

Catechetical Lecture IV

Cyril of Jerusalem

Early Church (pre-Nicene) · Nicene & Post-Nicene · Catechesis

STROMATA 40

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INTRODUCTION

Delivered in mid-fourth-century Jerusalem to those preparing for baptism at Easter, this fourth lecture stands among the earliest surviving examples of systematic catechesis in the Christian tradition, sketching the framework of doctrine a believer was expected to hold before being entrusted with the Creed itself. Cyril, who would later be exiled three times over the Arian controversy, writes with the urgency of a bishop guarding new converts against rival teachers, Greek philosophers, Jewish interpreters, and Christian heretics alike, and his ten points cover God, Christ, the virgin birth, the cross, resurrection, ascension, judgment, the Spirit, the soul, and the body. What follows is brisk and pastoral rather than speculative, the voice of a teacher walking catechumens through what they must know before they can profess what they believe.

On the Ten Points of Doctrine.

Colossians 2:8.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, etc.

Vice mimics virtue, and the tares strive to be thought wheat, growing like the wheat in appearance, but being detected by good judges from the taste. _The devil also transfigures himself into an angel of light_ 2 Corinthians 11:14; not that he may reascend to where he was, for having made _his heart hard as an anvil_ , he has henceforth a will that cannot repent; but in order that he may envelope those who are living an Angelic life in a mist of blindness, and a pestilent condition of unbelief. Many wolves are going about _in sheeps' clothing_ , their clothing being that of sheep, not so their claws and teeth: but clad in their soft skin, and deceiving the innocent by their appearance, they shed upon them from their fangs the destructive poison of ungodliness. We have need therefore of divine grace, and of a sober mind, and of eyes that see, lest from eating tares as wheat we suffer harm from ignorance, and lest from taking the wolf to be a sheep we become his prey, and from supposing the destroying Devil to be a beneficent Angel we be devoured: for, as the Scripture says, _he goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour_. 1 Peter 5:8 This is the cause of the Church's admonitions, the cause of the present instructions, and of the lessons which are read.

For the method of godliness consists of these two things, pious doctrines, and virtuous practice: and neither are the doctrines acceptable to God apart from good works, nor does God accept the works which are not perfected with pious doctrines. For what profit is it, to know well the doctrines concerning God, and yet to be a vile fornicator? And again, what profit is it, to be nobly temperate, and an impious blasphemer? A most precious possession therefore is the knowledge of doctrines: also there is need of a wakeful soul, since there are many _that make spoil through philosophy and vain deceit_. Colossians 2:8 The Greeks on the one hand draw men away by their smooth tongue, _for honey drops from a harlot's lips_ Proverbs 5:3: whereas they of the Circumcision deceive those who come to them by means of the Divine Scriptures, which they miserably misinterpret though _studying them from childhood to old age_ , and growing old in ignorance. But the children of heretics, _by their good words and smooth tongue, deceive the hearts of the innocent_ , disguising with the name of Christ as it were with honey the poisoned arrows of their impious doctrines: concerning all of whom together the Lord says, Take heed lest any man mislead you. Matthew 24:4 This is the reason for the teaching of the Creed and for expositions upon it.

But before delivering you over to the Creed , I think it is well to make use at present of a short summary of necessary doctrines; that the multitude of things to be spoken, and the long interval of the days of all this holy Lent, may not cause forgetfulness in the mind of the more simple among you; but that, having strewn some seeds now in a summary way, we may not forget the same when afterwards more widely tilled. But let those here present whose habit of mind is mature, and who _have their senses already exercised to discern good and evil_ Hebrews 5:14, endure patiently to listen to things fitted rather for children, and to an introductory course, as it were, of milk: that at the same time both those who have need of the instruction may be benefited, and those who have the knowledge may rekindle the remembrance of things which they already know.

I. Of God.

First then let there be laid as a foundation in your soul the doctrine concerning God; that God is One, alone unbegotten, without beginning, change, or variation ; neither begotten of another, nor having another to succeed Him in His life; who neither began to live in time, nor ends ever: and that He is both good and just; that if ever thou hear a heretic say, that there is one God who is just, and another who is good , you may immediately remember, and discern the poisoned arrow of heresy. For some have impiously dared to divide the One God in their teaching: and some have said that one is the Creator and Lord of the soul, and another of the body ; a doctrine at once absurd and impious. For how can a man become the one servant of two masters, when our Lord says in the Gospels, _No man can serve two masters_ ? There is then One Only God, the Maker both of souls and bodies: One the Creator of heaven and earth, the Maker of Angels and Archangels: of many the Creator, but of One only the Father before all ages — of One only, His Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom He made _all things visible and invisible_.

This Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not circumscribed in any place , nor is He less than the heaven; _but the heavens are the works of His fingers_ , and _the whole earth is held in His grasp_ Isaiah 40:12: He is in all things and around all. Think not that the sun is brighter than He , or equal to Him: for

He who at first formed the sun must needs be incomparably greater and brighter. He foreknows the things that shall be, and is mightier than all, knowing all things and doing as He will; not being subject to any necessary sequence of events, nor to nativity, nor chance, nor fate; in all things perfect, and equally possessing every absolute form of virtue, neither diminishing nor increasing, but in mode and conditions ever the same; who has prepared punishment for sinners, and a crown for the righteous.

Seeing then that many have gone astray in various ways from the One God, some having deified the sun, that when the sun sets they may abide in the night season without God; others the moon, to have no God by day ; others the other parts of the world ; others the arts ; others their various kinds of food ; others their pleasures ; while some, mad after women, have set up on high an image of a naked woman, and called it Aphrodite , and worshipped their own lust in a visible form; and others dazzled by the brightness of gold have deified it and the other kinds of matter;— whereas if one lay as a first foundation in his heart the doctrine of the unity of God, and trust to Him, he roots out at once the whole crop of the evils of idolatry, and of the error of the heretics: lay thou, therefore, this first doctrine of religion as a foundation in your soul by faith.

Of Christ.

Believe also in the Son of God, One and Only, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who was begotten God of God, begotten Life of Life, begotten Light of Light , Who is in all things like to Him that begot, Who received not His being in time, but was before all ages eternally and incomprehensibly begotten of the Father: The Wisdom and the Power of God, and His Righteousness personally subsisting : Who sits on the right hand of the Father before all ages.

For the throne at God's right hand He received not, as some have thought, because of His patient endurance, being crowned as it were by God after His Passion; but throughout His being — a being by eternal generation — He holds His royal dignity, and shares the Father's seat, being God and Wisdom and Power, as has been said; reigning together with the Father, and creating all things for the Father, yet lacking nothing in the dignity of Godhead, and knowing Him that has begotten Him, even as He is known of Him that has begotten; and to speak briefly, remember thou what is written in the Gospels, that _none knows the Son but the Father, neither knows any the Father save the Son_.

Further, do thou neither separate the Son from the Father, nor by making a confusion believe in a Son-Fatherhood ; but believe that of One God there is One Only-begotten Son, who is before all ages God the Word; not the uttered word diffused into the air, nor to be likened to impersonal words ; but the Word the Son, Maker of all who partake of reason, the Word who hears the Father, and Himself speaks. And on these points, should God permit, we will speak more at large in due season; for we do not forget our present purpose to give a summary introduction to the Faith.

Concerning His Birth of the Virgin.

Believe then that this Only-begotten Son of God for our sins came down from heaven upon earth, and took upon Him this human nature of like passions with us, and was begotten of the Holy Virgin and of the Holy Ghost, and was made Man, not in seeming and mere show , but in truth; nor yet by passing through the Virgin as through a channel ; but was of her made truly flesh, \[and truly nourished with

milk \], and did truly eat as we do, and truly drink as we do. For if the Incarnation was a phantom, salvation is a phantom also. The Christ was of two natures, Man in what was seen, but God in what was not seen; as Man truly eating like us, for He had the like feeling of the flesh with us; but as God feeding the five thousand from five loaves; as Man truly dying, but as God raising him that had been dead four days; truly sleeping in the ship as Man, and walking upon the waters as God.

Of the Cross.

He was truly crucified for our sins. For if you would deny it, the place refutes you visibly, this blessed Golgotha , in which we are now assembled for the sake of Him who was here crucified; and the whole world has since been filled with pieces of the wood of the Cross. But He was crucified not for sins of His own, but that we might be delivered from our sins. And though as Man He was at that time despised of men, and was buffeted, yet He was acknowledged by the Creation as God: for when the sun saw his Lord dishonoured, he grew dim and trembled, not enduring the sight.

Of His Burial.

He was truly laid as Man in a tomb of rock; but rocks were rent asunder by terror because of Him. He went down into the regions beneath the earth, that thence also He might redeem the righteous. For, tell me, could thou wish the living only to enjoy His grace, and that, though most of them are unholy; and not wish those who from Adam had for a long while been imprisoned to have now gained their liberty? Esaias the Prophet proclaimed with loud voice so many things concerning Him; would you not wish that the King should go down and redeem His herald? David was there, and Samuel, and all the Prophets , John himself also, who by his messengers said, Are you He that should come, or look we for another Matthew 11:3? Would you not wish that He should descend and redeem such as these?

Of the Resurrection.

But He who descended into the regions beneath the earth came up again; and Jesus, who was buried, truly rose again the third day. And if the Jews ever worry you, meet them at once by asking thus: Did Jonah come forth from the whale on the third day, and has not Christ then risen from the earth on the third day? Is a dead man raised to life on touching the bones of Elisha, and is it not much easier for the Maker of mankind to be raised by the power of the Father? Well then, He truly rose, and after He had risen was seen again of the disciples: and twelve disciples were witnesses of His Resurrection, who bore witness not in pleasing words, but contended even unto torture and death for the truth of the Resurrection. What then, _shall every word be established at the mouth of two or three witnesses_ Deuteronomy 19:15, according to the Scripture, and, though twelve bear witness to the Resurrection of Christ, are you still incredulous in regard to His Resurrection?

Concerning the Ascension.

But when Jesus had finished His course of patient endurance, and had redeemed mankind from their sins, He ascended again into the heavens, a cloud receiving Him up: and as He went up Angels were beside Him, and Apostles were beholding. But if any man disbelieves the words which I speak, let him believe the actual power of the things now seen. All kings when they die have their power extinguished with their life: but Christ crucified is worshipped by the whole world. We proclaim The Crucified, and the devils tremble now. Many have been crucified at various times; but of what other who was crucified did the invocation ever drive the devils away?

Let us, therefore, not be ashamed of the Cross of Christ; but though another hide it, do thou openly seal it upon your forehead, that the devils may behold the royal sign and flee trembling far away. Make then this sign at eating and drinking, at sitting, at lying down, at rising up, at speaking, at walking: in a word, at every act. For He who was here crucified is in heaven above. If after being crucified and buried He had remained in the tomb, we should have had cause to be ashamed; but, in fact, He who was crucified on Golgotha here, has ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives on the East. For after having gone down hence into Hades, and come up again to us, He ascended again from us into heaven, His Father addressing Him, and saying, _Sit on My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool_.

Of Judgment to Come.

This Jesus Christ who is gone up shall come again, not from earth but from heaven: and I say, not from earth, because there are many Antichrists to come at this time from earth. For already, as you have seen, many have begun to say, _I am the Christ_ Matthew 24:5: and _the abomination of desolation_ is yet to come, assuming to himself the false title of Christ. But look thou for the true Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, coming henceforth no more from earth, but from heaven, appearing to all more bright than any lightning and brilliancy of light, with angel guards attended, that He may judge both quick and dead, and reign in a heavenly, eternal kingdom, which shall have no end. For on this point also, I pray you, make yourself sure, since there are many who say that Christ's Kingdom has an end.

Of the Holy Ghost.

Believe thou also in the Holy Ghost, and hold the same opinion concerning Him, which you have _received to hold_ concerning the Father and the Son, and follow not those who teach blasphemous

things of Him. But learn thou that this Holy Spirit is One, indivisible, of manifold power; having many operations, yet not Himself divided; Who knows the mysteries, Who _searches all things, even the deep things of God_ 1 Corinthians 2:10: Who descended upon the Lord Jesus Christ in form of a dove; Who wrought in the Law and in the Prophets; Who now also at the season of Baptism seals your soul; of Whose holiness also every intellectual nature has need: against Whom _if any dare to blaspheme, he has no forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come_ Matthew 12:32: Who with the Father and the Son together is honoured with the glory of the Godhead: of Whom also _thrones, and dominions, principalities, and powers_ have need. Colossians 1:16 For there is One God, the Father of Christ; and One Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of the Only God; and One Holy Ghost, the sanctifier and deifier of all , Who spoke in the Law and in the Prophets, in the Old and in the New Testament.

Have thou ever in your mind this seal , which for the present has been lightly touched in my discourse, by way of summary, but shall be stated, should the Lord permit, to the best of my power with the proof from the Scriptures. For concerning the divine and holy mysteries of the Faith, not even a casual statement must be delivered without the Holy Scriptures; nor must we be drawn aside by mere plausibility and artifices of speech. Even to me, who tell you these things, give not absolute credence, unless thou receive the proof of the things which I announce from the Divine Scriptures. For this salvation which we believe depends not on ingenious reasoning , but on demonstration of the Holy Scriptures.

Of the Soul.

Next to the knowledge of this venerable and glorious and all-holy Faith, learn further what you yourself art: that as man you are of a two-fold nature, consisting of soul and body; and that, as was said a short time ago, the same God is the Creator both of soul and body. Know also that you have a soul self-governed, the noblest work of God, made after the image of its Creator : immortal because of God that gives it immortality; a living being, rational, imperishable, because of Him that bestowed these gifts: having free power to do what it wills. For it is not according to your nativity that you sin, nor is it by the power of chance that you commit fornication, nor, as some idly talk, do the conjunctions of the stars compel you to give yourself to wantonness. Why do you shrink from confessing your own evil deeds, and ascribe the blame to the innocent stars? Give no more heed, pray, to astrologers; for of these the divine Scripture says, _Let the stargazers of the heaven stand up and save you_, and what follows: _Behold, they all shall be consumed as stubble on the fire, and shall not deliver their soul from the flame_ Isaiah 47:13 .

And learn this also, that the soul, before it came into this world, had committed no sin , but having come in sinless, we now sin of our free-will. Listen not, I pray you, to any one perversely interpreting the words, _But if I do that which I would not_ Romans 7:16: but remember Him who says, _If you be willing, and hearken unto Me, you shall eat the good things of the land: but if you be not willing, neither hearken unto Me, the sword shall devour you, etc._ Isaiah 1:19-20: and again, _As you presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification_. Romans 6:19 Remember also the Scripture, which says, _Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge_ Romans 1:28: and, _That which

may be known of God is manifest in them_ Romans 1:19; and again, _their eyes they have closed_. Matthew 13:15 Also remember how God again accuses them, and says, _Yet I planted you a fruitful vine, wholly true: how are you turned to bitterness, thou the strange vine_ Jeremiah 2:21?

The soul is immortal, and all souls are alike both of men and women; for only the members of the body are distinguished. There is not a class of souls sinning by nature, and a class of souls practising righteousness by nature : but both act from choice, the substance of their souls being of one kind only, and alike in all. I know, however, that I am talking much, and that the time is already long: but what is more precious than salvation? Are you not willing to take trouble in getting provisions for the way against the heretics? And will you not learn the bye-paths of the road, lest from ignorance thou fall down a precipice? If your teachers think it no small gain for you to learn these things, should not thou the learner gladly receive the multitude of things told you?

The soul is self-governed: and though the devil can suggest, he has not the power to compel against the will. He pictures to you the thought of fornication: if you will, you accept it; if you will not, you reject. For if you were a fornicator by necessity, then for what cause did God prepare hell? If you were a doer of righteousness by nature and not by will, wherefore did God prepare crowns of ineffable glory? The sheep is gentle, but never was it crowned for its gentleness: since its gentle quality belongs to it not from choice but by nature.

Of the Body.

You have learned, beloved, the nature of the soul, as far as there is time at present: now do your best to receive the doctrine of the body also. Suffer none of those who say that this body is no work of God : for they who believe that the body is independent of God, and that the soul dwells in it as in a strange vessel, readily abuse it to fornication. And yet what fault have they found in this wonderful body? For what is lacking in comeliness? And what in its structure is not full of skill? Ought they not to have observed the luminous construction of the eyes? And how the ears being set obliquely receive the sound unhindered? And how the smell is able to distinguish scents, and to perceive exhalations? And how the tongue ministers to two purposes, the sense of taste, and the power of speech? How the lungs placed out of sight are unceasing in their respiration of the air? Who imparted the incessant pulsation of the heart? Who made the distribution into so many veins and arteries? Who skilfully knitted together the bones with the sinews? Who assigned a part of the food to our substance, and separated a part for decent secretion, and hid away the unseemly members in more seemly places? Who when the human race must have died out, rendered it by a simple intercourse perpetual?

Tell me not that the body is a cause of sin. For if the body is a cause of sin, why does not a dead body sin? Put a sword in the right hand of one just dead, and no murder takes place. Let beauties of every kind pass before a youth just dead, and no impure desire arises. Why? Because the body sins not of itself, but the soul through the body. The body is an instrument, and, as it were, a garment and robe of the soul: and if by this latter it be given over to fornication, it becomes defiled: but if it dwell with a holy soul, it becomes a temple of the Holy Ghost. It is not I that say this, but the Apostle Paul has said, _Do you not know, that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you_ 1 Corinthians 6:19? Be tender, therefore, of your body as being a temple of the Holy Ghost. Pollute not your flesh in fornication: defile

not this your fairest robe: and if ever you have defiled it, now cleanse it by repentance: get yourself washed, while time permits.

And to the doctrine of chastity let the first to give heed be the order of Solitaries and of Virgins, who maintain the angelic life in the world; and let the rest of the Church's people follow them. For you, brethren, a great crown is laid up: barter not away a great dignity for a petty pleasure: listen to the Apostle speaking: *“Lest there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of __meat sold his own birthright__*. Hebrews 12:16 Enrolled henceforth in the Angelic books for your profession of chastity, see that thou be not blotted out again for your practice of fornication.

Nor again, on the other hand, in maintaining your chastity be thou puffed up against those who walk in the humbler path of matrimony. For as the Apostle says, Let marriage be had in honour among all, and let the bed be undefiled. Hebrews 13:4 You too who retain your chastity, were you not begotten of those who had married? Because you have a possession of gold, do not on that account reprobate the silver. But let those also be of good cheer, who being married use marriage lawfully; who make a marriage according to God's ordinance, and not of wantonness for the sake of unbounded license; who recognise seasons of abstinence, that they may give themselves unto prayer 1 Corinthians 7:5; who in our assemblies bring clean bodies as well as clean garments into the Church; who have entered upon matrimony for the procreation of children, but not for indulgence.

Let those also who marry but once not reprobate those who have consented to a second marriage : for though continence is a noble and admirable thing, yet it is also permissible to enter upon a second marriage, that the weak may not fall into fornication. For it is good for them, says the Apostle, if they abide even as I. But if they have not continency, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. 1 Corinthians 7:8-9 But let all the other practices be banished afar, fornication, adultery, and every kind of licentiousness: and let the body be kept pure for the Lord, that the Lord also may have respect unto the body. And let the body be nourished with food, that it may live, and serve without hindrance; not, however, that it may be given up to luxuries.

Concerning Meats.

And concerning food let these be your ordinances, since in regard to meats also many stumble. For some deal indifferently with things offered to idols , while others discipline themselves, but condemn those that eat: and in different ways men's souls are defiled in the matter of meats, from ignorance of the useful reasons for eating and not eating. For we fast by abstaining from wine and flesh, not because we abhor them as abominations, but because we look for our reward; that having scorned things sensible, we may enjoy a spiritual and intellectual feast; and that having now sown in tears we may reap in joy in the world to come. Despise not therefore them that eat, and because of the weakness of their bodies partake of food: nor yet blame these who use a little wine for their stomach's sake and their often infirmities 1 Timothy 5:23: and neither condemn the men as sinners, nor abhor the flesh as strange food; for the Apostle knows some of this sort, when he says: forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe. 1 Timothy 4:3 In abstaining then from these things, abstain not as from things abominable , else you have no reward: but as being good things disregard them for the sake of the better spiritual things set before you.

Guard your soul safely, lest at any time thou eat of things offered to idols: for concerning meats of this kind, not only I at this time, but ere now Apostles also, and James the bishop of this Church, have had earnest care: and the Apostles and Elders write a Catholic epistle to all the Gentiles, that they should abstain first from things offered to idols, and then from blood also and from things strangled. For many men being of savage nature, and living like dogs, both lap up blood , in imitation of the manner of the fiercest beasts, and greedily devour things strangled. But do thou, the servant of Christ, in eating observe to eat with reverence. And so enough concerning meats.

Of Apparel.

But let your apparel be plain, not for adornment, but for necessary covering: not to minister to your vanity, but to keep you warm in winter, and to hide the unseemliness of the body: lest under pretence of hiding the unseemliness, thou fall into another kind of unseemliness by your extravagant dress.

Of the Resurrection.

Be tender, I beseech you, of this body, and understand that you will be raised from the dead, to be judged with this body. But if there steal into your mind any thought of unbelief, as though the thing were impossible, judge of the things unseen by what happens to yourself. For tell me; a hundred years ago or more, think where wast you yourself: and from what a most minute and mean substance you have come to so great a stature, and so much dignity of beauty. What then? Cannot He who brought the non-existent into being, raise up again that which already exists and has decayed? He who raises the grain, which is sown for our sakes, as year by year it dies — will He have difficulty in raising us up, for whose sakes that grain also has been raised? Do you see how the trees stand now for many months without either fruit or leaves: but when the winter is past they spring up whole into life again as if from the dead: shall not we much rather and more easily return to life? The rod of Moses was transformed by the will of God into the unfamiliar nature of a serpent: and cannot a man, who has fallen into death, be restored to himself again?

Heed not those who say that this body is not raised; for it is raised: and Esaias is witness, when he says: _The dead shall arise, and they that are in the tombs shall awake_ Isaiah 26:19: and according to Daniel, _Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame_. Daniel 12:2 But though to rise again is common to all men, yet the resurrection is not alike to all: for the bodies received by us all are eternal, but not like bodies by all: for the just receive them, that through eternity they may join the Choirs of Angels; but the sinners, that they may endure for ever the torment of their sins.

Of the Laver.

For this cause the Lord, preventing us according to His loving-kindness, has granted repentance at Baptism, in order that we may cast off the chief — nay rather the whole burden of our sins, and having received the seal by the Holy Ghost, may be made heirs of eternal life. But as we have spoken sufficiently concerning the Laver the day before yesterday, let us now return to the remaining subjects of our introductory teaching.

Of the Divine Scriptures.

Now these the divinely-inspired Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament teach us. For the God of the two Testaments is One, Who in the Old Testament foretold the Christ Who appeared in the New; Who by the Law and the Prophets led us to Christ's school. _For before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law_, and, _the law has been our tutor to bring us unto Christ_. And if ever thou hear any of the heretics speaking evil of the Law or the Prophets, answer in the sound of the Saviour's voice, saying, Jesus _came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it_. Matthew 5:17 Learn also diligently, and

from the Church, what are the books of the Old Testament, and what those of the New. And, pray, read none of the apocryphal writings : for why do you, who know not those which are acknowledged among all, trouble yourself in vain about those which are disputed? Read the Divine Scriptures, the twenty-two books of the Old Testament, these that have been translated by the Seventy-two Interpreters.

For after the death of Alexander, the king of the Macedonians, and the division of his kingdom into four principalities, into Babylonia, and Macedonia, and Asia, and Egypt, one of those who reigned over Egypt, Ptolemy Philadelphus, being a king very fond of learning, while collecting the books that were in every place, heard from Demetrius Phalereus, the curator of his library, of the Divine Scriptures of the Law and the Prophets, and judged it much nobler, not to get the books from the possessors by force against their will, but rather to propitiate them by gifts and friendship; and knowing that what is extorted is often adulterated, being given unwillingly, while that which is willingly supplied is freely given with all sincerity, he sent to Eleazar, who was then High Priest, a great many gifts for the Temple here at Jerusalem, and caused him to send him six interpreters from each of the twelve tribes of Israel for the translation. Then, further, to make experiment whether the books were Divine or not, he took precaution that those who had been sent should not combine among themselves, by assigning to each of the interpreters who had come his separate chamber in the island called Pharos, which lies over against Alexandria, and committed to each the whole Scriptures to translate. And when they had fulfilled the task in seventy-two days, he brought together all their translations, which they had made in different chambers without sending them one to another, and found that they agreed not only in the sense but even in words. For the process was no word-craft, nor contrivance of human devices: but the translation of the Divine Scriptures, spoken by the Holy Ghost, was of the Holy Ghost accomplished.

Of these read the two and twenty books, but have nothing to do with the apocryphal writings. Study earnestly these only which we read openly in the Church. Far wiser and more pious than yourself were the Apostles, and the bishops of old time, the presidents of the Church who handed down these books. Being therefore a child of the Church, trench thou not upon its statutes. And of the Old Testament, as we have said, study the two and twenty books, which, if you are desirous of learning, strive to remember by name, as I recite them. For of the Law the books of Moses are the first five, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. And next, Joshua the son of Nave , and the book of Judges, including Ruth, counted as seventh. And of the other historical books, the first and second books of the Kings are among the Hebrews one book; also the third and fourth one book. And in like manner, the first and second of Chronicles are with them one book; and the first and second of Esdras are counted one. Esther is the twelfth book; and these are the Historical writings. But those which are written in verses are five, Job, and the book of Psalms, and Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs, which is the seventeenth book. And after these come the five Prophetic books: of the Twelve Prophets one book, of Isaiah one, of Jeremiah one, including Baruch and Lamentations and the Epistle ; then Ezekiel, and the Book of Daniel, the twenty-second of the Old Testament.

Then of the New Testament there are the four Gospels only, for the rest have false titles and are mischievous. The Manichæans also wrote a Gospel according to Thomas, which being tintured with the fragrance of the evangelic title corrupts the souls of the simple sort. Receive also the Acts of the Twelve Apostles; and in addition to these the seven Catholic Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude; and as a

seal upon them all, and the last work of the disciples, the fourteen Epistles of Paul. But let all the rest be put aside in a secondary rank. And whatever books are not read in Churches, these read not even by yourself, as you have heard me say. Thus much of these subjects.

But shun thou every diabolical operation, and believe not the apostate Serpent, whose transformation from a good nature was of his own free choice: who can over-persuade the willing, but can compel no one. Also give heed neither to observations of the stars nor auguries, nor omens, nor to the fabulous divinations of the Greeks. Witchcraft, and enchantment, and the wicked practices of necromancy, admit not even to a hearing. From every kind of intemperance stand aloof, giving yourself neither to gluttony nor licentiousness, rising superior to all covetousness and usury. Neither venture yourself at heathen assemblies for public spectacles, nor ever use amulets in sicknesses; shun also all the vulgarity of tavern-haunting. Fall not away either into the sect of the Samaritans, or into Judaism: for Jesus Christ henceforth has ransomed you. Stand aloof from all observance of Sabbaths , and from calling any indifferent meats _common or unclean_. But especially abhor all the assemblies of wicked heretics; and in every way make your own soul safe, by fastings, prayers, almsgivings, and reading the oracles of God; that having lived the rest of your life in the flesh in soberness and godly doctrine, you may enjoy the one salvation which flows from Baptism; and thus enrolled in the armies of heaven by God and the Father, may also be deemed worthy of the heavenly crowns, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Source: Translated by Edwin Hamilton Gifford. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 7. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1894.

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