say therefore to me: Why then does he still find fault? For who resists his will? It is fitting that the reader of these things should recall rather attentively that comparison which we set down in the earlier books concerning the manner in which the apostolic discourse is dispensed: that, as in a certain royal house which is laid out with manifold entrances and exits, one passes from one chamber into another in such a way that scarcely any signs appear of the one entering or of the one going out — so also Paul seems to open up the secrets of divine things a little, yet not to spread them out plainly and openly.

And so, in view of what he had said above concerning Isaac and Jacob — that by election and from the purpose of God, before they had done any work good or evil, God had said, either of the former, ”At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son,” or of the latter, ”Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated” — when in the present chapter he had introduced a certain person as though contradicting him and raising a question, and said, ”Is there unrighteousness with God? and had answered, ”God forbid,” but ”it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy”: and if he chose Pharaoh for this reason, that he might show in him the might of his power; and if he himself has mercy on whom he wills, and whom he wills he hardens — why then, he says, does he find fault with men? and why is the one who sins blamed, when such is his will concerning each one? To the one, then, who raises these objections and others like them, and who thrusts himself rather impudently and importunately into the bedchamber of this mystery, he meets him with the rebuke of a most worthy exclamation, and says: ”O man, who art thou that repliest against God? As if he were saying: Who are you who plunge into the palace of the king, and have dared to penetrate the secrets of the inner chamber?

Therefore let us too in such matters, standing as it were in a royal court, walk with suspended foot, and pass over few things in speech and more in silence, having the Apostle Paul himself made our teacher and guide of this journey. So then, in the person of one contradicting him, the Apostle says: ”Is there unrighteousness with God? and at once at the outset he answers, ”God forbid”; so that to all the other things which are to be objected in the person of the contradictor, the Apostle may always be seen to answer, ”God forbid. This objector, then, uses also the words of Moses, in which the Lord says to him: ”I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will show compassion to whom I will show compassion. But if this is so, he says, then salvation is not of him that wills nor of him that runs, but of him on whom God has mercy. For to Pharaoh also, he says, it is said, ”For this very purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show in thee my power, and that my name might

be proclaimed in all the earth"; so that from this it may seem to be shown that, if Pharaoh was chosen for this, that through him the power of God might be declared to men, it was not in his own power that he perished. And after everything he adds: "Therefore he has mercy on whom he wills, and whom he wills he hardens.

This, he says, is what you who contradict assert: that God complains and accuses men without cause. For if he himself chooses whom he wills, and casts off whom he wills, who resists the will of him through whom are all things? Without doubt this contradiction is aiming at this: that there is no freedom of choice in man, and that no one has [... in that little book where we discussed the freedom of the will, each several point has been examined according to our ability, things which suffice more than enough for instruction. Nevertheless, we will even now briefly remind the reader of some of the things said there. What he said, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy," is to be taken as David also says in the Psalm: "Unless the Lord build the house, they have labored in vain that build it. Unless the Lord keep the city, he watches in vain that keeps it. In which he shows, not that the one who builds the house does nothing and is idle, and that the Lord thus builds it; but rather that the man himself expends as much care and labor as lies in a man, while it belongs to God that, with all obstacles removed, the work should come to its accomplishment.

Since, then, we are taught by this that man indeed expends labor and care, but God grants success and accomplishment to the work, it is surely pious and religious to attribute the sum even of that work which lies in man to God rather than to man. So also, when Paul was planting and Apollos watering, God is said to give the increase; and it is added: "So then neither he that plants is anything, nor he that waters, but God that gives the increase. Thus, then, we can say in the present passage also: and so neither he that runs is anything, nor he that wills, but God that gives the accomplishment. For he who wills, and he who runs, seem to be what he is who plants and he who waters; but the Apostle says that he who plants and he who waters are nothing: not that they do nothing, but that in comparison with God, who gives the increase or the accomplishment to the work, they are said to be nothing. But let us also see of what sort is this which is said to Pharaoh: "For this very purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show in thee my power. It is certain that God not only knows the purpose and will of each one, but even foreknows it. And knowing and foreknowing, as a good and just steward, he uses the impulses and purpose of each one for accomplishing those works which the mind and will of each one chooses.

As if, for example, we should say: If a head of a household be wise and just, and have many servants, will he not, with all the shrewdness possible, consider which of them has a mind fit for tilling the field, and assign these to the field? and whose is fit for trading, whose also for tending the flock, whose indeed for personal service,

and whose temperament he will approve as suited for keeping watch over his own bedchamber, and thus, being wise, assign each one to the duties that fit him? But since it is not hidden from him — whether he be a head of a household or a king — that it is necessary that at times his subjects rebel and break the laws of discipline, and on this account need correction and stripes, it is necessary therefore that he choose out of all those dispositions fit for this too, if there be any more fiercely stirred, which, though carried along by their own impulses, nevertheless confer the correction necessary for offenders. Let us suppose, then, that this head of a household, or this king, has seen the time at which those must be corrected who have committed many things against morals and discipline, and has chosen someone most savage, and much more savage than those very ones who are to be corrected, one who for his own crimes is now worthy not of correction but of death.

And willing that his destruction should profit for the correction of the rest, he sends him to those whom he desires to be corrected by his death, and says to him: ”For this very purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show in thee my power, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. For see that he did not say, ”For this very purpose have I made thee” — otherwise the fault would seem to be referred to the Creator — but he says, ”For this very purpose have I raised thee up”: that is, so that through the malice of your soul, which you acquired for yourself by living unbridled and without the fear of God, both a useful and fruitful correction may be inflicted upon others, and upon yourself a most notorious destruction may be brought as an example to posterity. But as for what he says, ”Therefore he has mercy on whom he wills, and whom he wills he hardens,” he seems to take it from what is written in Exodus. For there he says: ”I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, that he may not let the people go. Now Pharaoh’s heart was hardened in this way. God was unwilling to bring upon him a sudden and full vengeance. For although he was of consummate malice, nevertheless through his patience God had not shut off even from him the possibility of conversion: and therefore he uses upon him first lighter stripes, and then such as grow gradually heavier.

But what God was doing through patience, by this the man was hardened unto contempt, storing up for himself a greater wrath, so that there may fitly be said to him that which the Apostle writes: ”Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, and patience, and long-suffering, not knowing that the patience of God leads you to repentance? But according to your hardness and impenitent heart you treasure up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath. Therefore God does not harden whom he wills, but he who has been unwilling to yield to his patience is hardened. It is superfluous, then, what you say to the Apostle, O you who oppose: ”Why then does he still find fault? For who resists his will? It is certain indeed that no one withstands the will of God; but it is fitting that we know his will to be just and right. For that we should be good or evil is a matter of our own will; but to what sort of

stripes the evil man is destined, and to what sort of glory the good man, is a matter of God's will.

[§17] "O man, who are you who answer back to God? Does the thing formed say to him who formed it: Why have you made me thus? Or does not the potter have power over the clay, out of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another indeed unto dishonor? We read also in the Gospels that those who insolently and faithlessly inquired of the Lord by what power he did the things he was doing, and who had given him this power, were not held worthy even of an answer. Likewise in the present passage too we see the Apostle moved against insolent questions, and, through the things he answers, confounding the obstinacy of the one who puts them forward. For he says: "O man, who are you who answer back to God? For man is to God what clay is to the potter. And just as, in the case of a worthless servant, if perhaps it seems to the master that some work ought to be done which is full of both reason and usefulness, but the servant, unwilling to work, begins to scrutinize what the master commands and to demand of his master: Why do you order this work to be done? Whom does it profit? For whom is it necessary? — what answer will be so fitting for such a contumacious servant as that it be said to him: "Who are you who answer back" to your master? So it pleases him; so it seems good to the master.

But I do not think that if a faithful and prudent servant asks, wishing to understand and to marvel at his master's wisdom, it would be said to him: "Who are you? Indeed, when Daniel the prophet had desired to know the will of the Lord — whence also he was called "a man of desires" — it was not said to him: "Who are you? but an angel was sent who might instruct him concerning all the dispensations and judgments of God. And we too, therefore, if we desire to know something of the secret and hidden things of God, if we are men of desires and not of contentions, let us faithfully and humbly seek out the judgments of God inserted rather secretly in the divine letters. For on this account also the Lord said: "Search the Scriptures," knowing that these things are opened not to those who, occupied in other business, either hear or read them in passing, but to those who with an upright and simple heart, with unremitting labor and continual vigils, search the divine Scriptures more deeply — among whom I well know that I am not. Yet if there be anyone who seeks in this way, he will find. But let us also, according to our strength, turn to the things we have in hand. "Does the thing formed say," he says, "to him who formed it: Why have you made me thus?

Or does not the potter have power over the clay, out of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another indeed unto dishonor? And in the prophet Jeremiah we read something of this sort, where he is commanded by God to go into the potter's house and to see him forming: namely, gathering up again the vessel that had fallen from his hands, he formed it once more according to his own will. "And

the word of the Lord came to him," he says, "saying: Can I not do with the house of Israel as this potter does? And Wisdom says: "The furnace tests the potter's vessels, and temptation tests just men. Our God, therefore, has power over us just as the potter has over the clay, to make out of the same lump vessels unto honor and vessels unto dishonor. For you, then, who insolently answer back to God, let it suffice to have heard these things. But whoever desires to behold the works of God's wisdom in his dispensations, let him hear Paul, who was privy to the divine secrets, discoursing in another place about these very matters. "But in a great house," he says, "there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of clay, and some indeed unto honor, but others unto dishonor. If therefore anyone shall cleanse himself from these, he will be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and useful to the Lord, prepared for every good work.

Do you hear how, among those in whom Paul had no insolent contradictor, he disclosed the differences of the vessels? For there, where the hearer was not worthy but was a contradictor, he mentions only vessels of clay; but here he says there are also vessels of gold, and of silver, and of wood, and of clay: and some, he says, are unto honor, while others are made unto dishonor. Likewise also, where he recalled the reason why some are made unto honor and others unto dishonor: there he kept silent, here he disclosed it. "For if anyone shall cleanse himself," he says, "from these" — without doubt from the filth of sin — "he will be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and useful to the Lord, prepared for every good work. It remains, therefore, that he who has not cleansed himself, and has not washed away the stains of sin through repentance, is a vessel unto dishonor. And if he should also increase his malice, and through hardness of mind and an impenitent heart utterly scorn to be converted, he will now be not only a vessel of dishonor, but also a vessel of wrath. Thus, then, the reason which he closes off there to those who demand it unworthily, he opens up here to those who desire it worthily: and through it that also which he set forth a little before concerning Jacob and Esau is more openly explained.

For that Jacob might be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and useful to the Lord, prepared for every good work, his soul had cleansed itself: and God, seeing his purity, and having power out of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor, made Jacob indeed — who, as we have said, had cleansed himself — a vessel unto honor; but Esau, whose soul he saw was not so pure nor so simple, he made out of the same lump a vessel unto dishonor. And that you may know that it was on account of the purity and simplicity of his soul that Jacob was made a vessel unto honor, hear what testimony of simplicity the divine Scripture bears to him. "And Jacob," it says, "was a simple man, dwelling at home. For this reason, therefore, the Apostle says concerning them that, before they were born, it is said of them: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated,"

[§18] ”But if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he prepared unto his glory: whom also he called, even us, not only from among the Jews, but also from among the Gentiles, as he says in Hosea: I will call that which was not my people, my people; and her that was not beloved, beloved; and her that had not obtained mercy, her that had obtained mercy. And it shall be: In the place where it was said to them, You are not my people, there they shall be called sons of the living God. We have often given warning about the Apostle’s unpolished modes of expression and their deficiencies, and this is found no less in the present passage. For what he says at the beginning of the chapter, ”But if God, willing,” is not brought round to any conclusion. For instance, as he himself said elsewhere: ”But if the first-fruits are holy, so also is the lump”: here he renders no such thing, but has left that conjunction hanging as it were; and even if it is not taken up, a clearer sense will be given without it — for instance, if we read it thus:

”God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy. In this the following seems to be understood: that while God bears with and patiently endures the unbelieving and the faithless, he makes known to men both his patience and his power — his patience, while he endures them long, in case they should perhaps come to their senses and be converted; his power, while at some point he punishes, and does not leave outrages altogether unavenged. And again, ”upon vessels of mercy” — that is, upon those who have cleansed themselves from every stain of sin, from which ”no one is clean, not even if his life has been of a single day” — he makes known the riches of his glory: which vessels he prepared unto glory not by some unreasoning or fortuitous grace, but because they had themselves purged themselves of the aforesaid stains. But as to what he adds, ”whom also he called, even us,” it stands for what he would have said thus: Just as we, whom he called ”not only from among the Jews, but also from among the Gentiles. For he seems to have pursued the preceding remarks as concerning Pharaoh, who was a vessel of wrath, and the children of Israel, who were vessels of mercy.

Here, therefore, what he adds — ”whom also he called, even us, not only from among the Jews, but also from among the Gentiles” — seems to take up a comparison: that is, so that it seems to be said thus: Just as we too are vessels of mercy, whom he called not only from among the Jews, but also from among the Gentiles. Let these things be said here so far as pertains to the order of the apostolic discourse itself and the explanation of the words. Now, going back over it briefly, let us also seek out something concerning the inner meaning. How, then, does God make his wrath known? Through vessels, he says, of wrath fitted for destruction. I am myself astonished within myself when I contemplate the design of the Holy

Spirit in the divine volumes. For he says that the wrath of God, which is foreign to his nature, is made known to men, as the present passage of the Apostle indicates; but his goodness and sweetness, which is proper to his nature, he records as being hidden and concealed, as David says: ”How great is the abundance of your sweetness, O Lord, which you have hidden for those who fear you. What cause, then, shall we assign for God’s making his wrath manifest to men, and concealing his sweetness?

Doubtless he knows that the race of men is frail and prone to falling through negligence, and that it is more expedient for them to be under the fear of wrath than to be let loose by the hope of God’s kindness and sweetness — as the Wisdom of God also says: ”He who spares the rod hates his son. For if you strike him with the rod, he will not die: but you will save his soul from death. God therefore makes his power known while he chastises and rebukes the impious, so that, according to the saying of Scripture, ”when the pestilent man is scourged, the innocent becomes more shrewd. And he also makes known ”the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he prepared unto glory. The riches of God become known when his mercy is shown toward those who are despised among men and are lowly, who hope not in their own riches nor in their own power, but in the Lord. Just as at that time the nation of the Hebrews, despaired of among men and cast off, obtained mercy from God; so therefore now also the people of the Gentiles, who were despised and despaired of by those who glory in circumcision, has obtained mercy. But this is what we ought to attend to more sharply: that those others also obtained mercy, and were called the people of God, and were beloved of God;

but because they did not know how to keep the grace they had received, it is said to them: ”In the things wherein the dwelling of Israel committed adultery, I put her away, and gave her the bill of divorce into her hands”; and again elsewhere: ”You have become a surfeit to me, I will no longer forgive your sins. And through Jeremiah the Lord says: ”My inheritance has become to me like the cave of a hyena. Lest perhaps we too, who were not the people of God, but through the riches of his glory he called us his people, and who were not beloved, but have been made beloved, and sons of the living God — if we do not walk as sons of light and sons of God, if we do not so act as the people of God, ”that men, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father who is in heaven” — it is to be feared that we may incur that saying of the Apostle in which he says: ”For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. As he says in Hosea: I will call that which was not my people, my people; and her that was not beloved, beloved; and her that had not obtained mercy, her that had obtained mercy. And it shall be: In the place where it was said to them, You are not my people, there they shall be called sons of the living God.

This testimony, indeed, which the Apostle takes from Hosea, so far as pertains to the passage of the prophet itself, seems to be spoken not about the Gentiles, but about the people of Israel themselves. But, as we said above, Paul takes his example from a similar case, in order to show that, just as it was said to them once, when they had been cast off and despaired of, first: ”You are not my people, and I am not your God”; and after this it is added: ”And it shall be: In the place in which it was said to them, You are not my people, they too shall be called sons of the living God” — so, he says, also ”we, whom he called not only from among the Jews, but also from among the Gentiles,” who before were not his people, now he has called us his people, ”and her that was not beloved, beloved; and in the place where it was said” to us, ”You are not my people, there they shall be called sons of the living God. But perhaps those who are of the circumcision may inquire of us and say: Where indeed was it said to you that you are not the people of God, so that there you should be called sons of the living God?

For they will assert that God spoke these things in Judaea (for in it alone is God known), and that these things have no bearing on us, because ”the law speaks to those who are under the law. Nay rather, I shall point out a place far more worthy, where it was both fitting and possible for God to speak. For God will not consistently be said to speak on mountains and crags and any earthly places whatever: but God speaks in the mind of man, in the rational faculty, and in the governing part of the heart; and there, when unworthy acts alien to God are censured by the conscience convicting them, there, I say, it is pronounced, there it is said to each individual, that ”you are not my people. But if anyone cleanses and purifies himself from these things, and ”the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,” begins to guard his heart, there — that is, in the secret place of the heart — having been made peaceable, he will be called a son of God, with his conscience bearing witness.

[§19] ”But Isaiah cries out on behalf of Israel: If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved. For he is completing and shortening the word in equity: because the Lord will make a shortened word upon the earth; and as Isaiah foretold: Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we should have become as Sodom, and should have been made like unto Gomorrah. What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who were not pursuing righteousness, have laid hold of righteousness — that righteousness, however, which is of faith. But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law. Why? Because it was not of faith, but as it were of works: they stumbled at the stone of stumbling, as it is written: Behold, I place in Sion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense: and whoever believes in him shall not be put to shame. After he had, through that wisdom of God which Paul speaks among the perfect, set forth the secret and hidden things of the divine dispensation, and had shown by what reasoning and in what order God either displays his wrath in the vessels of wrath or the riches of his glory in the vessels of mercy;

and had taught that each one becomes a vessel of wrath from this, that by his own hardness and impenitent heart he treasures up for himself wrath in the day of wrath, while the vessels of mercy are those who have cleansed themselves from these things and have prepared themselves for every good work — now, in order to confirm these very things with greater authority, he teaches that they were prescribed also in the prophets: ”Isaiah,” he says, ”cries out on behalf of Israel: If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved. For the prophet, foreseeing things to come, saw that very many of Israel — and especially those who are compared to the sand of the sea — would through their own hardness and impenitent heart be ”vessels of wrath fitted for destruction,” not believing in their own life, but crucifying the Lord of majesty. ”If therefore,” he says, ”they be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved. Those who are not saved are as the sand of the sea; but the remnant which shall be saved are as the stars of heaven. For the word of the promise which was made to Abraham contains both: ”Your seed,” he says, ”shall be as the sand of the sea, and as the stars of heaven. And this is what he says: ”For he is completing and shortening the word in equity: because the Lord will make a shortened word upon the earth.

The word is shortened where many are called but few are chosen. And we may also call the word of the whole teaching ”shortened,” in that what formerly the Law and the Prophets contained in the breadth of their precepts, the Lord, when he came, pronounced and said: ”You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with all your strength; and your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets” — in which he plainly shortened the Prophets and the Law into these two sayings. The ”shortened word” can also be said to be the faith of the creed which is handed down to believers, in which the sum of the whole mystery is contained, bound together in few words. ”And as Isaiah foretold,” he says, ”Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we should have become as Sodom, and should have been made like unto Gomorrah. What seed does Isaiah say was left by the Lord? That, without doubt, which the same Apostle expounds elsewhere, when he says that it was said to Abraham: ”To you will I give this land, and to your seed. He did not say: And to seeds, as in many; but, to your seed, as in one, which is Christ. This, then, is what Isaiah says:

”Unless the Lord had left us a seed” — that is, unless he had given us Christ, to be born from us — ”we should have been as Sodom,” so far as concerns the magnitude of the impiety, except that something even graver was done among the Israelites. For the men of Sodom are recorded as unchaste and shameless toward their guests; but the people of Israel showed themselves sacrilegious toward him who, though he is the Lord of majesty, willed both to be called and to be their brother. Unless, therefore, the Lord had left that seed, through which a remnant might be saved and the vessels of mercy be saved, that people would have perished like Sodom.

And yet it is not idly that Isaiah named what was left a ”seed. For that is called seed which is sown in the earth and yields manifold fruit: teaching by this that Christ too was to be sown, that is, to be buried in the earth, and rising thence to bring forth the most abundant fruit of the whole multitude of the Church, as the Lord himself also says: ”Unless a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it bears no fruit; but if it die, it bears much fruit. ”What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who were not pursuing righteousness, have laid hold of righteousness — that righteousness, however, which is of faith.

Perhaps this may seem contrary either to those things we said above, that each one should cleanse and purge himself, that he may become a useful vessel and a vessel of mercy; or to those things we discussed earlier, that the Gentiles too make use of the natural law, in which without doubt righteousness also is contained. How then does he say here that the Gentiles, who were not pursuing righteousness, have laid hold of righteousness? See, then, whether we can answer in this way. It is one thing to pursue, another to have implanted. He is said to pursue who by teaching and much reading desires to attain something; whence also from ”pursuing” (sectando) those teachings are called ”sects” (sectae) which are learned by the tradition of men. The Gentiles, then, because they did not have the law so written on tablets or in books, are not said to have pursued righteousness; yet they had it implanted, which the natural law taught them. For that reason, therefore, they were near to that righteousness which is of faith, that is, to Christ. ”But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law. This passage too, as we said above must be observed, names ”law” in different senses within one and the same verse. For it is certain that Israel pursued the law of righteousness according to the letter, but did not attain to the law. What law? Without doubt, that of the spirit.

For the Apostle would not say this, that they did not attain to the law which they pursued and held and possessed. He gives, then, the reason why Israel could not attain to the law. ”Because it was not of faith,” he says, ”but as it were of works. Concerning the faith of Christ and the works of the law we have discussed abundantly at the beginning of this Epistle; and therefore, lest we repeat the same things too often, let us explain the present passage with a few words of the Apostle himself, in which he says: ”For being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they have not been subject to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law, unto righteousness for everyone who believes. Because, therefore, they pursued the law not according to the works of God’s righteousness, but according to the works of their own righteousness, therefore ”they stumbled at the stone of stumbling, of which it is written: Behold, I place in Sion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense: and he who has believed in him shall not be put to shame. But it should be known that in the prophet Isaiah this testimony is written thus: ”Behold, I send into the foundations of Sion a precious stone, chosen,

a cornerstone, glorious, into its foundations; and whoever shall believe in him shall not be put to shame.

The Apostle, however, inserted ”a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense” into this testimony from another passage of the same prophet Isaiah, in which it is written thus: ”And you shall not meet him as a stone of stumbling, nor as a stone of ruin”; and excerpting from both passages what seemed suitable to his assertions, he fitted them together. Nevertheless, since we find the Lord Jesus addressed by very many names — but good and salutary ones — it may perhaps seem strange why in this passage which the Apostle took from the prophet Isaiah he is named a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense; since surely to the good Lord and to the Son of the good Father whatever things are good and salutary ought to be applied: as peace, and righteousness, and truth, and the door by which one enters to the Father, and shepherd, and lion of the tribe of Judah, or lion’s whelp who is roused from sleep, or sanctification, or redemption, and other things of this sort which seem to befit his dignity. But see whether we can also show of ”the stone of stumbling and rock of offense” how far it can fittingly be applied to him. ”Stumbling” and ”offense” (scandalum) signify nearly one and the same thing. For a ”scandal” is so called when some obstacle is found in the road which impedes the step of one walking or climbing. From this, then, ”scandal” is derived.

Since therefore those who were in Sion, walking in ways that were not good, were running with hurried foot along the path of perdition, encouraging one another in their evils — as the Prophet says, because ”the sinner is praised in the desires of his soul, and he who is wicked is blessed” — our Lord and Savior, when he came, began to reprove their ways and to say: ”Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees”; and again: ”Woe to you rich”; and again: ”Woe to you, Jerusalem, who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you. But saying also many things like these, and reproving them, he began to impede their ways of perdition, and became to them a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, not allowing them to enter the broad way which leads to death. So finally it is written also in the prophet Hosea concerning those who walk the path of sin: ”Because of this,” he says, ”behold, I will hedge up her way with stakes, and I will block her ways, and she shall not find her path. Let us set forth again, then, if it seems good, in our midst Paul himself, who, having once received letters from the priests, was proceeding to Damascus to bring all men and women who believed in Christ bound to Jerusalem. When therefore he was travelling that road of sin, the Lord Jesus met him on the way, and for a time struck him with blindness;

and he became to him — so far as regards that very purpose for which he was going there — a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, so that he could not complete that journey of sin which he had undertaken, but being converted might believe

in him who had shut off his way and blocked it with certain stakes of threatening; and believing in him, might not be put to shame.

Commentary on Romans — Book 8

Latin source: J.-P. Migne (ed.), Patrologia Graeca 14 (Rufinus's Latin version of Origen's Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos). This English translation is in the public domain.

BOOK 8

[§1] "Brethren, the desire of my heart indeed, and my prayer to God is made for them unto salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of the justice of God, and seeking to establish their own justice, they have not been subject to the justice of God" (77). Both from the beginning, and as the text of the Epistle proceeds, we have said that Paul at one time speaks on behalf of the Gentiles, at another also on behalf of Israel. Since, therefore, in those things which were recently expounded he made use of many testimonies of the prophets against Israel, so that he brought forward from Isaiah: "Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we should have become as Sodom, and should have been made like unto Gomorrha; and again: "If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: and to these he adds (64-65), that "Israel, following after the law of justice, did not attain to the law; therefore now, wishing again to console his own people, and through this to invite them to faith, he says: "Brethren, the desire of my heart indeed, and my prayer to God is made for them unto salvation. And he shows the cause why his desire and prayer is held before God on their behalf.

"(66-67) For I bear them witness," he says, "that they have indeed a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. Although, he says, they are entangled in so many and such great evils of their own sins, nevertheless there is in them an unspeakable zeal and emulation of God. And this cause moved me to entreat God on their behalf, that at least at the end they may at some time attain to salvation. For they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. And he proves in what way they have a zeal of God not according to knowledge: because "being ignorant," he says, "of the justice of God," they submit to their own justice. It profits little, therefore,

to have a zeal of God and not to have the knowledge of that zeal. Accordingly the Jews, thinking that they were acting with zeal for God, became sacrilegious against the Son of God: because they were not zealous according to knowledge, as was Phinees the son of Eleazar, who, being zealous according to knowledge, slew the Madianite woman together with the Israelite who was fornicating with her: and as was Elias, who said: ”With zeal I have been zealous for the Lord God omnipotent of Israel, because the children of Israel have forsaken thee, they have slain thy prophets, and overthrown thy altars;

and as was Mathathias, of whom it is written in the first book of Machabees, that ”he was zealous in the law of God, and his reins trembled, and his fury went up according to judgment. The zeal and emulation of all these was according to knowledge, but the zeal of the Jews was not according to knowledge, for this reason: because being ignorant of the justice of God, they were attempting to fulfil their own, that is, that which seemed justice to men; whereas it would surely rather have been fitting for them to obey the justice of God, which is Christ. But see now whether perhaps this saying may seem to be spoken not to them alone, that they ”have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For the Apostle can likewise say of others also, that ”I bear them witness” that they have the fear of God, but not according to knowledge: and of others, that they have the love of God, but not according to knowledge. For if anyone have an affection toward God, but be ignorant that charity ought to be patient, kind, not envious, not dealing perversely, not puffed up, not ambitious, not seeking the things that are her own: and if he have not these things and things like to these in his charity, but love God in affection alone, it will fittingly be said to him also that he has the love of God, but not according to knowledge.

And likewise it can be said of another, that he has the faith of God, but not according to knowledge, if he be ignorant that ”faith without works is dead: and that the faith of God is not in words alone, which are sometimes learned as composed or written by another, but in such a disposition of mind as she had who said within herself: ”If I shall touch the hem of his garment, I shall be saved. If anyone therefore have not faith in such a way as to show by his good acts in whom he believes, it can be said to him also that he has the faith of God, but not according to knowledge. It can be said of another too that he has the chastity of God, but not according to knowledge. And another has care for the poor, but not according to knowledge: namely, if he wishes to be praised by men. And another can be called abstinent, but not according to knowledge, if he fasts for this reason, that he may be pleasing to men. And thus in each single thing that we do, unless we do it according to knowledge and understanding, it can be said to us that we have a zeal for a good work, but not according to knowledge. And therefore attention must especially be given to knowledge, lest the matter turn out unhappily for us, so that, being placed

in faith, we be cheated of faith, and having zeal for good things, we fall away from good things.

But do you wish to know that a person can, if he have not knowledge, come to nothing in faith? Hear Paul himself saying to certain persons: ”Unless you have believed in vain. It has happened, therefore, that those have believed in vain who do not give attention to knowledge, so as to receive also, in that which they have believed, the understanding of the truth. Accordingly the apostles too, clearly perceiving that this is the difference between faith simply handed down and faith which is according to knowledge, said to the Saviour: ”Increase our faith,” that is, that we who have that faith which is not according to knowledge may have also that which is according to knowledge. And so Paul bears witness to the Jews that they have a zeal of God, although not according to knowledge. Nevertheless, because in some fashion they have a zeal of God, they gave the Apostle a cause for which he might offer prayer for them to God. For it is better to have a zeal of God, although not according to knowledge, than not to have it at all. For ”he that hath,” as it is written, ”to him shall be given,” even in the last times when all Israel shall be saved; ”but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.”

[§2] ”For Christ is the end of the law, unto righteousness to everyone that believes. For Moses writes, that the man who does the righteousness which is of the law shall live in it. But the righteousness which is of faith speaks thus: Say not in your heart: Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down; or, Who shall descend into the abyss? that is, to bring Christ back from the dead. But what does the Scripture say? The word is near, in your mouth and in your heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach. For if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, that everyone who believes in him shall not be put to shame. For Christ is the end of the law: that is, the perfection of the law and righteousness is Christ, but for those who believe. Those, however, who do not believe, since they do not have Christ, do not have the perfection of the law; and therefore neither will they be able to attain to righteousness. ”For Moses writes, that the man who does the righteousness which is of the law shall live in it. But the righteousness which is of faith speaks thus.

Already in the passages above the Apostle had made mention of two righteousnesses, where he says that Israel, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, sought to establish its own righteousness; and here now again he speaks of two righteousnesses, one which is of the law, and another which is of faith. But it seems to me that the one which he said above was unknown to Israel — the righteousness of God — is this very righteousness which is of faith; whereas that one of which he

says, ”seeking to establish their own righteousness,” is the very one which here too he intimates in the words of Moses, namely that ”the man who does the righteousness which is of the law shall live in it. But observe the difference of the righteousnesses, and likewise of the lives. For of that righteousness of God, that is, of Christ, ”who was made for us righteousness from God,” and peace — see how he speaks: ”And this is eternal life, that they may know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. This righteousness, then, furnishes not merely life, but eternal life. But of that righteousness of the law, of him ”who does” it, he did not say that he shall live forever, but only that he ”shall live in it”:

since, if the end of the law, as the Apostle says, is Christ, not even that righteousness which is of the law will he be able to fulfill without Christ, who does not receive Christ, the end of the law. This righteousness, then, which is of faith, which is Christ, as living and subsisting, this, he says, speaks thus: ”Say not in your heart: Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down; or, Who shall descend into the abyss? that is, to bring Christ back from the dead. And do not wonder that, although Christ himself is righteousness, he here seems to speak of himself as though of another. For in many places you will find the Savior speaking of himself as though of another; as in the Gospel he says: ”And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left: and he shall say to those who are on the right hand,” and again to those who are on the left, the things that are written. Now what he says: ”Say not in your heart: Who shall ascend into heaven, or who shall descend into the abyss?” — apart from the clauses which he inserts in between, ”that is, to bring Christ down, or to bring him back from the dead” — and also, ”The word is near, in your mouth and in your heart,” seems to be taken from Deuteronomy, where it is written in this manner:

”This commandment, which I command you this day, is not too high for you, nor far from you. It is not in heaven, that you should say: Who shall ascend for us into heaven, and take it for us, that hearing it we may do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say: Who shall cross over the sea for us, and take it, that hearing it we may do it? The word is very near you, in your mouth, and in your heart, and in your hands, that you may do it. Since, therefore, these things are taken from Deuteronomy, and the Apostle writes that the righteousness which is of faith — which is Christ — says these very things, without doubt the Apostle declares that what is said in Deuteronomy was said by Christ. It is he, then, who says: ”This commandment, which I give you this day, is not too high for you, nor far from you,” and the rest that follows. What, then, is it that the Apostle teaches through this? Namely, that we should not say in our heart, and suppose, that Christ is confined in some one place, and is not everywhere, and diffused through all things: seeing that he, while he was on earth, said that he was also in heaven. For thus he spoke to his apostles: ”No one has ascended into heaven, except him who descended from

heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven. He did not say, who was, but ”who is in heaven.

And again, lest we suppose that he is only in heaven, and that the abyss is empty of his presence, therefore the righteousness which is of faith says: ”Say not in your heart: Who shall ascend into heaven? And as though this were like saying, to bring Christ down from heaven, so the Apostle added: ”That is, to bring Christ down. And again, if anyone should descend in mind and thought into the abyss, supposing Christ to be contained there alone, as though this were like calling Christ back from the dead, so he subjoins: ”That is, to bring Christ back from the dead. But you ought, he says, so to think concerning Christ, as concerning the Word, and truth, and wisdom, and righteousness of God. Now all these things are not sought in a place, but are present everywhere: nor are they summoned up from the regions below, but are grasped by the mind and understanding alone. As Word, therefore, and as wisdom, he is near, in your mouth and in your heart. And ”this,” he says, ”is the word of faith which we preach. For if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

We ought also to know this, that it is one thing for a potentiality to be in someone, another for there to be effectiveness or actualization — what the Greeks call dynamis (power, capacity) and energeia (activity, actualization). For example: a child newly born is a rational man in potentiality; for he can be rational if he grows up. And in potentiality he is also called a craftsman, and a helmsman, and a grammarian; for it is possible that he be some one of these.

But in efficacy or actuality — that is, in the thing itself and in operation — he is none of these while he is a little child; but if he begins to be capable of reason, or to accomplish something of the craftsman’s art or of any other, then at last he is called rational in efficacy, or a craftsman, or whatever it is that he performs by the effect of his work. In this way, therefore, Christ also, who is the Word of God, must be believed to be in potentiality according to us — that is, according to every human being — as reason is in little children; but he is said to be in me in efficacy when I have confessed with my mouth the Lord Jesus and have believed in my heart that God raised him from the dead. But do you wish to know that he is present everywhere, and is in the midst even of those who do not know him and do not confess him? Hear how John the Baptist bears this very witness concerning him: ”There stands,” he says, ”in the midst of you one whom you do not know, who comes after me. He is therefore in the midst even of those who do not know him, but he is in their midst in potentiality, not in efficacy. For they are able to receive him, but they do not yet receive him. But in efficacy or actuality he is in the midst of those to whom he said:

”Wherever two or three have been gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. For these confessed with their mouth the Lord Jesus, and believed in their heart that God raised him from the dead. Otherwise it seems absurd, if he is said to be in the midst both of those who are gathered in his name and of those who do not know him — unless a distinction of this kind be maintained, that among the ignorant and those who do not yet believe he is said to be in the midst in potentiality, but among believers in efficacy, that is, by the effect of the thing itself and of the work. But observe also this, that he says: ”Because if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. For it will seem to some, from this, that even if someone lacks the privileges of good work, even if he has given no labor to the virtues, yet by this very fact that he has believed, he does not perish but is saved, and has salvation, even though he cannot have the glory of blessedness. But see whether this ought rather to be understood:

that he who truly and not falsely confesses with his mouth the Lord Jesus, and believes with his heart, confesses at the same time that he is made subject to the dominion of wisdom and of justice and of truth and of all the things that Christ is; and that mammon is no longer lord over him — that is, that neither avarice any longer, nor injustice, nor unchastity, nor falsehood holds dominion over him. For once he has confessed Jesus Christ as Lord, he professes that he is a slave to none of these. And further, believing in his heart that God raised him from the dead, it is certain that he believes him raised for his own justification. Otherwise, what will it profit me to know and to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, if I do not have him raised within myself? Therefore, if I do not walk in newness of life, and do not flee the old habit of sinning, Christ has not yet risen from the dead for me. And to this sense the words that follow also agree, when he says: ”For the Scripture says, everyone who believes in him shall not be put to shame. Now this is written in Isaiah. But if everyone who believes in him shall not be put to shame, while everyone who sins is put to shame — as Adam sinned, and was ashamed, and hid himself — then whoever still incurs the blush of sin does not appear to believe.

[§5] ”For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For the same is Lord of all, rich toward all who call upon him. For everyone, whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. How there is no distinction of Jew and Greek in faith we have already shown frequently above. But that he is the same Lord of all, you will understand according to what we have just now set forth; that is, if justice and truth, sanctification and wisdom — all of which is Christ the Lord — hold dominion over us. For these are his riches, inasmuch as he is the one ”in whom the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. Yet he did not say that he bestows these riches on all men, but on all whoever shall call upon his name. But here too a question similar to the earlier ones seems to arise. For not all who in any manner whatsoever call upon the name of the Lord can be saved, even if

they have not done works worthy of the name they invoke — especially since the Wisdom of God also says in Proverbs: ”It shall come to pass that when you call upon me, I will not hear you.

In which it seems to me that Wisdom exhorts and urges those who wish to be saved, that they should call upon Wisdom quickly and not delay or defer, lest perhaps, when the appointed time has passed — that is, the time in which there is opportunity for repentance — they should call too late thereafter, where there is no place for repentance. And hence she says: ”You shall call upon me, and I will not hear you. Yet this saying which the Apostle sets down, that is, ”Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” is written in the prophet Joel in this manner: ”And I will give portents in the heaven above, and on the earth below: blood, and fire, and the vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes. And it shall be: whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Yet it seems to me that something great is designated in the divine Scriptures under this name of ”calling upon. For it is not of just any men, but of great and outstanding ones, that it is written that ”Enos first hoped to call upon the name of the Lord”; and in the Psalms: ”Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among those who call upon his name. They called upon the Lord, and he heard them: in the pillar of cloud he spoke to them.” 5.

”How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good tidings of good things. Plainly in these words he says this: by the words ”How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? he taught that what he had set down above as spoken by the prophet — that ”everyone whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” — is to be referred to Christ the Lord. For after he said, ”Everyone whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” he adds: ”How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? For the Jews did not believe in Christ, and therefore they do not call upon him in whom they have not believed. Moreover, at the beginning of the Epistle which he writes to the Corinthians, where he says, ”With all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place of theirs and of ours,” he declares that the one whose name is invoked is the Lord Jesus Christ. If therefore Enos also, and Moses, and Aaron, and Samuel ”called upon the Lord, and he heard them,” without doubt they were calling upon Christ Jesus the Lord.

And if to call upon the name of the Lord and to pray to the Lord are one and the same thing, then as God is called upon, so Christ is to be called upon; and as God is prayed to, so also is Christ to be prayed to; and as we offer prayers first of all

to God the Father, so also to the Lord Jesus Christ; and as we offer petitions to the Father, so we offer petitions also to the Son; and as we offer thanksgivings to God, so also do we offer thanks to the Savior. For the divine word teaches that one and the same honor is to be rendered to both, that is, to the Father and to the Son, when it says: ”That all may honor the Son as they honor the Father.

But as to what we have just now brought forward from the Epistle to the Corinthians, where the Apostle first says, ”To the Church of God which is at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints,” and after this, as though they were of another rank and another order, he thus adds certain persons of whom he says, ”With all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place of theirs and of ours” — perhaps it will seem to have some difference, that the former he names the Church of God, and sanctified, and called to be saints, but the latter only ”those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And see whether perhaps this diversity shows something such as the present chapter also seems to contain, in which he teaches that the name of the Lord cannot be invoked unless one first believes in Christ. But when someone has believed in Christ, even if he is not yet sanctified and joined to the body of the Church, nevertheless it is necessary that he should already call upon him in whom he has believed. For Christ came to reconcile the world to God, and to offer to the Father those who believe in him.

And those whom he offers to the Father, the Holy Spirit receives, that he may sanctify them, and quicken them as members of the heavenly Church of the firstborn, and restore them to the solidity and perfection of the whole body — and so at last they may deserve to be called the Church of God having neither spot nor wrinkle. Before, therefore, they come to the level of this perfection, they call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ as the mediator of God and men; but after the Spirit of God has been in their heart crying, ”Abba, Father,” that same Spirit teaches them also to call upon the name of the Father. Therefore he says, ”How shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? and in this he binds them with a most tight conclusion. There is no salvation, he says, except for one who calls upon him. But no one calls upon him who does not believe. Therefore, because you do not believe, you do not call upon him; and because you do not call upon him, you are not saved. But ”how,” he says, ”shall they believe him whom they have not heard? That they have not heard we can understand in this way: that they were unwilling to hear either him himself when he was set in the flesh, or his apostles preaching about him. For so the Lord himself says: ”He who hears you hears me; and he who despises you despises me. But this too can be understood:

that even now and always Christ, as the Word and Reason, speaks to each one in the heart, and teaches concerning piety, and urges concerning justice, and testifies concerning chastity, concerning modesty, and concerning all the virtues together — just as he himself says: ”My sheep hear my voice. So finally he spoke also in

the heart of Paul, so that he could say: ”Do you seek a proof of Christ who speaks in me? There follows: ”And how shall they hear without a preacher? In this he shows rather that Christ is heard through the word of those who preach, in whom, according to what we said above, Christ is shown to speak and to teach.

”But how shall they preach, unless they be sent? A certain difficulty seems to me to arise in this statement. For if we understand it in this way, that they do not preach for this reason, because they are not sent; and that with no one preaching they will not hear; and not hearing they will not believe; and not believing they will not call upon; and not calling upon they will not be saved: it is gathered from these things that the cause by which they were not saved falls back upon the fault of the author, who did not send preachers. But let us rather turn aside to that path of understanding which is more correct: and what he said, ”How shall they preach, unless they be sent,” let us take as though the Apostle were saying: We, the heralds and preachers of Christ, could not preach, nor would any power of announcing subsist in us, unless he himself who sent us were present with us. But if, when we preach, you are unwilling to hear, the fault is now yours; and if, hearing, you do not believe, and not believing you do not call upon, and not calling upon you cannot be saved. Because, therefore, they were sent to preach, for this reason it is written concerning those who were sent by him: ”How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good tidings of good things.

That he here calls the feet beautiful not bodily but spiritual, I think that, however much someone may be a friend of the letter, he could not deny. For he will not reduce the apostolic meaning to such absurdity as to suppose that the feet of the evangelists which can be seen with bodily eyes are called by him comely and beautiful; but those feet are comely and beautiful which walk along the way of life. For according to him who said, ”I am the way,” understand the comely and beautiful feet of those who bring good tidings, which are worthy to advance along such a way. These are the feet with which Paul also said that he had run the race, and had so run that he might lay hold of it; that is, the vigor of the soul by which it strains and hastens toward heaven. And you will pleasingly affirm that these are the feet which Jesus washes for the disciples, and wipes with the linen cloth with which he was girded. And although it was then fulfilled in bodily appearance, nevertheless, when Peter understood only this which he saw being done, and, as it were for honor’s sake, excused himself lest the Lord should wash the feet of him who was a servant, hear what a word of profound mystery is brought forth. ”If I wash thee not,” he says, ”thou shalt have no part with me. And again he brings forth another utterance like this, as though from the hidden treasures of knowledge, and says:

”What I have done you do not know now: but you shall know hereafter; and he adds, that ”as I, the Lord and master, have washed your feet: so do ye also wash one another’s feet in turn. For I have given you an example. Let us see, therefore,

what that example is, by which masters ought to wash the feet of disciples, or with what water to wash them. If anyone should find living water, and if anyone should receive drink from Jesus, and that water should become in him a fountain of water springing up into life eternal, he can with this water of spiritual doctrine wash the feet of the disciples, and wash away all the uncleannesses and filth from their soul: and doing this he will fulfill the example given by the master. ”Beautiful,” therefore, ”are the feet of those who bring good tidings of good things. Concerning these same feet I think the Bride also says to the Word of God in the Song of Songs: ”I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? And concerning them nonetheless it is said: ”Thy legs are as pillars of marble with bases of silver. And perhaps because this beauty is in the feet of the evangelists, therefore the Lord Jesus does not wish them to cover them with sandals and to hide their beautiful appearance; but he commands them not even to have a sandal on the way. But let us see what those good things are which they evangelize, that is, which they announce.

Although this very word ”to evangelize” is interpreted as ”to announce good things,” yet let us inquire what those good things are which he added to the good. One and true good is God, whose image of goodness is the Son, and his Spirit, who is called good. This one good, therefore, because it is in God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, he named ”good things. For this is what the evangelists announce, according to the precept of our Lord and Savior, who says: ”Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. These, therefore, are the good things of those who bring good tidings. But since he himself is called both a good messenger, and to announce concerning good things, let this be the reason: that they not only announce good things, but also announce good things well. For there are some who do indeed announce and preach concerning the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; but not sincerely, not soundly: as are all the heretics, who do indeed announce the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; but they do not announce well, nor faithfully. For either they wrongly separate the Son from the Father, so as to say that the Father is of one nature, the Son of another: or they wrongly confound them, so as to think either that God is composed of three, or that there is in him the designation of a merely threefold appellation.

But he who announces good things well will indeed give to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit their own properties, each to each; yet he will confess that there is no diversity in substance or nature. Those, therefore, who thus announce the Gospel, not only announce good things, but announce good things well and soundly. This example, however, seems taken from Isaiah; but there the prophet referred the office of evangelizing to the Lord himself. For thus he says: ”Since I myself who was speaking am present, as an hour upon the mountains, as the feet of one bringing good tidings of the hearing of peace, as one bringing good tidings of good things. But it seems to me that Paul, because the prophet had said,

”as the feet of one bringing good tidings of the hearing of peace, as one bringing good tidings of good things,” recalled this as though from a comparison with another; as if he were saying: So shall I be present, like a man who evangelizes peace, and evangelizes good things. But this the apostles shall do: and therefore he seems to have taken this as said concerning themselves, that is, concerning the apostles, in comparison with whom Christ had said through the prophets that he would be present and would evangelize good things. 6. ”But not all obey the Gospel. For Isaiah says: Lord, who has believed our report? Therefore faith comes from hearing; and hearing through the word of Christ. But I say: Have they not heard?

Their sound went out into all the earth; and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say: Did Israel not know? First Moses says: I will lead you to jealousy by that which is not a nation, by a foolish nation I will lead you into wrath. But Isaiah is bold and says: I was found by those who did not seek me: I appeared openly among those who did not ask after me. But to Israel what does he say? All the day long I stretched out my hands to a people that does not believe, and that contradicts. Neither did all of the Gentiles believe the Gospel, nor all of Israel: yet more, and many more, from the Gentiles than from Israel.

Therefore, when the Apostle sets down that Isaiah said, ”Lord, who has believed our report?” — the word ”who” is said in the sense of ”few”; and we ought to observe that this expression in the Scriptures is sometimes put for ”few,” and sometimes for ”no one at all. For example, when it says, ”Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? and, ”Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord? and, ”Who is the man that desires life?” — in all these ”who” signifies ”few. But where it says, ”Who has ascended into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down; or who has descended into the abyss? that is, to bring Christ back from the dead,” here ”who” is understood as ”no one. For there is no one who ascends into heaven to bring Christ down from there. Now therefore, in what Isaiah says, ”Lord, who has believed our report? the ”who” signifies ”few. Yet it is fitting for us to know that ”Lord, who has believed our report? does not have ”Lord” in the Hebrew copies, but it is so in the translation of the Seventy Elders; and the Apostle, approving what is found among them, put ”Lord. Isaiah, however, seems to prophesy these things in the person of the apostles, to whom the office of preaching had been entrusted;

and they, seeing the scarcity of believers especially from the people of Israel, say to the Lord, ”Lord, who has believed our report?” — just as that other saying is also spoken in their person, that ”we have announced him as a child before him, as a root in a thirsting land. And it is likewise they who speak as though they were placed with him and beheld him in human condition, saying, ”we saw him, and he had neither form nor comeliness,” and the rest. But even if these words are referred to the person of the prophets themselves, as of men complaining before

the Lord that no one, or only very few, out of that people believed the things they had prophesied concerning Christ, it will not seem foreign to the sense. Or is it not to be supposed that Moses says to the Lord: Lord, no one has believed my report? For if they had believed my writings, they would certainly have believed Christ as well; for I wrote concerning him. ”Therefore faith comes from hearing; and hearing through the word of Christ. Here ”the word of Christ” signifies the preaching about Christ. For not only those believed who heard the word from Christ Jesus the Lord himself as he spoke; but far more numerous are they who heard him through others preaching him, as the Lord himself had foretold when he spoke to Thomas: ”Because you have seen me,” he says, ”you have believed; blessed are they who do not see and yet believe.

Every word, therefore, which the apostles — and any others who, having received grace from him, preached concerning Christ — he declares to be the word of Christ. Moreover, in the Church, if anyone speaks the wisdom that is from God and the truth of God, if anyone teaches the way of God, which is Christ, and expounds his righteousness, without doubt what he speaks is the word of Christ. ”But I say: Have they not heard? Their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. This is taken from the eighteenth psalm, where it says: ”There are no speeches nor discourses whose voices are not heard. Their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. In which, by the variety of tongues and speeches, the nations are without doubt understood; and it is said that the sound of the apostles of Christ went out indeed into all the earth, but that to the ends of the world not the sound but the words came. This can be understood in this way: that by ”the earth” it means all those who are untrained and unteachable, to whom there came not the words, in which the reason of faith and the explanation of wisdom is contained, but the sound of faith by a common and simple preaching; whereas by ”the end of the world” it has named all the more learned and more prudent. For ”end” indicates the perfection of things.

To such as these, then, it declares that not the sound of a voice but words and reason have come — men who, hearing the discourse of faith, are also able to search out and examine the divine Scriptures, so as to recognize the truth of those words which have been announced to them through the apostles. And the Apostle, knowing that there is this difference among them, that is, between sound and words, says in a certain place: ”And my speech and my preaching were not in the persuasive words of wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power” — so as to show that ”word” is that by which, through the power of the Spirit, the wisdom of God is more lucidly expounded, whereas ”preaching” is that of which the Prophet speaks, that ”their sound went out into all the earth”: in which, namely, there is the simple announcement of faith, sufficient for all the simpler sort. But elsewhere too he says of himself that he is ”a preacher and an apostle, and a teacher of the nations. In which ”apostle” indeed indicates the general name of the office, of one

who not only preaches but also teaches: he preaches indeed the simple faith, as to those to whom he says, ”For I judged that I knew nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified”; but he teaches those to whom he said, ”Yet we speak wisdom among the perfect.

In these it is shown that to the former he set forth the sound of preaching, but to the latter he expounded the wisdom of God through words. ”But I say: Has Israel not known? First Moses says: I will lead you to jealousy by a non-nation, by a foolish nation; I will bring you into wrath. He seems to have spoken the things said above concerning the nations; but now, as is his custom, to add something also concerning Israel; and he wishes to prove by suitable witnesses that Israel is without excuse. Moses himself, he says, speaks in the person of God: ”I will lead you to jealousy by a non-nation” — speaking without doubt of the Christians, who have been taken up by God to provoke the jealousy of the former people, unbelieving and contemptuous. But perhaps it may seem that Moses addressed rather insultingly a nation chosen by God for the merit of its faith and devotion, when he says, ”by a non-nation,” and so counts it as nothing, so as not to deign even to call it a nation; or, if he does call it one, to name it foolish. But Moses is not insulting, being as he is the friend of God, toward God’s elect; nor will there seem to be any reproach in the expression, if the reason of the expression be made plain.

Every single nation — for example, of the Egyptians, or the Syrians, or the Moabites — is called this nation or that for the reason that it is distinguished by its own boundaries, and language, and dress, and customs and institutions; and Syrians are never called Egyptians, nor are Moabites called Idumaeans, nor Arabs Scythians. But of Christians there is not one nation, but out of all nations one people; and therefore Moses named it ”a non-nation” as the highest honor, because it was not one nation but, if it may be so said, the nation of all nations.

But we shall seem to be excluded in what follows, where he says: ”I will lead you into anger by a foolish nation” — in that he has called them both a nation and foolish. Yet not even in this does Moses, the servant of God, do dishonor to the people of God; rather he foresaw in the Spirit that if anyone wishes to be wise in this world, he must become foolish, that he may be wise with God; and ”since the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe”; and that through the preaching of the cross of Christ, which is foolishness to the Gentiles, a people would be gathered which should become foolish in this world, that it might be wise with God. The Jews, then, are angry that, when they themselves made excuses and refused, the Gentiles were invited to the king’s banquet — not looking to those things which long ago concerning this mystery ”Isaiah dares to say: I was found by those who did not seek me; I appeared openly among those who did not ask after me. But to

Israel what does he say? All the day I have stretched out my hands to a people that does not believe and contradicts.

Just as in the passages above we have often shown that the Apostle Paul speaks now of the Gentiles, now of Israel, and yet does not plainly and openly declare the change of person, so Isaiah too does in these words which the Apostle has brought forward as an illustration; and the first part indeed, that is, ”I was found by those who did not seek me; I appeared openly among those who did not ask after me,” he says without doubt concerning the Gentiles; and where the prophet secretly changes the person, the Apostle has given a clear distinction by his own words in that he added, ”But to Israel what does he say? And the former words he expounds as referring to the Gentiles, but the following as to be referred to Israel, in which he says: ”All the day I have stretched out my hands to a people that does not believe and contradicts. But first of all, as to what he says, ”Isaiah dares to say,” let us see what he dares, or what daring of the prophet is here taught. If we attend to the words of the blessed Stephen, who says: ”Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute, who announced the coming of the Just One?” — then we understand Isaiah’s daring, who, with persecutions and death set before him, nevertheless dared to preach the coming of the Just One, and for the good’s sake dares even to die.

Yet in this at the same time that also is shown, that the prophets did not, as some suppose, fail to know what they were saying, and prophesy as it were with their own understanding estranged from them. For what the Apostle says of Isaiah, that ”he dares and says,” indicates this: that despising death and the persecutions which were being inflicted, although he knew that danger threatened him, he nevertheless dares and preaches the word of God — as Paul himself also said: ”I know that bonds and prisons await me at Jerusalem; but I do not hold my life dearer to myself. So then Isaiah too knew indeed that he was to be sawn asunder and slain by the impious, yet he dares, and in the person of Christ says: ”I was found by those who did not seek me. Now it is certain that it was the Gentiles who neither had known how to seek Christ nor had learned to ask after him; yet they found him whom they did not seek, because he first sought them. For he is the Good Shepherd, and he sought out the sheep that had perished; and he is the Wisdom that sought the lost drachma, and in seeking found it. But the Jews even to this day seek concerning Christ, and question the Scriptures about him, and do not find; because his cross is to the Jews a stumbling-block. And therefore he says to them:

”All the day I have stretched out my hands to a people that does not believe and contradicts” — that is, when he hung upon the cross, they not only did not find him, but moreover said: ”If you are the Son of God, come down now from the cross, and we will believe you. But hear also what is said in the Wisdom of Solomon: that ”he will not be found by those who tempt him; but he will appear to those who are not

unbelieving toward him. Yet neither is it fitting that this be unknown to us, that in the copies of the Hebrews the words ”and contradicts” are not found. The Apostle, however, followed in his writings the truth of the Seventy Translators, and sets it down just as they translated it.

[§7] ”I say then: Has God cast off his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast off his people whom he foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in Elijah — how he pleads with God against Israel? Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have dug down your altars, and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what does the divine answer say to him? I have left for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed their knees to Baal. So therefore at this present time also a remnant according to the election of grace has been saved. But if by grace, then no longer of works: otherwise grace is no longer grace. Since from the things said above the Jewish people might perhaps seem to have been cast off by God and to bear no hope, seeing that God has led them into jealousy by a no-nation, and into anger by a foolish nation, and has been made manifest to those who did not seek him, and has been found by those who did not ask after him — therefore the Apostle, wishing to remedy these things and to show that a way of salvation remains for the people of Israel if they believe, and that they were not cast off for the reason that they are of the race of Israel, but because they were unbelieving, says:

”God has not cast off his people whom he foreknew. And that he might prove this by a present example, he adds: ”For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin” — and yet I teach the faith of Jesus, and announce that he is the Christ. But if it has not been a hindrance to me that I am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, so as to keep me from believing in Christ and being justified by faith in him, it is certain that ”God has not cast off his people whom he foreknew. And in what sense ”whom he foreknew, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified,” has already been said above; and that for God to foreknow is set down in the Scriptures as meaning not only to know beforehand things future (which cannot even be doubted), but to approve, and to deem worthy of his knowledge. But lest it should seem a small thing that he taught by his own example that the people of God had not been cast off, the Apostle seeks stronger examples, and says: ”Or do you not know what the Scripture says in Elijah? How he pleads with God against Israel? Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have dug down your altars, and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what does the divine answer say to him?

In these words we are taught that the prophet, once filled with zeal for God, laid before God his complaint of the transgressing people, who had not only killed the prophets and overthrown the altars, but were also trying to destroy Elijah, who seemed to be the only one left of the prophets of the Lord. And when Elijah made

this lament before God, hear what the divine oracles answer him: ”I have left for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed their knees to Baal. Baal is the name of an idol, to whose worship that people had fallen away, having abandoned the law of God. These are the things which the Apostle brings forward as an example for the present time. And he adds: ”So therefore at this present time also a remnant according to the election of grace has been saved. But if by grace, then no longer of works: otherwise grace is no longer grace. We must therefore show, so far as we are able, how, just as it happened under Elijah, where the prophet had supposed the whole people together to have been rejected, and seven thousand men are found who had remained in the covenant of God — so it happened also at the coming of Christ, and in those times in which Paul was preaching. And see whether we can perhaps set John the Baptist, who went before the coming of the Savior, in the place of Elijah:

since indeed the Gospel bears such witness of him, that he came ”in the spirit and power” of Elijah; and the Lord himself said of him: ”And if you wish to know, he is Elijah. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. This man, then, who had come in the spirit and power of Elijah, had so despaired of that people that he said they were not the offspring of Abraham but the offspring of vipers; and added to this: ”Do not say that we have Abraham for our father. For I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up sons of Abraham. To him, then, thus complaining about the people, let this be answered by our Lord and Savior: ”I know whom I have chosen”; and again: ”My sheep hear my voice, and I go before them, and my own follow me”; and again: ”I have other sheep which are not of this fold: I must bring them also. But let us see what the very number of seven thousand men indicates. The number seven pertains to rest. For ”on the seventh day God rested. Hear then also how Christ invites those who believe in him to rest, and says: ”Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened; and you shall find rest for your souls. To this number seven, therefore, belongs everyone who, coming to Christ, has laid down the burdens of sin and found the rest of salvation.

Rightly then does the Apostle say that ”so at this present time also a remnant according to the election of grace has been saved” — calling a remnant those of the circumcision who believed, both the apostles, among whom he numbers himself as well, and the rest who together with them followed the faith of Jesus Christ. But as for his saying that the remnant was saved ”according to the election of grace,” this addition of ”election” does not seem to me superfluous. For he could have said: ”A remnant has been saved” by grace; but by these words he shows that there is a grace both without election and with election. For all indeed who are saved through faith are without doubt saved through grace; but those who are saved through ”the election of grace” seem to me to be shown to be of a more perfect soul. For just as everyone who is descended from the race of Israel is called Israel, but he is the true Israel who with a pure mind and a sincere heart sees God, so also we can

understand this: that all indeed who come to faith in Christ come through grace; but he who adorns the gift of grace with works of virtue and purity of heart, he will be said by Christ to be saved not only through grace, but through ”the election of grace. Finally the apostle Paul himself, if anyone observes him carefully in his words, sees how he uses distinctions of this kind:

in one place naming Israel according to the flesh, in another making no mention at all of the flesh concerning him — as in the present passage, where, when he said that ”God has not cast off his people,” and wished to set forth the nobility of the Israelite soul, he says: ”For I also am an Israelite. But in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, where he is compelled to answer certain men who boasted of Israelite descent according to the flesh, see what he puts first: ”What I speak,” he says, ”I speak not according to God, but as it were in foolishness, in this matter of boasting. Since indeed many boast according to the flesh; I too will boast. And after a little he says: ”Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. So then, where he was speaking of Israel with reference to that inner man (for such is that people whom God foreknew and did not cast off), he does not say Israel ”according to the flesh”; but to those who boasted in fleshly descent he first declared that concerning boasting of this kind he would speak neither ”according to God” nor in wisdom, but, as he himself says, ”in foolishness. Such, then, is the ”remnant” which ”according to the election of grace has been saved. And he added: ”But if by grace, then no longer of works.

It must be known that the works which Paul rejects, and frequently censures, are not the works of righteousness which are commanded in the law, but those in which they who keep the law according to the flesh glory — that is, either circumcision of the flesh, or the rite of sacrifices, or the observance of sabbaths and new moons. These, then, and such as these are the works from which he says no one could be saved, and about which in the present passage he says that it is ”not of works: otherwise grace is no longer grace. For if anyone is justified through these, he is not justified freely. But he who is justified through grace — these works indeed are not required of him; yet he ought to take care that the grace he has received does not become void in him, as Paul also says: ”his grace in me was not void, but I labored more than all of them. And again he adds, as one mindful of grace: ”Not I,” he says, ”but the grace of God with me. He, therefore, does not make grace void who joins to it works worthy of it, and is not ungrateful for the grace of God. For he who sins after obtaining grace becomes ungrateful to him who bestowed the grace.

But if you do not make grace void, grace will be multiplied to you, and as it were as a reward for good work you will obtain an abundance of graces — as he himself also writes, and Peter says in his Epistle: ”May grace and peace be multiplied to you in

the knowledge of God"; and again elsewhere: "As good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

[§8] "What then? What Israel was seeking, this it did not obtain; but the election obtained it, while the rest were blinded; as it is written: God gave them a spirit of compunction; eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this present day. And David says: Let their table become a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense unto them. Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back always. In these words the Apostle divides Israel into two parts: one of which he calls the election, which has obtained what it was seeking; the other he names "the rest," who not only did not obtain what they were seeking, but were blinded with a spirit of compunction. And he says that God even "gave" to them "eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this present day," that is, unto the consummation of the age. But a question is raised for us: how can it seem to be said worthily of the good God that he himself gave to the remainder of Israel eyes with which they should not see, and ears with which they should not hear? And see whether perhaps this is rather a recompense and the wage of unbelief, according to what we expounded in the earlier portions, where it is said that, because "they did not approve of having God in their knowledge, God delivered them over to a reprobate mind.

For here too he speaks of the eyes and ears of the heart, not of the body, with which those men are blinded and do not hear — those, namely, who, seeing Christ in the body and hearing his teaching, were willing neither to believe the works which they saw nor to obey the word which they heard. But on this very question enough has been said by us in the first parts of this Epistle. Where, however, this very thing may be written which the Apostle says — "As it is written: God gave them a spirit of compunction, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this present day" — I have thus far been unable to find. But if anyone applies himself to the divine Scriptures more diligently than we, let him make it plain if he finds it. Yet I think the Apostle spoke in this manner: "But the rest were blinded; and, as it is written of them, God gave them a spirit of compunction," so that he seems to say in his own words that God gave them a spirit of compunction in accordance with those things which were said through Isaiah about the blindness of the eyes and the hearing of the ears. For Isaiah speaks thus: "Go, and say to this people: With hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not see.

For the heart of this people has been made gross, and with their ears they have heard heavily; and they have closed their eyes, lest perchance they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. Now therefore the Apostle seems to have set forth the sense of Isaiah, but in his own words; yet because he was giving

the prophet's sense, he added: "As it is written. And he does likewise with those things which he declares to have been said through David. For he says: "And David says: Let their table become a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense unto them. Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back always. For as to what he says, "Let their table become a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block" — "a trap" is not found written in the Psalm, neither in our copies of the Seventy Translators nor in those of the Hebrews. And again, in the Psalm it stands: "Let their table before them become a snare"; but the Apostle did not put "before them.

These things we have mentioned concerning the order of the words and the character of the testimonies taken up, in order to show point by point that apostolic authority in no way puts its trust in the copies of the Hebrews, nor does it always serve the words of the translators, but sets forth the sense of the Scriptures in the words that suit it. Now therefore let us see how the sense of the chapter before us ought to be explained. The blindness of heart by which the remainder of Israel — that is, the part which did not believe — was blinded, he proves by two prophetic testimonies, the one which seems to be taken from Isaiah, and the one from David; and in both a single sense, in a certain way, is set forth. For here eyes are given them with which they may not see, and ears with which they may not hear; and there it is wished that their table before them may become a snare, and a trap, and a recompense, and a stumbling block, and that their eyes may be darkened so that they may not see. And it does not seem idle to show how these things may be believed to be worthily said, and especially in the psalm from the person of Christ. See, then, whether we can explain in this way what is sought.

Just as each person uses his bodily eyes for seeing either good things or evil, and has it in his power either to lift up his eyes to heaven and, through what he sees, to acknowledge its Founder and to praise the Creator, or to turn them toward the spectacles of the circus or of the theater, or to the delights of any sordid sights whatever, by which the mind is inflamed either to lust or to rapacity or to any other vices: so understand for me also the eyes of the soul, which some indeed use so as to recognize the Word of God and the teaching of truth, and daily to take profit from his wisdom; but others use these eyes to the contrary end, exercising themselves daily, namely, and inquiring how they may break down the doctrines of truth and, so far as it seems to them, assail the faith of Christ. Let us suppose, then, that someone prays for those who are sharp-sighted and full of argument in false knowledge, and says: May God give them "eyes that they may not see" the subtleties of a perverse understanding, "and ears that they may not hear" the teachers, namely, of falsehood, and "let their eyes be darkened that they may not see" — does not the man who wishes for them those things by which their sins are lessened seem to you one to be embraced? For it is much better not to know than to know evilly.

Does it not seem to you, I say, that Marcion, who composed blasphemous writings against God the Creator, or Basilides, or Valentinus, or the other authors of depraved doctrines, would have been blessed if they had not had those eyes of the heart with which they understood evilly? For of these Isaiah says: ”Woe to those who write! For in writing they write wickedness. And in like manner David also prays in the Psalms for those who teach evilly and speak evilly, and says: ”Let the wicked lips be made mute, which speak iniquity against the just man in pride and contempt. So then it is said also of Israel: ”Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see,” and, May God give them ”eyes that they may not see. Let this be said so far as concerns the blindness of eyes which seems to be given by God to the ill-seeing and unbelieving Israel as a kind of remedy. Now let us also consider the table which is said to become ”a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense to them.”

But first a few things must be said to those who reject allegories in the divine Scriptures and are accustomed to laugh at those who do not in all things follow the historical sense. Let them tell us, then, whether the Prophet here means that table of the Jews at which they are wont to take their lunch or their supper, so that this very table should become for them a snare to catch them; or whether that same table is made for them a recompense, so that from it they receive vengeance for the offenses they have committed; or let them explain in what way it is a stumbling block to them. But if they are unable to give an account of these several points, and see their laughter turned into confusion, then let them come along with us, and inquire from the divine Scriptures how this table of Israel may be understood. To us, therefore, so far as our understanding can grasp it, it appears thus: that all the Scriptures which existed before the coming of the Lord among Israel (for ”to them first were entrusted the oracles of God”), and everything that is called the Old Testament, is the table of Israel — at which table, if anyone wished to eat the word of God, he was fed by the words of the Law and the Prophets set before him. And this, I think, is the table of which Solomon says:

”If you sit down to sup at the table of a ruler, understand intelligently what is set before you, and put forth your hand, knowing that you must prepare such things yourself. And when the Savior too says, ”When you shall eat and drink at my table,” what else do we understand his table to be, except where he teaches those who are worthy, and those who are able to receive the word of wisdom and the knowledge of things? This Solomon also attests in the Proverbs concerning Wisdom, saying: ”Wisdom has built herself a house, and set up seven pillars; she has slain her victims, she has mingled her wine in the bowl, and has prepared her table. Every Scripture, therefore, is the table of Wisdom. But let us see how David prays that this table may become to the unbelieving Israelites ”before them a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense. The divine Scripture becomes a snare to them when they read the things prophesied concerning Christ: ”He shall

build my city, and shall turn back the captivity of my people," and they say that these things were not fulfilled under Jesus. For he did not build, they say, the city of God, nor did he call back the captivity of the people. But they say these things because, sitting at the table of the ruler, they do not do what Solomon admonished, namely, to understand intelligently the things set before them.

For Christ was prophesied as about to do these things not visibly, but intelligibly, that is, spiritually. For he did indeed build the city of God, but out of living stones, from which he raised up sons of Abraham, and from these he built the Church of God; and he turned back the captivity of the people, of those whom the devil held captive in their sins. Since, therefore, they do not understand in this way, this table of the divine Scripture has been made for them "a snare and a trap. And that trap of this table may also be seen in that by which the Lord caught them when he said to them: "What do you think concerning the Christ? Whose son is he? And they answered: David's. And the Lord said: How then does David call him Lord, saying: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand? And they were not able to answer him a word. And this table is made "a recompense" to them, to speak briefly, according to that word of the Lord in which he says: "Do you think that I shall accuse you before the Father? There is one who accuses you, Moses"; and according to what the Apostle says: "As many as have sinned under the Law shall be judged by the Law. And this table is made "a stumbling block" to them in this way. From the Scriptures the Jews had learned that "Christ abides forever";

but seeing Jesus in the flesh, and not only in the flesh, but even in death, and the death of the cross, they were made to stumble at him, not knowing that "although he suffered from the weakness" of the flesh, "yet he lives by the power of God. Because, therefore, they did not receive intelligibly these several things which were set before them at the table of the ruler, they were made to stumble, and the very table of the divine Scriptures was made for them a stumbling block, and their eyes were darkened according to what we said above, and their back is bowed down always. For those who have sinned against the Creator of heaven, and against the Lord of majesty, ought no longer to look up to heaven. But each one of us also must fear lest perhaps this table of the divine words, at which we seem to have sat down that we may take the food of the word of God according to our capacity, become a snare, or a recompense, or a stumbling block, if we do not receive from it intelligibly, and as is fitting, the clean and pure and spiritual foods of wisdom — observing likewise this also, that we do not sit down at the table of wisdom in unclean and filthy garments, that is, with a polluted body or heart;

but, already now meditating upon the appearance of that future banquet in the heavens, let us through conversion and repentance daily prepare cleaner and nuptial garments, by the use of which we may be worthy to enter the hall of wisdom and the bridal chambers of the king's son.

[§9] ”I say then: Have they so stumbled that they should fall? God forbid. But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, that they may emulate them. But if their transgression is the riches of the world, and their diminishment the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness? When the Apostle had set forth those things in which Israel was rejected and the Gentiles were brought in, and had also enumerated the prophecies which had foretold concerning their blindness, and the snare, and the recompense, and the stumbling-block, lest he should again furnish the Gentiles with occasions for insulting and matter for pride, he says that the very fall of Israel was of such a kind, not that they should fall, but that by their transgression they should give salvation to the Gentiles; and he says: ”I say then: Have they so stumbled that they should fall? God forbid. But by their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles. And he shows how salvation is given to the Gentiles out of their transgression: ”That they may emulate them,” he says: that is, that seeing the conversion of the Gentiles, and the covenant of God, which they themselves had first received, handed over to those others, and the law and the prophets held among them with greater and worthier observance, they too may take up zeal at least in the last times;

and just as now their fall has given salvation to the Gentiles, so the faith and manner of life of the Gentiles may confer upon Israel the emulation of conversion and of salvation. It must nevertheless be observed that Paul sets down one thing as stumbling and transgressing, and another as falling; and for stumbling indeed, or for transgression, he provides a remedy; but that they have fallen — as though there were in this some despair — he does not admit. For he says: ”Have they so stumbled that they should fall? God forbid. But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles. And it is a wonder how, amid so many and such things as the whole text of the Epistle sets forth concerning them, the Apostle nevertheless denies that they have fallen. But it seems to me that Paul well knew the differences of falling, and knew that it is one thing to fall according to that which is written: ”Seven times shall the just man fall, and shall rise again”; and again: ”Do not insult me, O my enemy, because I have fallen: I shall also rise again”; and according to what Jeremiah says: ”Shall not he who falls add that he may rise again? or shall he who has turned away not be converted? But Job too says concerning himself: ”At the appointed time it was prepared for him to fall under others, and for his house to be plundered by strangers”; and in the fourth book of Kings it is written:

”Hezekiah fell from the elation of his heart. And all these falls, of which we have recalled that Scripture has spoken in the passages cited above, do assuredly have a rising again; and their turning away has a conversion. But in the present chapter, as though the Apostle knew that if they had fallen they could by no means rise again, so does he deny that they have fallen, and strongly excuses them in that he says: ”Have they so stumbled that they should fall? God forbid. Lest perhaps, then, the Apostle, looking to another kind of fall, should excuse Israel and deny that it

has fallen — to that fall, perhaps, of which our Lord and Savior was speaking when he said that ”I saw Satan fallen from heaven like lightning”; and also that of which Isaiah says: ”How has Lucifer fallen from heaven, he who rose in the morning? It is with such a fall, then, that he here denies that Israel has fallen. For their conversion will take place even at the end of the age, when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, and all Israel shall be saved; but of that one who is said to have fallen from heaven there will be no conversion even at the end of the age.

Let us therefore observe that the fall we spoke of above — that is, in which he who falls shall add that he may rise again — is similar to this which in this very place the Apostle names a stumbling, and which he calls a transgression: which seems to me to be something of this sort, if at any time a just man, overcome in some one thing — for example, either in the frailty of the flesh or in some other transgression — has fallen, and yet has not on that account departed from every observance of the law, but holds to justice, cultivates mercy, keeps faith, piety, gentleness, and does not neglect to meditate upon the law of God: concerning such a one we can say, ”Has he so stumbled that he should fall? God forbid. So also the Israelites, although they denied their Redeemer, and stoned and persecuted those who were sent by him, nevertheless still have something remaining. There is among them the meditation of the law, though they do not believe nor understand. There is among them also a zeal for God, though not according to knowledge. And therefore the Apostle says that they have not ”so stumbled that they should fall”; that is, that they should turn aside utterly from all observance or meditation of the law of God. And a fall of this kind he named a transgression. For ”by their transgression,” he says, ”salvation has come to the Gentiles.

Therefore David too, knowing that there are transgressions of this kind, in which he who has fallen rises again, and that there are others, in which he who has fallen does not rise again even at the consummation of the age, said: ”Who understands his transgressions?” — or falls. There follows after this: ”But if their transgression is the riches of the world, and their diminishment the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness? Consider in these things the wisdom of God, how with him not even transgressions and falls themselves turn out to be useless; but while each one transgresses out of the freedom of his own purpose, the dispensation of divine wisdom, in that very thing by which those men become poor through the loss incurred by their negligence, makes others rich. For indeed, ”when God divided the nations, and scattered the sons of Adam, he established the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the angels of God. And the Lord’s portion was then made Jacob, and Israel the cord of his inheritance. But when those angels, to whom the portion of the Gentiles had been distributed, in a certain way seduced and corrupted individuals from the Lord’s portion, they made them stumble, so that the Lord said through the prophet: ”My desirable portion has become to me an execration”;

it was necessary that, when that portion had been refused and rejected, there should be another portion of the Lord upon the earth, which should receive the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the services of the worship of God (all of which were the riches of the Lord's portion), and should be called the Lord's portion in place of that portion which had stumbled. For this reason "their transgression" becomes "the riches of the world. For now no longer is one nation of the Hebrews, but the whole world has been made the portion of the Lord. For the Savior himself says: "Because I came not to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through me. And lest the term "world" should seem ambiguous — since indeed the designation of "world" is often referred to heaven and earth, often to the earth alone, and sometimes even to all men — for that reason the Apostle repeats it, and more plainly indicates in what sense he has said "world. For he says: "And their diminishment, the riches of the Gentiles. For what was diminished and taken away from those who stumbled has been conferred upon the riches of the Gentiles, who through faith have been made the Lord's portion and his inheritance. And well has he rendered "fullness" in answer to "diminishment," and not without some profound meaning does Paul call the people of Israel a "fullness. In which I, according to my powers, understand something of this sort:

Now indeed, while all the nations are coming to salvation, the riches of God are being gathered from the multitude of believers; but as long as Israel persists in unbelief, the fullness of the Lord's portion will not yet be said to be complete. For the people of Israel is lacking to its integrity. But when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, and Israel in the last time has come through faith to salvation, that will be the people which was indeed the first; but coming last, it will in a certain way complete the very fullness of the inheritance and portion of the Lord. And therefore it is called a "fullness," because what was lacking in God's portion, it will itself complete in the last times; and thus the dispensation of the almighty and good God makes the transgressions of some fruitful for others, just as in the present case it makes the transgressions of Israel the riches of the world, and their diminishment the riches of the Gentiles. Now indeed, whether from the transgressions of the Gentiles also, which they necessarily commit, the Dispenser of all things may do something of this sort, and confer riches upon some of them — lest this should seem to have been something special belonging to Israel alone, but rather that equity may be held to exist with the just and good God over all — you also who read must inquire this for yourself.

[§10] "For I say to you Gentiles: As long indeed as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I will glorify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to emulation my own flesh, and may save some of them. For if the loss of them is the reconciliation of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? As we have often observed in this Epistle, Paul sometimes speaks on behalf of the Jews, sometimes on behalf of the Gentiles, and at times directs his discourse to one or the

other of these, or to both, as when he said, ”But if you are called a Jew,” speaking as though to a Jew; and again, ”to the Jew first, and to the Greek,” speaking as though to both. So now, openly addressing the Gentiles — that is, chiefly those in the city of Rome who had come to faith from among the Gentiles — he says: ”For I say to you Gentiles. Let us therefore see what he says to the Gentiles. ”As long indeed as I am,” he says, ”the apostle of the Gentiles, I will glorify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to emulation my own flesh, and may save some of them. Someone will say:

What he says, ”As long as I am the apostle of the Gentiles,” seems to show that he will not always be the apostle of the Gentiles, but that, once his ministry is completed, he will be the apostle of some others, whoever they may be. But so far as may be gathered both from his own words and from the course of what actually happened, he is proved to have remained the apostle of the Gentiles in faith and truth as long as he was in this world. What then shall we say? Was it perhaps that, like a good and faithful servant who had been faithful in a few things, he knew that he was to be set over many things, and that he would be an apostle even after his own departure, not only of the Gentiles but also of the Israelites, and perhaps of others invisible, there where the spirits and souls of the just bless the Lord, sing a hymn, and exalt him above all forever? Or ought we rather to take it as simply said, ”As long as I am the apostle of the Gentiles,” just as the Lord also says to the apostles: ”And behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the age” — not that he says he will not be with them after the consummation of the age, but that, to show that he would never depart from them, he said ”even to the consummation of the age”;

so too the Apostle said ”As long as I am an apostle” in the sense of ”always and without end. But which of the two expositions ought to be accepted we leave to the reader’s judgment. Therefore, as long as Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles, he says that he glorifies his ministry: and what is so fitting as that each one should adorn the ministry which he receives through God’s providence? Now he adorns and glorifies his ministry who ministers well, just as, on the contrary, he dishonors his ministry and makes it notorious who has ministered negligently and unworthily. For example, in the ministry of the Church, ”the deacon,” he says, ”who has ministered well acquires for himself a good standing, and much confidence in the faith of Jesus Christ. But if he has not ministered well — that is, if he has not shown himself such as the Apostle describes, grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, but holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience — he acquires for himself not now a good standing, but an evil punishment, as one who has done insult to the divine ministry. And in like manner, whoever receives the rank of the presbyterate in the Church, let him take pains to glorify the ministry of a presbyter. For to him pertain both those things which the Apostle writes to Titus concerning presbyters, and those things which Isaiah writes when he says:

”The Lord himself will come into judgment with the elders of the people and with its princes he will enter into judgment”; and he adds: ”But why do you set my vineyard on fire, and the plunder of the poor is in your houses? Why do you do injury to my people, and put to shame the persons of the poor? And according to these things the bishop too glorifies his ministry in the episcopate, if he be such as the Apostle describes — blameless, watchful, prudent, of good behavior, hospitable, a teacher, not given to wine, not a striker, but modest; not quarrelsome, not covetous, ruling his own house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity, not puffed up with pride, lest he fall into the judgment of the devil. He who is such glorifies the ministry of his episcopate, so that he too may hear: ”Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. In like manner also the widow, if she continues in prayers and supplications night and day, glorifies the ministry of her widowhood. But if she be such as the Apostle censures — idle, and talkative, and not only talkative but also a busybody, speaking what is not fitting; or if she be one living in pleasures, and dead while she lives — she has dishonored and not glorified the ministry of her widowhood.

In the same way also the virgin consecrated to God glorifies the ministry of her virginity, if she be holy in body and spirit, and think not on the things of men, but on the things of God, how she may please God. But if she acts otherwise, not only does she not glorify the ministry of her virginity, nor does she make her lamp shine, but on the contrary her light is extinguished, and she becomes one of the foolish virgins. Let each one placed in the Church consider these same things within himself, so that in whatever place he stands, whether among the clergy or among the people, he may glorify the ministry of his faith, and so order his deeds that ”men, seeing” his ”good works, may glorify the Father who is in heaven. For this is what Paul also was doing, by teaching and instructing the Gentiles, whose apostle he was; nourishing the weak with herbs, feeding the little ones with milk, offering to the strong the stronger food of the word; and travailing again in birth with a mother’s affection over those who erred and wavered in the faith and were reduced as it were to something abortive, until Christ should be formed in them: and through all these things, by glorifying the ministry of his apostleship, he was leading his own flesh — that is, his kinsmen according to the flesh — into an emulation of faith and a zeal for good conduct;

so that, if not all, he might yet save some of them. Thus therefore, while he exercises vigilant care and unceasing solicitude over the teaching of the Gentiles, and renders their conduct and life highly commendable, the Israelites who were his kinsmen according to the flesh, seeing these things, are invited and provoked to imitate those who advance in faith in God: and it is the glory of his ministry when from their instruction a benefit accrues to those others as well. ”For if the loss of them is the reconciliation of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? This is what the Apostle seems to me to show in these words:

that, Israel having been cast off and the preaching necessarily transferred to the Gentiles, the world (that is, all the nations) has been reconciled to God, according to what is written: ”For God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to them their offenses”; and again, as Paul says: ”Who has placed in us the word of reconciliation”; through which word he was saying: ”We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. If therefore, he says, the casting off of this Israelite nation furnished reconciliation to the world, and if so great was the grace toward that nation that, when taken from it, it sufficed to reconcile the whole world to God, how much do you think the world will then merit, when that nation too shall have merited to be reconciled to God?

And what it is that the world will gain from the reconciliation of Israel, he shows briefly, saying: ”Life from the dead. For then will be the receiving of Israel, when the dead too shall receive life, and the world shall from corruptible become incorruptible, and mortals shall be endowed with immortality. For it would seem absurd that, when their offense bestowed reconciliation upon the world, their receiving should not bestow upon the world something greater and more excellent.

[§11] ”But if the firstfruits are holy, so is the lump; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, though you were a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became a sharer in the root and the fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, it is not you who bear the root, but the root you. You say then: The branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in. Well: they were broken off because of unbelief. But you stand by faith: do not be proud in your thinking, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. Behold, then, the goodness and the severity of God: toward those indeed who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in goodness. Otherwise you too will be cut off, and they, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in. For God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into the good olive tree, how much more shall these, who are according to nature, be grafted into their own olive tree?

I do not know how those who come from the school of Valentinus and Basilides, failing to hear these things thus spoken by Paul, suppose that there is a nature of souls which is always saved and never perishes, and another which always perishes and is never saved: when Paul plainly says that the branches of the good olive tree were broken off because of their own unbelief, and stood in need of the vengeance of divine severity; and again that the branches of the wild olive — which among them is set down as a nature that is lost — were grafted into the root and fatness of the olive tree. But to those people, indeed, an easy answer may be given by these words. Nevertheless, even to us who say that the nature of all human beings — nay rather, of all rational beings — is one, and equally capable of salvation and, if

it be careless, of perdition, an objection can be raised, and it may be said: How then does Paul set down a good olive tree and a wild olive, since surely, if he knew the nature of all to be one, he would not have introduced the example of trees of different kinds? To this, then, it must be said:

Just as all bodily matter, though it is beyond doubt of one nature, brings forth diverse species through the qualities that accrue to it — whether of bodies, or of trees, or of grasses — so also, since the nature of all rational beings is one, endowed equally with the liberty of its own free choice, the particular movements of each one, brought forth from the power of free choice, leading the soul subject to them either toward virtue or toward lust, form that soul either into the species of a good tree or of a bad one: so that it is called a good tree, if through the power of free choice it has chosen good things; or is called bad, if it has chosen evil things. And thus each one, according to the movements of his own purpose, will be named either a good olive, if he walks the path of virtue, or, if he pursues the contrary, a wild olive. Hence, finally, the Lord also said in the Gospel: ”Either make the tree good, and its fruits good; or make the tree bad, and its fruits bad; so as to show that a tree is not born good or bad, but becomes so. But now, if something should be added to the liberty of choice which from without either provokes to evils or exhorts to good things through certain ineffable dispensations of divine Providence, this in no way damages the consistency of the solution proposed;

for the rational nature has within itself the liberty of choice, vigorous also with respect to these things, by which it can either obey, if it will, the one provoking, or, if it will not, spurn the one exhorting. But what we said — that qualities accruing from without to bodily matter render diverse species, some indeed enduring for a long time, some for a short, and some scarcely lasting not only a few years but sometimes even a few months or days — is to be understood thus. For example: the species of heaven, and of the sun, or the moon, or the stars, have been formed with certain such qualities as suffice to endure until the end of the age, and until they are set free ”from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. But other are the qualities of earthly bodies, and among these too there is much difference. For the bodies of some animals, or of trees, or of birds, can last for very many periods of time; but of others, for few, or for exceedingly few. But if you have understood these things well, let us now pass over from the examples of bodily quality to the quality of the rational nature: and see how some indeed endure many ages in the qualities of blessedness; and others nonetheless spend many ages in the quality of wickedness; some of them remain a short time either in virtues or in wickednesses;

others a very short time, others an exceedingly brief time. Of these things, one by one, we men — weighed down as we are by the burden of a corruptible body — can grasp a very slight knowledge, or even none at all. But he who searches all

things, even the deep things of God, the Holy Spirit, knows all things, and makes them known to whomever he himself wills to reveal them. For in these matters especially, that is, in the dispensation of the rational nature, that apostolic saying must be uttered: ”O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. Thus, then, each one, by the power of free choice, becomes either a good olive or a wild olive, either of the Israelite race or of another blameworthy nation, so that it is said of him: ”Sinners are estranged from the womb, they have gone astray from the belly: they have spoken false things; so that they are strangers to the covenants and aliens to the promises of God. And others are cast upon God from the womb, and say: ”Upon you was I cast from the womb, from my mother’s belly you are my God. But since, as we have said, the liberty of choice always remains to this nature, it is possible that one who is of the Israelite nation, and a branch of the good olive tree, should fall into unbelief and be broken off;

and again that another who had chosen to be of a blameworthy and sinful nation, and on this account was called a branch of the wild olive, should, if he turns to the faith (for he has within himself the liberty of his own choice, by which he can be converted to the good), be grafted into the good olive tree through faith, and become a sharer of the root and fatness of the olive tree. But this root some name Abraham, others Seth, others set down some one of the fathers of good desert. I, however, know no other root that is holy, and no other holy firstfruits, save our Lord Jesus Christ. For he is the firstfruits of all, or the ”first portion” (delibatio), as we have it in the present passage of the Apostle, according to what is said elsewhere of him: ”Who is the firstborn of all creation. For into this root everyone who is saved is grafted, and from this holy firstfruit the whole lump of the human race is sanctified: and truly, as a holy root he supplies the fatness of holiness to the branches that remain in him, while through his Holy Spirit he gives life to those who cling to him, cultivates them by the word, makes them flourish with wisdom, and causes them to bear rich fruits in the fullness of all virtues: so that it too may say of them: ”But I am like a fruitful olive tree in the house of God.

For indeed, if the branches that were broken off were broken off because of unbelief, and those who stand, stand by faith: who else will there be in whom they stand, except Jesus Christ? And who else is he from whom they were broken off through unbelief, except the very one in whom they did not believe?

Therefore always, whoever came as a stranger to the faith, or to the manner of life of Israel, was being grafted into Christ, who was the true Israel. Especially, however, from the time of his coming, much wild olive is grafted into this root, or into its branches — that is, into the apostles and prophets of God — so that those who are grafted into them may become partakers of the root and of the fatness of Christ. After this the Apostle teaches us not to exalt ourselves against

the root, or against the Israelites who are the broken branches, nor to insult them: because we do not bear the root, but the root bears us. For we have nothing that we have not received. And if we have received it, why do we boast as though we had not received it? Then next, as though against certain persons more shamelessly insulting and saying: ”If the branches were broken off — well and good: they were broken off because of unbelief, so that I, who believed, might be grafted in” — the Apostle, restraining these, says: They indeed were broken off through unbelief, and you have been grafted in through faith, and you stand in faith; but remember that ”everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled; and therefore ”be not high-minded,” do not utter lofty and elevated things. For although you stand in the root, and stand well, yet fear, seeing that others also, whom you insult, once stood there where you now stand:

and you, when you were not there, were transplanted from elsewhere to the root of this olive tree, and it is possible for you also to sin. For by this very thing, that you are proud and exalt yourself, you already sin: and know that ”if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. But after this, this man who is proud and insults the fallen is imbued by the Apostle with deeper meanings of humility; and it is said to him: You who say these things, ”behold the goodness and severity of God: and when you behold his severity toward the branches that were broken off, you must fear lest perhaps you too, while you are proud and insult the fallen, may yourself, by sinning, incur that severity of God with which he presses hard upon sinners. For his goodness abides in those who have abided in goodness. ”Otherwise,” by the same ordering, ”you also,” if you do not abide in goodness, ”shall be cut off: and they, if they do not abide in unbelief, shall be grafted in. For it is not impossible for God ”to graft them in again,” if they withdraw from the unbelief through which they were broken off: since indeed it seems easier to restore to its own root the branches of its own tree than to graft in branches from another.

But as for what he said, ”from the natural wild olive,” and again, ”shall be grafted according to nature into its own olive tree,” we ought to understand the nature of the olive or of the wild olive according to what we expounded above, namely that freedom of choice has made the nature of each one either that of a wild olive or of a good olive. It should certainly be observed that those who have fallen from their own olive tree are said to be broken off; but those who are grafted in from the wild olive, if they sin again, are said not to be broken — which would surely be lighter — but to be cut off. In which indeed the severity of God is vehemently indicated, if, after someone who was a wild olive, and gathered from the forest of sinners, has been brought to the root of faith and holiness, he should again put forth the bitter sap of wickedness. But let not even this escape us in this passage, that the Apostle has not set forth the comparison of the olive and the wild olive in the order which obtains among farmers. For they are accustomed rather to graft the olive into the

wild olive, and not the wild olive into the olive: but Paul, by apostolic authority, changing the order, fitted the things to the causes rather than the causes to the things. 12.

”For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, that you be not wise in your own conceit: that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles should come in: and so all Israel should be saved, as it is written: There shall come out of Sion he who shall deliver and shall turn away impieties from Jacob: and this is my covenant with them, when I shall have taken away their sins. Still addressing those who had believed from among the Gentiles, as being elated and proud against the branches that were broken off, and thinking that they had obtained this not by God’s goodness and the ineffable dispensation of his wisdom, but by their own merits — namely that, with those broken off, they themselves, though they were wild olives, should be grafted into the good olive tree — he says: ”I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, that you be not wise in your own conceit; because to insult the fallen, and to boast against the branches that were broken off, comes not from the wisdom of God, but from a human wisdom, notorious and ignorant of the mystery of God. For he who is wise according to God does not, amid God’s benefits, insult those who have been cast down, but with fear gives thanks to the mercy that bestows them. The mystery, then, which was unknown to those who insulted, is of this sort:

how, in the dispersion of the sons of Adam, when all the other nations were distributed according to the number of the angels, Israel was made a certain portion proper to God, as also in other places where it was fitting, and in these very passages a little above, we have recalled — to whom also the promises of good things, and the covenants, and the giving of the law were made. So long, then, as that portion of the Lord remained in its own state, it was not possible for us, who were Gentiles, to enter into the inheritance of God, and to succeed to the rights of his scepter. For this reason, therefore, God allows a blindness to come about in part — that is, not upon all, but upon some of Israel — brought upon them, without doubt, by those angels who had obtained by lot the rule of the other nations, under the pretext of envious rivalry. God therefore allowed it, and, though he could have prevented it, was unwilling to do so, in order that, in exchange for those who were deceived by blindness — that is, who fell through the dullness of their heart — God might make the portions of those very ones who had deceived them his own portion, so that in a certain way they might be caught in that very thing by which they had caught others.

For by turning God’s people to themselves through the enticements of sin, they made room for the Gentiles to enter into the inheritance of God, God holding judgment with them by a certain common and most equitable right: that so long as they held the people of God in the captivity of blindness, the number of the Gen-

tiles should be rendered as it were in place of those whom from the beginning they had withdrawn from God's portion and his set-apart inheritance; but when the fullness of the Gentiles had been completed, and Israel, through emulation of their salvation, had begun to shake off from itself the blindness of heart, and, with eyes lifted up, to behold Christ the true light, then, according to the preceding prophecies, it might seek, being roused, the salvation which, having been blinded, it had lost, saying within itself that prophetic word: "I will return to my former husband, for it was better for me then than now. But that these things were promised to them through the prophets is found indeed in many prophetic volumes: we shall nevertheless set down what suffices for the present, a single testimony from Jeremiah, running thus: "If heaven be exalted on high, and the earth be humbled below, I will not reject the race of Israel for all that they have done.

If, therefore, in order that the fullness of the Gentiles might enter in, blindness came upon Israel for all that they have done, without doubt, when the fullness of the Gentiles has entered in, the blindness will cease.

But if you wish, says the Apostle, to know how Israel is to be saved even after its blindness, hear how it is written: "There shall come out of Sion he who delivers, and he shall turn away impiety from Jacob: and this is my covenant with them, when I shall have taken away their sins. It should indeed be known that in the prophet Isaiah, from whom Paul takes this testimony, in place of what the Apostle said, "he shall come out of Sion," it is written, "he shall come for the sake of Sion; and that what he says here, "when I shall have taken away their sins," is not written there at all, nor indeed among the Hebrews: yet it has been assumed on the Apostle's authority. Meanwhile the Lord, coming out of Sion, sets free and turns away impieties from Jacob. And he turns away impieties from him according to that which is written: That "the Lord shall wash away the filth of the sons and daughters of Sion, and shall cleanse the blood from the midst of her in the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning; and that this should so come to pass was for them a covenant from God, that in this way impieties should be turned away from them and their sins taken away. But who this "all Israel" is that shall be saved, or what this "fullness" of the Gentiles will be, God alone knows, and his Only-begotten, and any who perchance are his friends;

to whom he may say: "No longer will I call you servants, but friends; for I have made known to you all things which I have heard from the Father. This, however, can occur even to our understanding: that just as Israel, so long as it remains Israel according to the flesh, and has not also according to the spirit been made a true Israelite seeing God with the mind, cannot attain to salvation, so neither indeed can all the Gentiles whatsoever be saved, but only those who shall be found within the fullness, whatever that is which is named by the Apostle "fullness. Thus therefore the mystery of God is handled by a certain ineffable dispensation of his wisdom,

so that even when the soul has of itself brought upon itself a lot of evils, he who knows how to dispose all things makes its rejection and punishment the salvation of others. But this too seems to me in this passage to be more carefully considered, that he does not say that this blindness has befallen all Israel, but ”in part. For the remnant according to the election of grace has been saved,” concerning which remnant Isaiah also had prophesied, saying: ”Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed. These remnants, therefore, are joined in blessedness with the fullness of the Gentiles: but the rest of Israel, who have been blinded, are put together with those Gentiles who could not attain to the fullness.

So then, whatever things are found written in the discourses of the prophets concerning the promises containing blessedness, if they are about Israel, pertain to this remnant which has been chosen; if about the Gentiles, they look to the fullness. But if there be any sad things, if indeed they are spoken of Israel, they are without doubt referred to those remaining ones who were blinded: but if of the Gentiles, they assuredly bind those who are outside the fullness. Yet the end presses upon all things, and those indeed who are blessed, whether they come from Israel or also from the Gentiles, the word of the evangelical teaching of the present time purifies, that they may be such as were those to whom the Lord said: ”Behold, now you are clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. But whoever spurns the purification of the word of God and of evangelical teaching reserves himself for sad and penal purifications, so that the fire of Gehenna may purge amid torments him whom neither apostolic teaching nor the evangelical word has purged, according to that which is written: ”And I will purify you with fire unto purity.

But in this very purgation which is applied through the punishment of fire, for how long a time, or through how many ages, torment is exacted of sinners, he alone can know to whom ”the Father has handed over all judgment,” who so loves his creature that for its sake he emptied himself of the form of God and took up the form of a servant, humbling himself even unto death, willing that ”all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Nevertheless we ought always to remember that the Apostle wished the present passage to be held as a mystery, namely so that all the faithful and perfect should cover thoughts of this kind within themselves in silence as a mystery of God, and not bring them forth indiscriminately to the imperfect and the less capable. ”For it is good,” says the Scripture, ”to conceal the mystery of a king.” 13. ”According to the Gospel indeed they are enemies for your sake: but according to the election they are most dear for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance. For as you also once did not believe God, but now have obtained mercy because of their unbelief: so these also have now not believed, that through the mercy shown to you they too may obtain mercy: for God has shut up all in unbelief, that he may have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God:

how inscrutable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor? Or who has first given to him, and it shall be repaid to him? For from him, and through him, and in him are all things: to him be glory unto the ages of ages. Amen. The Apostle, still pursuing the same matters concerning Israel and the Gentiles, and reproaching the branches of the wild olive which insulted the broken branches of the olive tree, adds also these things: That Israel according to the Gospel has indeed been made an enemy to God, because it did not believe Christ: but so far as regards the honor due to the fathers, it is elect, and is held most dear with God. But election having once been granted to the seed of the fathers, and love conceded, God without doubt preserves his gifts and his calling toward the seed of those to whose merits he once bestowed this: nor does repentance come upon God, even if those upon whom the benefits promised to the fathers are conferred appear to be less worthy. But, as we have often advised, in the present passage also that distinction is to be observed, that the Israel which is an enemy to God is said to be that which cries out concerning Christ: ”Away with him, away with him, crucify him.

For how should they not be called enemies of God, who either then, or even now, have said such things, or say them? But when he says, ”for your sake,” this means, those namely whose salvation they envy, forbidding the apostles to speak to the Gentiles, and persecuting those who announce Christ. But according to the remnant which is said to be saved, in which the election of believers followed from Israel, they are ”most dear for the sake of the fathers: whose faith namely they follow, believing ”in him who raised Christ Jesus from the dead. And according to this, toward such a seed ”the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance. But after these things he opens also the hidden and deeper causes of their unbelief, and says: That just as you Gentiles once did not believe God, nor yet did God on that account utterly abandon you, but at last at some time you obtained mercy — yet the occasion of mercy being conferred upon you was the unbelief of the people of Israel — so also these who now from the people of Israel have not believed, and for their unbelief have been abandoned, so that the mercy of God might be turned toward you, will not be left forever in their unbelief; but after the dispensation of the fullness of the Gentiles has been fulfilled, they too shall obtain mercy.

In this passage the Apostle, wishing to display the goodness of God, by which he brings about the salvation of some through the unbelief of others, says: ”God has shut up all in unbelief, that he may have mercy upon all”; not that he himself thrust upon them the purpose of unbelief, but that out of their own purpose of unbelief he opened up an approach to faith for others who had themselves previously been unbelievers. Now Paul, having taken his stand at these points and looking more deeply into causes of this kind — how it is that God does not at once cut away and excise an evil purpose, but suffers it and holds it in reserve, foreseeing that some good will come to others through another’s evil purpose — turned, I think, the eyes

of his heart from those of whom he was speaking to the very origin of wickedness: namely, that God from the beginning did not judge it useful to cut it away when it sprouted in those in whom it first arose, whoever they may be, and grew by the liberty of choice; but permitted them to use their own purpose, knowing and foreseeing that the progress and benefit of many would arise from the occasion of their wickedness.

And so great is the room for virtue with the good God, that even the work of wickedness, though it be ruinous to him from whom it proceeds, is nevertheless so ordered as to confer a benefit upon him for whom it stirs up contests, when it has been overcome. Therefore the holy Apostle, considering that the riches of God's goodness are so great, and that so great a work of the divine wisdom is carried on toward rational natures, and that "God is so rich in mercy," and "rich toward all who call upon him," and that such is the magnitude of his goodness and patience and long-suffering — suddenly beholding these things with the inner eyes of the heart, and perceiving their immensity, struck at once with amazement and with awe, cries out and says: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For whence could the perception of the human mind have supposed such things — that, with the liberty of choice preserved to each one, the work of one man's wickedness should be turned to another's salvation, and should confer the palm upon the one who conquers it, while it brings ruin upon the one who practices it?

Having therefore surveyed these matters by a general reasoning, as it appears, the Apostle cries out and says that so great is the depth of the riches of God, and so great is the depth of his wisdom, and no less great is the depth of his knowledge (for the word "depth" serves for all of these), that no one is capable of searching out his judgments, by which he dispenses to each single soul and to every rational nature, nor can anyone investigate the ways of God along which his providence proceeds. And by "anyone" we mean not only of human beings, but of the whole creation. For his judgments would not be called unsearchable, and his ways past finding out, save because there is no creature that is able either to investigate or to search them out. For the Son alone is he who knows the Father, and the Holy "Spirit" alone is he who "searches all things, even the depth of God. And therefore this depth of God, which he calls both unsearchable and past finding out, he calls unsearchable and past finding out to every creature. But of the Son and of the Holy Spirit he could not say these things, because the Son says in the Gospel to the Father: "Father, all mine are thine, and thine are mine"; and concerning the Holy Spirit Paul himself declares, saying: "For no one among men knows the things of a man, except the spirit of the man which is in him:

so also the things which are in God no one has known, except the Spirit of God. You see, then, that Paul in the present chapter, in the words he speaks — "For who

has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?" — is speaking of creatures, but excepts the nature of the Trinity: seeing that it has nothing in common with the creature save the work of beneficence. Moreover, as to what he says, "Who has been his counsellor?" — it is not as though he himself, being less than sufficient, stood in need of another's counsel, but he declares that there is no partaker of his counsel among creatures. For counsel is necessarily present to the wise one in his own wisdom, which is Christ, and in his holiness, which is the Holy Spirit. And in like manner also, "Or who has first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him? is to be understood. For no one has first bestowed anything upon his Maker: since even this very thing that he is, each one has received from his Creator. "For of him, and through him, and in him are all things. You see how at the end he shows that in all the things he has said above he has marked out the mystery of the Trinity.

For just as in the present place what he says — "For of him, and through him, and in him are all things" — agrees with those sayings which the same Apostle records in other places when he says: "One God the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things"; and likewise he says that all things are revealed in the Spirit of God, and through these he designates that the providence of the Trinity is in all things; so also when he says "the depth of the riches," he signifies the Father, of whom he says all things are; and by the depth of wisdom he points to Christ, who is his wisdom; and by the depth of knowledge he declares the Holy Spirit, who also knows the deep things of God. Nevertheless, when he says "of him," he indicates this very thing that we are; but "through him," that we are dispensed in life through his providence; and "in him," that the perfection and end of all things will be in him then, when God shall be all in all: and then "to him be glory unto the ages of ages: Amen. "Unto the ages," because the perfection of all things is not confined within one age, but is extended into many, and is scarcely hoped to be fulfilled at some time. And he joins also "Amen," that we may understand that we must come to that blessedness through him of whom it is written in the Apocalypse:

"These things says he who is the Amen."

Commentary on Romans — Book 9

Latin source: J.-P. Migne (ed.), Patrologia Graeca 14 (Rufinus's Latin version of Origen's Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos). This English translation is in the public domain.

BOOK 9

[§1] Since throughout the whole text of the Epistle the Apostle had taught in the preceding sections how the sum of religion has been transferred from the Jews to the Gentiles, from circumcision to faith, from the letter to the spirit, from the shadow to the truth, from carnal observance to spiritual observance, and had shown by prophetic utterances that these things were foretold as destined to come about: now at last he undertakes to establish the customs and institutions of this spiritual observance, to which he taught that the rite of God's worship had been transferred, and he says: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be reformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good, and well-pleasing, and perfect. Since, he says, we have shown that one must withdraw from carnal sacrifices — according to what the Prophet also says: Sacrifices and oblation you did not desire, nor were they pleasing to you — now, he says, I teach you in what sacrifices God delights: and I teach these things not as one commanding, for the command of the law accomplishes nothing, but as one who has undertaken the office of reconciling you to God, I beseech you, brethren; and I beseech you not through power, but through the mercy of God.

For because, as I showed above, all have been shut up under sin, now human salvation consists no longer in merits, but in the mercy of God. But what is it that I beseech of you? That you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, that it may be your reasonable service. By "service" he here means the worship of God. And since this worship formerly consisted in the bodies of dumb beasts, now, he says, let it be offered in the body of a rational human being, and let

your bodies rather than those of cattle become a sacrifice to God, and be placed upon the sacred altars. For those who mortify their members from the incitement of lust and rage, and who keep the acts of their body pleasing to God, offer a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing, reasonably to God, and they fulfill according to spiritual understanding the law of sacrifices that was laid down in Leviticus. For example, as there they offered in the first place a calf, or in the second a ram, or in the third a he-goat, or in the fourth turtledoves or even young pigeons, so that in these the soul of each one might be purified according to the quality of his deeds: these things each one now purifies in his own body, and discerning them by a spiritual sense, offers a living sacrifice to God with reasonable service.

Concerning each of these, when we were saying some things on the book of Leviticus, we attempted to explain as best we could how each one, by the reasonable service of God's worship, immolates a calf if he conquers the pride of his body; slaughters a ram if he overcomes anger; offers a he-goat as a holocaust if he conquers lust; sacrifices doves and turtledoves if he cuts off the wandering and slippery flights of his thoughts. But these things, as I have said, anyone who thinks them worth knowing will find discussed there more fully. But now Paul beseeches those who believe in Christ to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God. He calls it a living sacrifice, one which bears life — that is, Christ — within itself, and he says: We carry about the death of Jesus in our body, so that the life of Jesus Christ also may be made manifest in our body. He calls it holy, one in which the Holy Spirit dwells, according to what he said in another place: Or do you not know that you are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you? Pleasing to God, inasmuch as it is separated from sins and vices. And all these things are the reasonable worship of God. For a reason can be given for such worship, and it can be shown that it is worthy that such sacrifices be immolated to God;

but no right and honorable reason will admit that rams and he-goats and calves be offered to the immortal and incorporeal God. Therefore the Apostle not only teaches those who have believed in Christ so to act and so to worship God, but he also beseeches them by the mercy of God: so that by this he may show that for the human race (since it is prone to sin) sacrifices of this kind have been provided by God's compassion, by which, if ever a fall should occur, the soul may be able through reasonable service and through sacrifices immolated in the manner we have described above to be repaired and restored to salvation. And that the mercies of God are many, Paul indicates in the second letter to the Corinthians, saying: Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies. You hear that God, just as he is the Father of Christ, and the father of wisdom, and the father of justice — all of which Christ is — so also is he the father of mercies. Therefore Christ, just as he is all the rest, is himself also mercy, and mercy that is manifold, not single:

that is, just as the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him, but are hidden, so also the treasure of mercy is in him, but is hidden — lest perhaps, if it were brought forth suddenly and before the time, it should make me, and anyone who might wish to be like me in sloth, negligent. It will seem, then, that the living and holy sacrifice, pleasing to God, is above all an uncontaminated body. But since we see that some of the saints, and even some of the apostles, had wives, we cannot altogether understand this of virginity alone, although virginity may hold the first rank among sacrifices of this kind: just as in the law also one sacrifice was that of the priest, another that of the ruler, another that of the Synagogue, and another that of a single soul. And although in the Church the first sacrifice after the apostles appears to be that of the martyrs, the second that of virgins, the third that of the continent, yet I think that not even those who are placed in marriage and who by mutual consent devote themselves for a time to prayer, as though fulfilling the vows of the Nazirites — if in other respects they act holily and justly — are to be denied the ability to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God;

nor, on the other hand, are the bodies of virgins or of the continent, if they are polluted either by the stain of pride, or by the filth of avarice, or by a slanderous tongue, or by the uncleanness of lying, to be thought to have offered a sacrifice holy and pleasing to God on the ground of bodily virginity alone: because in the law too, when a sacrifice was offered, it was inspected rather carefully by the priest, not only whether it was from clean animals, but also lest it should have a defect either in its eye, or in its ears, or in its feet, lest a lame, or one-eyed, or deaf animal be brought to the divine altar. So therefore through all its members the living, holy sacrifice, pleasing to God, which is to be offered reasonably, is examined and scrutinized. And be not conformed to this world; but be reformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good, and well-pleasing, and perfect. It should be known that in the Greek it reads: That you may prove what is the good and well-pleasing and perfect will of God. But we, since one and the same sense can be seen in both, follow the custom of the Latins. Be not conformed, therefore, he says, to this world. In this he shows that there is a certain form of this world, and another of the world to come:

and if there are any who love the present world and the things that are in this world, they are fitted to the form of the present world; but those who look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen and are eternal, are transformed and renewed to the form of the world to come: and hence it comes about that this world does not recognize them, but holds them in hatred, and persecutes them.

But the angels of God, who belong to that age to come, do recognize that form. And this seems to me to be like that saying in which he says: As we have borne the image of the earthly, let us bear also the image of the heavenly. See therefore lest perhaps, when anger comes into your heart, it make you conformed to this

age; and likewise also evil concupiscence, and avarice, and the remaining vices in which the present age delights, impose upon you the form of the present age. But if, on the contrary, meekness, patience, gentleness, continence, faith, truth, and the remaining virtues dwell in your mind, they will make you conformed to the age to come, and will render the beauty of your soul so fair that the Word of God, who has betrothed her to himself in mercy and in faith, will say to her: You are wholly beautiful, my beloved, and there is no spot in you. But attend more carefully to what he says: But be reformed in the newness of your mind, so that he may show that the earlier form was indeed blameworthy. For every soul previously had the form of wickedness. But from this the apostolic word exhorts us that, when that form has been cast off, we should be reformed to the beauty of each of the several virtues, and so at last be able, with the face of the heart unveiled, to behold the glory of the Lord, being transformed from an image of this kind.

But how we are to be transformed into these things he himself teaches, saying: By the renewal of your mind. Now our mind is renewed through the exercises of wisdom, and the meditation of the word of God, and the spiritual understanding of his law; and the more a man daily makes progress by the reading of the Scriptures, the more deeply his understanding penetrates, the more he is made ever new and daily new. But I do not know whether that mind can be renewed which is sluggish toward the divine Scriptures and toward the exercises of spiritual understanding, by which it might be able not only to understand the things that are written, but also to expound them more openly and to set them forth more carefully. Yet it can come about that not every mind can be renewed in this respect, so as to be enlarged by the recognition of knowledge. For a mind can be renewed unto justice, unto continence, unto mercy, faith, and patience. But see what, in what follows, the Apostle joins to this renewal of the mind. That you may prove, he says, what is the will of God, what is good, and well-pleasing, and perfect. And assuredly, unless the mind has been renewed unto all knowledge, and wholly illuminated by the wisdom of God, it cannot prove what the will of God is. For in many things the will of God is thought to be present, and it is not.

In this, certainly, those who do not have a renewed mind err and are deceived. But it belongs in truth not to just any mind, but to one greatly renewed and (so to speak) already reformed to the image of God, to prove in each single thing that we do, that we say, that we think, whether it be the will of God; and to do or say or think absolutely nothing which it has not perceived to accord with the will of God. What is the will of God, he says, what is good, and well-pleasing, and perfect. If we read according to what we find in the Latin codices, this will be the sense: that the will of God is whatever is good, and well-pleasing, and perfect; nor can God will anything other than what is good; and certainly what is good and perfect, this without doubt is pleasing to God. But if according to what we said is found among the Greeks, that is, that you may prove what is the good and well-pleasing and perfect will of

God, the same thing which we said above can indeed be seen, namely that every will of God is good, and well-pleasing, and perfect. But something of this sort also can be perceived in these words: that the will of God is indeed always good, but we do not always deserve to be governed by his good will, nor by the well-pleasing and the perfect.

For example, that Saul should be anointed king was indeed the will of God, but not the well-pleasing, nor the perfect. For being angry with the people, who had refused to have God as king over them, he commanded a man to be appointed king for them. But the Prophet also says in the person of God: I let them go according to the desires of their heart, that they might walk in their own lusts. Thus, therefore, the will of God is sometimes done in those things which we covet and desire; but he who has been renewed in mind ought to prove whether this will of God is good, and well-pleasing, and perfect, and not such as indulges our desires rather than consults our advantage. But let us now turn to what follows.

[§2] For I say, through the grace which has been given to me, to all who are among you: not to be more wise than one ought to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety: to each one as God has divided the measure of faith. For as in one body we have many members, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ; and individually members one of another. First it must be known that where we have to all who are among you, in the Greek it stands to everyone who is in you. This saying certainly indicates that the word is addressed to those who, whereas before they were not, have now begun to be. For God, as the same Apostle says, calls the things that are not as though they were. But those are not who are not partakers of him who truly is, who said to Moses: Say to the children of Israel: He who is has sent me to you. Therefore, when Paul says: For I say to all who are among you; or, as we said it is found in the Greek, to everyone who is in you, it is as if he were saying: For I say to everyone who is in God, not to be more wise than one ought to be wise.

Nevertheless it must be observed that Paul, as he says also in other places, speaks not in the persuasive words of fleshly wisdom, but through the grace which has been given to him. For there is a great difference between one who speaks through grace and one who speaks through human wisdom. And indeed it has often been discovered by experience itself that certain eloquent and learned men, powerful not only in speech but also in ideas, though they have said many things in the churches and received immense applause and praise, yet none of the hearers received compunction of heart from the things that were said, nor made progress toward faith, nor was stirred to the fear of God by the recollection of the things that were said; but people depart with their ears captivated by a certain sweetness and delight alone. But often men of no great eloquence, and not devoted to the composition of speech, by simple and unpolished words convert many of the

unbelieving to faith, bend the proud to humility, and drive into sinners the goad of conversion. And this certainly is the sign, as the Apostle says in the present passage, of speaking through the grace which has been given to them.

But I think that grace is present not only in those who teach the Church in the word of God, if their discourse be such as we described above — one which does not so much delight the hearer as goad him and lead him to some advance in virtue — but you will find that it is so in nearly all the things that are done in life. For there is one man who both in what he does and in what he says has grace; and another who at times speaks more prudently, and acts more carefully and more laboriously, and yet finds grace neither in his words nor in his deeds. Indeed, as we have already said in other places, it is written that Joseph found grace in the sight of the keeper of the prison, and that Esther found grace with the king. Now we have found it written in a certain more secret little book that there is, as it were, a certain angel of grace, who even draws his name from grace: for he is called Ananehel, which is interpreted ”the grace of God. This, then, that writing contained: that this angel was sent by the Lord to Esther, that he might give her grace with the king. So then the power of a discourse that is spoken through grace is one thing, and the force of the authority of teaching is another.

But another kind of discourse comes from common learning, which, although it be elegant and artfully composed, nevertheless, if it is neither spoken nor written through grace, can perhaps delight the reader, but cannot lead the hearer to advancement. Paul therefore not only himself says through grace the things he says, but also prays that grace be given to his hearers; and not only grace, but a multitude of grace. For thus he writes: Grace be multiplied to you; and in all his Epistles he says: Grace to you, and peace. But let us see what it is that the Apostle says, through the grace given to him, to all who are among the Romans. Not to be more wise, he says, than one ought to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety. He seems still to be fitting this saying also to the proud branches of the wild olive, who insult the branches that were broken off from the good olive, and to be telling them that they ought not to be more wise than they ought to be wise: which is like that saying which he uttered: Do not be haughtily wise; for this is to be more wise than one ought. Yet it must be known that other learned men also employ this definition, so as to place the nature or cause of sin in this: if something be either added to the virtues or taken away from them. For example, justice is a virtue;

and if anyone does something less than justice allows, he is without doubt unjust. But if anyone, under the appearance of justice, becomes excessive in regard to punishments, and pursues vengeance too savagely, he has slid from justice into cruelty. Whence Solomon also says: Do not become overly just. Similarly, freedom of speech too, if it be within its own measure, is a virtue; if it have less, it is timidity; if more, it is called rashness. In like manner prudence also, if it be in its own

measure, is a virtue; if it have less, it is imprudence; if more than it ought, it is called malice. Hence I think that the serpent in paradise was said to be more prudent than the rest of the beasts — that is, exceeding the measure of prudence, and slipping into the parts of malice. Hence too the sons of this age are said to be more prudent than the sons of light; for they are more wise than they ought to be wise. And thus in each and every virtue someone can be more wise than he ought to be wise. Even in chastity someone can be more wise than he ought to be wise, as are those who give heed to seducing spirits and to doctrines of demons, speaking falsehood in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared, forbidding to marry, and abstaining from foods which God created. These are more wise concerning chastity than they ought to be.

But the lustful and incestuous man is less wise than he ought to be. And I say that heretics too are more wise concerning Christ than they ought to be wise, who deny that he is the Son of God the Creator, but of some other, I know not what, better God. And those also are more wise concerning Christ than they ought to be wise, who deny that he came in the flesh and was born of the Virgin, but assign to him a heavenly body. In all these things, therefore, Paul wishes us not to be more wise than we ought to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety — which in Greek is called σωφροσύνη (sōphrosynē), but in our codices, that is, in the divine Scriptures, has been translated by our predecessors as ”sobriety,” while by other learned men it is rendered ”temperance,” which temperance is reckoned as one of the four general virtues. And so in this passage too the Apostle’s words would shine more clearly if we also had it written according to the force of the Greek expression, but to be wise unto temperance: that is, that in all things — whether what we do, or what we say, or what we think — we should maintain temperance.

In those things which we enumerated above, temperance alone knows how to preserve the measure, so that neither more nor less be done than ought. After this he says: To each one as God has apportioned the measure of faith: that is, that each one may know and understand what measure of God’s grace is in him, which he has deserved to obtain through faith. For sometimes a man receives from God to be wise in the work of charity, or to be wise in the office of visiting, or with respect to acts of mercy toward the poor, or concerning the care of the infirm, or with respect to the defense of widows and orphans, or with respect to the solicitude of hospitality. These things, then, God has apportioned singly to each according to the measure of faith. But if he who has received grace to be wise concerning some one of these does not understand the measure of the grace given to him, but wishes to be wise concerning the wisdom of God, concerning the word of doctrine, concerning the account of deeper knowledge — in which he has not received grace — and wishes not so much to learn as to teach the things he does not know: such a man, while he is wise about less, wishes to be wise about more than he ought. For

he is not wise unto temperance, so as to keep for each one the measure of faith as God has apportioned it.

But that the Apostle might designate these matters still more evidently, he introduces an example and says: For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same function: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another: composing through these words the whole body of the Church in the most orderly fashion; so that just as the several members of the body have their own proper functions, and each one serves its own offices, and yet it is not possible that they should not yield to one another by mutual consent: so, he says, also in the Church, which is the body of Christ, we severally have diverse functions. For example: one man devotes all his zeal to the wisdom of God and to the teaching of the word, and persists in meditation upon the divine law day and night; and he is the eye of this great body. Another, as we said above, cares for the ministry of the brethren and of the needy; and he is the hand of this holy body. Another is a diligent hearer of the word of God; and he is the ear of the body. Another is untiring in visiting those who lie sick, and in seeking out those in tribulation, and in rescuing those set in necessities; and he without doubt is called the foot of the ecclesiastical body.

And thus you may find each one inclined more strongly toward some one office, and giving his labor to it more particularly; yet holding the rest in a following place. For we do not say this, that one alone ought to suffice, but according to the form of the example set forth. Just as, for instance, the eye has the special office of seeing, yet it is one out of all and among all the members, and with the several members it does all things, and with it each several member does all things: so also he who through the grace of faith has merited some one special gift, administers that indeed principally; but in all the activities he is held to be a partner and sharer with the rest. But how this body is in Christ — that is, in truth, and wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, all of which Christ is — we have already often said. But now, if in this body it be, for example, that someone is an eye, which is the nobler thing in the whole body; or a hand, which may be held in the place following; or an ear, or a tongue, or any of the rest which seem to be more honorable: and again, that someone is some other member of those which seem to be less honorable;

whether he himself has furnished some cause for this, or whether by the will of God, without any causes whatsoever, this man has been appointed that member and that man this one — I think to be above our understanding. But lest those who assert that there are diverse natures of souls, established by diverse creators, should seem to find a place for confirming their doctrine, let the things which were discussed by us in the earlier parts concerning the vessels of honor and the vessels of dishonor suffice also for the present passage. For it must never be conceded that, whether in the present age, or in ages past, or even in ages to come, divine

Providence does not so dispense to each one that the merit of each, gathered by the freedom of choice, has furnished the matter to the one who dispenses. For God is just, and there is no injustice with him.

[§3] Having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, in ministering; or he that teaches, in doctrine; he that exhorts, in exhortation; he that gives, in simplicity; he that rules, in solicitude; he that shows mercy, in cheerfulness. When he had said that each of the believers were members of the one body of Christ, now he enumerates, as it were, the diversity of work of the diverse members; and for example, as sight to the eye, so to the mind, which is the interior eye, he assigns the office of prophecy; and to another, as to the hand, he ascribes ministry; and to another, as to the tongue, he attributes doctrine: and likewise also the rest. He also resolves that which seemed to us ambiguous in the earlier passage, where we were asking whether each member came to the honorable, or less honorable, offices of the body by furnishing some cause from itself; or whether from no causes, but by the will of God alone, it was assigned to each to be an honorable or a less honorable member. What therefore was there less clear to us, the Apostle has here evidently opened up, saying that whether prophecy, or ministry, or the remaining gifts of graces are given according to the proportion of faith: although this phrase — that is, according to the proportion of faith — seems among the Latins to be translated less properly.

For ἀναλογία (analogia) in Greek can be rendered not so much ”proportion” (ratio) as ”fitting measure,” so that, since it cannot be done by one word, it may be explained by two. He declares, therefore, that the diversities of graces are given according to the measure of faith of each one, so that, for example, when a man has received grace, he becomes this or that member in the body of Christ. And here indeed he has set down the measure of faith as the cause of receiving graces; but writing to the Corinthians he says: But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit unto that which is expedient; and after a few words he adds: But all these things works one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one as he wills. Whence it seems to me that, writing both to the Romans and to the Corinthians, he teaches three modes of receiving grace, so as to show that something in it is done by us, yet that the most part consists in God’s bounty. He posits, then, that there is a measure of faith through which one receives grace; he posits also that it is given unto that which is expedient; and that the Spirit divides as he wills. That, therefore, so great a faith be found in us as may be able to merit a more sublime grace, seems to belong to our work and zeal:

but that it be given unto that which is expedient, and be useful to the receiver, is God’s judgment; or, altogether, whether he will give it at all lies in him. Therefore also in another place the same Apostle says: But now God has set each member in

the body as he willed. And God willed according to the proportion or measure of the faith which is in us; or he willed unto that which is expedient. Unless perhaps someone should wish to understand this also in this way, that God has set each member in the body as he willed, so that the ”he willed” is referred rather to the member — that is, as it willed, as it chose, as it gave its labor; lest the power of choice should seem to be taken away from man. Nevertheless, from the fact that he says grace is given unto that which is expedient, it may come about that even though there be in someone so great a measure of faith as would deserve to receive a loftier grace, yet if the Holy Spirit, foreseeing things to come, should judge it not expedient for the receiver, he necessarily divides to each one as he wills and as is expedient. And indeed we see that some have received the grace of teaching or of exhortation to the people, and from this very thing, being lifted up and turned to pride, have fallen into the judgment of the devil:

and that others have indeed received grace, but have corrupted it by negligence of mind and slothfulness of life: of which sort was he also who bound up the denarius he had received in a napkin, and would not work anything from it. Therefore, finally, the Apostle also writes to his most beloved son, saying: Do not neglect the grace that is in you; as knowing that grace can perish through negligence. But as to what he said, according to the proportion or measure of faith, I think it has already been fully set forth in the earlier parts what that faith is which is required of us, and what that faith is which is given by God through grace, according to what the same Apostle says: To another, faith, in the same Spirit: and likewise where the apostles say to the Lord: Increase our faith: namely, that the faith which hopes and believes and trusts without any doubting is in us; but the account of that faith itself, and the knowledge, and the perfect understanding of the things we believe, is granted by God. But let us not omit in this place that which seems to belong to a more secret mystery. For if in the present age God gives to each one grace according to the measure of faith, without doubt in the age to come also he will give to each one grace in proportion to the measure of merits;

and if in the present age such is God’s dispensation, and such it will also be in the age to come, how shall it not be believed that in the ages past, which were before us, a like dispensation of God existed toward every rational creature? But let us now see what the gifts are which he enumerates as given according to grace. Prophecy, he says, and ministry, and doctrine, and exhortation, and giving — that is, bestowal — and ruling, and showing mercy. To these he joins also charity, and the rest. Concerning which someone might perhaps say: If all these things are given through grace, a man will not be in fault if he does not prophesy, or does not minister, or does not teach, or does not exhort, or does not give, or does not rule, or does not show mercy, or does not love, because he has not received the grace of all these things. But to this we shall say: Just as there is a faith which we have taught to be in us, and again there is a faith which is given through grace, as we

said above that it is written, To another, faith, in the same Spirit; so also in each one of those things which we enumerated above as given by God through grace, there is something in us too, according to whose measure or proportion each one merits the grace.

For that which is written is not to be taken of wisdom alone — namely, that even if one be perfect among the sons of men, if the wisdom that is from you be lacking to him, he shall be reckoned as nothing. For in the same way we can say: Even if someone be perfect in faith among the sons of men, if the faith that is from your grace be lacking to him, he shall be reckoned as nothing. So too, even if a man be perfect in ministry, if the grace of ministry from God be lacking to him, he shall be reckoned as nothing. So too, even if a man be perfect in doctrine, and the grace of doctrine which is from God be lacking to him, he shall be reckoned as nothing. And thus in all these things which have been enumerated, there is a certain perfection among the sons of men which they attain by their own labor and zeal, whether in wisdom, or in doctrine, or in the other offices: which nevertheless, if they have not grace given from God, will be nothing: because if the grace of the Spirit be lacking to them, they cannot even be members of Christ's body.

But in these matters it is asked whether there can be in us, or from us, some kind of prophecy which does not have the whole of itself from God, but takes some little part also from human endeavors. To others, indeed, this will seem utterly impossible; in Paul, however, it is plainly proved, when he says: But be zealous for the greater gifts, and rather that you may prophesy. In this, just as one is zealous for ministry, and for teaching, and for exhortation, and the rest, by the fact that he applies zeal and labor toward these things, so also the Apostle shows that it ought to come about with regard to prophecy. Hence this prophecy which the Apostle teaches must be understood as not being that through which it is said: Thus says the Lord — for that one stood until John, according to what is written in the Gospel: The Law and the Prophets were until John — but rather that of which the same Apostle says: He who prophesies speaks to men unto edification, and exhortation, and consolation. Prophecy, therefore, is spoken of in Paul when someone speaks to men unto edification, and when he speaks unto exhortation and consolation; and therefore it is possible for us to apply zeal toward prophecy of this kind, and it is within our power that, as we give our effort to these things, if we do them according to the reason or the measure of faith, there be added also that prophecy which is from God.

But according to the Apostle there is also another kind of prophecy, of which he says: But if you prophesy, and there enter someone unbelieving or unlearned, he is convicted by all, he is judged by all, the hidden things also of his heart are made manifest, and then, falling upon his face, he will declare that God is truly among you. For just as the Spirit of God searches all things, so also the Word of God searches

through all things, even those that are in secret — especially since the Word is living, and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword, reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow. And indeed, when a moral discourse is being handled in the Church, then the conscience of each one within himself is goaded, as he recognizes his own sins from the things that are said, and calls to mind whether he has perhaps committed anything in secret. And sometimes the very discernment of prudent men, who gather each person's conscience either from the countenance, or from the character, or from the bearing, holds a kind of prophecy. Let these things be said by us concerning the grace of prophecy. After these there follows: Or ministry, in ministering. We can recall all these things to that rule which was stated above, that is: Not to be wise beyond what one ought to be wise;

so that, for example, we may say that he who ministers ought not, in ministering, to be wise beyond what he ought to be wise; and he who teaches, in teaching, not to be wise beyond what he ought to be wise; and he who exhorts, in exhortation, not to be wise beyond what he ought to be wise. For many, having received a ministry, or having received a teaching office, have been wise beyond what they ought to have been wise; and, lifted up into arrogance, or dissolved into luxuries, they have fallen headlong. He who exhorts, in exhorting. Exhortation is a kind of teaching and of discourse, by which afflicted souls are relieved through the words of the divine Scriptures prudently fitted together and gathered into one. For often despair befalls the soul from the excess of its tribulations; nor can it easily be restored or refreshed by just any words, however polished and plausible they may be. But if a discourse having the power of the grace of God be applied, then it penetrates the heart of that soul, and offers consolation, and calls back hope with despair removed, according to that which was said by the Lord through the prophet: Priests, speak to the heart of Jerusalem.

[§3] He who gives, in simplicity; he who presides, in solicitude; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness. He who gives and supplies to the needy ought, he says, to do this in simplicity of heart; that is, that he not merely appear to do good to the needy while in his heart he seeks praise from men. It is not simplicity, therefore, if one thing seems to be done in the hands and another is sought in the heart. But he who presides over the brethren, or who presides over the Church, ought to be in solicitude — not of human affairs, nor of secular matters (for this solicitude ought to be foreign to those who preside over the Church) — but let him take up such solicitude as the Apostle speaks of: My daily press of business, the solicitude for all the Churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I am not set on fire? He, therefore, who presides over the Churches ought to have such solicitude, and ought by no means to have that other, secular one. He who shows mercy, in cheerfulness. It may perhaps seem that what he said above, He who gives, in simplicity, and this, He who shows mercy, in cheerfulness, are one

and the same. But to me it seems that the work is perhaps one, yet the disposition of the work itself is not likewise one.

For it is one thing to give to the needy, and another to share with the needy out of an affection of mercy; and therefore he does not wish there to be sadness in such a work. For he who lays out his money, if he is unbelieving and despairs of receiving it back, is necessarily saddened, as one who has lost it. But he who does this with faith and hope does it in cheerfulness and gladness, being certain that these small things which he expends for the commandment of God will confer upon him vast stores of heavenly riches, and beyond that, eternal life as well.

[§4] Love without pretense. I think that every love which is not according to God is feigned and not true. For God, the creator of the soul, implanted in it, along with the other virtues, the affection of love as well, so that it might love God and the things that God wills. Since, then, he has given the soul this work of love, whoever loves anything other than God and the things that please God — the love in that person must be called false and pretended. Moreover, if someone loves his neighbor and yet, when he sees him going astray, does not admonish him, does not correct him, that love must be called pretended. And therefore love ought to have nothing of flattery in it, nothing painted over, just as the same Apostle says elsewhere: Love from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.

[§5] Hating evil, clinging to good. It may perhaps seem strange that among the other goods of the virtues hatred too is taken up, and is set down by the Apostle as something necessary. From this it is certain that the affection of hatred is present in the soul: for it is praiseworthy to hate vices, to hate sins. For unless one holds vices in hatred, he cannot love, nor preserve, the virtues. For example, if someone proposes to guard chastity, he cannot keep it safely unless he takes up a certain hatred and abhorrence against unchastity. For difficult, and exceedingly difficult, is that continence in which the very thing one abstains from is still desired, and the soul’s craving is restrained by fear alone of the judgment to come. These things are perilous, and exceedingly perilous, unless, according to the Apostle’s counsel, hating evils and waging against them, as it were, unappeasable wars of hatred, we thus cling to good. This too is to be observed, that just as he says in another place: He who clings to the Lord is one spirit, so here too he says: Let us cling to good, doubtless so that it may come about that we are one with the good.

[§6] Loving one another with brotherly love. This commandment, that we love one another as God also loved us, though it is the first after the first (for the first is to love God; and again, among human beings, this is first, that we love one another), is somehow despised as though it were the last and least necessary thing among human beings; and the hatred which we said was implanted in us for this purpose, that we might hold evils in hatred, we exercise in a backwards order upon good things, and, loving the vices of the flesh and sins, we hold our brothers in hatred.

Nor does it happen otherwise that we hate what we ought not, except because we love what we ought not. We are commanded, then, to love our brothers, not to judge them. For if you think someone is ungodly, and therefore judge that he is not to be loved, hear that Christ died for the ungodly. Or if, because your brother is a sinner, you therefore think he is not to be loved, hear that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners. But if he is righteous, he is much more worthy of love, for the Lord loves the righteous.

[§7] Anticipating one another in honor. This is what the Lord also taught, when he marked the Scribes and Pharisees claiming for themselves the first places at banquets, and taught that, when you have been invited to a dinner, you should recline in the last place. [§8] In diligence not slothful. Above he admonished that the one who presides ought to be in diligence; but now he gives this commandment to all in common, lest any of us hear from the Lord: Wicked and slothful servant. [§9] Fervent in spirit. This too has to do with being unslothful and diligent. For he wills that we, who live under the law of the spirit, should have nothing slack in us, nothing lukewarm, but should carry out everything with fervor of spirit and warmth of faith. [§10] Serving the Lord. That person serves the Lord who can say: To us there is one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him, and over whom neither lust, nor greed, nor empty glory any longer holds dominion. But I know that in some Latin copies it reads serving the time, which does not seem to me to have been fittingly inserted — unless perhaps one supposes it was said in the way the same Apostle says elsewhere: The time is short; it remains that those who have wives should be as though they had none; or as that saying goes: Redeeming the time, for the days are evil.

[§11] Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation. He rejoices in hope who does not look at the things that are seen, but awaits the things that are not seen; and who knows that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the future glory that shall be revealed in us. That same person will also be patient in tribulation; because tribulation works patience, patience proof, and proof hope — provided, however, that we fulfill the words that follow, that is, persevering in prayer. For where human frailty is not sufficient, God’s help must be implored through prayers. [§12] Sharing in the needs of the saints. I recall that in the Latin copies it more often stands: Sharing in the memorials of the saints. But we neither disturb custom nor prejudge the truth, especially since both readings suit edification. For to contribute to the needs of the saints honorably and becomingly — not as though handing out a dole to the needy, but rather holding our means in a certain way in common with them — and likewise to remember the saints, whether in solemn assemblies or so that we may profit from the recollection of them, seems fitting and appropriate.

[§13] Pursuing hospitality. How worthily does he embrace in a single word the generosity of the one who pursues hospitality! For in saying that hospitality is to be pursued, he shows not merely that we are to receive the guest who comes to us, but that we are to seek him out, to be anxious about it, to pursue and search everywhere for guests, lest perchance any sit in the streets, lest any lie without a roof. Recall Lot, and you will find that it was not the guests who sought him out, but he who sought the guests; and this was to pursue hospitality. [§14] Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse. The Apostle, pursuing the moral topic more broadly, orders the deeds, the mind, the purpose, and also the very mouth and tongue of the disciples. He does not wish those who believe in Christ to bring forth a curse out of their mouth, but to speak well, to bless, to pray well, so that from this they may be believed both to be servants of a good Lord and disciples of a good Master. Yet it must be known that this word ”blessing” is found placed in the Scriptures in various senses. For God is found to bless either human beings or the other things he had created; and human beings, or the other creatures, are commanded to bless God. But God’s blessing always imparts some gift to those who are blessed by him, whereas human beings are said to bless God in the sense of praising him and returning thanks. Here, however, the Apostle, in saying Bless, and do not curse, admonishes that when we are provoked by enemies, or goaded by injuries, we should not return curses for curses, but should do what he writes of himself where he says: We are cursed, and we bless.

[§15] To rejoice with those who rejoice, to weep with those who weep. Here too a suitable and fitting distinction must be maintained. For the joys of Christians are not to be joined to just any joys, nor are our tears to be joined to just any weeping. For if I should see someone rejoicing over a gain of money, or over the extent of his possessions, or over the eminence of worldly honor, I ought not to congratulate such people, since I know that mourning and tears follow joys of this kind. Indeed, so far is one from rejoicing over such things, that the Lord did not permit his disciples to rejoice even over the fact that they saw the demons subject to them, but said to them: Do not rejoice that the demons are subject to you; but rejoice, he says, that your names are written in the book of life. We too, then, if we see such a work done by anyone as is worthy to be written in heaven — whether a work of justice, or of charity, or of peace, or of mercy — and so done that it deserves to be recorded in the book of life, we ought to rejoice with such people. And also, if we see anyone converted from error, and having left the darkness of ignorance come to the light of truth, and having obtained the remission of sins and the grace of the Holy Spirit, we ought to rejoice with such people.

Similarly, we are commanded to weep with those who weep — not with those who weep for their dead, or who weep over worldly losses, since we know that the sorrow of this world works death. Our tears, therefore, are not to be joined with such people; but we must weep with those of whom the Lord says: Blessed are those

who weep, for they shall be comforted. If anyone weeps for his sins, if anyone after an offense turns to repentance and washes away his error with tears, if anyone groans even while placed in this dwelling and desires to return to Christ, and consoles his holy longing by the pouring out of tears — let us join our tears with such people, and let us share their groanings; for the sorrow that is according to God works a lasting salvation through repentance.

[§16] Being of the same mind toward one another. This saying has been made obscure not by its own nature, but by the translation. For what he says is this: that we should feel toward a brother as toward our very selves, and should will for our neighbor what we will for ourselves; as the Lord also says in the Gospel: Whatever you wish that people should do to you, do the same also to them. Not being high-minded, but consenting to the humble. He teaches that pride is in every way to be fled; for this is what ”to be high-minded” means. And rightly is pride to be fled, since Scripture says that the beginning of departing from God is pride. And well has he set forth the training in humility in a single word; for to consent to the humble, and to love the humble, and to bend oneself down to them — this is to accustom oneself to imitate him who, though he was in the form of God, took the form of a servant, and humbled himself even unto death.

[§18] ”Be not wise in your own eyes.” He who seems wise to himself is, along with his arrogance, a fool; nor can he know the true wisdom of God, who cultivates his own folly as if it were wisdom. And indeed, in what has gone before, Paul himself taught that this was the cause of unbelief for the Jews, saying of them that, ”being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they were not made subject to the righteousness of God.” So then, he too who is wise in his own eyes cannot be wise in God’s eyes. [§19] ”Rendering to no one evil for evil.” If to inflict evil is to sin, then to render evil back is not, as it seems to some, just, but is a like sin — or, as I judge, even a graver one. For he who first inflicted the evil perhaps did not perceive that what he did was evil. But he who rendered evil back, by the very fact that he was moved to take vengeance, has confessed that he perceived that what he rendered was evil. And therefore one must always look to him who said: ”Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

[§20] ”Providing good things before all men.” A man provides good things before all men if he does not seek to please the vices or the manners of individuals. Otherwise that saying of the Apostle himself will be contrary to this, which says: ”If I wished to please men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” But he who so holds the balance of his life, his manners, and his acts that he cannot be reproved by any man — he it is who provides good things before all men. But let us also notice this, how the Apostle did not say ”that we may please all men,” but ”that we may

provide good things before all men" — that is, that we may do good things before all men, whether the things that are good please them or do not please them.

[§21] "If it be possible, as much as lies in you, having peace with all men." The Apostle knew that peace, among those between whom peace is held, consists not of one party but of both; therefore, lest another's disposition — should it happen to prove unpeaceable — should seem to hinder us from the good of peace, he gave a most measured precept: that meanwhile our own mind should always be prepared for peace, and that the fault of discord should rest not with us but with the other. But perhaps someone may say: How can it come about that we have peace with all men? And what shall we do with the Scripture which says: "You saw a thief, and you ran with him, and with adulterers you set your portion"? Well, therefore, did the Apostle add: "As much as lies in you," that is, what accords with your purpose and your faith. For to have peace and fellowship with the wicked does not accord with our faith and our purpose — although in another place a further distinction may be drawn. For it is one thing to love men, another to love crimes. He who loves men loves the creature of God; he who loves crimes follows after the devil's inventions. Those, therefore, who are perfect love the very men in whom they hate the crimes; and while holding in hatred that in them which sins, they do not cease to love that which God created.

[§22] "Not avenging yourselves, dearly beloved, but give place to wrath. For it is written: Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." In what way those who do not avenge themselves give place to wrath seems to me to be understood in two ways. For by this very fact, that (for example) they do not return blow for blow, or do not render insult for insult, they have given place to the wrath of him who did the injury to pass over and vanish away. For no one will be found so rabid that, having inflicted an injury, he rages again if he receives no requital; but, as though his fury were poured out and digested, he necessarily grows mild. There is therefore also great gain, where both the sinner's multitude of sins is checked, and the patience of him who suffered the injury becomes approved before God. But it is also possible to give place to wrath in this way: when, for the injuries they inflict, those who sin — according to Paul's own saying — "treasure up for themselves wrath in the day of wrath," when God will render to each one according to his works. If, therefore, we avenge ourselves, it is no great thing that we render for the injury received — for instance, a slap for a slap, or a stone for a stone, or for the insult of a word an insult of a word none the less. But if we reserve these things for the vengeance of God, we give place, in him who has injured us, to that wrath which he beyond doubt treasures up for himself by his own evil deeds, which will exact from him in the judgment of God punishments far graver than we are able to inflict.

[§23] "But if your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in doing this you will heap coals of fire upon his head." These things indeed the Lord also

commands in the Gospels. And although that understanding lies open, according to what we have said above — namely, that insofar as to enemies and to those who injure us we not only do not render requital but even bestow good things upon them, so far do we heap up their punishments in the judgment of God (for it is truly a just condemnation if they are convicted before God of having inflicted evils upon those from whom they received good things) — nevertheless let us see whether perhaps this commandment may contain some worthier meaning. For Jeremiah the prophet also says to the sinful daughter of Babylon: "You have coals of fire, sit upon them, these shall be to you for a help." Perhaps, then, here too these coals of fire which are heaped upon the enemy's head are heaped up for his help. For it can come about that the enemy's savage and barbarous mind, if it perceives our kindness, if it sees our humanity, our affection, our devotion, may take on compunction of heart and bear repentance for what it has committed; and from this a certain fire may be kindled in him, which tortures and burns him for the conscience of what he has committed; and these will be the coals of fire which are heaped upon his head out of our work of mercy and devotion. But by "head" is meant the ruling part of the heart; and rightly is that called the head by whose understanding and prudence all the members are governed.

[§24] Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. He is overcome by evil who, provoked by evils, returns evil; but he overcomes evil with good who, having received evils, repays them with good things. For it is certain that this is the nature of evil, that it is increased and grows from things like itself — just as if you add fire to fire, or as if the clouding of the air is joined to the darkness of night. But if you apply good, evil is destroyed. For contraries are done away with by contraries, just as fire is extinguished by water, and darkness is put to flight by light. But perhaps someone may say that Paul, through unskillfulness of speech, has fallen away from his subject; for he had set out to speak about the gifts of graces which are given through the Holy Spirit. And indeed, as to what he says: Whether prophecy, or ministry, or teaching, or exhortation, these can pertain to spiritual gifts. Perhaps also what follows: He who gives, in simplicity; he who presides, in solicitude; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness, can be joined to the foregoing; but as for those things which he enumerates after these — that charity be without dissimulation, hating evil, cleaving to good, loving one another with the charity of brotherhood, anticipating one another in honor, and the rest of this kind — one might say that these are precepts rather than gifts.

But let us consider more carefully whether perhaps, since indeed in all these matters he has undertaken to treat the moral topic, and to make the Christian not only stable and immovable in the faith of the truth but also adorned in his morals, he therefore joins moral precepts as well to the gifts of the graces, in order to show that these too are given to Christians through the grace of God. For there are also some among the Gentiles of well-ordered and honorably formed morals, who nev-

ertheless do not refer this very thing which they have to God, nor confess that the grace was given to them by Him; but either they ascribe it to their own diligence, or they boast about their masters and instructors. To us, however, the Apostle shows that everything which is good is from God and is given through the Holy Spirit, just as the apostle James also says: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, descending from the Father of lights; so that he who glories may glory in the Lord.

[§25] Let us see, then, what the Apostle now adds in what follows: Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. It seems to me that in this he has very commendably named the soul, which he commands to be subject to the powers. For he would never have said, let every spirit be subject to the power, but, let every soul. Concerning this distinction we have already often said that sometimes a person is named from the soul, sometimes from the flesh, sometimes from the spirit. But when he is to be named from the better part, as one who ought to be understood as spiritual, he is called spirit; when from the lower, soul; but when he is named from the worse, he is called flesh — and we have often brought forward testimonies about these things from the Scriptures. Now, therefore, since the Apostle is laying down precepts for believers, he wishes us to preserve, so far as it lies in us, the quiet and peace of the present life. And if indeed we are such as are joined to the Lord and are one spirit with Him, we are said to be subject to the Lord. But if we are not yet such, but there is still in us the common soul which has something of this world, which is bound to it by some business, for this one the Apostle lays down precepts, and says that it should be subject to the powers of the world:

because the Lord also said that those who have in themselves the superscription of Caesar should render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s. Peter and John had nothing which they might render to Caesar; for Peter says: Gold and silver I do not have. He who does not have this has neither anything to render to Caesar, nor anything on account of which he should be subject to the higher powers. But he who has either money, or possessions, or any business in the world, let him hear: Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.

[§26] For there is no power, he says, except from God. Perhaps someone will say: What then? Is even that power which persecutes the servants of God, attacks the faith, and overturns religion, from God? To this we shall reply briefly. There is no one who does not know that sight has been given to us by God, and hearing, and understanding. Since, therefore, we have these from God, yet it is in our own power whether we use sight for good things or for evil; and similarly hearing, and the movement of our hands, and the thought of our mind: and in this consists the just judgment of God, that we misuse for impious and iniquitous services those things which He gave for good uses. So, then, every power also has been given by God for the punishment of the evil, but for the praise of the good, as the same Apostle says in what follows. And the judgment of God will be just toward those

who regulate the power they have received according to their own impieties, and not according to the divine laws.

[§27] And therefore he says: Therefore he who resists the power resists the ordinance of God; and those who resist acquire damnation for themselves. He is not here speaking of those powers which bring persecutions upon the faith; for in that case it must be said: We ought to obey God rather than men. Rather he is speaking of those ordinary powers which are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil: and whoever resists these certainly procures damnation for himself according to the quality of his deeds.

[§28] ”But do you wish,” he says, ”not to fear the power? Do what is good, and you will have praise from it; for it is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid: for not without cause does it bear the sword; for it is God’s minister, an avenger in wrath upon him who does what is evil. Paul moves me in these words, in that he calls the worldly power and the judge of this world God’s minister; and this he repeats not once, but a second and a third time. I should therefore like to inquire how the judge of the world is God’s minister. We find it written in the Acts of the Apostles that the apostles, coming together into one place, established decrees which we who from the Gentiles have believed in Christ ought to observe, in which these things are contained: ”The apostles and elders to the brethren who are at Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia, to all who have believed from among the Gentiles, greeting. Forasmuch as we have heard that certain went out from us and troubled you, to whom we gave no such commandment. And after a little it is added: ”It seemed good, therefore, to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no further burden of weight, beyond those things which are necessary, that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication;

from which if you keep yourselves you will do well. Farewell. In these precepts, then, in which he says that no further burden is to be imposed upon those who believe from among the Gentiles, save that they abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication, neither is murder forbidden, nor adultery, nor theft, nor the lying of males with males, nor the other crimes which are punished by divine and human laws. But if he says that only those things which he mentioned above are to be observed by Christians, he will seem to have granted them license as regards the rest. But consider the ordering of the Holy Spirit: since indeed the other crimes are avenged by the laws of the world, and it seemed superfluous that those things should now be forbidden by divine law which are sufficiently chastised by human law, he decrees only those things concerning which human law had said nothing and which seemed to pertain to religion. From which it appears that the judge of the world fulfills the greatest part of God’s law. For all the crimes which God wills to be avenged, He willed to

be avenged not through the prelates and rulers of the Churches, but through the judge of the world; and Paul, knowing this, rightly names him God's minister and an avenger upon him who does what is evil.

But what he says concerning the power, "Do what is good, and you will have praise from it," seems to me to require a deeper inquiry. For it is not the custom of the powers of this world to praise those who have not been criminals. For they indeed punish those who sin, but they have no custom of praising those who do not sin. But let us see whether perhaps Paul, even when he seems to be teaching moral matters, does not fail always to insert something also about the mysteries. For indeed, knowing that all who have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law — and that in the judgment that law will without doubt convict each one according to how he lived (and we have shown that the Holy Spirit in many things has given place to human law) — it is therefore certain that in the day of judgment he too will have praise with God even from these laws, who has committed nothing against the established laws, when it will be said to him by the Lord: "Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Yet it must be known that the law is not laid down for the just, but for the unjust and the insubordinate, for the wicked, for murderers, for the defiled, for perjurers, and for the rest who are of this sort. For these are they who fear the law.

But he who does good, that is, who does what is good not from fear of the law but from love of the good, that man now lives not under the law of the letter, but under the law of the spirit.

[§29] "Therefore it is necessary to be subject, not only because of wrath, but also because of conscience. For on this account you also pay tributes. For they are God's ministers, attending upon this very thing. By these words Paul indeed orders the Church of God, that, doing nothing adverse to the princes and powers of this world, it may through quiet and tranquillity of life carry out the work of righteousness and piety. For if we were to suppose, for example, that those believing in Christ were not subject to the powers of this world, did not render tributes, nor pay customs, showed fear to none, honor to none, would they not by these things deservedly turn the arms of rulers and princes against themselves, and make their persecutors excusable, but themselves blameworthy? For they would then seem to be assailed not for the cause of faith, but of insolence; and there would be for them indeed a worthy cause of death, but an unworthy merit of death. Foreseeing these things, then, through his immense wisdom, Paul says: "Render to all what is due: to whom tribute, tribute; to whom custom, custom; to whom fear, fear; to whom honor, honor. Owe no one anything, save that you love one another. I think, however, that these things too Paul does not utter apart from the customary mysteries of his discourses.

For indeed we have already taught in the foregoing that every creature, and all spirits, whether good and upright, or even of a depraved and evil purpose, minister to God, and that each one furnishes that ministry for which he has shown himself fit. For the Apostle pronounced concerning all of them together when he said: ”Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth for ministry on account of those who receive the inheritance of salvation? All spirits, therefore, minister to the life of men; each one, however, as we have said, according to his own dignity and desert: for those also are called ministers by whose ministry the things that pertain to the world are accomplished. Whence the Apostle also, who had said of himself, ”the world is crucified to me, and I to the world,” says this as well: ”But we have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is from God. But he who is still of the world, and savors the things that are of the world, and seeks the things that are of the flesh, is necessarily subject to the ministers of the world; subject, moreover, because of wrath, which he has treasured up for himself from his sins. And on this account it seems to me that he says: ”Therefore it is necessary to be subject, not only because of wrath, but also because of conscience”; since he who is made subject has in himself that for which he is accused by conscience.

To these, therefore, we also pay certain tributes, while we still live according to the flesh and think the things that are of the flesh. For if we cultivate the Lord’s vineyard, and exercise within ourselves the true vine, which is Christ, from that vineyard we shall not pay tributes to the ministers of the world, but shall render the fruits in their season to the Lord Himself: according to what the Savior Himself says in the Gospels, that He will take away the vineyard from the evil husbandmen, and will give it to other husbandmen who will render Him the fruits in their season. But this very thing also which he says: ”Render to all what is due: to whom tribute, tribute; to whom custom, custom” — seems to me to be distinguished from what is added in what follows, ”to whom fear, fear; to whom honor, honor”: and that tributes and customs indeed pertain to those ministers of whom we spoke above. For they exact from us the tributes of our land, and the customs of our trading. And why do I speak of ourselves? Even our Lord Jesus Christ, when He was placed in the flesh, had tribute exacted of Him: which He says that He pays for this reason, not because He is a debtor, but lest He should give them offense.

But if He who had nothing of Caesar’s in Himself, and in whom the prince of this world, when he came, found nothing of his own, although He was free, nevertheless paid tribute (for He came even into death, that He might be free also among the dead) — how much more is it necessary for us to pay out these tributes of the flesh, and, if indeed we trade in the pearls of the kingdom of heaven, to pay the customs of our trading to the spirits who exact them from us through diverse temptations? But fear and honor we ought rather to refer to Him who says through the prophet: ”Do you not call me both Lord and Father? And if I am Lord, where is my fear? and if I am Father, where is my honor? As for the latter things which he added, that is,

”Owe no one anything,” it is certain that these are to be referred to the ministers, to whom a man becomes a debtor when he has sinned. For we have shown in many places and frequently that sin is a debt. Paul wishes, therefore, that every debt of sin be paid, and that the debt of sin remain with us not at all, but that the debt of charity abide and never cease from us: for it is expedient for us both to pay this daily, and always to owe it.

[§31] Finally, he sets forth in what follows how great is the power of charity. For he who loves his neighbor, he says, has fulfilled the law. For: You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not covet; and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up again in this word: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. And at the last, gathering up briefly the reason for so great a good, he says: The love of one’s neighbor works no evil; therefore love is the fullness of the law. Above he had said that he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law; and because it seemed difficult how anyone could fulfill the whole law in a single utterance, he renders the fullest account, saying: The love of one’s neighbor works no evil, and therefore love is the fullness of the law. For set love alongside each single commandment of the law, and see how easily they are all fulfilled. Can he who loves his neighbor possibly kill him? It is certain that no one kills the person he loves. Love, then, is that by which the commandment is fulfilled which enjoins: You shall not kill. And again, does he who loves his neighbor commit adultery with his wife? Assuredly never. If, therefore, you love your neighbor, neither will you commit adultery. Likewise too, he who loves his neighbor does not steal what belongs to him;

and he who loves his neighbor does not speak false witness against him. Likewise the remaining commandments of the law also, if there be love toward one’s neighbor, are kept without any labor. Yet I think that in this too the Apostle wished us to learn something by a shorter road. For if you inquire more diligently who our neighbor is, you will learn in the Gospel that he is our neighbor who came, and, when we lay wounded by robbers and stripped bare by demons, set us upon the beast of his own body, and carried us to the inn of the Church, and granted to the innkeeper (whether to Paul himself, or to everyone who presides over the Church) the two denarii of the New and Old Testament for the expenses of our care and attendance. If, then, we love this neighbor, we fulfill the whole law and all the commandments in love of him. For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness for everyone who believes; nor can it come about by any means that one who loves Christ with his whole heart and with all his inward parts should do anything that does not please Christ. For he who loves him not only does not kill him, which the law forbids, but does not even grow angry with his brother. He who so delights in the one he loves not only does not commit adultery, but does not even look upon a woman to lust after her; but says rather to him:

My soul covets and faints for the living God. He who loves Christ, how should he think about theft, who even leaves behind all his own possessions, whatever he has, in order to follow Christ? He who loves Christ, when does he speak false witness, since he knows that the very one whom he loves was betrayed by false witness? And necessarily he who loves Christ also loves his neighbor. For by this sign alone is one marked out as a disciple of Christ, if he has charity toward his neighbors. For it is certain that he who does not love his neighbor does not know Christ.

[§32] And this, knowing the time, that it is now the hour to rise from sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night has gone before, but the day has drawn near. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light; let us walk honorably, as in the day. When, after those discussions which the Apostle pursued concerning either the Gentiles or the Jews, he had also introduced the moral topic, by which he might more and more urge his hearers toward conversion, he now introduces as well the pressing consideration of time, which in all matters is supreme. For no one is so drowsy and sluggish that the brightness of the oncoming day does not rouse him, and whose sight the sun, poured into his eyes, does not open. There is, then, a certain sleep of the soul as well. For if it has, as we have often already said, its own proper eyes, and its own ears, and hands and feet — each of which is to be reckoned not so much as bodily members belonging to it, as powers by which it is moved and stirred toward each several thing — then without doubt sleep also befalls it in respect of its eyes. For if it does not do at the opportune time the things that are God’s, but grows torpid with idleness, it will deservedly be said to sleep.

For this reason, therefore, Paul, the herald of Christ, going about a world set in the sleep of idleness, announces that the light is now at hand, and that it is time to rise from sleep; and that the night — that is, that time in which ignorance held dominion over men — has gone before, and that, with the coming of the Sun of righteousness drawing near and the darkness thinning out, the day of knowledge is now imminent; and therefore he cries out that one must awake, lest through sloth anyone suffer night in the daylight; and that the works of darkness must be cast off, and the armor of light put on. The works of darkness are those acts which are alien from God; the armor of light, however, is the taking up of the virtues. And just as we have said that it is disgraceful to sleep when day is already pressing upon us, much more disgraceful is it to carry out the works of darkness in the time of day and light. But it must be known that the coming of this light and day is to be understood in a twofold manner: both as general for all, and as particular for each individual. The light and day will be present generally for all when the time of the age to come has arrived: in comparison with which the span of this present world is called darkness.

That time draws near as the days daily slip away, and the spans which are increased for the past are without doubt diminished for the future; and therefore, he says, our salvation is now nearer than when we believed, and daily it becomes nearer — just as the Lord also, when he was distinguishing the signs of the consummation of the age, said: But when you see all these things, lift up your heads, for your redemption draws near. But there also comes about a coming of this day for individuals. For if Christ is in our heart, he makes day for us also: if the reasoning of knowledge puts our ignorances to flight, and, turning aside from unworthy acts, we pursue whatever is devout and honorable, we are set in the light, and, as it were, we walk honorably in the day.

[§33] What the works of darkness are which must be cast off, he next enumerates, saying: Not in revelings and drunkenness; not in chamberings and impurities; not in strife and envy. These are the works of darkness, which are also called the works of the flesh, in those who have made over their flesh to wantonness and impurity, not to holiness nor to the Lord. For revelings — that is, disgraceful and luxurious banquets, whose necessary companion is the most shameful drunkenness — what else will follow upon them, save chamberings and impurities? From foul couchings they are named ”chamberings,” things which seem to befit not so much rational human beings as wild beasts and brutes. Not in strife and envy. Those things which he named above are vices of the flesh; these now are also of the soul — although all alike are called works of the flesh and works of darkness, because in truth strife and envy are in the souls of those who live according to the flesh and who walk in darkness. But he who is in the light, and walks honorably as in the day, does nothing through strife, nothing through vainglory. In this way, then, does one cast off (as he said above) the works of darkness.

[§34] But as for what he said, Let us put on the armor of light, he now explains how this ought to come about. But put on, he says, the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in its concupiscences. We have frequently said that Christ is wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and truth, and all the virtues together: and whoever has taken these up is said to have put on Christ. For if Christ is all these things, then necessarily he who has these has Christ also. For he who has these makes no provision for the flesh in its concupiscences. The Apostle employs his customary moderation, in that he does not deny that provision for the flesh is to be made in every respect. For it is certain that in things necessary it must be made; but in delicacies and luxury and every concupiscence it must be utterly excluded.

[§35] Now him that is weak in faith receive, not in disputes over thoughts. For one believes that he may eat all things; but he who is weak, let him eat vegetables. In the passages above too the Apostle made mention of weakness of faith, where he says of Abraham: When he was nearly a hundred years old, he was not weakened

in faith. Concerning that weakness of faith we have set forth, in those places, such things as could occur to us. But now also he makes mention of one weak in faith, whom he calls weak in this respect, that he does not believe he may eat all things, but his faith is so slight that he reckons vegetables alone to be food suitable for him. This can indeed seem to have been said to those who believed from among the Gentiles, exalting themselves in the liberty of faith because they believed nothing to be common or unclean, over against those who believed from the circumcision, still observing according to the tradition of the law a distinction of foods: so that he may seem to restrain them and to warn them not to insult those in whom long custom in the observance of foods still stirred some discrimination and hesitation. He commands, therefore, that he who is thus weak in this faith should rather be received, and not cast off, nor judged as though unbelieving. For it is one thing to be unbelieving, another to be weak in faith. For he is called unbelieving who does not have faith; but weak in faith is he who doubts in some part of the faith.

[§36] The Apostle, therefore, composing the body of the Church in peace, says: Let him who eats not despise him who does not eat; and let him who does not eat not judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you that judge another’s servant? To his own lord he stands, or falls: but he shall stand; for God is able to make him stand — namely, so that through these words there should be no dissension among believers on account of foods. But Paul seems to have spoken these things with a deeper meaning. For the law had enjoined nothing about eating vegetables upon those coming from the circumcision, such that what he says would seem to fit them: But he who is weak, let him eat vegetables. Whence it is evident that he is treating these matters concerning the food of the word, and calls weak in faith the one who is not so perfect in his faculties that he can take all the food of the word of God — just as the Apostle himself says elsewhere: But solid food is for the perfect, for those who, according to their capacity for taking it, have their faculties exercised for the discernment of good and evil. And again he says to others: I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able.

And shall we be so foolish as to suppose that the Apostle, who was sent to preach the word of God, carried milk about with him to give the Corinthians to drink? But it is manifest that he is speaking of these things with respect to the quality of the word, and therefore says: If anyone is weaker in his faculties, and is not of so perfect a faith as to grasp the word concerning the more hidden mysteries, disputes of thoughts must not be stirred up for him through those things which he cannot understand. For one, he says, believes that he may eat all things. Paul is not by these words exhorting the disciples to eat all things; nor is he a teacher of gluttony and the gullet: but he is doubtless speaking of those whose faith is perfect, and who are hindered by no distinctions in the word of God — those whom the same Apostle elsewhere calls spiritual, when he says: But the spiritual man examines all things. It is he, then, of whom he here says: But another believes that he may eat

all things. Finally, to the apostles also, before they received the Holy Spirit, it was said by the Lord: I have yet many things to say to you; but you cannot bear them now. But the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, will come, and he himself will teach you all things.

These, then, are the ”all things” which he believes he may eat who, by reason of the perfection of his faith, has through the grace of the Holy Spirit become capable of the more hidden word. Yet the weak man too has something to take from the word of God, and there is a certain kind of word which the Apostle here has called ”vegetables,” which does not render the hearer’s faculties so robust and strong as it sustains them and keeps them from perishing. For in many places divine Scripture speaks of the inner senses of the soul as though of the outward members of the body; and as we have often taught that the inner man is said either to see, or to hear, or to walk, so now too this same inner man is said either to be able to take in every food if he is perfect, or, if he is weak, to eat vegetables. But in order that he may compose the concord in the Church of the perfect and the imperfect — as of the less honorable and the honorable members in the body — and that there may be no dissension among them, he says: Let him who eats not despise him who does not eat; and let him who does not eat not judge him who eats. This is what he says elsewhere too: That the eye cannot say to the hand, You are not necessary to me; nor the head to the feet, I do not need your service.

But much more those members of the body which seem to be less honorable are necessary. And so to those whose faith is such that they can eat all things, and grasp every kind of the word, he gives the precept that they not be proud and despise those who are inferior; and again to those who are incapable of the more perfect teaching he gives the charge that they not judge those whose faculties are more capacious and whose understanding is more eminent. For by a perverse order the unskilled are wont to judge the skilled, and the slothful the studious. Sometimes, however, even those who have grasped some beginnings of knowledge are puffed up and exalt themselves against those who seem to be less capable. Therefore Paul, restraining by the rebuke of apostolic authority the insolence of both parties, says: Who are you that judge another’s servant? To his own lord he stands, or falls. When he says stands, or falls, he speaks according to the mind of the one whom he rebukes. For the more unskilled man, if he sees someone perceiving something more profoundly and in a way he himself cannot grasp, judges that this man has fallen from the standing of faith; and again those who are puffed up by knowledge, and do not act with charity as Paul admonishes, think similarly about any who are less skilled: and therefore he took away from a brother the power of judging a brother. And he says another’s servant well, because the Lord says:

But you are all brothers. All — that is, the whole creation — and there is one sole Lord, Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, rich toward all. At the same time he also

makes manifest the ineffable goodness of God, when he says of him who seems to have fallen, even if he has truly fallen, that God is able to make him stand. For the Lord raises up those who have been cast down.

[§37] One judges between one day and another; another judges every day. Let each one abound in his own sense. We said above, following the sequence of the apostolic letter, that these matters seem to be treated concerning abstinence from foods, or liberty in them: since indeed the calling which is in Christ places nothing common or unclean in foods, but the principle of continence persuades us to abstain even from things permitted. For, as he himself says elsewhere, because all things are lawful, it does not therefore follow that all things are expedient, or that all things edify. Yet the very principle of abstinence differs according to the vow and purpose of the one vowing. For one judges thus, and so determines in his own mind, that he should spend every day, that is, the continuous time of his life, in abstinence. But another appoints some particular time, as by a votive profession. In this matter, whether one undertakes a perpetual or a temporary continence, he grants free power to the judgment of each. Nevertheless he promises that both are made acceptable before the Lord, and therefore he adds:

[§38] He who is wise concerning the day, is wise for the Lord; and he who eats, eats for the Lord: for he gives thanks to God; and he who does not eat, for the Lord does not eat, and gives thanks to God. Thanks therefore are rendered to God by both: by the one indeed for the fruit of continence; by the other for the liberty of eating. But since, as we have shown in what preceded, a deeper sense of the Apostle is found than the account of carnal foods contains, in the spiritual exposition, according to those things which we discussed above concerning those of whom one judges every day, but another judges between one day and another, we can understand this: that in the divine Scriptures each single chapter in which a doctrine of piety and faith is contained is called a day. For truly that is a day which illuminates the mind, which puts to flight the darkness of ignorance, which has in itself Christ, who is the sun of righteousness. If therefore there be anyone who so expends labor and zeal upon the divine letters that he examines and judges every day and every sense of divine Scripture, so that not one iota or one tittle of the law escapes him, this man will be seen to judge every day.

But he who is not of such great capacity will grasp alternate ones, that is, a few senses out of many, which, if they do not suffice for the fullness of knowledge, are yet certainly enough for the sum of faith. Let each therefore, according to the apostolic counsel, give thanks to God: he who is wise concerning every day, and who eats all things, that is, who recognizes and understands all things; and he also who, although he does not eat all things, and does not grasp the understanding of all matters, is nevertheless saved by a brief confession of faith. And therefore

even the one who does not eat all things, nor take in the knowledge of all things, is nevertheless himself also said to give thanks to God.

[§39] For none of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself; whether therefore we live, we live to the Lord; or whether we die, we die to the Lord. Whether therefore we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died and lived, that he might have dominion over both the dead and the living. What it is to live in Christ, and what it is to die in Christ, has often been said by us in the exposition of this Epistle, and especially in that place where we attempted to explain the saying of the Apostle in which he says: But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live together with him. If therefore we remember what was said in that place, from those very things the present saying of the Apostle set before us will become plainer and clearer — how none of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself. For each one does not give to himself, but takes from Christ the example of death — he who alone died to sin — so that he too, by imitation of him, may be able to be made a stranger to sin and dead to it. But we do not have the example of life from ourselves either; rather we receive it from the resurrection of Christ, as the same Apostle says:

That as Christ rose from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. Therefore the newness of life by which we live in Christ through faith in his resurrection is reckoned to the Lord, because it takes its beginning not from us but from him; and therefore: Whether we live, we live to the Lord; or whether we die, we die to the Lord. Whether therefore we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For he calls that death by which, buried together with Christ, as we said, and baptized into his death, we have died to sin; and that life by which, made strangers to this world, and, as he himself says, living from the dead, we live not to ourselves, that is, not to the flesh, but to God, according to what he joins in what follows. For to this end, he says, Christ died and lived, that he might have dominion over both the dead and the living. He says that Christ died, without doubt by the dispensation of the passion; but that he lived, through the mystery of the resurrection. Whence he left us also the example first of passion and mortification, and afterward also of resurrection and newness of life. But perhaps it may trouble someone that the Apostle says he died and lived for this reason, that he might have dominion over the dead and the living;

as though he had given this to be understood, that unless he had died, he would not have had dominion over the dead; and unless after death he had lived again, he would not have held dominion over the living. But to these things I think we must reply as follows. Christ's dominion over every creature is established in two ways. In one, by which, as Creator of all and wielding power over all things, he holds all things subject by the force of his majesty and the necessity of his power; and by this mode he has dominion not only over good and holy minds and spirits,

but also over the wicked and the apostate, and over those whom divine Scripture has called malignant angels. For it is on this account that he is called all-holding, or almighty, according to what John designates in the Apocalypse, saying: These things says he who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty. This then is one mode by which Christ has dominion over all. But there is another, by which, as one who is good and the Son of a good Father, he does not wish to bend rational spirits by violence to the obedience of his law, but waits until they come of their own accord, so that they may seek the good by will and not by necessity, and so that he may persuade by teaching rather than by commanding, by inviting rather than by extorting.

From this, finally, it comes that he deigns to go even to death, that he may leave an example of obedience, and a pattern of dying, to those who are willing to die to sin and to vices. And for this reason in the present passage the Apostle writes that he died and lived for this end, that he might have dominion over both the living and the dead: over the living, assuredly those who by the example of his resurrection lead a new and heavenly life on earth; over the dead, without doubt those who carry about the mortification of Christ in their own body, and mortify their members which are upon the earth.

[§40] But if these things are so: Why, he says, do you judge your brother? Or why do you despise your brother, since, whether there is in you a mortification of the flesh and of the vices, it did not arise from you but was bestowed by the death of Christ; or whether you have newness of life and, walking on earth, have your conversation in heaven, you have merited this by Christ’s resurrection? And he has aptly marked the character of each fault by a homely designation, saying to the one: Why do you despise? and to the other: Why do you judge your brother? For those who seem to have advanced somewhat in knowledge are accustomed to despise and to count as nothing those who are less capable of a higher understanding; and, on the contrary, the unskilled and the untaught are accustomed to judge — that is, to accuse and condemn — those who search out things loftier and deeper than they themselves can grasp or attain. And therefore the Apostle, wishing to cut away the fault arising on either side, charges the former not to despise and look down upon their inferiors, and the latter not to judge their superiors, since they do not possess the competence to judge.

Although, then, he rebukes both — both the one who despises the inferior brother and the one who judges the superior — nevertheless, in order to show that the latter sins more gravely in judging than the former in despising his brother, he passes over the fault of contempt and enlarges upon the presumption of the brother who judges; and therefore in what follows he adds: 41. For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written: As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. And so each one of us

shall render an account for himself to God. Let us therefore no longer judge one another; but judge this rather, that you place no offense or stumbling block before your brother. The Apostle, taking up the causes drawn from those matters in which those who judge their brothers do not judge rightly, introduces the form of the right and just divine judgment, and says: For we must all stand before the judgment seat of God — so that, namely, he who judges his brother may know that he incurs so great a crime of arrogance as to seem to himself to usurp the judgment seat of God and to forestall the judgment of the Only-begotten. But let us see what this very thing means that the Apostle mentions the judgment seat of God, and how it is to be understood.

For not only in this passage, but also in writing to the Corinthians, he makes mention nonetheless of a judgment seat, where he says: Wherefore we strive, whether present or absent, to please him. For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive through the body according to what he has done, whether good or evil. Moreover, in the prophet Daniel too we find certain such things described concerning the manner of judging. I beheld, he says, and lo, thrones were set, and the Ancient of days was seated, and his garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like clean wool. His throne was a flame of fire, its wheels a blazing fire, a river of fire ran before him. Thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. He appointed judgment, and the books were opened. In the book of the twelve prophets also it is said under a mystery that in the valley of Josaphat the Lord judges his people; and that same valley of Josaphat he shortly afterward names the valley of judgment. But it seems a long task to discuss now each of these things which we have brought forward for the sake of comparison.

Nevertheless, comparing those things which we said the Apostle wrote to the Corinthians with the present passage, or with the rest which we have recalled as written among the prophets, we see it declared from all of them most certainly that there will be a judgment of God; and in order that the manner of it might become better known to men, the form of judging has been taken from the things that are transacted among men — so that, namely, we might know that, just as that earthly judge ascends a certain loftier place which is called a tribunal, in order that from it he may be higher and more eminent than the rest who are to be judged, lest either the punishments of the guilty or the pleas of the innocent escape his sight; so we may understand that Christ also, the judge of all, eminent above all in nature and majesty, looks into the hearts and consciences of individuals, brings hidden things to light and reveals what is covered, so that he may both bestow praise on good deeds and that the wicked may receive the punishment they deserve. But if the future judgment of God awaits us — and such a judgment in which not only will each one receive according to his deeds, but will also render an account for every idle word, according to the Lord’s sentence — evil thoughts too will be confuted,

with conscience convicting them, and in all things each one of us will render an account for himself to God.

Therefore, he says, let us no longer judge one another, as he also says elsewhere: And so do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes, who will illuminate the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of hearts; and then there will be praise for each one from God. For our heart will be laid bare, as I think, to every rational creature, and the hidden things will be revealed, or even made manifest. For there is a difference. For those things which are revealed seem to pertain to the wicked, of whom it is said: For it shall be revealed in fire; but those which are made manifest, to the good; and therefore it is said: For everything that is made manifest is light. And, like certain written books, or engraved tablets containing the letters of our deeds and thoughts, they will be read over by every rational creature, as we have said. And this is what I think is indicated through Daniel where he says: And the books were opened — those, namely, which are now folded up and covered over in the heart, containing indeed the records of what we do, and furrowed with certain marks of conscience, yet known to none but God alone. These books, then, of our soul, or these pages of our heart, will be opened in the sight of the flaming throne and of the wheels of burning fire, and of the fiery river running before the Ancient of days.

The angels will see and even read these things, and those thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand thousands of ministering angels; and thus, of our crimes — in which now we are ashamed to endure even a single witness — we shall then endure innumerable throngs of heavenly powers as witnesses. But since Paul says that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God, and since he associates himself with those who will stand before the judgment seat of God, who is there who would so deceive and delude himself as to suppose that he will not come to the judgment of Christ and to the tribunal of his examination, or suppose that he will not be made manifest in those things which he has committed, whether rightly or less rightly? But as to the fact that in the present passage he set down the judgment seat of God, while to the Corinthians the judgment seat of Christ, I for my part think there is no difference to prevent one and the same tribunal being named both the tribunal of Christ and the tribunal of God, according to what the Savior himself says in the Gospel: All things that the Father has are mine; and again: Father, all mine are yours, and yours mine. If, however, anyone thinks — since in Paul’s discourses there is not even an idle syllable in his writings — that the reasons for this variation must be sought out, he will perhaps be able to say something of this sort:

The name of Christ, so far as pertains to the proper meaning of the appellation itself, is an indication of the Word set in the flesh and reconciling the world to God, as the same Paul also says, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself;

but the intervals of this reconciliation are stretched out and made longer by the delay of our conversion and the negligence of our amendment; and until he brings to nothing all principalities and powers, and puts all enemies under his feet, and destroys the last enemy, death, he must so reign as to carry out the mystery of the dispensation undertaken in the flesh, and to make the good manifest, while the culpable receive each one according to his works; but when he shall have handed over the kingdom to God and the Father — that is, when he shall have offered to God all who are converted and amended, and shall have fulfilled entirely the mystery of the reconciliation of the world — then, he says, all stand before the judgment seat of God, so that this which follows may be fulfilled: As I live, says the Lord, that every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

Now every creature will bend the knee to God in the name of Jesus, through whom it has been reconciled to him, according to what the same Apostle says, that in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things heavenly, things earthly, and things under the earth. The bending of the knee, indeed, and every tongue confessing to God, the Apostle has taken over from the words of the prophet Isaiah. This, however, is not to be understood in a fleshly way, as though we should suppose that even the heavenly beings, which he says bend the knee, are believed to do this with fleshly limbs — for instance, that the sun, or the moon, or the stars, or even the angels, and whatever things there are that are named heavenly, should be thought to adore with bodily knees bent, or even to be thought to confess God with a fleshly tongue and with such a member as we men speak with — beings of whom it is said that they are spirit and fire, according to what the Prophet says: Who makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a burning fire. And what knees shall be believed to exist in spirits? Or what tongue shall be looked for in the form of fire? Rather, ”to bend the knee” declares that all things are made subject and obey the worship of God. Something further moves me out of those things which we took up from the Epistle to the Corinthians, where he says:

That each one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he has done, whether good or evil — namely, whether it is because in all men it is necessary that there be something of good and something of evil, and that no one is found among the good who has not had something of evil also, or again anyone among the evil who has not had something of good also, on account of the Scripture which says: For an incorruptible spirit is in men — whether for this reason he said that each one should receive both good things for his good deeds and evil things for his evil ones; or whether he calls those good to whom nothing evil is to be ascribed, and those evil to whom nothing at all of good is owed. But if we suppose this latter, we shall seem to go against evident reason. For no one, as I have said, will be found so good that there is not something of evil implanted in him, as seems very easily to be gathered from the examples of many saints; and again there is no one among

the worst — even if Judas himself be set forth, who was impious beyond all impiety — who does not seem to have had something of good even he.

For, to pass over those things which he did while placed among the apostles as one of them (although even there evils were already mingled with his goods, for he was greedy of money), nevertheless this very thing, that led by repentance he carried back the thirty pieces of silver to the priests and said: I have sinned in betraying righteous blood, was something of good. From all of which it seems to me that, since one and the same person cannot simultaneously receive both good things and evil (for no one can at the same time be sent both into paradise, or into the kingdoms of the heavens, and into hell), only in those in whom evils greatly preponderate is no account taken of the good; and in those in whom good things preponderate, and in whom the repentance of conversion has abolished the traces of evils, no account is taken of the evil. But that we may return to the end and conclusion of the chapter set before us: since, he says, so great is the truth of judgment with God and with his Christ, so great the searching out of the future examination — therefore, he says, let us no more judge one another. But judge this rather, that you place not an occasion of stumbling before a brother, or a scandal. ”Judge this,” that is, determine this, that you do not by the observance of foods generate offenses or scandals for your brothers.

Concerning offense or scandal we have already said above that a scandal is when in the road along which one is walking something is found placed in the way, against which the feet of those climbing or walking strike. This, then, is what those suffer who have lately entered upon the way of faith: they are offended by the contentions, or the negligences, or the contempt and arrogance of those who came before them, and, struck back by their examples, are turned away from the faith.

[§42] I know and am confident in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is common through itself, except to him who reckons anything to be common — to him it is common. For if because of food your brother is grieved, you are no longer walking according to charity. Do not by your food destroy him for whom Christ died. We have said elsewhere also that in the holy Scriptures, by a kind of vernacular appellation, whatever is not holy or clean is called ”common”; which appellation, however, is more frequently found in the New Testament, whereas in the Old I do not recall that it is anywhere so named — as in the Gospel the Savior says, that from the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, fornications, adulteries, thefts, false testimonies: and these are the things that make a man common. But to eat with unwashed hands does not make a man common. Although in some Latin copies they have put ”defile” instead of ”make common,” and although the force is the same, nevertheless the proper sense of the word is ”make common. But also in the Acts of the Apostles the Lord says to Peter: What God has cleansed, do not you call common. I think, therefore, that the use of this expression was taken from this: that, for

example, the vessels set apart for the ministry of the temple were without doubt called vessels of the Lord, while by distinction from these the remaining vessels were called common;

so also, by distinction of foods, from those which Scripture set apart as clean and to be eaten according to the law, all the rest were called common. But the Jews, not knowing the force of the word, whence a man was called common whom they called common, held to the use of the expression without understanding of its meaning. For the foods which God created, whether taken in ignorance or in simplicity, could not make a man common and unclean; but that mind of man which is set apart for God alone is rightly called clean; whereas that which is alien from God, since it is possessed not by one unclean spirit but by many, for that reason such a man is called common, as being the slave of many vices or of many demons, according to him who, when asked, What is your name? answered, Legion: for we are many; and according to that which is said by the Savior, that when the unclean spirit has gone out from a man, he goes about dry places seeking rest, and not finding it he returns; and finding the house empty and swept with brooms, he takes with him seven other spirits worse than himself, and entering in they dwell there. And without doubt such a man is called common, having plainly been made the slave of all those malignant spirits which dwell in him. Rightly, therefore, Paul, knowing that this is the reason of this expression, says:

I know and am confident in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is common through itself. For nothing among the creatures of God is unclean by its own nature (for it is established that all things created by the good God are good and clean); but, he says, to him who reckons anything to be common, to him it is common; that is, to him who with the intention of his heart thinks something unclean and admits the observance of distinctions, as he also says in what follows: But he who discerns, if he eats, is condemned; because it is not of faith. For everything that is not of faith is sin. Nor yet in these words did he exclude the distinction of the law, so as to say absolutely that nothing is common or unclean among those things which the law defined as unclean. For he set down beforehand the reason why nothing is called common through itself. I know, he says, and am confident in the Lord Jesus. In the Lord Jesus, therefore, . . . this by its own nature [. . .] nothing is common through itself, it is said; but to him, he says, who reckons, and who thinks something to be common, to him it is common.

And do not wonder that the thought of the mind makes polluted a food which by its own nature is not common or polluted, when on the contrary simplicity of mind, with no scrupulosity of thought injected, absolves from all suspicion of contamination a food that is truly polluted (for that is truly polluted which is sacrificed to idols). And again, even if the food be clean, yet if someone suffers a suspicion that it has been sacrificed to idols, it is said to be polluted on account of the scruple

of conscience. For if because of food your brother is grieved, you are no longer walking according to charity. Do not by your food destroy him for whom Christ died. When he had determined by apostolic teaching that through the Lord Jesus nothing is to be thought common or unclean by its own nature, and had granted to all the faithful the most complete liberty with regard to the use of foods, he again cuts back the license of that liberty for the building up of brotherly love, and says: Even if nothing is common, and the use of all foods is freely permitted, nevertheless if, because of a food which you think may lawfully be taken, you scandalize your brother, who is not yet capable of this knowledge, you are no longer walking according to charity, nor do you show in yourself the affection of brotherly love. For what harm do you suffer if, in order not to grieve your brother, you abstain even from what is lawful?

For to abstain from lawful things is no crime for you; but for him, in matters where he discerns and thinks it not lawful, the use is condemnable. For he who discerns, if he eats, is condemned. But if you do this, you assuredly destroy your brother for whom Christ died, and you procure for him the causes of destruction. And more magnificently the same Paul, writing to the Colossians, says about these matters: Let no one therefore judge you in food, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or of new moons, or of a Sabbath, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ. Let no one seduce you, willing it in humility of heart and religion of angels, exalting himself in what he has not seen, vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh, and not holding the head; and a little later: If therefore you are dead with Christ to the elements of the world, why, as though living in this world, do you decree: Touch not, taste not, handle not — which things are all unto corruption by the very use, according to the precepts and doctrines of men: which things have indeed a show of wisdom in the observance of religion, and in humility through the affliction of the body, not in any honor unto the satisfying of the flesh. To discuss these things one by one is not the business of the present work;

for it is those things which the Apostle writes to the Romans that we are now attempting to expound. This, however, is what is asserted by the present example also: that we should not be judged by anyone in food, or in drink, or in observances of this kind, which among the Jews is thought to be as it were a religion of angels. For they exalt themselves in the things that are seen, and are puffed up about visible things. Yet this elation is not according to the wisdom of the spirit, but according to the sense of the flesh. But it was not concerning fleshly things that the precept was given: Touch not, handle not, taste not. For all these things, that is, fleshly things, have been given for this corruptible use; and what observance of purity can there be in corruption? But whereas the law prescribes these things concerning rational realities, which, if they are unclean, are truly not to be touched nor tasted, lest they make us partakers of their sin and uncleanness, they, forsaking the precepts and doctrines of men, transferred this spiritual sense to these fleshly

and bodily things, which have a show of wisdom in the observance of religion and in humility of the body — yet not so that on the occasion of such observance some honor among men and the delights of the flesh should be sought after, while in place of the abstinence of a few, many and choice foods are required.

But true observance is where food is so taken, and all things are so done, that it may not be said of such persons: Whose God is their belly. For it is fitting to abstain from every food which concupiscence and lust presumes upon, which delicacies prepare, which luxury devises. For we must look not only to what kind of food we use, but also to how much, and at what time, and how sparingly. For thus all things become clean to clean minds; but to the contaminated, as the Apostle says, and to unbelievers nothing is clean. In which he shows that even those things which among the Jews are named clean in the matter of foods cannot be clean to a man if he is contaminated and unbelieving. It will follow, therefore, that if the things which are clean are made unclean to the contaminated, so also the things which are called unclean become clean to the holy and the faithful. For they are sanctified through the word of God and prayer, because every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be cast away which is received with thanksgiving. And they are sanctified by the prayer not of just anyone, but of those who lift up pure hands without anger and disputing. But do you wish to be taught still more magnificently concerning clean and unclean things, that they are spoken of not concerning bodies but concerning souls and minds? Hear the judgment of the Lord and Savior himself in the Gospel, saying:

Not the things which enter into the mouth make a man common, but the things which proceed out of the mouth; since from within, out of the heart, come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, and the rest. It is therefore the thought and the mind not rightly disposed that pollutes a man, not the quality of foods, which, of whatever sort it may be, will fulfill the use of corruption by one and the same outcome. And it is no wonder if a holy man sanctifies by the word of God and by prayer the food which he takes, when even the very garments with which he is clothed are holy. Paul’s handkerchiefs, in fine, and his aprons had received so much from the purity of his sanctification that, when applied to sick bodies, they put diseases to flight and restored health. For what shall I say of Peter, whose very bodily shadow carried so much sanctification that whomever, as he passed by, not he himself but his shadow alone had touched, they were straightway relieved of every sickness? But we have digressed a little too widely in discussing clean and common foods, in order that we might consider, as far as is possible, the more exalted meaning of the Apostle. But mindful of the brevity we proposed, having here made the conclusion of the ninth volume, let us approach the beginning of the tenth, which is also the last.

Commentary on Romans — Book 10

Latin source: J.-P. Migne (ed.), Patrologia Graeca 14 (Rufinus's Latin version of Origen's Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos). This English translation is in the public domain.

BOOK 10

[§1] Therefore let not our good be blasphemed. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who in this serves Christ pleases God, and is approved by men. I ask in what way our good can be blasphemed. It is a good thing to understand the law spiritually, and to avoid, as unclean and polluted foods, the impious and foolish teachings of the heretics or of those who pursue a false philosophy. For this is what is enjoined by the spiritual law. Nevertheless, if someone from among the Jews, for example, or from those who are called Encratites, should wish to believe in Christ, yet should suppose that no small importance lies in the observance of abstinence — whether from those foods which are forbidden by the law, or from those which some think should be shunned as opposed to chastity, even on the authority of the Scriptures — if you press such a man to the foods common to all, and tell him that he cannot otherwise be saved, or attain to the faith and grace of Christ, unless he takes the foods he shrinks from, then truly the good of the spiritual understanding is blasphemed, since the man you are pressing supposes that this is the faith held among us: that we believe no one can be saved unless he feeds on the flesh of swine, or on other such common and indifferent foods. And he adds to these things:

For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Spirit. In which again I greatly admire the wisdom of Paul, who restrains the faults of the present time by the authority of the sacrament to come, and, in order to establish the pattern of the Church, discloses the mystery of the kingdom of heaven. He says therefore: What need is there to disturb brotherly peace and charity so greatly over foods and the qualities of meats, when the kingdom of God, for the sake of which we labor and run, consists neither in foods nor in drink — but

rather these things are foreign to the kingdom of God and to that future manner of life? For there, just as they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God, so neither do they take food nor drink, but are as the angels of God. Therefore it has been settled by a most absolute doctrine and a plain declaration of the Apostle that in the kingdom of God neither bodily foods nor drink have a place, but righteousness and peace in the Holy Spirit; and for that reason he exhorts us to exercise ourselves in those things, and to strive to possess those goods already here, and to own that substance which can pass over with us into the kingdoms of heaven.

Peace, therefore, and righteousness, and whatever things of this kind are sought out through the Holy Spirit — these very things will be our food and our substance in the kingdom of God: and therefore by these words he teaches that we must take thought not for the accounts of bodily foods, which will be none in the world to come, but for the virtues, which remain with us both in the present life and in the future in the kingdom of God. And therefore he says that he who in this serves Christ pleases God, and is approved by men. This is what he says elsewhere of himself: Just as I also, he says, please all men in all things, not seeking what is useful to me, but what is useful to many. For this reason, even though he was an apostle of Christ, he became a Jew to the Jews — without doubt so that by pleasing the Jews he might save them; and to those who were without the law he himself became without law, that by pleasing them he might save them. But he says that he pleases men in this way: not by indulging their vices, but by supporting their weaknesses through patience. But let us not pass over even this idly, that he says: For he who in this — that is, in the Holy Spirit — serves Christ pleases God, and is approved by men. He speaks of serving Christ in the Holy Spirit according to what he also says elsewhere:

No one says ”Lord Jesus” except in the Holy Spirit. Paul himself therefore serves Christ in the Spirit, who, having received the grace of the Holy Spirit, serves the Word of God, serves wisdom, serves righteousness, and all the virtues together, which Christ is recorded to be. And therefore he is said to please God in these things who fulfills the will of God, according to the word which He Himself pronounced, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him. He therefore who hears God, and serves Christ in whom God was well pleased, pleases God, and is approved by men.

[§2] Therefore let us pursue the things that make for peace, and the things that are for mutual edification. Do not for the sake of food destroy the work of God. Above he said: Pursuing hospitality; and here likewise he says, let us pursue the things that make for peace, and the things that are for edification one toward another: and just as we showed there in what manner hospitality is to be pursued, so here too let us understand in what manner peace is to be pursued, since David likewise

says: Seek peace, and pursue it. Although in the Latin codices it stands, follow it, nevertheless ”pursue” is written there also. In which this seems to me to be shown: that peace has been disturbed, he says, by many who act restlessly and insolently, and, put to flight, has as it were slipped away from among men; on the contrary, by those who have learned Christ and serve Him, it must be pursued even as it flees, and called back by every means. Now he pursues peace who guards those things by which peace can stand firm — even at his own labor, at his own loss, and even at the cost of reproach, and, if it be so necessary, even at peril of life and reputation. For these things preserve not only peace, but also mutual edification. For he is edified who sees you seeking not the things that are expedient for yourself alone, but those that are expedient for others; and thus the building of faith grows, and the temple of God rises up from living stones through the construction of charity; and therefore he adds: Do not for the sake of food destroy the work of God. For he destroys the work of God, and pulls down the building of charity, who by intemperance in foods places a stumbling block before his brothers.

[§3] All things indeed are clean, but it is evil for the man who eats through offense. It is good not to eat meat, and not to drink wine, nor anything in which your brother is offended. What he said, All things indeed are clean, but it is evil for the man who eats through offense, is like what he said above, that nothing is common of itself, except that to him who reckons something to be common, to that man it is common. Therefore according to their own nature and the principle of creation, by which all things that exist were made by God, all things are clean; and there is nothing unclean, or what is called common. Yet he laid down two causes by which either things that are clean become unclean, or things that are good become evil. For he says in the present passage: But it is evil for the man who eats through offense. That therefore which is by its own nature good is made evil out of offense, that is, in this, that your brother is offended when you make use of those foods in which he suffers a stumbling-block. But the other cause by which that becomes common or unclean which is not by its own nature unclean, is if anyone reckons it so, and holds it within himself to be common. Therefore to that man alone who so reckons it, it is made common or unclean.

From which the Apostle plainly teaches that uncleanness and pollution consist not in things or in substances, but in acts and thoughts that are less than right; although the law of Moses marked out certain things as clean and certain as unclean: in which it wished to lay down certain distinctions, so that the people who were reckoned under the law might be seen to be set apart from the other nations by observances of this kind. And so long indeed as that people was held holy and separated from the other nations, the distinction concerning clean and unclean also seemed necessary, which would separate and set apart the special people of God from the nations whom ignorance of God and the worship of idols made unclean: but when the door of faith is opened to the Gentiles, and all are invited to

God, there are shown to Peter all the four-footed beasts, and creeping things, and birds, set forth in a sheet which had been let down from heaven, and it is said to him: Rise, Peter, kill and eat. And when, mindful of the observance of the law, he had answered the Lord and said: Far be it, Lord, for never has anything common or unclean entered into my mouth, it is pronounced by a heavenly verdict: What God has cleansed, do not you call common. Where therefore all the nations are cleansed from defilement through the acknowledgment of faith, there also every food is purified by the word of the Lord and by prayer:

and on this account the Apostle says that all things are clean, provided only that this be avoided which he sets down in what follows, lest through the offense of a brother those things which are clean become again unclean to the one eating. But now, as to what he adds, It is good not to eat meat, and not to drink wine — unless he had added, nor anything in which your brother is offended, it would perhaps seem contrary to what went before. For he taught that to eat meat and not to eat, or to drink wine or not to drink, is neither evil nor good, but is to be held as a middle thing and indifferent. For even an evil man and one estranged from the faith can refrain from eating meat and from drinking wine, as it is certain that some also often do this for the sake of idols. Sometimes too such an observance is said to be kept in the evil arts. Certainly it is the custom of not a few heretics to observe these things; and yet we do not straightway say: It is good for them that they do not eat meat, nor drink wine. But plainly in that manner which he set down in what follows, in which a brother is offended, not to eat meat and not to drink wine is no longer a middle or indifferent thing, but truly good. For it is good not to put an offense or stumbling-block before a brother.

For on this account he says also in another place: Be without offense both to the Jews and to the Greeks, and to the Church of God. And therefore let them see whether they act rightly who, when men abstain from meat and wine for whatever cause, compel them by every means to taste, namely so that by this there may seem to be removed from them the suspicion by which they are thought superstitiously to cling to distinctions of foods. For let them consider that the Apostle did not say: It is good to eat and to drink wine; but, not to eat meat, and not to drink wine, if a brother is offended in it. He did not wish, therefore, that for the sake of those who judge that one ought to eat, the man should be compelled to eat who is offended in this; but rather, for the sake of him who thinks one ought not to eat, he enjoins abstinence even upon those who judge that one ought to eat. For it is to be feared lest perhaps, once the wall of continence has been broken down and license taken, one fall into the storm of gluttony and the depth of luxury, and shipwrecks of chastity follow together with it. All things therefore must be done to this end, that the work of God be not destroyed: and therefore one must eat, if in this a brother is edified; and one must not eat, if through this the work of God does not increase;

and one must drink, if through this a brother advances in faith; and one must not drink, if through this a brother incurs loss of faith, or you the detriment of charity.

[§4] After these things he says: The faith which you have, have it with yourself before God. He here calls "faith" that by which one believes that he may eat all things, just as he said above: One believes that he may eat all things — that man, without doubt, who believes that among God's creatures nothing is common, nothing unclean. But it is enough for you, he says, to have such faith before God; yet not on that account is another to be compelled to eat all things, one who does not yet have such faith as to believe that all things are to be eaten. But in saying, which you have with yourself, he cuts away boastfulness, lest what we believe should consist rather in display than in virtue. And he added, have it before God, that he might teach that we must take pains, not that our faith be noised abroad among men, but that it be approved before God. And it is a great thing to have an approvable faith before God. For with God even the faith of the apostles is judged small, whence it is said to Peter: O you of little faith, why did you doubt? Therefore truly great is he who has before God an approvable faith.

[§5] Blessed is he who does not judge himself in that which he approves. But he who makes a distinction, if he eats, is condemned, because it is not of faith. And everything that is not of faith is sin. A man is called blessed not only if he does the things that are fitting, but also if he does not do the things that are unfitting: as he is called blessed who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and no less blessed is he who walks in the law of the Lord. The one, then, is blessed because he does not walk in the way of sinners; the other, because he walks in the law of the Lord. So too in the present passage the Apostle says: Blessed is he who does not judge himself in that which he approves. But let us see of what work this blessedness consists. For there are many who approve of doing some good thing — for example, those who, hearing of the rewards of chastity, approve and resolve to live chastely; but in the course of time, either through negligence creeping in or through lust overcoming them, that which they had approved as to be observed is stained and corrupted: and unhappy is that man who, conquered in the very thing he had decreed to observe, judges and condemns himself. But blessed is he who so remains fixed and stable in that which he approves and resolves, that in nothing does he judge himself, in nothing reproach himself.

And he says that this is to be held also in the observance of foods, according to that rule which he wove above: so that if there is anyone who through knowledge of the spiritual law approves that all things are to be eaten and that all things are clean, he should not again judge himself and take up a doubt whether he ought to partake or not: because he who makes a distinction in this way — that is, who doubts whether what he takes is truly clean or unclean — that man, from the very doubt of his own mind, is condemned by his accusing conscience. He also sets forth the cause of this

condemnation, saying: Because it is not taken of faith, but assuredly out of doubt. And after these things he propounds a general sentence upon all things, saying: And everything that is not of faith is sin. By this word he binds with a tighter bond the negligent and slothful souls of any believers whatever, that they should do nothing without faith, say nothing apart from faith, nor think anything apart from faith: because whether you have done something without faith, or spoken, or even thought it, you sin. This is the same as what he says elsewhere: Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God. But someone may ask whether the heretics too, in what they do, since they act according to what they believe, are to be held to act out of faith;

or whether, because the faith among them is evil, everything they do is to be pronounced sin, since it is not done of faith. For my part, I think that their credulity is called faith rather than is faith. For just as false prophets are sometimes by a false name called prophets; and false knowledge is called knowledge; and false wisdom is by misuse named wisdom: so also the credulity of heretics is by a false name called faith. Whence it must be considered whether perhaps even if some good work seems to be performed among them, because it is not done of faith, it is turned into sin, as was said of a certain man: Let his prayer become sin. There is sometimes also a chastity which is not of faith — that, at any rate, of those who give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared, forbidding to marry, and abstaining from foods which God created. There is, then, also a false faith of those who have made shipwreck concerning the faith; there is also a false wisdom, namely that of this world, and of the princes of this world, which shall be destroyed. For just as pirates are accustomed at sea, in shallow places and among hidden rocks, to kindle a light through the darkness of night, by which they may lure sailors — under the hope of fleeing to a harbor of safety — to the shipwrecks of destruction;

so too that light of false wisdom or false faith is kindled by the princes of the world and by the spirits of this air, not that men may escape by it, but that by it the men who sail the waves of this world and the sea of life may perish. Of these pirates, I think, Job also was speaking: The arrows of his pirates have come upon me. And for this reason, doubtless, the apostle Paul himself also says that Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, sailing the waves of this life, we ought not to trust every light, that is, not every wisdom; but, as the Apostle admonishes, to test the spirits, which are of God. And therefore we ought unceasingly to pray for the help of the Lord, and to hope that he himself will snatch us from the snare of the hunters, so that we too may say: For our soul has been snatched like a sparrow from the snare of the hunters: the snare is broken, and we are set free. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

[§6] But we who are stronger ought to bear the weaknesses of the infirm, and not to please ourselves. Let each of you please his neighbor in what is good, unto edification. For Christ also did not please himself; but as it is written: The reproaches of those who reproached you fell upon me. For whatever things were written, were written for our instruction, that through the patience and consolation of the Scriptures we might have hope. In these words Paul appears to declare himself one of the strong, just as he also says in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, that I became weak to the weak, that I might gain the weak. For there too he does not say that he is weak, but that he becomes weak; and certainly, if he had been weak, he could not have become weak. But do not take this to mean that he was forgetful of that command of the passage where it is said: Let your neighbor praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips. It is not, then, for his own praise, but for the logic of the matter, that he declares himself strong. For if he himself, under the appearance of humility, had avoided being numbered among the strong, which of those who ought to bear the weaknesses of others would have dared to undertake this duty, that he should strive, as one strong himself, to bear the frailties of the weak?

But he makes this duty a common one for this reason, that each one of us, in whatever he can — even if not in all things, yet in that in which he seems to be stronger than his neighbor — may bear his neighbor’s weakness; just as he also says elsewhere: Bear one another’s burdens. But here he seems to have used ”burdens” of bodily necessities, so that if anyone is more abundantly supplied with means, he may bear the burden of the poorer man, and abundance may console want. But in that place where he says that the stronger should bear the weaknesses of the weak, nothing else can be understood than that those who are more robust should patiently endure the things in which others fail through weakness, and should not at once despise them, cast them off, and shrink from them, if perhaps they are overcome by some fault of weakness, nor drive them away, under the appearance of a purer life, from the assembly of the brethren and the fellowship of the Church. For whoever does this is no imitator of him of whom Isaiah says: He himself bears our infirmities, and grieves for us; and we thought him to be in grief, and in stripes, and in affliction. But if Christ bears our infirmities, and God patiently endures our offenses, how is it that we by no means tolerate the offenses and negligences of those who seem a little inferior?

This is surely to turn Christ himself away from that disposition, so that he should be unwilling to bear our infirmities. For no one is so perfect that he is not found in some respect weak before God, and borne by Christ; and therefore he rather teaches sympathy in this matter, that is, to suffer with one another and to grieve together, as he also writes elsewhere: Forgiving one another your offenses, as God also in Christ has forgiven you. But he does not enjoin this in order to nourish the delinquent, and to loosen the weak by a laxer indulgence; but knowing that if the

weak man is borne with, either he blushes to be borne with any longer, and corrects the fault of his offending; or, if he is not able to amend himself, there will at any rate be this fruit for the one who bears him, that he does not go on to worse, nor become more degenerate than himself, like those of whom the Apostle says: But evil men and seducers shall go on to worse, deceiving and being deceived. And to this — that we bear the weaknesses of the weak — we ought also to add this, that we should not please ourselves, but our neighbor, only in what is good, and unto edification. The vice of self-love (philautia), that is, of pleasing oneself, the prophet also blames elsewhere when he says: Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and learned in their own sight.

Likewise, then, in this matter also we can say: Woe to those who please themselves, and seem good in their own sight. For we must first please in the sight of God, and secondly our neighbors as well. For just as the first thing is to love the Lord God, and the second the neighbor, so also the first thing is to please God, and secondly our neighbors as well. But perhaps someone may say that Paul contradicts himself in commanding us to please our neighbors, when he said elsewhere: If I pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. And surely it seems contrary to this sentence that each one of us should please his neighbor, and what he says elsewhere: As I also please all men in all things, not seeking what is profitable to myself, but what is profitable to many, that they may be saved. It must therefore be said in reply to these things, that it is one thing to have a zeal for pleasing men so as to seek praise from them, and another thing to have a zeal for pleasing men in this, that one’s life may be blameless before men, and that all who either see or hear such a man may profit from it. There, then, men are not to be pleased, where that by which one pleases is against faith, against honesty, against religion;

and therefore he says, That if I pleased men — that is, unbelieving and faithless Jews — I should not be the servant of Christ. For if Paul had wished to please the Jews, he would surely have dragged men and women bound to Jerusalem, having been sent to Damascus with letters, and he would in no way have believed the vision brought to him on the way, and the heavenly voice. But also, if anyone demands that we do something against justice, against sanctity, against the Christian rule, and unless we do this threatens hatred and enmity, then we ought to remember this saying which says: If I wished to please men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But when it is said: Let each of you please his neighbor, a necessary distinction is joined to it, which plainly shows in what one is to please the neighbor, when he says: In what is good, unto edification. When, therefore, we act well and teach well, we please our neighbor and edify him. For he does not admonish us that glory is to be sought from men, but that edification is to be given to our neighbors by our action and our speech; just as also in what the Savior says, that your light may shine before men, and that seeing your good works they may glorify your Father who is in heaven.

By which he certainly does not exhort the disciples to seek glory from men, but that, living rightly and honorably, they may furnish edification to those who see them, and that God may be glorified, who has opened to men the way of amendment and salvation. For Christ also did not please himself, but as it is written: The reproaches of those who reproached you fell upon me. In this he seems to show that Christ too, not pleasing himself, and not thinking it robbery to be equal with God, emptied himself; but wishing to please men — that is, to save men — he endured the reproaches of those who reproached, as it is written: The reproaches of those who reproached you fell upon me. This will become clearer if we recall the things that are written in the Gospel: how, in order that he might benefit men and save them, he ate and drank with sinners and publicans, and the Jews, reproaching him for these things, said: Why does your master eat with publicans and sinners? Or again, when he did not forbid the sinful woman to touch his feet, and to bathe them with her tears, and to wipe them with her hair, and to anoint them with myrrh; and for this the Jews, reproaching and upbraiding him, said that if this man were a prophet, he would surely know who and what sort the woman is who touches him, that she is a sinner.

But if you ask why the example which he brought forward from the Psalm should stand thus, as though the reproaches that were cast at God fell upon Christ, we can explain it thus: that just as he said, He who receives me receives him who sent me, so this too can be understood: that he who reproaches me reproaches him who sent me. The example, then, which he took up is written in this way in the sixty-eighth Psalm: I have become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien to my mother’s sons. For the zeal of your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproached you fell upon me. For whatever things were written, were written for our instruction. This is like what he himself says elsewhere: But they were written for our sakes, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. But if it is asked in what way the things that were written were written for our sakes, see that it was for our sakes that it was written: You shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the grain; for God has no care for oxen, but he says it concerning us; and for our sakes it was written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free, that we might know that these things are allegorical, and that these are the two testaments.

For our sakes that also was written, that the people ate manna in the desert and drank water from the rock, so that we might understand that they ate spiritual food and drank spiritual drink, drinking from the rock that followed them, which rock was Christ. And these, and other things of this kind, were mysteries, which were hidden from eternal times, but are now made manifest through the prophetic Scriptures and the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But that it may become still more manifest how the things that were written were written for our sakes, the prophet says concerning the former people, that with the ear you shall

hear, and shall not hear; and seeing you shall see, and shall not understand. But concerning us it is said, that those to whom it was not announced concerning him shall see; and those who have not heard shall understand. Consider therefore from this for whose sake the things that were written appear to have been written. For the things that are written are without doubt written for the sake of those who are going to see and understand, not for the sake of those who are said neither to be going to see nor to understand. And those who understand the things that were written will without doubt find that which is consequently added: That through the patience and consolation of the Scriptures we may have hope toward God.

For consolation from the Scriptures is grasped not by him who neither believes nor understands, but by him who both believes and understands.

[§7] ”Now may the God of patience and of consolation grant you to be of the same mind one toward another according to Jesus Christ: that with one accord, with one mouth, you may honor God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive one another, as Christ also received you unto the honor of God. If patience is a virtue, and every virtue is from God, then patience too is from God. When therefore he says ”the God of patience,” this seems to be what is shown: that God is with those who have within themselves the virtue of patience — just as, when one says ”the God of justice,” it is shown that God is in those who keep justice. In like manner ”the God of truth” and ”the God of wisdom” are understood. But when ”the God of consolation” is also said, God is shown to be with those who take from the divine Scriptures, through spiritual understanding, the consolation of the Spirit. ”May the God of patience and consolation therefore grant you,” he says, ”to be of the same mind one toward another according to Jesus Christ. In this Paul, after the manner of the patriarchs and prophets whose blessings are recorded in writing, bestows blessings upon the Romans, praying earnestly that it be given them by God to be of the same mind one toward another. This is a great blessing:

that all should be of one mind and one sentiment, and that each should will for his neighbor just as he wills for himself. Do you wish to know how much the grace of unanimity avails? The Savior declares in the Gospels that if two or three shall agree as one concerning anything whatsoever they ask of God, it shall be done for them; and again he says of himself that where two or three are gathered together in my name — that is, thinking one and the same thing in the name of Jesus Christ — ”there,” he says, ”I will be in the midst of them. Do you wish to receive yet another example of how Christ becomes present in the midst of those who think one thing? See in the Acts of the Apostles how, after the Lord’s ascension, when, it says, the eleven apostles together with the rest lifted up their voice and prayed with one accord, the place in which they stood was shaken, and they were counted worthy of the presence of the Holy Spirit. But that it may be made still clearer how great is the power of unanimity and how great its grace, I do not think it will seem

out of place if we bring forward those things which have been handed down to us on these matters by the fathers, with good reason, from the Old Testament as well — handed down, that is, by those who came from among the Hebrews to faith in Christ.

They used to say, then, that those three sons of Korah whose names we find in Exodus — that is, Aser, which is interpreted ”instruction,” and Elkanah, which in our language is called ”possession of God,” and Abiasaph, which in the Latin tongue signifies ”the congregation of the father” — when their father Korah had sinned together with Dathan and Abiram and all who consented with them, and destruction by divine vengeance was being prepared against them, these separated themselves from the wicked gathering, and, set apart from the impious conspiracy, poured out with one accord a prayer of repentance to God; and that, being heard by God, they merited not only pardon of the punishment but also the grace of prophecy; and that this too was granted them by God at their request, that they should not be commanded to prophesy anything sad or ruinous; and that for this reason all the Psalms which are recorded as inscribed with their names contain nothing sad or harsh against sinners. This we have brought forward so that it might be known more magnificently how great is the power of unanimity, and of thinking one thing, and of being of the same mind one with another. As for myself, that thing too which Paul does in certain of his Epistles, joining the names of others with his own and saying, ”Paul, and Sosthenes the brother,” and elsewhere, ”Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy,” I think was not done to no purpose;

but that by it is shown that, when two or three are set in unity, the Holy Spirit has drawn forth from them one understanding and one utterance: so that those who desired to teach the Churches that all should say one thing and be of one mind should first show that they themselves said one thing and were of one mind, and with one mouth honored God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For ”one mouth” is spoken of where one and the same understanding and utterance proceeds through the mouths of different persons. And rightly, where he said ”to be of the same mind one toward another,” the Apostle added, ”according to Jesus Christ. For it could happen that some might agree unanimously even in wickedness, and be of one mind for the worse. For this reason, therefore, he added, ”according to Jesus Christ. But he who is of one mind according to Jesus Christ is without doubt of a mind for everything that is good. After these things he says: ”Wherefore receive one another, as Christ also received you unto the honor of God. What he says, ”receive one another,” is to be referred back to what he had set forth at the first, where, on the occasion of clean or unclean foods, those who thought differently were at variance with one another; and he says: ”Receive one another, as Christ also received you,” who shrank from no one’s uncleannesses, nor reckoned to anyone his offenses.

Judge nothing, therefore, concerning the uncleanness of animals, just as he did not reckon the uncleannesses of believers. And he who had said above, ”But let him who eats not judge him who does not eat, for God has taken him up,” here said, ”As Christ received you” — so as to show that to be received by God and by Christ is one and the same thing. And he adds this also, that it is the honor of God to be received by Christ. For those whom Christ receives, he teaches that they ought so to act that men, seeing their good works, may glorify their Father who is in heaven.

[§8] For I say that Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the sake of God’s truth, to establish the promises of the Fathers. But the Gentiles honor God for his mercy, as it is written: ”Therefore I will confess to you among the Gentiles, and I will sing to your name. And again he says: ”Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people. And again: ”Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and magnify him, all you peoples. And Isaiah again says: ”There shall be the root of Jesse, and he who shall arise to rule the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles hope. In what way Christ was a minister of the circumcision to establish the promises of the Fathers can be understood in a twofold manner. Either on the ground that he himself received circumcision in his own flesh, so that it might be most manifestly known that, coming from the seed of Abraham — to whom God had promised that in his seed all the Gentiles would be blessed — he fulfilled in himself the things that had been promised to the Fathers; and so that by this, according to the plan of the whole Epistle’s arrangement, whereby he now curbs and restrains those who had believed from the circumcision, and now also those from the Gentiles who were exalting themselves against one another, he might teach that those who linger in the observances of the Law are not to be judged utterly, seeing that Christ too stood forth in his own flesh as a minister of circumcision.

Or else in another way, so that Christ is said to have been a minister of that circumcision of which the same Apostle says: ”For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is manifest in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit, not the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God”; and according to what the same Apostle says elsewhere: ”In whom also you have been circumcised with a circumcision not made by hand, in the stripping away of the body of the flesh, but in the circumcision of Christ, buried together with him in baptism. Through circumcision of this kind, therefore, it is certain that the promises of the Fathers have been fulfilled. But what those promises were, he declares by the examples he subjoins, in which he says: ”Therefore I will confess to you among the Gentiles, and I will sing to your name. This appears to be taken from the seventeenth psalm, with a small alteration made, not of the sense but of the words. For there the Prophet says: ”Therefore I will confess to you among the Gentiles, O Lord, and I will sing a psalm to your name. But as for what he says, ”Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people,” it is written in those same words in the canticle of Deuteronomy. ”Praise the Lord, all you

Gentiles, and magnify him, all you peoples," is read in the hundred and sixteenth psalm;

only that there, instead of "magnify," "praise together" is set down. But the last example Paul himself says is taken from Isaiah, in whose body of text it is written thus: "And there shall be in that day the root of Jesse; and he who shall arise to rule the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles hope. And his rest shall be honor. But having omitted, in the first place, two expressions, that is, "in that day," and, in the last, "and his rest shall be honor," he set down the rest in the same words in which the Seventy Translators published them. From which it must be known that in nearly everything the Apostle holds to the edition of the Seventy Translators, unless perhaps some things seem to him less necessary to the assertion he is pursuing, or when he wishes to use not so much the words of the translators as the meanings of Scripture, brought forth in his own utterance. But this saying about the root of Jesse has seemed better to be discussed in the exposition of the prophet Isaiah himself. Nevertheless, even in the present place it will be said that "Jesse" is interpreted in our language as "there is to me. At the coming of Christ, therefore, everyone who has believed in him has fittingly said: "There is to me.

For he of whom Moses said, "He who is has sent me to you," he himself is "to me" — that is, I believe in him who is, not in one who was made out of nothing, as it pleases the impious, but in him who is, and always is, and this is his name; and he it is who has arisen from the root of Jesse, and in him shall the Gentiles hope. For which mercy, which they have obtained from him, namely that he who always was should be born from the root of Jesse to give salvation to the Gentiles — for this mercy conferred upon them, I say, the Gentiles honor and magnify God.

[§9] "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Spirit. He who had said above what is written in Isaiah, "And in him shall the Gentiles hope," gratefully added, "Now may the God of hope"; so that, if it had been written, "in him shall the Gentiles believe," he would without doubt have added, "Now may the God of faith" — so that now, from the act of hoping, he invokes the God of hope for the Gentiles, upon those who hope in him, from whom he prays that the gift of blessing may be increased for them. And the blessing is of this kind: that they may be filled with all joy and all peace. And similarly the Prophet too says in a certain place: "And in his days shall be justice and abundance of peace, until the moon be taken away. But since these things are said of Christ, in him we can rightly perceive the abundance of peace, in that he made peace through the blood of his cross, not only for the things that are on earth, but also for the things that are in the heavens.

But how what the Apostle prays for can be fulfilled in all — that they be filled with all joy and all peace — seems to me difficult to explain, especially since the Apostle himself, among the things he has obtained through the grace of the Spirit, says that

he knows in part and prophesies in part. But I think that believers can have the fullness of peace in this: when they are reconciled to God the Father through faith, according to the word of Paul who says, ”We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God”; and when they return into peace with the Son of God through the blood of his cross; and when they are joined to the Holy Spirit, once they have cleansed themselves from every defilement and have been made holy vessels — so that at last a person may be seen to be filled with all peace, if he has believed in the fullness of the Trinity. Finally, on this account the Apostle adds and says: ”May he fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Spirit. For if he who believes is fortified by the power of the Holy Spirit, it is certain that he always has fullness of joy and fullness of peace.

[§10] But I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, so that you are able to admonish others as well. By the same reasoning by which we said above that believers are filled with all joy and all peace, here too he affirms that those to whom the discourse is addressed are full of goodness and of all knowledge. Similarly, writing to the Corinthians as well, he says: In everything you have been made rich in him, in all utterance and in all knowledge; and he, as we said above, declares even of himself that he does not have all knowledge, nor all prophecy, but in part — concerning which I remember that we have often spoken elsewhere. And now none the less we shall say that Paul, and any who are such as he, are called perfect in comparison with the rest; but with respect to that supreme knowledge, or to that perfection which is in the heavenly orders, no one among men can either be called or be perfect. As if we were to say: in the studies of boyhood, in comparison with one who has only lately been initiated and is receiving the first elements of letters, the schoolmaster himself is called perfect; but he is not perfect in the way that the man who teaches grammar is. And the grammarian himself, however perfect he may be, is nevertheless surpassed by the perfection of the rhetorician;

and far more eminent than all of these is the perfection of philosophic teaching. And although in all of these there is literary learning, yet a different degree of perfection and of mastery is held in each one. So then it can be that Paul also, when he says: Not that I have already attained, or am already perfect, seems to write these things looking to that summit of heavenly perfection. But when he says: As many of us therefore as are perfect, let us be thus minded, he has regard only to the degree of human perfection. So then in the present passage too they are to be understood as filled — whether with peace, or with joy, or even with goodness, or even with knowledge, whether the Romans or the Corinthians — in so far as it is possible for those to be filled who are being taught in the Church and who live under perfect teachers. And he indicates also the measure of that knowledge itself when he says: so that you are able to admonish others as well. In which he shows that in that which each one has learned he ought also to admonish another, and to

hold conversations of this kind with his fellow-disciples, by which they may both admonish and edify one another.

For mutual conference can contribute very much instruction, if it be held with charity, and if concerning any of the deeper or more obscure matters one awaits the judgment of the learned and the perfect, according to what Moses also says: Ask your fathers, and they will declare to you; your elders, and they will tell you.

[§11] But I have written to you the more boldly in part, as putting you in remembrance, because of the grace given me by God, that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus among the Gentiles, sanctifying the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified in the Holy Spirit. As one who was conscious to himself that throughout the whole text of the Epistle — while he addressed his word now to those who are of the circumcision, now to those who have believed from among the Gentiles — he had touched upon certain matters even of the more secret and deeper mysteries, and out of eagerness to render an account had laid open many things that were held among the hidden things (although in each case he preserved the dispensation of the word with cautious moderation, and while disclosing it in some part, in great part again veiled it), for that reason he says: But I have written to you the more boldly in part, as putting you in remembrance, through the grace which was given me. Do you hear the Apostle saying: I have written in part? Whence let no one be angry with us if we are not able to explain the account of the divine mysteries with full clarity, when he hears that the very man who handed these things down to us handed them down in part;

nor let anyone strut about so puffed up under the title of knowledge, as though he had come to know all things, when Paul himself, from whom the word of knowledge has been poured out to us, says that he writes in part and knows in part. I, however, judge that although Paul himself also confesses that he knows in part, yet he knew many things — and far more things — than he wrote. For as one who himself knew much, and yet did not dare to bring much of it forward, he says that it was boldness in him to commit at least some things to writing. But in that he says, putting you in remembrance through the grace given me, he indicates that he had indeed already had discourse concerning such matters, and had often discussed the mysteries; but since what has been said by speech alone forgetfulness might easily intercept, by these few things, he says, which I have written through the grace given me, I call back to you the memory of those things which have often been more fully discussed by me. But concerning the grace which Paul recalls as given to him, we have already spoken above. And he says this grace was given him for this purpose, that I may be, he says, a minister to Christ Jesus among the Gentiles, sanctifying the Gospel of God.

What we have as sanctifying the Gospel of God, the Greeks say more magnificently, hierourgounta to euangelion tou theou (”performing the sacred rite of the Gospel of

God”), which, though not fully rendered by us, might nevertheless be expressed as sacrificing the Gospel of God; by which it is shown that to announce the Gospel is a sacrificial work. And accordingly he then adds: That the offering up of the Gentiles may be made acceptable, sanctified in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, just as the high priests, when they made offering, necessarily had to take care that there should be no blemish in the victim, no reproach, no defect, so that it could be acceptable and pleasing to God; so also he who sacrifices the Gospel and announces the word of God ought by every means to take care that no blemish arise in his preaching, no defect in his teaching, no fault in his instruction; but, so to speak, if it can be done, let him first offer up himself, let him first cut the throat of his own vices, let him first mortify his own members to sin, so that not only by teaching but also by the example of his life he may make his offering — the salvation of his disciples — acceptable to God. Sanctified, he says, in the Holy Spirit.

The fount of sanctification is the Holy Spirit, and therefore the offering of the Gentiles which is offered while Paul sacrifices is said to be made acceptable to God not through the observance of the law, but through the Holy Spirit. 12. I have therefore glory in Christ Jesus toward God. For I do not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ does not accomplish through me unto the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deeds, by the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem round about as far as Illyricum I have filled up the Gospel of Christ. And so I have preached this Gospel not where Christ has been named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation: but as it is written: They to whom it was not announced concerning him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand. True glorying toward God there is none, except that which is in Christ Jesus. But to glory in God without Christ is much the same as if someone should say that he can have glory with God without righteousness, without wisdom, without truth. For all these things Christ is; and therefore in Christ alone is there true glorying toward God. This is like that which he himself says elsewhere: But he that glories, let him glory in the Lord.

But in what way every glorying which is outside Christ is blameworthy — for example, in riches, or in the honors of the world, or in the wisdom of the world, or in the other arts which are outside Christ — we have already discussed more fully above. It should indeed be known that here the Latins have put ”glory” for ”glorying. For I do not dare, he says, to speak of any of those things which Christ does not accomplish through me unto the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deeds, by the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit of God. The things I speak, he says, are not the words of another’s work, nor do I make myself the praiser of another’s deeds; but what I know Christ to have accomplished through me, these things I write to you, the things which he has fulfilled in me by word and by work unto the obedience of the Gentiles — by the word of preaching, by the work of signs and wonders. But what the difference is between signs and wonders, we

have both said more fully elsewhere, and in the present passage we shall explain more briefly. Those are called signs in which, while there is something marvelous, something future is also indicated; but wonders are those in which only something marvelous is displayed. But he said ”signs and wonders” as containing both.

Divine Scripture, however, sometimes keeps these proper meanings, but sometimes by a loose usage puts both wonders for signs and signs for wonders. Paul therefore, by the power of signs and wonders — which signs and wonders nevertheless he wrought in the power of the Holy Spirit — filled up the Gospel of Christ from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum. God had given to Moses and Aaron the power of signs and wonders, as it is written: He placed in them the words of signs and of wonders in the land of Ham, that they might free the sons of Israel when Egypt had been chastised: but they were scarcely and rarely able to convert any from the nation of the Egyptians. Paul, having received the power of signs and wonders, converted to the sacraments of Christ not one nation, nor two or three peoples, but all the nations and peoples from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum, by the preaching of the word and by the might of his works and mighty deeds. And he preached this Gospel in such a way that he did not insert his own discourses as an addition to another’s labors or another’s preaching, lest he should himself set the building of his own preaching upon foundations of faith laid by another, and should seem to filch the glory of another’s work.

These things are to be observed by the rulers of the Churches, and to be kept with diligent attention, so that they may neither seem to speak any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through them, nor cast a slur upon the labors and endeavors of others. And a man speaks those things which Christ does not accomplish through him in this manner: if he should speak of continence and teach it, while he himself is not continent; or if he should speak of sobriety, or of righteousness, or of bestowing wealth and despising possessions for the kingdom of God, and Christ has accomplished none of these things in the very man who teaches them. And therefore the Apostle sets forth his own pattern, and says that he speaks those things, and preaches those things to others, which Christ has first fulfilled through him. But as it is written, he says, They to whom it was not announced concerning him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand. The Apostle therefore diligently took care that, according to the prophetic utterance, he should announce Christ to those to whom he had been announced by no one, and that those should understand concerning him who had learned of him before from no one. And this, as I think, was the cause which frequently hindered him when he proposed to go to Rome, as he says: For which reason I was very much hindered from coming to you;

not, as he says elsewhere, hindered by Satan, but detained by the occupation of founding Churches, and of founding them in those places where no foundation of

faith had gone before. But the example is taken from Isaiah, and is set down in the very same words, entire, in which it is read in the prophet.

[§13] ”But now, having no further place in these regions, and having a desire to come to you now for many preceding years, when I set out for Spain, I hope that as I pass through I may see you, and be sent on my way there by you, when first I shall have enjoyed you in part. He seems to say these things while situated in Achaia, at Corinth, as we have already shown so far as our strength allowed in the earlier parts of the Epistle: which Achaia, of course, is neighboring and adjoining to Macedonia. Living in those places, when he had traveled through each and every region preaching the Gospel—only within those boundaries in which Christ had not previously been preached—and had filled all things with the knowledge of God, he says that he has no further place in these regions, that is, that no place remains to him empty of the preaching of Christ; and he indicates that the time is now at hand in which he ought to fulfill his desire of seeing those who are at Rome: a desire which he had conceived and carried for many years, but which had been deferred and set aside until he should fill every place in which Christ had not been preached with the knowledge of his Gospel.

But what he said, ”When I set out for Spain, I hope that as I pass through I may see you,” is not to be taken as though Paul were held by so small a love toward the Romans that he judged they should be visited only in passing and while journeying elsewhere. For see what he adds in what follows. ”When first,” he says, ”I shall have enjoyed you in part. In which, surely, he seems to place it in their own power when the journey he has proposed ought to be released by them: and through this he in a certain manner invites and nourishes their love toward himself, so that if they themselves are held by an insatiable affection toward the Apostle, they may know that he too has this purpose, not to depart from them nor to set out elsewhere before he has fully enjoyed the grace of their charity. Yet he foresees that this charity will be so great that it cannot be satisfied in full, but ”in part,” he says. For he gives warning beforehand that in all things the necessity of preaching the Gospel must be preferred. And rightly does he promise his presence and his delay more moderately to those whom he had not yet seen according to the flesh, and to whom he had not yet come in the body. For we receive more longingly those goods which we fear will quickly be taken away; but we neglect more carelessly what we believe we shall keep for a longer time.

And to such a degree does he nourish the affection of the Romans toward himself, and place his delay in their own judgment, that he says he is to be sent on his way by them to Spain, and then to be sent on, when he shall first have satisfied them in love: in which, surely, if they should prove more eager, they will themselves give the Apostle causes for delaying longer.

[§14] ”But now I shall set out for Jerusalem to minister to the saints. For it has pleased Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor of the saints who are in Jerusalem. For it has pleased them, and they are their debtors: for if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they ought also to minister to them in carnal things. When therefore I shall have completed this, and shall have consigned to them this fruit, I shall set out by way of you into Spain. For I know that coming to you, I shall come in the abundance of the blessing of Christ. That it pleased Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor of the saints who are in Jerusalem, we can learn more fully also from the second Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he writes in this manner: ”But I make known to you, brethren, the grace of God which has been given to me in the Churches of Macedonia, that in much trial of tribulation the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their simplicity: for according to their power (I bear them witness) and beyond their power they were willing of their own accord, beseeching us with many prayers for the grace and the fellowship which is made toward the saints,” and the rest. And just as in these words he bears witness to the Macedonians, so again he also exhorts the Corinthians, saying:

”But as you abound in all things, in faith, and in word, and in knowledge, and in our charity toward you, so may you abound in this grace also,” and the rest. But also in other places, praising the Corinthians because they had been ready toward the fellowship of the poor who are in Jerusalem, he says: ”And I give counsel in this matter: for this is expedient for you, who not only to do, but also to will, began from the former year: but now complete it also in deed. But in the remaining passages too he pursues this same fellowship of the saints, and after a little he adds: ”But concerning the ministry which is toward the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you. For I know your ready will, for which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia has been prepared since the former year, and your zeal has provoked many. But that after a ministry of this kind of Macedonia and Achaia, which is made toward the saints who are in Jerusalem, the Apostle had also purposed to see Rome, is indicated in the Acts of the Apostles in this manner: ”But when these things were fulfilled, Paul purposed in the Holy Spirit that when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, he would set out for Jerusalem, saying: For after I have been there, it is necessary for me to see Rome also.

Now from all these words it is gathered that not only the first to the Corinthians, but also the second was written before this one to the Romans which we have in hand; and at the same time this is observed, that the later Paul is found in each Epistle, so much the more perfect he also is: so that that saying of his may be true which he spoke, that ”forgetting the things that are past, I stretch myself forward to the things that are to come, following on toward the perfect, to the palm of the heavenly calling. But in that he says, ”It has pleased Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor of the saints,” subtly and modestly, while

he praises the Corinthians, he exhorts the Romans. For devout minds are more easily invited to do good by examples than by words. But also in that he adds, ”For it has pleased them, and they are their debtors,” what else does he wish the Romans to perceive, except that if the Achaians and Macedonians are debtors to the poor of the saints who are in Jerusalem, then by the same reasoning, since the Romans also hold one and the same faith of Christ as they do, they should notice that they themselves too have been made debtors to these same persons?

For not only the Macedonians and Achaians have been made partakers in spiritual things with the saints who are in Jerusalem, so that they ought also to minister to them in carnal things; but the Romans as well; and therefore by an equal condition they are debtors: but he pronounces only about the former, so that the latter also may know themselves to lie under a like judgment. These things indeed have been said according to the common understanding of the letter. But let us seek out the customary magnificence in the writings of Paul. For I do not think that he meant it thus, as to shut up the poor of the saints—whom he also called spiritual—within Jerusalem alone, a single city of Palestine; and to call the rest, who are in all the earth, ”Gentiles,” who ought to minister in carnal things to the inhabitants of Jerusalem as though they alone were spiritual—since surely it is possible for spiritual persons to be found outside Jerusalem also, whom not place, but holy conduct and the perfection of faith and knowledge has made spiritual, as Paul himself also says in writing: ”Brethren, even if anyone be overtaken in any fault, you who are spiritual instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness. What then is it that we ought to perceive in these matters?

That everyone who is spiritual, that is, who serves God in the spirit, and who lives not according to the flesh but according to the spirit, this man dwells in Jerusalem, that is, in the place of peace, and stands in the vision of peace: and this man is one of the poor of the saints, namely from those blessed poor to whom it is said: ”Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Such then is that blessed poverty which says: ”Gold and silver I do not have; but what I have, this I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise and walk. Such a poor man as this always dwells in Jerusalem, possessing spiritual riches. His gold is wisdom, his silver the word of knowledge: his clothing is Christ, his feasts and delights are the table of wisdom, and food overflowing in the word of God: he drinks the wine of gladness, which Wisdom has mixed in her bowl, and from the victims of her understanding he eats solid foods, and the Word made flesh. These are the spiritual riches which the Gentiles, still placed in the flesh, hasten to share. It seems to me therefore that by those whom he names ”Gentiles” he indicates the more imperfect souls, which have need of the teaching of the perfect: and if perchance they have been held worthy to become partakers with them in understanding and spiritual knowledge, they themselves ought to minister to them in carnal things:

that is, when their spirit has begun to be imbued with a loftier knowledge, the flesh also, taking up the reins of continence and chastity, ought to minister to the spiritual precepts; lest perhaps, if it still wantons in carnal things, incautious and unbridled it throw down its rider, the Word of God. But even the very difference of terms which Paul used toward each of the two parts does not seem to me idle. For in spiritual things he set down ”fellowship” or ”participation”; but in carnal things, ”ministry”; and this he says is owed as a debt, but that other is shared: so that he may show that all the more perfect things, as being heavenly, are not so much owed to earthly things as lent to them; whereas earthly and carnal things are exacted as though for a debt. For we have been made debtors according to him who first lost in paradise the received revenue of immortality and incorruptibility by the persuasion of the serpent; and therefore we are all made debtors, as many as are bound by the lot of transgression into the likeness of Adam. For this reason, therefore, precepts also are given, that we may pay off our debts. Finally, in the Gospel too the Savior says thus: ”But when you shall have done all things which I commanded you, say that we are unprofitable servants; what we owed to do, we have done. But those things which we do above the debt, we do not do from precepts.

For example, virginity is not paid as a debt: for neither is it demanded by precept, but it is offered above the debt. Hear finally Paul saying: ”But concerning virgins I have no precept of the Lord. So then, concerning spiritual and more perfect things he spoke of ”fellowship”; but concerning lower and carnal things he named a ”ministry” that is owed. And I think that through a ministry of this kind that passage also is to be noticed which is in the Psalms: ”Who makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire” — namely, that he called the good angels ”spirits,” as being spiritual, but those who preside over the ministries of punishments, and prepare flames for sinners, he named ”ministers of the burning flame. Although these things may seem to have been said by a certain digression, nevertheless, since the passage prompted it, we have not omitted them. After these things he says: ”When therefore I shall have completed this, and shall have consigned to them this fruit, I shall set out by way of you into Spain. For I know that coming to you, I shall come in the abundance of the blessing of Christ. See with how great caution he promises that he will seal the fruit of those who offer. With what seal do you suppose the Apostle seals the fruit of a holy work?

With that one, I think, by which the image of God is expressed, that is, that in completing the work there be no admixture of an alien thought, that praise be not sought from men, but that he who gives may give in simplicity of heart, and not out of sadness: for ”God loves a cheerful giver. And whoever observes these and similar things in the work of God, seals his work with the seal of the divine image. ”When therefore,” he says, ”I shall have completed this, then I shall set out by way of you to Spain. Indeed he promises a great gift to the Romans, and says: ”For I

know that coming to you, I shall come in the abundance of the blessing of Christ": which he promises only through the Holy Spirit and the grace of prophecy. For it is above man to know these things about the future, that he would come to them not only in the blessing of Christ, but even in the abundance of the blessing. In which both the grace of him who comes, and equally the merits of those who receive him, are indicated.

[§15] I beseech you therefore, brethren, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you help me in your prayers to God, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers who are in Judaea, and that this my ministry may be made acceptable to the saints in Jerusalem, so that coming to you in joy by the will of God, I may find rest together with you. Although he had said above, "For I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the abundance of the blessing of Christ," nevertheless he knew that even in those things which he had come to know as certainly to be, prayer was necessary: for if, let us say, prayer had not been employed, it would doubtless follow that what had been prophesied would not be fulfilled. Who then is there who, reading these things — that Paul begs the brethren who are at Rome to pray for him — would think it contemptible or beneath him to ask for the prayers of the Church, even if those from whom the prayer is asked should seem to be inferior in merits? For behold, Paul, endowed with apostolic merits, exhorts not only the Romans to pray for him, but the Corinthians as well. And see, too, with what strong and religious oaths he binds them. "Through our Lord Jesus Christ," he says, "and through the love of the Spirit I beseech you that you help me in your prayers to God.

What our translators have rendered "that you help me in prayers" is read more magnificently among the Greeks, "that you strive together with me" (synagōnisasthai): by which this is indicated, "that you help me in the contest of prayers to God," showing that he himself has, as it were, a contest and a struggle of prayer, with those doubtless opposing him of whom he said: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. And it is certain that all these, just as they oppose faith and resist piety, just as they are contrary to justice and to truth and to all good things, so without doubt they resist and oppose prayer also. And therefore Paul shows that there is no small contest even in prayer, seeing that in this contest he believed the help of those who are at Rome must be implored. For truly the demons and the adverse powers stand against us in prayer, first in this way: that he who sweats in the contest of prayer may not be found such a man as to lift up pure hands without anger. And even if someone should be able to obtain this, that he be without anger, it is hardly possible that he escape being without disputation — that is, without superfluous and empty thoughts.

For you will scarcely find that, when anyone prays, there does not occur to him some empty and foreign thought which turns aside and shatters the intent by which the mind is directed toward God, and drags it off through things that are not fitting. And therefore great is the contest of prayer, that, while enemies stand against us and drag the mind of prayer off in different directions, the mind may ever press fixed toward God with steady intent, so that a man may deservedly be able to say himself: ”I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course. Now therefore the Apostle prays that he be helped in the contest of prayers, that he may be delivered from the unbelievers who are in Judaea — at whose hands he fears not so much to suffer, nor to endure those things which pertain to the glory of his apostleship, as he fears to be hindered: lest, being detained longer by their obstacles, he either render a less acceptable ministry to the saints — which itself has need of prayers that it may be made acceptable — or lest his desire of visiting the Romans be longer deferred.

”If,” he says, ”this shall so turn out that both my ministry be made acceptable to the saints in Jerusalem, and that, delivered from the unbelievers who are in Judaea, I be not hindered from coming to you, then rejoicing over things well accomplished I shall surely come to you by the will of God, and shall find rest together with you. Certainly Paul does not seek bodily rest, but that rest which has its consolation from God, as he himself said in the first parts of this Epistle: ”That I may be comforted among you by that faith which is mutually yours and mine.”

[§16] ”Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.” He endows the Romans with an immense blessing, that the God of peace may be with them — that is, that the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, may guard their hearts in Christ Jesus, who is our peace.

[§17] ”I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is in the ministry of the Church which is at Cenchreae, that you receive her in the Lord worthily of the saints, and assist her in whatever matters she may have need of you. For she herself has also assisted many, and myself as well.” This passage too teaches with apostolic authority that women also are appointed in the ministry of the Church. Paul follows up Phoebe, placed in this office in the Church which is at Cenchreae, with great praise and commendation, enumerating also her distinguished deeds, and saying: because she has to such a degree assisted all — that is, has been at hand in their necessities — that she has assisted even me myself in my necessities and apostolic labors with the whole devotion of her mind. And I would say that her work is like the hospitality of Lot, who, while he always received guests, at length was found worthy to receive angels also into his lodging. Similarly Abraham too, while he always ran to meet guests, was found worthy that even the Lord with the angels should turn aside to his tent. So this religious Phoebe also, while she stands by all and renders service to all, was found worthy to stand by and to serve the Apostle as

well. And therefore this passage teaches two things equally: both that, as we have said, women are held as ministers in the Church, and that such women ought to be taken into the ministry as have assisted many, and who through their good offices have deserved to attain even to apostolic praise. He exhorts this also, that those who devote their labor to good works in the Churches should receive a return and honor from the brethren, so that in whatever things may be necessary, whether in spiritual or in bodily services, they may be held in honor.

[§18] Greet Prisca and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus (who laid down their own necks for my life: to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles), and the church that is in their house. These seem to me to be the same persons about whom it is written thus in the Acts of the Apostles: But after these things Paul, departing from Athens, came to Corinth; and having found there a certain Jew named Aquila, of Pontic race, who had lately come from Italy, and Priscilla his wife, because Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome, he came to them; and because they were of the same craft, he remained with them, and they worked together. For they were tentmakers by trade, that is, stitchers. Nor is it any wonder if Paul writes ”Prisca” in the Epistle, where in Acts she is written ”Priscilla,” the other details agreeing. It may be that, since at that time, when the Jews had been driven out of the city by Caesar’s command, they had come to Corinth, so afterwards, when the harshness of the edict had ceased, they returned to Rome and are greeted by Paul. Yet it appears that these people exposed themselves when Paul was in peril from the plots of the Jews, so that he might depart free; and this a certain Jason too is reported in the Acts of the Apostles to have done.

And the Apostle does not keep silent about this praise of theirs, but hands it on to all the churches as a thing to be admired, and therefore says: To whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. From this it appears that they showed themselves dutiful and hospitable toward all the faithful brethren, not only those who had come to believe from among the Jews, but also those from among the Gentiles. For great grace is found in the office of hospitality, not only with God, but also with human beings. Yet since this matter rests not only in the will and purpose of the masters of a household, but also in the grateful and faithful service of the servants, therefore he named all those who faithfully fulfilled that ministry along with them ”the church that is in their house.”

[§19] Greet Epaenetus my beloved, who is the beginning of Asia in Christ. This Epaenetus seems to me to have been the very first of all from Asia to believe; whence also he called him the beginning of the Church, or, as the Greek has it, the firstfruits of Asia — unless indeed this saying signifies something more profound, so that we understand that the angels of God who watch over the churches offer each of them firstfruits to God from among those who believe; and that among them

firstfruits are reckoned not among those who are first in time, but among those who excel in virtues and merits. Paul, knowing through the Spirit their choice regarding Epaenetus, and that the election of the angels had found him out of the whole number of the faithful who were in Asia, called him the firstfruits of Asia. But in another Epistle also he says of certain persons that they are the firstfruits of Achaia, doubtless looking to the same mystical reasoning in their case as well.

[§20] Greet Mary, who has labored much among you. In this too he teaches that women also ought to labor for the churches of God. For they labor when they teach young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to bring up children, to be modest, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, subject to their own husbands, to receive guests with hospitality, to wash the feet of the saints, and to carry out in all chastity everything else that is written concerning the duties of women.

[§21] Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow captives, who are noble among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. It may indeed be that these were kinsmen of Paul according to the flesh, and believed before him, and were held to be noble among the apostles of Christ; concerning whom it is also possible to understand this, that perhaps they were among those seventy-two who were themselves also named apostles, and that for this reason he calls them noble among the apostles, and among those apostles who were before him. But this too moves me, that he says: my fellow captives. For what was that captivity of Paul in which he testifies that Andronicus and Junia also were fellow captives with him? — unless perhaps, by a more profound mystery, we look to that captivity which Christ came to loose, of which it is written that he came to give release to the captives and sight to the blind. In that captivity these persons appear to be by one and the same reckoning as Paul himself was. For example, if we should say: When the people of Israel were captive among the Assyrians or the Babylonians, all indeed appeared to be captives; but there was one reason for the captivity in the rest, and another in Daniel and Ananias and Azarias and Misael. For those were captives on account of their own sins; but these were themselves captives for the consolation of the captives.

And therefore, if Daniel were to say of some one of the common people, ”My fellow captive,” it would not seem to be said so fittingly as if he said of Ananias and Azarias and Misael, ”my fellow captives. For in these there is one single reckoning of captivity, which is far different from the reckoning of the rest of the people. So then Paul too, looking to the reasoning of a more hidden mystery, names something of this sort concerning himself and Andronicus and Junia, calling them his fellow captives in this world, and noble among the apostles. 22. Greet Ampliatus my beloved in the Lord. Although he seems to ascribe to this man nothing outstanding above the rest by way of praise, nevertheless by this very fact, that he is beloved of Paul, he is rendered praiseworthy and worthy of greeting.

[§23] Greet Urbanus my helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. He joins Stachys in the greeting, but he set Urbanus ahead in praises. For he calls the one a helper in Christ; but Stachys he named only as beloved to himself, just as he did Ampliatus. Now a helper of the Apostle in Christ is understood as nothing other than a partaker in the apostolic work. [§24] Greet Apelles approved in Christ. I think that this Apelles had passed through many tribulations patiently and bravely endured, and that for this reason he is pronounced approved by the Apostle, according to those things which he himself said elsewhere, that tribulation works patience, and patience approval, and approval hope. It should indeed be considered whether perhaps this is the very man who in the Acts of the Apostles is named Apollo, an Alexandrian, learned in the Scriptures. [§25] Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus. Since nothing is idly either added or diminished in the letters of the Apostle, these who are either of the house or of the family of Aristobulus he names not without purpose neither beloved, nor approved, nor helpers in Christ; but perhaps because they had nothing of the sort in their merits, therefore he honored them with the title of greeting alone.

[§26] Greet Herodion my kinsman. This man too, similarly to Andronicus and Junias, is called a kinsman of Paul; but he is named neither a fellow-captive as they were, nor noble among the apostles, among those who were in Christ before Paul. From which it must be understood that even among these whom Paul calls his kinsmen there is much difference, according to that reasoning, as I judge, which we attempted to open up above. [§27] Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord. It seems indeed that there were several of the house or family of Narcissus, but that not all were in the Lord; and therefore he added that those were to be greeted who are in the Lord. [§28] Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. He gives a good testimony concerning these women, whose labor he testifies to be not of this world, nor of common life, but in the Lord. For many labor, but it is not established that the labor of all is in the Lord.

[§29] Greet Persis most dear, who has labored much in the Lord. This woman seems to be praised more than Tryphaena and Tryphosa, since indeed he says that those labored in the Lord, but that this one labored much in the Lord, to whom he added also ”most dear.” 30. Greet Rufus, elect in the Lord, and his mother and mine. I do not think that in these greetings the difference of praise and of greeting through each single person is made emptily. For he who knows that Christ speaks in Paul is certain that according to merit one is indeed called by him approved, another most dear, another laboring in the Lord, another laboring much in the Lord, another elect, just as also this Rufus, of whom our discourse now is, is greeted as elect in the Lord. I believe that Paul knew him to be of the number not of the many who are called, but of the few who are chosen; whose mother also had so much merit that Paul named her his own mother, with whom he too, just as Jesus with John, shares one affection of a mother.

[§31] Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and if there are any brethren with them. Concerning these the greeting is simple, nor is anything distinctive of praise added to them. I think, however, that this Hermas is the writer of that little book which is called The Shepherd, which writing seems to me very useful, and, as I think, divinely inspired. But that he ascribed no praise to him, this, I suppose, is the reason: because he seems, as that writing declares, to have been converted to repentance after many sins; and therefore he wrote no reproach against him either — for he had learned from Scripture not to upbraid a man converting himself from sin — nor did he bestow anything of praise, because he was still placed under the angel of repentance, by whom at the opportune time he ought again to be offered to Christ. Moreover it is understood that those whose greeting is joined together dwelt together. 32. Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympias, and all the saints who are with them. It may be that Philologus and Julia were spouses; the rest their household members, to whom a simple greeting is directed.

[§33] Greet one another with a holy kiss. From this saying, and from some others like it, a custom has been handed down to the Churches that after the prayers the brethren receive one another with a kiss. And this kiss the Apostle calls holy. By which name he teaches this first, that the kisses which are given in the churches be chaste; and then next, that they be not feigned, as were those of Judas, who gave a kiss with his lips and was plotting betrayal in his heart. But the kiss of a believer should first, as we have said, be chaste; and then next have in itself peace and simplicity in charity unfeigned.

[§34] All the Churches of Christ greet you. Is it not the case that Paul writes these things while placed in one Church? And how is it true that he sends to the Roman Church the greetings of all the Churches at once? But we ought to understand it in this way: either that there was one spirit in Paul and in all the Churches of Christ, or that he means they greet through faith, and are joined through the spirit. 35. But I beg you, brethren, that you observe those who make dissensions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and turn aside from them. For such do not serve Christ our Lord, but their own belly; and through sweet words and blessings they seduce the hearts of the innocent. For your obedience is everywhere published abroad. In you therefore I rejoice. Here Paul must be believed to write, through the Holy Spirit, both to those who preside over the Churches and to all believers, that they may more diligently consider and perceive who they are that beget dissensions and offenses in the Churches, and are strangers to that beatitude which the Lord promised, saying: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. For this, he says, that you be peacemakers, you have learned from the Lord through the Gospel; but to stir up dissensions or scandals is contrary to the doctrine which you have learned;

and therefore let him be a stranger to you, and let him by no means be received among you, who stirs up contentions, who sows quarrels, who excites lawsuits, and practices the pursuits of strife. For those who are such do not serve Christ our Lord, who is our peace, but their own belly. But he also discloses, by the prompting of the divine Spirit, what the cause is by which quarrels and lawsuits are aroused in the Churches. For the sake of the belly, he says; that is, of gain and covetousness. Thence it is that some go about houses speaking for favor with all flattery and deception, not that they may in the word of God build up souls unto virtue, but that by flattering and sweet words they may exhort them to remain, or even to advance, in vices, praising and speaking well of those things which are worthy of rebuke; putting light for darkness, and darkness for light; sweet for bitter, and bitter for sweet; and in these things they seduce the hearts of the innocent. And therefore one must diligently attend to with what aim he teaches who teaches: whether seeking favor and honor from his hearers, or hoping for a reward from the Lord for the instruction and progress of the learners. Subtly indeed Paul marks the undiscerning and easy obedience of the Romans, and asserts that it is everywhere not praised, but published abroad. But lest again, if he should chastise them more openly for this, he should make them disobedient, he adds:

In you therefore I rejoice. But you will say: How does he mark in them a common obedience, when he says that he rejoices in them? First indeed it is one thing to mark a fault, another to mark men. For it can be that he rejoices in those in whom he had detected many other good things; but that he marks the fault which had displeased him, lest he be thought to have been pleased with it also along with the rest. But the Apostle can also have said that he rejoices in them for this reason, that he who is disobedient can be drawn neither to evil nor to good; but he who is obedient, if indeed he be drawn to useless things, the fault is one of inexperience. For he does not know that those things are useless by which he proves his obedience; but when he has learned what things are useful, having the good of obedience ready at hand, he immediately ascends the road of virtue through it. Paul therefore rejoices over the obedient, being certain that when he has taught them that they ought not to use that common obedience which they incautiously offer to all, but that alone by which one ought to obey God rather than men, they will, leaving the rest aside, use that alone. For in truth it requires no small discernment, but an approved and most practiced judgment, to know to what word or to what work one must be obedient, and to what one must offer resistance.

Finally the Lord himself says in the Gospel: Beware of those who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but within are ravening wolves. And therefore a watchful sense and an intent mind is required, which knows how to test either the sheep’s simplicity in the open, or the wolf’s hidden rapacity. Whence see how near to danger those become who neglect to be exercised in the divine letters, from which alone the discernment of such examination is to be learned. Immediately therefore

he shows briefly the appearance of the distinction proposed, and says: Since indeed your obedience is easy and undiscerning, receive what you ought to keep, what you ought to beware of.

[§36] ”I want you,” he says, ”to be wise in what is good, and simple in what is evil. This is similar to that saying which he writes to the Corinthians: ”Be children in malice, that you may be perfect in understanding. But that too which the Lord says, ”For the sons of this world are more prudent than the sons of light in their generation,” accords with this saying. For the sons of this world are more prudent in malice, in that they always find something deeper and subtler in it whereby they may do more harm and injure more violently. But in what is good they are foolish: for they scarcely find what good they might do. Paul, on the contrary, wishes us to be wise in what is good, that is, always to find something more, to search out more, and to think more deeply about what good we may do: so that even if we are hindered by someone’s malice from a good work, we, if we are wise, may devise how, if we cannot do a good work, we may at least utter a good word; and if not even this is permitted, that we may at least display a good wish and disposition.

So then we ought to be wise in what is good, but simple in what is evil, so that if we are struck by malice, if we are struck by injury, we may not be crafty and cunning, seeking arts and devices by which we may repay evil for evil and wickedness for wickedness. But in such a case we ought to remember that saying which declares: ”If anyone wishes to be wise with God, let him become a fool in this world. Let us therefore be fools in receiving injury and not repaying it, that we may be wise with God, who said: ”Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. For concerning the impious Jeremiah too says: ”They are wise to do evil; but to do good they know not. To this looks also that which the Lord said, that we ought to be simple as doves and prudent as serpents. But if someone from among the unbelievers should shrewdly confront us and say: How can the same person be both wise and foolish? we shall say to him: Look at those arts which are in common use among men, how he who, for example, is a most wise grammarian is found most unskilled in the smith’s craft; or again, how a most wise helmsman is found unskilled in the art of medicine. So then it is possible to be wise in those things which pertain to God, and unwise in those things which pertain to the world.

It should certainly be known that when he says there, ”For such men do not serve Christ our Lord,” it is not that they themselves profess that they do not serve Christ the Lord, but that, departing from the rule of his service, they show by the facts themselves that they do not serve Christ the Lord. For it does not seem that anyone can at the same time serve both Christ and the belly; and be equally a lover of pleasure and of God; just as no one can serve God and mammon at the same time.

[§37] ”And the God of peace shall crush Satan under your feet speedily. The question is asked in this passage what Satan he meant, who was to be crushed swiftly

by God beneath the feet of those to whom he writes. For if it be referred to one person, namely to him of whom it is said in the Gospel, ”Behold, I see Satan falling from heaven like lightning,” and who is indicated as the adversary of the human race, it will surely seem, if Paul truly says what he says, that once he is swiftly crushed beneath the feet of those to whom he was then writing, there is no longer any Satan to stir up contests and struggles and persecutions for believers: which the reality of things certainly does not allow. But it seems to me that in this passage he called ”Satan” every spirit which opposes believers. For ”Satan” in our tongue is rendered ”adversary. Whatever, therefore, resists and opposes the soul that is striving toward God, and whatever is contrary to its peace, this is named ”satan” for it. Accordingly he therefore prefaced it by saying, ”the God of peace,” that is, the God to whom peace is pleasing, ”shall crush” him who is contrary to peace and works dissensions. So too, finally, we read in the books of Kingdoms that God raised up against Solomon a Satan, Hadad the Idumaean: that is, against Solomon, who was peaceable, he raised up a Satan who is contrary to peace.

But just as to those whom the Apostle teaches, if they act thus and show themselves such as his discourse has described, he promises, for the amendment of their life, that Satan shall swiftly be crushed beneath their feet by the God of peace: so no less does the God of peace raise up against him who has not kept his peace in a pure heart and a clean conscience a Satan, that is, an adversary; so that he who has neglected the good of peace may endure the bitterness of assaults, and thus at last, set in the midst of the struggle, may remember the sweetness of the peace he violated. From both passages of divine Scripture, then, let us be edified — that in which God is said to raise up a Satan for the negligent, or to crush and subject him for the zealous — so that he may rouse the former to contests, and to the latter grant the palm of victory over the prostrate adversary, and bestow the rewards of virtue. And we can also say, in each single contest, if we strive lawfully, that God will crush Satan beneath our feet speedily. For example, if someone has undertaken the contest of chastity, if he has persevered to the end with an unstained conscience, it can be said of him that God has crushed Satan beneath his feet, that is, the spirit which was contrary to chastity.

Likewise he too who undertakes the contest of faith, if standing before kings and governors he confesses the Lord Jesus Christ with confidence, and remains in that confession to the end, God has crushed Satan beneath his feet, since by steadfast faith he has conquered the spirit of unbelief. So also he who perseveringly cultivates concord crushes the demon of dissension beneath his feet; he who preserves gentleness tramples the Satan of wrath under the footsteps of patience. This surely is what the Lord says in the Gospel: ”Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy.”

[§38] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. The grace of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ are to be taken as one and the same grace. For just as the Father gives life to whom he wills, so also the Son gives life to whom he wills; and just as the Father has life in himself, and has granted to the Son to have life in himself, so also the grace which the Father gives, this the Son likewise gives. Yet it must be understood that everything which human beings have from God is grace, for they have nothing by right of debt. For who has first given to him, and it shall be repaid to him? Grace, then, is whatever he possesses who once was not and now is, receiving it from him who always was, and is, and shall be forever.

[§39] Timothy my helper greets you, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater my kinsmen. It seems to me that concerning these men, whom he set apart from the whole catalogue of those sending greetings, he had something more in mind. For he calls Timothy his helper, and all of them together his kinsmen. And indeed concerning Timothy it is reported very fully in the Acts of the Apostles that he was a citizen of Derbe, the son of a believing widow, by a Gentile father; of whom Paul himself also says that for this reason he had asked him to remain at Ephesus, so that he might charge certain persons not to teach otherwise, nor to give heed to fables and endless genealogies. And some maintain that Lucius is that same Luke who wrote the Gospel, on the ground that names are customarily pronounced sometimes according to the inflection of the native tongue, sometimes according to the Greek and Roman. Jason, moreover, is that man of whom it is also written in the Acts of the Apostles that at Thessalonica, when the crowds were stirring up a riot against Paul and Silas, he gave himself up, so as to secure for the apostles the freedom to depart. Sosipater too, who is joined with these, I suspect to be the very man who is described in the Acts of the Apostles as Sosipater son of Pyrrhus, of Beroea.

But one who considers Paul’s letters rather carefully, as though Christ were speaking in him, will doubtless be troubled at how Paul — who declared himself born at Tarsus in Cilicia, a Hebrew of the Hebrews — is now said to be the kinsman or blood relation either of Timothy, a citizen of Derbe by a Gentile father, or of Jason of Thessalonica, or of Sosipater son of Pyrrhus of Beroea. But if in defense of this someone should say that these men too came in some measure from the circumcision, then he ought not to have spoken of these in particular, but of all who were of the Jews, that they were kinsmen of Paul. As it is, however, since he by no means grants this title to the rest, but assigns it to these and to a few others, it is certain that he is naming some other kinship, one which he holds in common with Timothy and Luke and a few others like them; and this kinship or blood relation he doubtless knows to descend to him along with them from that fatherhood of which he says in another place: For this cause I bend my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom every fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named.

Knowing, therefore, that there is a certain fatherhood in heaven just as there is on earth, it is certain that those who are in no way joined to him according to the kinship of an earthly fatherhood, he knew to be joined to him according to the kinship of the heavenly fatherhood. And for this reason he calls them kinsmen, and fellow captives, and helpers — inasmuch as with them he had received by the lot of birth a single kinship for preaching the gospel, and for enduring the captivity of the Babylon of this world. Or, if anyone will not allow these things to be explained by some such figurative reading, let him explain to us how Timothy and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, citizens not only of far different cities but even of different provinces, could have been kinsmen and blood relations of Paul according to the flesh — and not only these, but also Andronicus and Junias and Herodion, all of whom he calls both his kinsmen and his fellow captives.

[§40] I Tertius, who wrote this Epistle in the Lord, greet you. As one who had been judged worthy to write out the Epistle to the Romans at Paul’s dictation, he inserts his own name into it as well, employing neither rashness nor boastfulness, but because he knew that he had not only rendered the service of a scribe, but had written in the Lord: since indeed the righteous man does all that he does for the glory of God. And so if he writes, he writes for the glory of God, and therefore he writes in the Lord; for which reason it is fitting that he should insert mention of his own name too into the Epistle. Or certainly, since he had taken down the force of the meanings of Paul as he dictated, and had understood that it was not a man but the Lord who was writing, for that reason he records that he wrote in the Lord.

[§41] Gaius my host, and host of the whole Church, greets you. This Gaius is understood to be the one whom he mentions in writing to the Corinthians, saying: I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius. He seems, then, to indicate concerning him that he was a hospitable man, who not only received Paul and each of those arriving at Corinth into his lodging, but himself provided a meeting place in his own house for the whole Church. It is indeed handed down by the tradition of our forebears that this Gaius was the first bishop of the Church of Thessalonica. [§42] Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus the brother. I think this is the same Erastus of whom he says that he remained at Corinth, and who appears to be designated the steward of the city. But I do not think that Paul would have made such notable mention of this office in his Epistle, unless perhaps he perceived something further in him, and called him treasurer — that is, steward — of that city whose maker and builder is God; and for that reason he did not put down of which city he was, but only named him treasurer of ”the city.” Whether, then, it is to be taken in some such manner, or rather quite simply, and nothing deeper is to be sought in Paul’s writings, consider, you who read.

[§43] Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept in si-

lence through the times of the ages, but now made manifest through the prophetic Scriptures, according to the commandment of the eternal God, made known to all the nations unto the obedience of faith: to God, alone wise, through Jesus Christ, be glory unto the ages of ages. Amen! Marcion, by whom the evangelical and apostolic Scriptures were tampered with, removed this passage entirely from this Epistle; and not only this, but from that place where it is written, but everything that is not of faith is sin, he cut away all that follows to the end. In other copies, however — that is, in those which have not been violated by Marcion — we find this very passage placed differently. For in some codices, immediately after that place which we mentioned above, that is, but everything that is not of faith is sin, there follows directly, now to him who is able to strengthen you. Other codices, however, contain it at the end, as it now stands. But let us come now to the explanation of this passage. Paul seems to me to point out two causes by which those are made strong who are confirmed in the faith of the Gospel: one, by which Paul's preaching, which is also Christ's preaching, becomes known to them;

and another, by which there is revealed to them the mystery which was kept in silence through all the times of the ages, but now — that is, at the coming of Christ in bodily presence — has been made manifest and opened, and, so far as concerns the matter, has been declared not without suitable witnesses, but with the prophetic Scriptures giving their attestation. For such was the commandment of the eternal God, that by the preaching of the Gospel the nations should be called to the obedience of faith; while by the revelation of the mystery the wisdom of God should be recognized, and glory and honor rendered to God alone wise unto the ages of ages. But let us go back once more, and consider how it is said: Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept in silence through the times of the ages. It does not seem to me that this strengthening of both kinds pertains to all; but to all believers, at any rate, there pertains the Gospel of Paul and the preaching of Christ, whereas the revelation of the mystery kept in silence through the times of the ages pertains not to the many, but to the few and the elect who can be capable of the wisdom and knowledge of God — of whom it is said: Many are called, but few are chosen.

But concerning what he says, of the mystery kept in silence, it must be asked whether he means it was so kept in silence that absolutely no one knew it, not even the prophets themselves who announced it; or whether some deeper account of the silence is to be understood. To me indeed it seems altogether absurd that we should say the prophets wrote about the divine mysteries in such a way that they did not understand the very things they were saying, since Scripture says: The wise man understands what proceeds from his own mouth, and he bears understanding on his lips. If, then, the prophets did not understand what they uttered from their own mouth, they were not wise. But if it is foolish to acknowledge them as prophets and

to deny that they were wise, it remains that they were wise, and understood what they uttered from their own mouth, and had understanding on their lips. What, then, is the account of the silence? Let us see whether it is not that which Paul himself fully taught as having been handed down to him for the dispensation of the mysteries, where he says that he was caught up into the third heaven, and from there into paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter. In which he certainly shows not that he himself is ignorant of what he heard, but that it is not lawful to bring forth and disclose to other men the things that were shown to him.

So, then, it can seem to be said in this place also that the mystery was kept in silence through the times of the ages in this sense: that the prophets indeed knew it (for it is made manifest from the prophetic Scriptures), but did not make it manifest or lay it open to men, that is, to the common crowd, but covered it with silence according to the commandment of the eternal God, until the time should come for the Word to be made flesh and to dwell among us, and to be made manifest to all the nations unto the obedience of faith. But as to what he says, to God alone wise, do not take ”wise God” as though wisdom had made him wise, as is the case among men. For among men each one is called wise by participation in wisdom; but God is called Wise not as one who has been made wise out of wisdom, but as one who is himself the author and begetter of wisdom. For, as we have said, God is not wise from wisdom, but from God who is wise, wisdom proceeds. Rightly, therefore, is it said: To God alone wise. For God alone is wise in such a way that he himself rather begot wisdom than was made wise out of wisdom.

And rightly is the glory referred to him through Jesus Christ, because Christ Jesus, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God, declared that God alone is wise in such a way that he himself begot wisdom. But as to his saying unto the ages of ages, it is the custom of divine Scripture to designate by this the immensity of times. And he placed Amen at the end, as if for the confirmation of all that has been written above, signifying thereby, in the native speech of the Hebrews, that the things written are true and trustworthy.

RUFINUS’S CLOSING WORD (on Origen’s Exposition of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans)

Thus far, in dictating upon the Epistle to the Romans as best we could, we have sweated with very great labor and over a very long time. For I confess, Heraclius, most beloved brother, that in my desire to satisfy your longings I have nearly forgotten the commandment which enjoins: ”Lift not a burden beyond your strength” — although in the other works too which we turned into Latin at your insistence (or rather, at the demand of a daily quota of work) there was no lack of very great labor, since we were seeking to supply those things which Origen delivered extempore in the lecture-hall of the Church, with the intention not so much of exposition

as of edification: as we did in the homilies, or brief discourses, on Genesis and on Exodus, and especially in those on the book of Leviticus, which were spoken by him indeed in the style of preaching, but were translated by us in the manner of a commentary. We undertook this labor of filling out what was missing for this reason: that questions raised and then left unresolved — which often happens in the homiletic style of speaking — might not breed distaste in the Latin reader. For what we wrote on Joshua son of Nun, and on the book of Judges, and on the thirty-sixth, the thirty-seventh, and the thirty-eighth psalm, we translated plainly as we found it, and without much labor.

Therefore, although in the other works mentioned above we did labor at supplying what he had omitted, nevertheless in this work on the Epistle to the Romans, for the reasons we set out in the Preface, an immense and inextricable labor has weighed upon us. Yet it has been a delight to have given ourselves over to these labors — if only, as we have found in other cases, ill-willed minds do not repay our night-watches with insults, if only our efforts are not rewarded with disparagement and our labors with treachery. For among such people we incur a novel kind of blame. They say to me: In these things which you write, since much in them is your own work, give them the title of your own name, and write, for instance, "Books of Rufinus's Expositions on the Epistle to the Romans," just as among secular authors, they say, the title bears not the name of him who was translated out of the Greek, but of him who did the translating. But all this they grant me not out of love for me, but out of hatred for the author. But I, who defer more to my conscience than to my reputation, even if I do seem to add some things and to fill out what is lacking, or to abridge what is overlong, still do not think it right to steal the title from him who laid the foundations of the work and furnished the material for erecting the building.

Let it be entirely at the reader's discretion, once he has approved the work, to ascribe the merit of the work to whomever he wishes. For our aim is to seek not the applause of readers, but the profit of those who make progress. After this, indeed, there calls us a work which was enjoined upon us long ago, but which is now more urgently pressed upon us by the blessed bishop Gaudentius: namely, that the books of the Recognitions of Clement, bishop of Rome, companion and successor of the apostles, be turned into Latin. In this work I know well that labor multiplies labor, if I take up the task. In this at least I shall satisfy my friends: I shall give the title my own name, while the author's name nonetheless remains — for it shall be entitled "Rufinus's Clement. And if the Lord permits me to complete it, I shall return again to your desires, so that we may say something, God permitting, either on the books of Numbers or of Deuteronomy (for this alone of the Heptateuch is wanting to us), or may dictate what we can, the Lord directing, on the remaining Epistles of the apostle Paul.

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