

De Principiis (Book II)

Origen

Early Church (pre-Nicene) · Ante-Nicene · Treatise

STROMATA 281

Downloaded from The Stromata (thestromata.com). Free for personal, educational, and ministry use.

INTRODUCTION

Book II turns from first principles to the world itself: its origin, its providential middle, and its restoration. Origen, writing in third-century Alexandria under the pressure of Gnostic cosmologies he meant to answer without conceding the goodness of matter, argues that the visible diversity of creation reflects the varied declensions of rational souls from an original unity to which all will finally return. Much of what later councils would contest — the pre-existence of souls, the scope of apokatastasis, the subordination implicit in his account of spirit and body — is worked out here in its first speculative form, making this the seedbed of debates that would occupy Christian thought for centuries. Expect speculative reasoning conducted in a patient, exploratory register: Origen is thinking aloud at the outer edge of what Scripture permits him to say.

De Principiis (Book II)

Chapter 1. On the World.

1\.. Although all the discussions in the preceding book have had reference to the world and its arrangements, it now seems to follow that we should specially re-discuss a few points respecting the world itself, i.e., its beginning and end, or those dispensations of Divine Providence which have taken place between the beginning and the end, or those events which are supposed to have occurred before the creation of the world, or are to take place after the end.

In this investigation, the first point which clearly appears is, that the world in all its diversified and varying conditions is composed not only of rational and diviner natures, and of a diversity of bodies, but of dumb animals, wild and tame beasts, of birds, and of all things which live in the waters; then, secondly, of places, i.e., of the heaven or heavens, and of the earth or water, as well as of the air, which is intermediate, and which they term æther, and of everything which proceeds from the earth or is born in it. Seeing, then, there is so great a variety in the world, and so great a diversity among rational beings themselves, on account of which every other variety and diversity also is supposed to have come into existence, what other cause than this ought to be assigned for the existence of the world, especially if we have regard to that end by means of which it was shown in the preceding book that all things

are to be restored to their original condition? And if this should seem to be logically stated, what other cause, as we have already said, are we to imagine for so great a diversity in the world, save the diversity and variety in the movements and declensions of those who fell from that primeval unity and harmony in which they were at first created by God, and who, being driven from that state of goodness, and drawn in various directions by the harassing influence of different motives and desires, have changed, according to their different tendencies, the single and undivided goodness of their nature into minds of various sorts?

2\ But God, by the ineffable skill of His wisdom, transforming and restoring all things, in whatever manner they are made, to some useful aim, and to the common advantage of all, recalls those very creatures which differed so much from each other in mental conformation to one agreement of labour and purpose; so that, although they are under the influence of different motives, they nevertheless complete the fullness and perfection of one world, and the very variety of minds tends to one end of perfection. For it is one power which grasps and holds together all the diversity of the world, and leads the different movements towards one work, lest so immense an undertaking as that of the world should be dissolved by the dissensions of souls. And for this reason we think that God, the Father of all things, in order to ensure the salvation of all His creatures through the ineffable plan of His word and wisdom, so arranged each of these, that every spirit, whether soul or rational existence, however called, should not be compelled by force, against the liberty of his own will, to any other course than that to which the motives of his own mind led him (lest by so doing the power of exercising free-will should seem to be taken away, which certainly would produce a change in the nature of the being itself); and that the varying purposes of these would be suitably and usefully adapted to the harmony of one world, by some of them requiring help, and others being able to give it, and others again being the cause of struggle and contest to those who are making progress, among whom their diligence would be deemed more worthy of approval, and the place of rank obtained after victory be held with greater certainty, which should be established by the difficulties of the contest.

3\ Although the whole world is arranged into offices of different kinds, its condition, nevertheless, is not to be supposed as one of internal discrepancies and discordances; but as our one body is provided with many members, and is held together by one soul, so I am of opinion that the whole world also ought to be regarded as some huge and immense animal, which is kept together by the power and reason of God as by one soul. This also, I think, is indicated in sacred Scripture by the declaration of the prophet, Do not I fill heaven and earth? Says the Lord; and again, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool; and by the Saviour's words, when He says that we are to swear neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool. To the same effect also are the words of Paul, in his address to the Athenians, when he says, In Him we live, and move, and have our being. For how do we live, and move, and have our being in God, except by His comprehending and holding together the whole world by His power? And how is heaven the throne of God, and the earth His footstool, as the Saviour Himself declares, save by His power filling all things both in heaven and earth, according to the Lord's own words? And that God, the Father of all things, fills and holds together the world with the fullness of His power, according to those passages which we have quoted, no one, I think, will have any difficulty in admitting. And now, since the course of the preceding discussion

has shown that the different movements of rational beings, and their varying opinions, have brought about the diversity that is in the world, we must see whether it may not be appropriate that this world should have a termination like its beginning. For there is no doubt that its end must be sought amid much diversity and variety; which variety, being found to exist in the termination of the world, will again furnish ground and occasion for the diversities of the other world which is to succeed the present.

4\.. If now, in the course of our discussion, it has been ascertained that these things are so, it seems to follow that we next consider the nature of corporeal being, seeing the diversity in the world cannot exist without bodies. It is evident from the nature of things themselves, that bodily nature admits of diversity and variety of change, so that it is capable of undergoing all possible transformations, as, e.g., the conversion of wood into fire, of fire into smoke, of smoke into air, of oil into fire. Does not food itself, whether of man or of animals, exhibit the same ground of change? For whatever we take as food, is converted into the substance of our body. But how water is changed into earth or into air, and air again into fire, or fire into air, or air into water, although not difficult to explain, yet on the present occasion it is enough merely to mention them, as our object is to discuss the nature of bodily matter. By matter, therefore, we understand that which is placed under bodies, viz., that by which, through the bestowing and implanting of qualities, bodies exist; and we mention four qualities — heat, cold, dryness, humidity. These four qualities being implanted in the ~~lbr~~ matter (for matter is found to exist in its own nature without those qualities before mentioned), produce the different kinds of bodies. Although this matter is, as we have said above, according to its own proper nature without qualities, it is never found to exist without a quality. And I cannot understand how so many distinguished men have been of opinion that this matter, which is so great, and possesses such properties as to enable it to be sufficient for all the bodies in the world which God willed to exist, and to be the attendant and slave of the Creator for whatever forms and species He wished in all things, receiving into itself whatever qualities He desired to bestow upon it, was uncreated, i.e., not formed by God Himself, who is the Creator of all things, but that its nature and power were the result of chance. And I am astonished that they should find fault with those who deny either God's creative power or His providential administration of the world, and accuse them of impiety for thinking that so great a work as the world could exist without an architect or overseer; while they themselves incur a similar charge of impiety in saying that matter is uncreated, and co-eternal with the uncreated God. According to this view, then, if we suppose for the sake of argument that matter did not exist, as these maintain, saying that God could not create anything when nothing existed, without doubt He would have been idle, not having matter on which to operate, which matter they say was furnished Him not by His own arrangement, but by accident; and they think that this, which was discovered by chance, was able to suffice Him for an undertaking of so vast an extent, and for the manifestation of the power of His might, and by admitting the plan of all His wisdom, might be distinguished and formed into a world. Now this appears to me to be very absurd, and to be the opinion of those men who are altogether ignorant of the power and intelligence of uncreated nature. But that we may see the nature of things a little more clearly, let it be granted that for a little time matter did not exist, and that God, when nothing formerly existed, caused those things to come into existence which He desired, why are we to suppose that God would create matter either better or greater, or of another kind, than that which He did produce from His own power and wisdom, in order that that might exist which formerly did not? Would He create a worse and inferior matter, or one the same as that which

they call uncreated? Now I think it will very easily appear to any one, that neither a better nor inferior matter could have assumed the forms and species of the world, if it had not been such as that which actually did assume them. And does it not then seem impious to call that uncreated, which, if believed to be formed by God, would doubtless be found to be such as that which they call uncreated?

5\ But that we may believe in the authority of holy Scripture that such is the case, hear how in the book of Maccabees, where the mother of seven martyrs exhorts her son to endure torture, this truth is confirmed; for she says, I ask of you, my son, to look at the heaven and the earth, and at all things which are in them, and beholding these, to know that God made all these things when they did not exist. In the book of the Shepherd also, in the first commandment, he speaks as follows: First of all believe that there is one God who created and arranged all things, and made all things to come into existence, and out of a state of nothingness. Perhaps also the expression in the Psalms has reference to this: He spoke, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created. For the words, He spoke, and they were made, appear to show that the substance of those things which exist is meant; while the others, He commanded, and they were created, seem spoken of the qualities by which the substance itself has been moulded.

Chapter 2. On the Perpetuity of Bodily Nature.

1\ On this topic some are wont to inquire whether, as the Father generates an uncreated Son, and brings forth a Holy Spirit, not as if He had no previous existence, but because the Father is the origin and source of the Son or Holy Spirit, and no anteriority or posteriority can be understood as existing in them; so also a similar kind of union or relationship can be understood as subsisting between rational natures and bodily matter. And that this point may be more fully and thoroughly examined, the commencement of the discussion is generally directed to the inquiry whether this very bodily nature, which bears the lives and contains the movements of spiritual and rational minds, will be equally eternal with them, or will altogether perish and be destroyed. And that the question may be determined with greater precision, we have, in the first place, to inquire if it is possible for rational natures to remain altogether incorporeal after they have reached the summit of holiness and happiness (which seems to me a most difficult and almost impossible attainment), or whether they must always of necessity be united to bodies. If, then, any one could show a reason why it was possible for them to dispense wholly with bodies, it will appear to follow, that as a bodily nature, created out of nothing after intervals of time, was produced when it did not exist, so also it must cease to be when the purposes which it served had no longer an existence.

2\ If, however, it is impossible for this point to be at all maintained, viz., that any other nature than the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can live without a body, the necessity of logical reasoning compels us to understand that rational natures were indeed created at the beginning, but that material substance was separated from them only in thought and understanding, and appears to have been formed for them, or after them, and that they never have lived nor do live without it; for an incorporeal life will rightly be considered a prerogative of the Trinity alone. As we have remarked above, therefore, that material substance of this world, possessing a nature admitting of all possible transformations, is, when dragged down to beings of a lower order, moulded into the crasser and more solid condition of a body, so as to distinguish those visible and varying forms of the world; but when it becomes the servant of more perfect and more blessed beings, it shines in the splendour of celestial bodies, and adorns either the angels of God or the sons of the resurrection with the clothing of a spiritual body, out of all which will be filled up the diverse and varying state of the one world. But if any one should desire to discuss these matters more fully, it will be necessary, with all reverence and fear of God, to examine the sacred Scriptures with greater attention and diligence, to ascertain whether the secret and hidden sense within them may perhaps reveal anything regarding these matters; and something may be discovered in their abstruse and mysterious language, through the demonstration of the Holy Spirit to those who are worthy, after many testimonies have been collected on this very point.

Chapter 3. On the Beginning of the World, and Its Causes.

1\ The next subject of inquiry is, whether there was any other world before the one which now exists; and if so, whether it was such as the present, or somewhat different, or inferior; or whether there was no world at all, but something like that which we understand will be after the end of all things, when the kingdom shall be delivered up to God, even the Father; which nevertheless may have been the end of another world — of that, namely, after which this world took its beginning; and whether the various

lapses of intellectual natures provoked God to produce this diverse and varying condition of the world. This point also, I think, must be investigated in a similar way, viz., whether after this world there will be any (system of) preservation and amendment, severe indeed, and attended with much pain to those who were unwilling to obey the word of God, but a process through which, by means of instruction and rational training, those may arrive at a fuller understanding of the truth who have devoted themselves in the present life to these pursuits, and who, after having had their minds purified, have advanced onwards so as to become capable of attaining divine wisdom; and after this the end of all things will immediately follow, and there will be again, for the correction and improvement of those who stand in need of it, another world, either resembling that which now exists, or better than it, or greatly inferior; and how long that world, whatever it be that is to come after this, shall continue; and if there will be a time when no world shall anywhere exist, or if there has been a time when there was no world at all; or if there have been, or will be several; or if it shall ever come to pass that there will be one resembling another, like it in every respect, and indistinguishable from it.

2\ . That it may appear more clearly, then, whether bodily matter can exist during intervals of time, and whether, as it did not exist before it was made, so it may again be resolved into non-existence, let us see, first of all, whether it is possible for any one to live without a body. For if one person can live without a body, all things also may dispense with them; seeing our former treatise has shown that all things tend towards one end. Now, if all things may exist without bodies, there will undoubtedly be no bodily substance, seeing there will be no use for it. But how shall we understand the words of the apostle in those passages, in which, discussing the resurrection of the dead, he says, This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying which is written, Death is swallowed up in victory! Where, O death, is your victory? O death, your sting has been swallowed up: the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. Some such meaning, then, as this, seems to be suggested by the apostle. For can the expression which he employs, this corruptible, and this mortal, with the gesture, as it were, of one who touches or points out, apply to anything else than to bodily matter? This matter of the body, then, which is now corruptible shall put on incorruption when a perfect soul, and one furnished with the marks of incorruption, shall have begun to inhabit it. And do not be surprised if we speak of a perfect soul as the clothing of the body (which, on account of the Word of God and His wisdom, is now named incorruption), when Jesus Christ Himself, who is the Lord and Creator of the soul, is said to be the clothing of the saints, according to the language of the apostle, Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. As Christ, then, is the clothing of the soul, so for a kind of reason sufficiently intelligible is the soul said to be the clothing of the body, seeing it is an ornament to it, covering and concealing its mortal nature. The expression, then, This corruptible must put on incorruption, is as if the apostle had said, This corruptible nature of the body must receive the clothing of incorruption — a soul possessing in itself incorruptibility, because it has been clothed with Christ, who is the Wisdom and Word of God. But when this body, which at some future period we shall possess in a more glorious state, shall have become a partaker of life, it will then, in addition to being immortal, become also incorruptible. For whatever is mortal is necessarily also corruptible; but whatever is corruptible cannot also be said to be mortal. We say of a stone or a piece of wood that it is corruptible, but we do not say that it follows that it is also mortal. But as the body partakes of life, then

because life may be, and is, separated from it, we consequently name it mortal, and according to another sense also we speak of it as corruptible. The holy apostle therefore, with remarkable insight, referring to the general first cause of bodily matter, of which (matter), whatever be the qualities with which it is endowed (now indeed carnal, but by and by more refined and pure, which are termed spiritual), the soul makes constant use, says, This corruptible must put on incorruption. And in the second place, looking to the special cause of the body, he says, This mortal must put on immortality. Now, what else will incorruption and immortality be, save the wisdom, and the word, and the righteousness of God, which mould, and clothe, and adorn the soul? And hence it happens that it is said, The corruptible will put on incorruption, and the mortal immortality. For although we may now make great proficiency, yet as we only know in part, and prophesy in part, and see through a glass, darkly, those very things which we seem to understand, this corruptible does not yet put on incorruption, nor is this mortal yet clothed with immortality; and as this training of ours in the body is protracted doubtless to a longer period, up to the time, viz., when those very bodies of ours with which we are enveloped may, on account of the word of God, and His wisdom and perfect righteousness, earn incorruptibility and immortality, therefore is it said, This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

3\ But, nevertheless, those who think that rational creatures can at any time lead an existence out of the body, may here raise such questions as the following. If it is true that this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality, and that death is swallowed up at the end; this shows that nothing else than a material nature is to be destroyed, on which death could operate, while the mental acumen of those who are in the body seems to be blunted by the nature of corporeal matter. If, however, they are out of the body, then they will altogether escape the annoyance arising from a disturbance of that kind. But as they will not be able immediately to escape all bodily clothing, they are just to be considered as inhabiting more refined and purer bodies, which possess the property of being no longer overcome by death, or of being wounded by its sting; so that at last, by the gradual disappearance of the material nature, death is both swallowed up, and even at the end exterminated, and all its sting completely blunted by the divine grace which the soul has been rendered capable of receiving, and has thus deserved to obtain incorruptibility and immortality. And then it will be deservedly said by all, O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin. If these conclusions, then, seem to hold good, it follows that we must believe our condition at some future time to be incorporeal; and if this is admitted, and all are said to be subjected to Christ, this (incorporeity) also must necessarily be bestowed on all to whom the subjection to Christ extends; since all who are subject to Christ will be in the end subject to God the Father, to whom Christ is said to deliver up the kingdom; and thus it appears that then also the need of bodies will cease. And if it ceases, bodily matter returns to nothing, as formerly also it did not exist.

Now let us see what can be said in answer to those who make these assertions. For it will appear to be a necessary consequence that, if bodily nature be annihilated, it must be again restored and created; since it seems a possible thing that rational natures, from whom the faculty of free-will is never taken away, may be again subjected to movements of some kind, through the special act of the Lord Himself, lest perhaps, if they were always to occupy a condition that was unchangeable, they should be ignorant that it is by the grace of God and not by their own merit that they have been placed in that final state of happiness; and these movements will undoubtedly again be attended by variety and diversity of bodies, by which the world is always adorned; nor will it ever be composed (of anything) save of variety and diversity — an effect which cannot be produced without a bodily matter.

4\ And now I do not understand by what proofs they can maintain their position, who assert that worlds sometimes come into existence which are not dissimilar to each other, but in all respects equal. For if there is said to be a world similar in all respects (to the present), then it will come to pass that Adam and Eve will do the same things which they did before: there will be a second time the same deluge, and the same Moses will again lead a nation numbering nearly six hundred thousand out of Egypt; Judas will also a second time betray the Lord; Paul will a second time keep the garments of those who stoned Stephen; and everything which has been done in this life will be said to be repeated — a state of things which I think cannot be established by any reasoning, if souls are actuated by freedom of will, and maintain either their advance or retrogression according to the power of their will. For souls are not driven on in a cycle which returns after many ages to the same round, so as either to do or desire this or that; but at whatever point the freedom of their own will aims, there do they direct the course of their actions. For what these persons say is much the same as if one were to assert that if a medimnus of grain were to be poured out on the ground, the fall of the grain would be on the second occasion identically the same as on the first, so that every individual grain would lie for the second time close beside that grain where it had been thrown before, and so the medimnus would be scattered in the same order, and with the same marks as formerly; which certainly is an impossible result with the countless grains of a medimnus, even if they were to be poured out without ceasing for many ages. So therefore it seems to me impossible for a world to be restored for the second time, with the same order and with the same amount of births, and deaths, and actions; but that a diversity of worlds may exist with changes of no unimportant kind, so that the state of another world may be for some unmistakeable reasons better (than this), and for others worse, and for others again intermediate. But what may be the number or measure of this I confess myself ignorant, although, if any one can tell it, I would gladly learn.

5\ But this world, which is itself called an age, is said to be the conclusion of many ages. Now the holy apostle teaches that in that age which preceded this, Christ did not suffer, nor even in the age which preceded that again; and I know not that I am able to enumerate the number of anterior ages in which He did not suffer. I will show, however, from what statements of Paul I have arrived at this understanding. He says, But now once in the consummation of ages, He was manifested to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. For He says that He was once made a victim, and in the consummation of ages was manifested to take away sin. Now that after this age, which is said to be formed for the consummation of other ages, there will be other ages again to follow, we have clearly learned from Paul himself, who says, That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in

His kindness towards us. He has not said, in the age to come, nor in the two ages to come, whence I infer that by his language many ages are indicated. Now if there is something greater than ages, so that among created beings certain ages may be understood, but among other beings which exceed and surpass visible creatures, (ages still greater) (which perhaps will be the case at the restitution of all things, when the whole universe will come to a perfect termination), perhaps that period in which the consummation of all things will take place is to be understood as something more than an age. But here the authority of holy Scripture moves me, which says, For an age and more. Now this word more undoubtedly means something greater than an age; and see if that expression of the Saviour, I will that where I am, these also may be with Me; and as I and You are one, these also may be one in Us, may not seem to convey something more than an age and ages, perhaps even more than ages of ages — that period, viz., when all things are now no longer in an age, but when God is in all.

6\ Having discussed these points regarding the nature of the world to the best of our ability, it does not seem out of place to inquire what is the meaning of the term world, which in holy Scripture is shown frequently to have different significations. For what we call in Latin *_mundus_*, is termed in Greek *κόσμος* and *οἶκος* not only a world, but also an ornament. Finally, in Isaiah, where the language of reproof is directed to the chief daughters of Sion, and where he says, Instead of an ornament of a golden head, you will have baldness on account of your works, he employs the same term to denote ornament as to denote the world, viz., *κόσμος*. For the plan of the world is said to be contained in the clothing of the high priest, as we find in the Wisdom of Solomon, where he says, For in the long garment was the whole world. That earth of ours, with its inhabitants, is also termed the world, as when Scripture says, The whole world lies in wickedness. Clement indeed, a disciple of the apostles, makes mention of those whom the Greeks called *ἐκτάκτοις* parts of the earth, to which no one of our people can approach, nor can any one of those who are there cross over to us, which he also termed worlds, saying, The ocean is impassable to men; and those are worlds which are on the other side of it, which are governed by these same arrangements of the ruling God. That universe which is bounded by heaven and earth is also called a world, as Paul declares: For the fashion of this world will pass away. Our Lord and Saviour also points out a certain other world besides this visible one, which it would indeed be difficult to describe and make known. He says, I am not of this world. For, as if He were of a certain other world, He says, I am not of this world. Now, of this world we have said beforehand, that the explanation was difficult; and for this reason, that there might not be afforded to any an occasion of entertaining the supposition that we maintain the existence of certain images which the Greeks call ideas: for it is certainly alien to our (writers) to speak of an incorporeal world existing in the imagination alone, or in the fleeting world of thoughts; and how they can assert either that the Saviour comes from thence, or that the saints will go there, I do not see. There is no doubt, however, that something more illustrious and excellent than this present world is pointed out by the Saviour, at which He incites and encourages believers to aim. But whether that world to which He desires to allude be far separated and divided from this either by situation, or nature, or glory; or whether it be superior in glory and quality, but confined within the limits of this world (which seems to me more probable), is nevertheless uncertain, and in my opinion an unsuitable subject for human thought. But from what Clement seems to indicate when he says, The ocean is impassable to men, and those worlds which are behind it, speaking in the plural number of the worlds which are behind it, which he intimates are administered and governed by the same providence of the Most High God, he appears to throw out to us some germs of that view by which the whole universe of existing things, celestial and super-celestial, earthly and infernal, is generally called one perfect world, within which, or by which, other worlds, if any there are, must be supposed to be contained. For which reason he wished the globe of the sun or moon, and of the other bodies called planets, to be each termed worlds. Nay, even that pre-eminent globe itself which they call the non-wandering (*ἄσπετος*) nevertheless desire to have properly called world. Finally, they summon the book of Baruch the prophet to bear witness to this assertion, because in it the seven worlds or heavens are more clearly pointed out. Nevertheless, above that sphere which they call non-wandering (*ἄσπετος*) we have another sphere to exist, which they say, exactly as our heaven contains all things which are under it, comprehends by its immense size and indescribable extent the spaces of all the spheres together within its more magnificent circumference; so that all things are within it, as this earth of ours

is under heaven. And this also is believed to be called in the holy Scriptures the good land, and the land of the living, having its own heaven, which is higher, and in which the names of the saints are said to be written, or to have been written, by the Saviour; by which heaven that earth is confined and shut in, which the Saviour in the Gospel promises to the meek and merciful. For they would have this earth of ours, which formerly was named Dry, to have derived its appellation from the name of that earth, as this heaven also was named firmament from the title of that heaven. But we have treated at greater length of such opinions in the place where we had to inquire into the meaning of the declaration, that in the beginning God made the heavens and the earth. For another heaven and another earth are shown to exist besides that firmament which is said to have been made after the second day, or that dry land which was afterwards called earth. Certainly, what some say of this world, that it is corruptible because it was made, and yet is not corrupted, because the will of God, who made it and holds it together lest corruption should rule over it, is stronger and more powerful than corruption, may more correctly be supposed of that world which we have called above a non-wandering sphere, since by the will of God it is not at all subject to corruption, for the reason that it has not admitted any causes of corruption, seeing it is the world of the saints and of the thoroughly purified, and not of the wicked, like that world of ours. We must see, moreover, lest perhaps it is with reference to this that the apostle says, While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And when he says elsewhere, Because I shall see the heavens, the works of Your fingers, and when God said, regarding all things visible, by the mouth of His prophet, My hand has formed all these things, He declares that that eternal house in the heavens which He promises to His saints was not made with hands, pointing out, doubtless, the difference of creation in things which are seen and in those which are not seen. For the same thing is not to be understood by the expressions, those things which are not seen, and those things which are invisible. For those things which are invisible are not only not seen, but do not even possess the property of visibility, being what the Greeks call *ἄφ' ὧν* incorporeal; whereas those of which Paul says, They are not seen, possess indeed the property of being seen, but, as he explains, are not yet beheld by those to whom they are promised.

7\ Having sketched, then, so far as we could understand, these three opinions regarding the end of all things, and the supreme blessedness, let each one of our readers determine for himself, with care and diligence, whether any one of them can be approved and adopted. For it has been said that we must suppose either that an incorporeal existence is possible, after all things have become subject to Christ, and through Christ to God the Father, when God will be all and in all; or that when, notwithstanding all things have been made subject to Christ, and through Christ to God (with whom they formed also one spirit, in respect of spirits being rational natures), then the bodily substance itself also being united to most pure and excellent spirits, and being changed into an ethereal condition in proportion to the quality or merits of those who assume it (according to the apostle's words, We also shall be changed), will shine forth in splendour; or at least that when the fashion of those things which are seen passes away, and all corruption has been shaken off and cleansed away, and when the whole of the space occupied by this world, in which the spheres of the planets are said to be, has been left behind and beneath, then is reached the fixed abode of the pious and the good situated above that sphere, which is

called non-wandering (*Assyria*), a good land, in a land of the living, which will be inherited by the meek and gentle; to which land belongs that heaven (which, with its more magnificent extent, surrounds and contains that land itself) which is called truly and chiefly heaven, in which heaven and earth, the end and perfection of all things, may be safely and most confidently placed — where, viz., these, after their apprehension and their chastisement for the offenses which they have undergone by way of purgation, may, after having fulfilled and discharged every obligation, deserve a habitation in that land; while those who have been obedient to the word of God, and have henceforth by their obedience shown themselves capable of wisdom, are said to deserve the kingdom of that heaven or heavens; and thus the prediction is more worthily fulfilled, Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth; and, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven; and the declaration in the Psalm, He shall exalt you, and you shall inherit the land. For it is called a descent to this earth, but an exaltation to that which is on high. In this way, therefore, does a sort of road seem to be opened up by the departure of the saints from that earth to those heavens; so that they do not so much appear to abide in that land, as to inhabit it with an intention, viz., to pass on to the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, when they have reached that degree of perfection also.

Chapter 4. The God of the Law and the Prophets, and the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, is the Same God.

1\). Having now briefly arranged these points in order as we best could, it follows that, agreeably to our intention from the first, we refute those who think that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is a different God from Him who gave the answers of the law to Moses, or commissioned the prophets, who is the God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For in this article of faith, first of all, we must be firmly grounded. We have to consider, then, the expression of frequent recurrence in the Gospels, and subjoined to all the acts of our Lord and Saviour, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by this or that prophet, it being manifest that the prophets are the prophets of that God who made the world. From this therefore we draw the conclusion, that He who sent the prophets, Himself predicted what was to be foretold of Christ. And there is no doubt that the Father Himself, and not another different from Him, uttered these predictions. The practice, moreover, of the Saviour or His apostles, frequently quoting illustrations from the Old Testament, shows that they attribute authority to the ancients. The injunction also of the Saviour, when exhorting His disciples to the exercise of kindness, Be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect; for He commands His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust, most evidently suggests even to a person of feeble understanding, that He is proposing to the imitation of His disciples no other God than the maker of heaven and the bestower of the rain. Again, what else does the expression, which ought to be used by those who pray, Our Father who art in heaven, appear to indicate, save that God is to be sought in the better parts of the world, i.e., of His creation? Further, do not those admirable principles which He lays down respecting oaths, saying that we ought not to swear either by heaven, because it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, because it is His footstool, harmonize most clearly with the words of the prophet, Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool? And also when casting out of the temple those who sold sheep, and oxen, and doves, and pouring out the tables of the money-changers, and saying, Take these things, hence, and do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise, He undoubtedly called Him His Father, to whose name Solomon had raised a magnificent temple. The words, moreover, Have you not read what was spoken by God to Moses: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; He is not a God of the dead, but of the living, most clearly teach us, that He called the God of the patriarchs (because they were holy, and were alive) the God of the living, the same, viz., who had said in the prophets, I am God, and besides Me there is no God. For if the Saviour, knowing that He who is written in the law is the God of Abraham, and that it is the same who says, I am God, and besides Me there is no God, acknowledges that very one to be His Father who is ignorant of the existence of any other God above Himself, as the heretics suppose, He absurdly declares Him to be His Father who does not know of a greater God. But if it is not from ignorance, but from deceit, that He says there is no other God than Himself, then it is a much greater absurdity to confess that His Father is guilty of falsehood. From all which this conclusion is arrived at, that He knows of no other Father than God, the Founder and Creator of all things.

2\). It would be tedious to collect out of all the passages in the Gospels the proofs by which the God of the law and of the Gospels is shown to be one and the same. Let us touch briefly upon the Acts of the Apostles, where Stephen and the other apostles address their prayers to that God who made heaven and earth, and who spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, calling Him the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; the God who brought forth His people out of the land of Egypt. Which expressions undoubtedly clearly direct our understandings to faith in the Creator, and implant an affection for Him

in those who have learned piously and faithfully thus to think of Him; according to the words of the Saviour Himself, who, when He was asked which was the greatest commandment in the law, replied, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. And the second is like it, You shall love your neighbour as yourself. And to these He added: On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. How is it, then, that He commends to him whom He was instructing, and was leading to enter on the office of a disciple, this commandment above all others, by which undoubtedly love was to be kindled in him towards the God of that law, inasmuch as such had been declared by the law in these very words? But let it be granted, notwithstanding all these most evident proofs, that it is of some other unknown God that the Saviour says, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, etc., etc. How, in that case, if the law and the prophets are, as they say, from the Creator, i.e., from another God than He whom He calls good, shall that appear to be logically said which He subjoins, viz., that on these two commandments hang the law and the prophets? For how shall that which is strange and foreign to God depend upon Him? And when Paul says, I thank my God, whom I serve in my spirit from my forefathers with pure conscience, he clearly shows that he came not to some new God, but to Christ. For what other forefathers of Paul can be intended, except those of whom he says, Are they Hebrews? So am I: are they Israelites? So am I. Nay, will not the very preface of his Epistle to the Romans clearly show the same thing to those who know how to understand the letters of Paul, viz., what God he preaches? For his words are: Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart to the Gospel of God, which He had promised before by His prophets in the holy Scriptures concerning His Son, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead of Christ Jesus our Lord, etc. Moreover, also the following, You shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the grain. Does God take care for oxen? Or says he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he that ploughs should plough in hope, and he that threshes in hope of partaking of the fruits. By which he manifestly shows that God, who gave the law on our account, i.e., on account of the apostles, says, You shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the grain; whose care was not for oxen, but for the apostles, who were preaching the Gospel of Christ. In other passages also, Paul, embracing the promises of the law, says, Honour your father and your mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with you, and that your days may be long upon the land, the good land, which the Lord your God will give you. By which he undoubtedly makes known that the law, and the God of the law, and His promises, are pleasing to him.

3\ But as those who uphold this heresy are sometimes accustomed to mislead the hearts of the simple by certain deceptive sophisms, I do not consider it improper to bring forward the assertions which they are in the habit of making, and to refute their deceit and falsehood. The following, then, are their declarations. It is written, that no man has seen God at any time. But that God whom Moses preaches was both seen by Moses himself, and by his fathers before him; whereas He who is announced by the Saviour has never been seen at all by any one. Let us therefore ask them and ourselves whether they maintain that He whom they acknowledge to be God, and allege to be a different God from the Creator, is visible or invisible. And if they shall say that He is visible, besides being proved to go against the declaration of Scripture, which says of the Saviour, He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born

of every creature, they will fall also into the absurdity of asserting that God is corporeal. For nothing can be seen except by help of form, and size, and color, which are special properties of bodies. And if God is declared to be a body, then He will also be found to be material, since every body is composed of matter. But if He be composed of matter, and matter is undoubtedly corruptible, then, according to them, God is liable to corruption! We shall put to them a second question. Is matter made, or is it uncreated, i.e., not made? And if they shall answer that it is not made, i.e., uncreated, we shall ask them if one portion of matter is God, and the other part the world? But if they shall say of matter that it is made, it will undoubtedly follow that they confess Him whom they declare to be God to have been made!— a result which certainly neither their reason nor ours can admit. But they will say, God is invisible. And what will you do? If you say that He is invisible by nature, then neither ought He to be visible to the Saviour. Whereas, on the contrary, God, the Father of Christ, is said to be seen, because he who sees the Son, he says, sees also the Father. This certainly would press us very hard, were the expression not understood by us more correctly of understanding, and not of seeing. For he who has understood the Son will understand the Father also. In this way, then, Moses too must be supposed to have seen God, not beholding Him with the bodily eye, but understanding Him with the vision of the heart and the perception of the mind, and that only in some degree. For it is manifest that He, viz., who gave answers to Moses, said, You shall not see My face, but My hinder parts. These words are, of course, to be understood in that mystical sense which is befitting divine words, those old wives' fables being rejected and despised which are invented by ignorant persons respecting the anterior and posterior parts of God. Let no one indeed suppose that we have indulged any feeling of impiety in saying that even to the Saviour the Father is not visible. Let him consider the distinction which we employ in dealing with heretics. For we have explained that it is one thing to see and to be seen, and another to know and to be known, or to understand and to be understood. To see, then, and to be seen, is a property of bodies, which certainly will not be appropriately applied either to the Father, or to the Son, or to the Holy Spirit, in their mutual relations with one another. For the nature of the Trinity surpasses the measure of vision, granting to those who are in the body, i.e., to all other creatures, the property of vision in reference to one another. But to a nature that is incorporeal and for the most part intellectual, no other attribute is appropriate save that of knowing or being known, as the Saviour Himself declares when He says, No man knows the Son, save the Father; nor does any one know the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him. It is clear, then, that He has not said, No one has seen the Father, save the Son; but, No one knows the Father, save the Son.

4\.. And now, if, on account of those expressions which occur in the Old Testament, as when God is said to be angry or to repent, or when any other human affection or passion is described, (our opponents) think that they are furnished with grounds for refuting us, who maintain that God is altogether impassible, and is to be regarded as wholly free from all affections of that kind, we have to show them that similar statements are found even in the parables of the Gospel; as when it is said, that he who planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, who slew the servants that were sent to them, and at last put to death even the son, is said in anger to have taken away the vineyard from them, and to have delivered over the wicked husbandmen to destruction, and to have handed over the vineyard to others, who would yield him the fruit in its season. And so also with regard to those citizens who, when the head of the household had set out to receive for himself a kingdom, sent messengers after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us; for the head of the household having obtained the kingdom, returned, and in anger commanded them to be put to death before him, and burned their city with fire. But when we read either in the Old Testament or in the New of the anger of God, we do not take such expressions literally, but seek in them a spiritual meaning, that we may think of God as He deserves to be thought of. And on these points, when expounding the verse in the second Psalm, Then shall He speak to them in His anger, and trouble them in His fury, we showed, to the best of our poor ability, how such an expression ought to be understood.

Chapter 5. On Justice and Goodness.

1\.. Now, since this consideration has weight with some, that the leaders of that heresy (of which we have been speaking) think they have established a kind of division, according to which they have declared that justice is one thing and goodness another, and have applied this division even to divine things, maintaining that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is indeed a good God, but not a just one, whereas the God of the law and the prophets is just, but not good; I think it necessary to return, with as much brevity as possible, an answer to these statements. These persons, then, consider goodness to be some such affection as would have benefits conferred on all, although the recipient of them be unworthy and undeserving of any kindness; but here, in my opinion, they have not rightly applied their definition, inasmuch as they think that no benefit is conferred on him who is visited with any suffering or calamity. Justice, on the other hand, they view as that quality which rewards every one according to his deserts. But here, again, they do not rightly interpret the meaning of their own definition. For they think that it is just to send evils upon the wicked and benefits upon the good; i.e., so that, according to their view, the just God does not appear to wish well to the bad, but to be animated by a kind of hatred against them. And they gather together instances of this, wherever they find a history in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, relating, e.g., the punishment of the deluge, or the fate of those who are described as perishing in it, or the, destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha by a shower of fire and brimstone, or the falling of all the people in the wilderness on account of their sins, so that none of those who had left Egypt were found to have entered the promised land, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. Whereas from the New Testament they gather together words of compassion and piety, through which the disciples are trained by the Saviour, and by which it seems to be declared that no one is good save God the Father only; and by this means they have ventured to style the Father of the Saviour Jesus Christ a

good God, but to say that the God of the world is a different one, whom they are pleased to term just, but not also good.

2\ Now I think they must, in the first place, be required to show, if they can, agreeably to their own definition, that the Creator is just in punishing according to their deserts, either those who perished at the time of the deluge, or the inhabitants of Sodom, or those who had quitted Egypt, seeing we sometimes behold committed crimes more wicked and detestable than those for which the above-mentioned persons were destroyed, while we do not yet see every sinner paying the penalty of his misdeeds. Will they say that He who at one time was just has been made good? Or will they rather be of opinion that He is even now just, but is patiently enduring human offenses, while that then He was not even just, inasmuch as He exterminated innocent and sucking children along with cruel and ungodly giants? Now, such are their opinions, because they know not how to understand anything beyond the letter; otherwise they would show how it is literal justice for sins to be visited upon the heads of children to the third and fourth generation, and on children's children after them. By us, however, such things are not understood literally; but, as Ezekiel taught when relating the parable, we inquire what is the inner meaning contained in the parable itself. Moreover, they ought to explain this also, how He is just, and rewards every one according to his merits, who punishes earthly-minded persons and the devil, seeing they have done nothing worthy of punishment. For they could not do any good if, according to them, they were of a wicked and ruined nature. For as they style Him a judge, He appears to be a judge not so much of actions as of natures; and if a bad nature cannot do good, neither can a good nature do evil. Then, in the next place, if He whom they call good is good to all, He is undoubtedly good also to those who are destined to perish. And why does He not save them? If He does not desire to do so, He will be no longer good; if He does desire it, and cannot effect it, He will not be omnipotent. Why do they not rather hear the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospels, preparing fire for the devil and his angels? And how shall that proceeding, as penal as it is sad, appear to be, according to their view, the work of the good God? Even the Saviour Himself, the Son of the good God, protests in the Gospels, and declares that if signs and wonders had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. And when He had come near to those very cities, and had entered their territory, why, pray, does He avoid entering those cities, and exhibiting to them abundance of signs and wonders, if it were certain that they would have repented, after they had been performed, in sackcloth and ashes? But as He does not do this, He undoubtedly abandons to destruction those whom the language of the Gospel shows not to have been of a wicked or ruined nature, inasmuch as it declares they were capable of repentance. Again, in a certain parable of the Gospel, where the king enters in to see the guests reclining at the banquet, he beheld a certain individual not clothed with wedding raiment, and said to him, Friend, how did you come in hither, not having a wedding garment? and then ordered his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Let them tell us who is that king who entered in to see the guests, and finding one among them with unclean garments, commanded him to be bound by his servants, and thrust out into outer darkness. Is he the same whom they call just? How then had he commanded good and bad alike to be invited, without directing their merits to be inquired into by his servants? By such procedure would be indicated, not the character of a just God who rewards according to men's deserts, as they assert, but of one who displays indiscriminating goodness towards all. Now, if this

must necessarily be understood of the good God, i.e., either of Christ or of the Father of Christ, what other objection can they bring against the justice of God's judgment? Nay, what else is there so unjust charged by them against the God of the law as to order him who had been invited by His servants, whom He had sent to call good and bad alike, to be bound hand and foot, and to be thrown into outer darkness, because he had on unclean garments?

3\.. And now, what we have drawn from the authority of Scripture ought to be sufficient to refute the arguments of the heretics. It will not, however, appear improper if we discuss the matter with them shortly, on the grounds of reason itself. We ask them, then, if they know what is regarded among men as the ground of virtue and wickedness, and if it appears to follow that we can speak of virtues in God, or, as they think, in these two Gods. Let them give an answer also to the question, whether they consider goodness to be a virtue; and as they will undoubtedly admit it to be so, what will they say of injustice? They will never certainly, in my opinion, be so foolish as to deny that justice is a virtue. Accordingly, if virtue is a blessing, and justice is a virtue, then without doubt justice is goodness. But if they say that justice is not a blessing, it must either be an evil or an indifferent thing. Now I think it folly to return any answer to those who say that justice is an evil, for I shall have the appearance of replying either to senseless words, or to men out of their minds. How can that appear an evil which is able to reward the good with blessings, as they themselves also admit? But if they say that it is a thing of indifference, it follows that since justice is so, sobriety also, and prudence, and all the other virtues, are things of indifference. And what answer shall we make to Paul, when he says, If there be any virtue, and, if there be any praise, think on these things, which you have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me? Let them learn, therefore, by searching the holy Scriptures, what are the individual virtues, and not deceive themselves by saying that that God who rewards every one according to his merits, does, through hatred of evil, recompense the wicked with evil, and not because those who have sinned need to be treated with severer remedies, and because He applies to them those measures which, with the prospect of improvement, seem nevertheless, for the present, to produce a feeling of pain. They do not read what is written respecting the hope of those who were destroyed in the deluge; of which hope Peter himself thus speaks in his first Epistle: That Christ, indeed, was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which He went and preached to the spirits who were kept in prison, who once were unbelievers, when they awaited the long-suffering of God in the days of Noah, when the ark was preparing, in which a few, i.e., eight souls, were saved by water. Whereunto also baptism by a like figure now saves you. And with regard to Sodom and Gomorrha, let them tell us whether they believe the prophetic words to be those of the Creator God — of Him, viz., who is related to have rained upon them a shower of fire and brimstone. What does Ezekiel the prophet say of them? Sodom, he says, shall be restored to her former condition. But why, in afflicting those who are deserving of punishment, does He not afflict them for their good?— who also says to Chaldea, You have coals of fire, sit upon them; they will be a help to you. And of those also who fell in the desert, let them hear what is related in the seventy-eighth Psalm, which bears the superscription of Asaph; for he says, When He slew them, then they sought Him. He does not say that some sought Him after others had been slain, but he says that the destruction of those who were killed was of such a nature that, when put to death, they sought God. By all which it is established, that the God of the law and the Gospels is one and the same, a just and good God, and that He confers benefits justly, and punishes with kindness; since neither goodness without justice, nor justice without goodness, can display the (real) dignity of the divine nature.

We shall add the following remarks, to which we are driven by their subtleties. If justice is a different thing from goodness, then, since evil is the opposite of good, and injustice of justice, injustice will doubtless be something else than an evil; and as, in your opinion, the just man is not good, so neither will the unjust man be wicked; and again, as the good man is not just, so the wicked man also will

not be unjust. But who does not see the absurdity, that to a good God one should be opposed that is evil; while to a just God, whom they allege to be inferior to the good, no one should be opposed! For there is none who can be called unjust, as there is a Satan who is called wicked. What, then, are we to do? Let us give up the position which we defend, for they will not be able to maintain that a bad man is not also unjust, and an unjust man wicked. And if these qualities be indissolubly inherent in these opposites, viz., injustice in wickedness, or wickedness in injustice, then unquestionably the good man will be inseparable from the just man, and the just from the good; so that, as we speak of one and the same wickedness in malice and injustice, we may also hold the virtue of goodness and justice to be one and the same.

4). They again recall us, however, to the words of Scripture, by bringing forward that celebrated question of theirs, affirming that it is written, A bad tree cannot produce good fruits; for a tree is known by its fruit. What, then, is their position? What sort of tree the law is, is shown by its fruits, i.e., by the language of its precepts. For if the law be found to be good, then undoubtedly He who gave it is believed to be a good God. But if it be just rather than good, then God also will be considered a just legislator. The Apostle Paul makes use of no circumlocution, when he says, The law is good; and the commandment is holy, and just, and good. From which it is clear that Paul had not learned the language of those who separate justice from goodness, but had been instructed by that God, and illuminated by His Spirit, who is at the same time both holy, and good, and just; and speaking by whose Spirit he declared that the commandment of the law was holy, and just, and good. And that he might show more clearly that goodness was in the commandment to a greater degree than justice and holiness, repeating his words, he used, instead of these three epithets, that of goodness alone, saying, Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. As he knew that goodness was the _genus_ of the virtues, and that justice and holiness were _species_ belonging to the _genus_, and having in the former verses named _genus_ and _species_ together, he fell back, when repeating his words, on the _genus_ alone. But in those which follow he says, Sin wrought death in me by that which is good, where he sums up generically what he had beforehand explained specifically. And in this way also is to be understood the declaration, A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, brings forth evil things. For here also he assumed that there was a _genus_ in good or evil, pointing out unquestionably that in a good man there were both justice, and temperance, and prudence, and piety, and everything that can be either called or understood to be good. In like manner also he said that a man was wicked who should without any doubt be unjust, and impure, and unholy, and everything which singly makes a bad man. For as no one considers a man to be wicked without these marks of wickedness (nor indeed can he be so), so also it is certain that without these virtues no one will be deemed to be good. There still remains to them, however, that saying of the Lord in the Gospel, which they think is given them in a special manner as a shield, viz., There is none good but one, God the Father. This word they declare is peculiar to the Father of Christ, who, however, is different from the God who is Creator of all things, to which Creator he gave no appellation of goodness. Let us see now if, in the Old Testament, the God of the prophets and the Creator and Legislator of the word is not called good. What are the expressions which occur in the Psalms? How good is God to Israel, to the upright in heart! and, Let Israel now say that He is good, that His mercy endures for ever; the language in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, The Lord is good to

them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeks Him. As therefore God is frequently called good in the Old Testament, so also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is styled just in the Gospels. Finally, in the Gospel according to John, our Lord Himself, when praying to the Father, says, O just Father, the world has not known You. And lest perhaps they should say that it was owing to His having assumed human flesh that He called the Creator of the world Father, and styled Him Just, they are excluded from such a refuge by the words that immediately follow, The world has not known You. But, according to them, the world is ignorant of the good God alone. For the world unquestionably recognises its Creator, the Lord Himself saying that the world loves what is its own. Clearly, then, He whom they consider to be the good God, is called just in the Gospels. Any one may at leisure gather together a greater number of proofs, consisting of those passages, where in the New Testament the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is called just, and in the Old also, where the Creator of heaven and earth is called good; so that the heretics, being convicted by numerous testimonies, may perhaps some time be put to the blush.

Chapter 6. On the Incarnation of Christ.

1\). It is now time, after this cursory notice of these points, to resume our investigation of the incarnation of our Lord and Saviour, viz., how or why He became man. Having therefore, to the best of our feeble ability, considered His divine nature from the contemplation of His own works rather than from our own feelings, and having nevertheless beheld (with the eye) His visible creation while the invisible creation is seen by faith, because human frailty can neither see all things with the bodily eye nor comprehend them by reason, seeing we men are weaker and frailer than any other rational beings (for those which are in heaven, or are supposed to exist above the heaven, are superior), it remains that we seek a being intermediate between all created things and God, i.e., a Mediator, whom the Apostle Paul styles the first-born of every creature. Seeing, moreover, those declarations regarding His majesty which are contained in holy Scripture, that He is called the image of the invisible God, and the first-born of every creature, and that in Him were all things created, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by Him, and in Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist, who is the head of all things, alone having as head God the Father; for it is written, The head of Christ is God; seeing clearly also that it is written, No one knows the Father, save the Son, nor does any one know the Son, save the Father (for who can know what wisdom is, save He who called it into being? Or, who can understand clearly what truth is, save the Father of truth? Who can investigate with certainty the universal nature of His Word, and of God Himself, which nature proceeds from God, except God alone, with whom the Word was), we ought to regard it as certain that this Word, or Reason (if it is to be so termed), this Wisdom, this Truth, is known to no other than the Father only; and of Him it is written, that I do not think that the world itself could contain the books which might be written, regarding, viz., the glory and majesty of the Son of God. For it is impossible to commit to writing (all) those particulars which belong to the glory of the Saviour. After the consideration of questions of such importance concerning the being of the Son of God, we are lost in the deepest amazement that such a nature, pre-eminent above all others, should have divested itself of its condition of majesty and become man, and tabernacled among men, as the grace that was poured upon His lips testifies, and as His heavenly Father bore Him witness, and as is confessed by the various signs and wonders and miracles that were performed by Him; who also, before that appearance of His which He manifested in the body, sent the prophets as His forerunners, and the messengers of His advent; and after His ascension into heaven, made His holy apostles, men ignorant and unlearned, taken from the ranks of tax-gatherers or fishermen, but who were filled with the power of His divinity, to itinerate throughout the world, that they might gather together out of every race and every nation a multitude of devout believers in Himself.

2\). But of all the marvellous and mighty acts related of Him, this altogether surpasses human admiration, and is beyond the power of mortal frailness to understand or feel, how that mighty power of divine majesty, that very Word of the Father, and that very wisdom of God, in which were created all things, visible and invisible, can be believed to have existed within the limits of that man who appeared in Judea; nay, that the Wisdom of God can have entered the womb of a woman, and have been born an infant, and have uttered wailings like the cries of little children! And that afterwards it should be related that He was greatly troubled in death, saying, as He Himself declared, My soul is sorrowful even unto death; and that at the last He was brought to that death which is accounted the most shameful among men, although He rose again on the third day. Since, then, we see in Him some things so human

that they appear to differ in no respect from the common frailty of mortals, and some things so divine that they can appropriately belong to nothing else than to the primal and ineffable nature of Deity, the narrowness of human understanding can find no outlet; but, overcome with the amazement of a mighty admiration, knows not whither to withdraw, or what to take hold of, or whither to turn. If it think of a God, it sees a mortal; if it think of a man, it beholds Him returning from the grave, after overthrowing the empire of death, laden with its spoils. And therefore the spectacle is to be contemplated with all fear and reverence, that the truth of both natures may be clearly shown to exist in one and the same Being; so that nothing unworthy or unbecoming may be perceived in that divine and ineffable substance, nor yet those things which were done be supposed to be the illusions of imaginary appearances. To utter these things in human ears, and to explain them in words, far surpasses the powers either of our rank, or of our intellect and language. I think that it surpasses the power even of the holy apostles; nay, the explanation of that mystery may perhaps be beyond the grasp of the entire creation of celestial powers. Regarding Him, then, we shall state, in the fewest possible words, the contents of our creed rather than the assertions which human reason is wont to advance; and this from no spirit of rashness, but as called for by the nature of our arrangement, laying before you rather (what may be termed) our suspicions than any clear affirmations.

3\ The Only-begotten of God, therefore, through whom, as the previous course of the discussion has shown, all things were made, visible and invisible, according to the view of Scripture, both made all things, and loves what He made. For since He is Himself the invisible image of the invisible God, He conveyed invisibly a share in Himself to all His rational creatures, so that each one obtained a part of Him exactly proportioned to the amount of affection with which he regarded Him. But since, agreeably to the faculty of free-will, variety and diversity characterized the individual souls, so that one was attached with a warmer love to the Author of its being, and another with a feebler and weaker regard, that soul (*_anima_*) regarding which Jesus said, No one shall take my life (*_animam_*) from me, inhering, from the beginning of the creation, and afterwards, inseparably and indissolubly in Him, as being the Wisdom and Word of God, and the Truth and the true Light, and receiving Him wholly, and passing into His light and splendour, was made with Him in a pre-eminent degree one spirit, according to the promise of the apostle to those who ought to imitate it, that he who is joined in the Lord is one spirit. This substance of a soul, then, being intermediate between God and the flesh — it being impossible for the nature of God to intermingle with a body without an intermediate instrument — the God-man is born, as we have said, that substance being the intermediary to whose nature it was not contrary to assume a body. But neither, on the other hand, was it opposed to the nature of that soul, as a rational existence, to receive God, into whom, as stated above, as into the Word, and the Wisdom, and the Truth, it had already wholly entered. And therefore deservedly is it also called, along with the flesh which it had assumed, the Son of God, and the Power of God, the Christ, and the Wisdom of God, either because it was wholly in the Son of God, or because it received the Son of God wholly into itself. And again, the Son of God, through whom all things were created, is named Jesus Christ and the Son of man. For the Son of God also is said to have died — in reference, viz., to that nature which could admit of death; and He is called the Son of man, who is announced as about to come in the glory of God the Father, with the holy angels. And for this reason, throughout the whole of Scripture, not only is the divine nature spoken of in human words, but the human nature is adorned by appellations of divine dignity. More

truly indeed of this than of any other can the statement be affirmed, They shall both be in one flesh, and are no longer two, but one flesh. For the Word of God is to be considered as being more in one flesh with the soul than a man with his wife. But to whom is it more becoming to be also one spirit with God, than to this soul which has so joined itself to God by love as that it may justly be said to be one spirit with Him?

4\.. That the perfection of his love and the sincerity of his deserved affection formed for it this inseparable union with God, so that the assumption of that soul was not accidental, or the result of a personal preference, but was conferred as the reward of its virtues, listen to the prophet addressing it thus: You have loved righteousness, and hated wickedness: therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows. As a reward for its love, then, it is anointed with the oil of gladness; i.e., the soul of Christ along with the Word of God is made Christ. Because to be anointed with the oil of gladness means nothing else than to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And when it is said above your fellows, it is meant that the grace of the Spirit was not given to it as to the prophets, but that the essential fullness of the Word of God Himself was in it, according to the saying of the apostle, In whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Finally, on this account he has not only said, You have loved righteousness; but he adds, and You have hated wickedness. For to have hated wickedness is what the Scripture says of Him, that He did no sin, neither was any guile found in His mouth, and that He was tempted in all things like as we are, without sin. Nay, the Lord Himself also said, Which of you will convince Me of sin? And again He says with reference to Himself, Behold, the prince of this world comes, and finds nothing in Me. All which (passages) show that in Him there was no sense of sin; and that the prophet might show more clearly that no sense of sin had ever entered into Him, he says, Before the boy could have knowledge to call upon father or mother, He turned away from wickedness.

5\.. Now, if our having shown above that Christ possessed a rational soul should cause a difficulty to any one, seeing we have frequently proved throughout all our discussions that the nature of souls is capable both of good and evil, the difficulty will be explained in the following way. That the nature, indeed, of His soul was the same as that of all others cannot be doubted, otherwise it could not be called a soul were it not truly one. But since the power of choosing good and evil is within the reach of all, this soul which belonged to Christ elected to love righteousness, so that in proportion to the immensity of its love it clung to it unchangeably and inseparably, so that firmness of purpose, and immensity of affection, and an inextinguishable warmth of love, destroyed all susceptibility (*_sensum_*) for alteration and change; and that which formerly depended upon the will was changed by the power of long custom into nature; and so we must believe that there existed in Christ a human and rational soul, without supposing that it had any feeling or possibility of sin.

6\ To explain the matter more fully, it will not appear absurd to make use of an illustration, although on a subject of so much difficulty it is not easy to obtain suitable illustrations. However, if we may speak without offense, the metal iron is capable of cold and heat. If, then, a mass of iron be kept constantly in the fire, receiving the heat through all its pores and veins, and the fire being continuous and the iron never removed from it, it become wholly converted into the latter; could we at all say of this, which is by nature a mass of iron, that when placed in the fire, and incessantly burning, it was at any time capable of admitting cold? On the contrary, because it is more consistent with truth, do we not rather say, what we often see happening in furnaces, that it has become wholly fire, seeing nothing but fire is visible in it? And if any one were to attempt to touch or handle it, he would experience the action not of iron, but of fire. In this way, then, that soul which, like an iron in the fire, has been perpetually placed in the Word, and perpetually in the Wisdom, and perpetually in God, is God in all that it does, feels, and understands, and therefore can be called neither convertible nor mutable, inasmuch as, being incessantly heated, it possessed immutability from its union with the Word of God. To all the saints, finally, some warmth from the Word of God must be supposed to have passed; and in this soul the divine fire itself must be believed to have rested, from which some warmth may have passed to others. Lastly, the expression, God, your God, anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows, shows that that soul is anointed in one way with the oil of gladness, i.e., with the word of God and wisdom; and his fellows, i.e., the holy prophets and apostles, in another. For they are said to have run in the odour of his ointments; and that soul was the vessel which contained that very ointment of whose fragrance all the worthy prophets and apostles were made partakers. As, then, the substance of an ointment is one thing and its odour another, so also Christ is one thing and His fellows another. And as the vessel itself, which contains the substance of the ointment, can by no means admit any foul smell; whereas it is possible that those who enjoy its odour may, if they remove a little way from its fragrance, receive any foul odour which comes upon them: so, in the same way, was it impossible that Christ, being as it were the vessel itself, in which was the substance of the ointment, should receive an odour of an opposite kind, while they who are His fellows will be partakers and receivers of His odour, in proportion to their nearness to the vessel.

7\ I think, indeed, that Jeremiah the prophet, also, understanding what was the nature of the wisdom of God in him, which was the same also which he had assumed for the salvation of the world, said, The breath of our countenance is Christ the Lord, to whom we said, that under His shadow we shall live among the nations. And inasmuch as the shadow of our body is inseparable from the body, and unavoidably performs and repeats its movements and gestures, I think that he, wishing to point out the work of Christ's soul, and the movements inseparably belonging to it, and which accomplished everything according to His movements and will, called this the shadow of Christ the Lord, under which shadow we were to live among the nations. For in the mystery of this assumption the nations live, who, imitating it through faith, come to salvation. David also, when saying, Be mindful of my reproach, O Lord, with which they reproached me in exchange for Your Christ, seems to me to indicate the same. And what else does Paul mean when he says, Your life is hid with Christ in God; and again in another passage, Do you seek a proof of Christ, who speaks in me? And now he says that Christ was hid in God. The meaning of which expression, unless it be shown to be something such as we have pointed out above as intended by the prophet in the words shadow of Christ, exceeds, perhaps, the apprehension of

the human mind. But we see also very many other statements in holy Scripture respecting the meaning of the word shadow, as that well-known one in the Gospel according to Luke, where Gabriel says to Mary, The Spirit of the Lord shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you. And the apostle says with reference to the law, that they who have circumcision in the flesh, serve for the similitude and shadow of heavenly things. And elsewhere, Is not our life upon the earth a shadow? If, then, not only the law which is upon the earth is a shadow, but also all our life which is upon the earth is the same, and we live among the nations under the shadow of Christ, we must see whether the truth of all these shadows may not come to be known in that revelation, when no longer through a glass, and darkly, but face to face, all the saints shall deserve to behold the glory of God, and the causes and truth of things. And the pledge of this truth being already received through the Holy Spirit, the apostle said, Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.

The above, meanwhile, are the thoughts which have occurred to us, when treating of subjects of such difficulty as the incarnation and deity of Christ. If there be any one, indeed, who can discover something better, and who can establish his assertions by clearer proofs from holy Scriptures, let his opinion be received in preference to mine.

Chapter 7. On the Holy Spirit.

1\ As, then, after those first discussions which, according to the requirements of the case, we held at the beginning regarding the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it seemed right that we should retrace our steps, and show that the same God was the creator and founder of the world, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, i.e., that the God of the law and of the prophets and of the Gospel was one and the same; and that, in the next place, it ought to be shown, with respect to Christ, in what manner He who had formerly been demonstrated to be the Word and Wisdom of God became man; it remains that we now return with all possible brevity to the subject of the Holy Spirit.

It is time, then, that we say a few words to the best of our ability regarding the Holy Spirit, whom our Lord and Saviour in the Gospel according to John has named the Paraclete. For as it is the same God Himself, and the same Christ, so also is it the same Holy Spirit who was in the prophets and apostles, i.e., either in those who believed in God before the advent of Christ, or in those who by means of Christ have sought refuge in God. We have heard, indeed, that certain heretics have dared to say that there are two Gods and two Christs, but we have never known of the doctrine of two Holy Spirits being preached by any one. For how could they maintain this out of Scripture, or what distinction could they lay down between Holy Spirit and Holy Spirit, if indeed any definition or description of Holy Spirit can be discovered? For although we should concede to Marcion or to Valentinus that it is possible to draw distinctions in the question of Deity, and to describe the nature of the good God as one, and that of the just God as another, what will he devise, or what will he discover, to enable him to introduce a distinction in the Holy Spirit? I consider, then, that they are able to discover nothing which may indicate a distinction of any kind whatever.

2\ Now we are of opinion that every rational creature, without any distinction, receives a share of Him in the same way as of the Wisdom and of the Word of God. I observe, however, that the chief advent of

the Holy Spirit is declared to men, after the ascension of Christ to heaven, rather than before His coming into the world. For, before that, it was upon the prophets alone, and upon a few individuals — if there happened to be any among the people deserving of it — that the gift of the Holy Spirit was conferred; but after the advent of the Saviour, it is written that the prediction of the prophet Joel was fulfilled, In the last days it shall come to pass, and I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and they shall prophesy, which is similar to the well-known statement, All nations shall serve Him. By the grace, then, of the Holy Spirit, along with numerous other results, this most glorious consequence is clearly demonstrated, that with regard to those things which were written in the prophets or in the law of Moses, it was only a few persons at that time, viz., the prophets themselves, and scarcely another individual out of the whole nation, who were able to look beyond the mere corporeal meaning and discover something greater, i.e., something spiritual, in the law or in the prophets; but now there are countless multitudes of believers who, although unable to unfold methodically and clearly the results of their spiritual understanding, are nevertheless most firmly persuaded that neither ought circumcision to be understood literally, nor the rest of the Sabbath, nor the pouring out of the blood of an animal, nor that answers were given by God to Moses on these points. And this method of apprehension is undoubtedly suggested to the minds of all by the power of the Holy Spirit.

3\.. And as there are many ways of apprehending Christ, who, although He is wisdom, does not act the part or possess the power of wisdom in all men, but only in those who give themselves to the study of wisdom in Him; and who, although called a physician, does not act as one towards all, but only towards those who understand their feeble and sickly condition, and flee to His compassion that they may obtain health; so also I think is it with the Holy Spirit, in whom is contained every kind of gifts. For on some is bestowed by the Spirit the word of wisdom, on others the word of knowledge, on others faith; and so to each individual of those who are capable of receiving Him, is the Spirit Himself made to be that quality, or understood to be that which is needed by the individual who has deserved to participate. These divisions and differences not being perceived by those who hear Him called Paraclete in the Gospel, and not duly considering in consequence of what work or act He is named the Paraclete, they have compared Him to some common spirits or other, and by this means have tried to disturb the Churches of Christ, and so excite dissensions of no small extent among brethren; whereas the Gospel shows Him to be of such power and majesty, that it says the apostles could not yet receive those things which the Saviour wished to teach them until the advent of the Holy Spirit, who, pouring Himself into their souls, might enlighten them regarding the nature and faith of the Trinity. But these persons, because of the ignorance of their understandings, are not only unable themselves logically to state the truth, but cannot even give their attention to what is advanced by us; and entertaining unworthy ideas of His divinity, have delivered themselves over to errors and deceits, being depraved by a spirit of error, rather than instructed by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, according to the declaration of the apostle, Following the doctrine of devils, forbidding to marry, to the destruction and ruin of many, and to abstain from meats, that by an ostentatious exhibition of stricter observance they may seduce the souls of the innocent.

4\ We must therefore know that the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit, who teaches truths which cannot be uttered in words, and which are, so to speak, unutterable, and which it is not lawful for a man to utter, i.e., which cannot be indicated by human language. The phrase it is not lawful is, we think, used by the apostle instead of it is not possible; as also is the case in the passage where he says, All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me; but all things edify not. For those things which are in our power because we may have them, he says are lawful for us. But the Paraclete, who is called the Holy Spirit, is so called from His work of consolation, *_para_ _clesis_* being termed in Latin *_consolatio_*. For if any one has deserved to participate in the Holy Spirit by the knowledge of His ineffable mysteries, he undoubtedly obtains comfort and joy of heart. For since he comes by the teaching of the Spirit to the knowledge of the reasons of all things which happen — how or why they occur — his soul can in no respect be troubled, or admit any feeling of sorrow; nor is he alarmed by anything, since, clinging to the Word of God and His wisdom, he through the Holy Spirit calls Jesus Lord. And since we have made mention of the Paraclete, and have explained as we were able what sentiments ought to be entertained regarding Him; and since our Saviour also is called the Paraclete in the Epistle of John, when he says, If any of us sin, we have a Paraclete with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins; let us consider whether this term Paraclete should happen to have one meaning when applied to the Saviour, and another when applied to the Holy Spirit. Now Paraclete, when spoken of the Saviour, seems to mean intercessor. For in Greek, Paraclete has both significations — that of intercessor and comforter. On account, then, of the phrase which follows, when he says, And He is the propitiation for our sins, the name Paraclete seems to be understood in the case of our Saviour as meaning intercessor; for He is said to intercede with the Father because of our sins. In the case of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete must be understood in the sense of comforter, inasmuch as He bestows consolation upon the souls to whom He openly reveals the apprehension of spiritual knowledge.

Chapter 8. On the Soul (Anima).

1\ The order of our arrangement now requires us, after the discussion of the preceding subjects, to institute a general inquiry regarding the soul; and, beginning with points of inferior importance, to ascend to those that are of greater. Now, that there are souls in all living things, even in those which live in the waters, is, I suppose, doubted by no one. For the general opinion of all men maintains this; and confirmation from the authority of holy Scripture is added, when it is said that God made great whales, and every living creature that moves which the waters brought forth after their kind. It is confirmed also from the common intelligence of reason, by those who lay down in certain words a definition of soul. For soul is defined as follows: a substance ~~And / Anima~~ ^{And / Anima} may be rendered into Latin, although not so appropriately, *_sensibilis et mobilis_*. This certainly may be said appropriately of all living beings, even of those which abide in the waters; and of winged creatures too, this same definition of *_anima_* may be shown to hold good. Scripture also has added its authority to a second opinion, when it says, You shall not eat the blood, because the life of all flesh is its blood; and you shall not eat the life with the flesh; in which it intimates most clearly that the blood of every animal is its life. And if any one now were to ask how it can be said with respect to bees, wasps, and ants, and those other things which are in the waters, oysters and cockles, and all others which are without blood, and are most clearly shown

to be living things, that the life of all flesh is the blood, we must answer, that in living things of that sort the force which is exerted in other animals by the power of red blood is exerted in them by that liquid which is within them, although it be of a different color; for color is a thing of no importance, provided the substance be endowed with life. That beasts of burden or cattle of smaller size are endowed with souls, there is, by general assent, no doubt whatever. The opinion of holy Scripture, however, is manifest, when God says, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, four-footed beasts, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind. And now with respect to man, although no one entertains any doubt, or needs to inquire, yet holy Scripture declares that God breathed into his countenance the breath of life, and man became a living soul. It remains that we inquire respecting the angelic order whether they also have souls, or are souls; and also respecting the other divine and celestial powers, as well as those of an opposite kind. We nowhere, indeed, find any authority in holy Scripture for asserting that either the angels, or any other divine spirits that are ministers of God, either possess souls or are called souls, and yet they are felt by very many persons to be endowed with life. But with regard to God, we find it written as follows: And I will put My soul upon that soul which has eaten blood, and I will root him out from among his people; and also in another passage, Your new moons, and sabbaths, and great days, I will not accept; your fasts, and holidays, and festal days, My soul hates. And in the twenty-second Psalm, regarding Christ — for it is certain, as the Gospel bears witness, that this Psalm is spoken of Him — the following words occur: O Lord, be not far from helping me; look to my defense: O God, deliver my soul from the sword, and my beloved one from the hand of the dog; although there are also many other testimonies respecting the soul of Christ when He tabernacled in the flesh.

2\ But the nature of the incarnation will render unnecessary any inquiry into the soul of Christ. For as He truly possessed flesh, so also He truly possessed a soul. It is difficult indeed both to feel and to state how that which is called in Scripture the soul of God is to be understood; for we acknowledge that nature to be simple, and without any intermixture or addition. In whatever way, however, it is to be understood, it seems, meanwhile, to be named the soul of God; whereas regarding Christ there is no doubt. And therefore there seems to me no absurdity in either understanding or asserting some such thing regarding the holy angels and the other heavenly powers, since that definition of soul appears applicable also to them. For who can rationally deny that they are sensible and moveable? But if that definition appear to be correct, according to which a soul is said to be a substance rationally sensible and moveable, the same definition would seem also to apply to angels. For what else is in them than rational feeling and motion? Now those beings who are comprehended under the same definition have undoubtedly the same substance. Paul indeed intimates that there is a kind of animal-man who, he says, cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, but declares that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit seems to him foolish, and that he cannot understand what is to be spiritually discerned. In another passage he says it is sown an animal body, and arises a spiritual body, pointing out that in the resurrection of the just there will be nothing of an animal nature. And therefore we inquire whether there happen to be any substance which, in respect of its being *_anima_*, is imperfect. But whether it be imperfect because it falls away from perfection, or because it was so created by God, will form the subject of inquiry when each individual topic shall begin to be discussed in order. For if the animal man receive not the things of the Spirit of God, and because he is animal, is unable to admit the understanding of a better, i.e., of

a divine nature, it is for this reason perhaps that Paul, wishing to teach us more plainly what that is by means of which we are able to comprehend those things which are of the Spirit, i.e., spiritual things, conjoins and associates with the Holy Spirit an understanding rather than a soul. For this, I think, he indicates when he says, I will pray with the spirit, I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, I will sing with the understanding also. And he does not say that I will pray with the soul, but with the spirit and the understanding. Nor does he say, I will sing with the soul, but with the spirit and the understanding.

3\). But perhaps this question is asked, If it be the understanding which prays and sings with the spirit, and if it be the same which receives both perfection and salvation, how is it that Peter says, Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls? If the soul neither prays nor sings with the spirit, how shall it hope for salvation? Or when it attains to blessedness, shall it be no longer called a soul? Let us see if perhaps an answer may be given in this way, that as the Saviour came to save what was lost, that which formerly was said to be lost is not lost when it is saved; so also, perhaps, this which is saved is called a soul, and when it has been placed in a state of salvation will receive a name from the Word that denotes its more perfect condition. But it appears to some that this also may be added, that as the thing which was lost undoubtedly existed before it was lost, at which time it was something else than destroyed, so also will be the case when it is no longer in a ruined condition. In like manner also, the soul which is said to have perished will appear to have been something at one time, when as yet it had not perished, and on that account would be termed soul, and being again freed from destruction, it may become a second time what it was before it perished, and be called a soul. But from the very signification of the name soul which the Greek word conveys, it has appeared to a few curious inquirers that a meaning of no small importance may be suggested. For in sacred language God is called a fire, as when Scripture says, Our God is a consuming fire. Respecting the substance of the angels also it speaks as follows: Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a burning fire; and in another place, The angel of the Lord appeared in a flame of fire in the bush. We have, moreover, received a commandment to be fervent in spirit; by which expression undoubtedly the Word of God is shown to be hot and fiery. The prophet Jeremiah also hears from Him, who gave him his answers, Behold, I have given My words into your mouth a fire. As God, then, is a fire, and the angels a flame of fire, and all the saints are fervent in spirit, so, on the contrary, those who have fallen away from the love of God are undoubtedly said to have cooled in their affection for Him, and to have become cold. For the Lord also says, that, because iniquity has abounded, the love of many will grow cold. Nay, all things, whatever they are, which in holy Scripture are compared with the hostile power, the devil is said to be perpetually finding cold; and what is found to be colder than he? In the sea also the dragon is said to reign. For the prophet intimates that the serpent and dragon, which certainly is referred to one of the wicked spirits, is also in the sea. And elsewhere the prophet says, I will draw out my holy sword upon the dragon the flying serpent, upon the dragon the crooked serpent, and will slay him. And again he says: Even though they hide from my eyes, and descend into the depths of the sea, there will I command the serpent, and it shall bite them. In the book of Job also, he is said to be the king of all things in the waters. The prophet threatens that evils will be kindled by the north wind upon all who inhabit the earth. Now the north wind is described in holy Scripture as cold, according to the statement in the book of Wisdom, That cold north wind; Sirach 43:20 which same thing also must undoubtedly be understood of the devil. If, then, those things which are holy are named fire, and light, and fervent, while those which are of an opposite nature are said to be cold; and if the love of many is said to wax cold; we have to inquire whether perhaps the name soul, which in Greek is termed ~~ψυχή~~ ^{ψυχή} is termed from growing cold out of a better and more divine condition, and be thence derived, because it seems to have cooled from that natural and divine warmth, and therefore has been placed in its present position, and called by its present name. Finally, see if you can easily find a place in holy Scripture where the soul is properly mentioned in terms of praise: it frequently occurs, on the contrary, accompanied with expressions of censure, as in the passage, An

evil soul ruins him who possesses it; Sirach 6:4 and, The soul which sins, it shall die. For after it has been said, All souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine, it seemed to follow that He would say, The soul that does righteousness, it shall be saved, and The soul which sins, it shall die. But now we see that He has associated with the soul what is censurable, and has been silent as to that which was deserving of praise. We have therefore to see if, perchance, as we have said is declared by the name itself, it was called ~~En~~ ^{En} ~~anima~~, because it has grown cold from the fervour of just things, and from participation in the divine fire, and yet has not lost the power of restoring itself to that condition of fervour in which it was at the beginning. Whence the prophet also appears to point out some such state of things by the words, Return, O my soul, unto your rest. From all which this appears to be made out, that the understanding, falling away from its status and dignity, was made or named soul; and that, if repaired and corrected, it returns to the condition of the understanding.

4\ Now, if this be the case, it seems to me that this very decay and falling away of the understanding is not the same in all, but that this conversion into a soul is carried to a greater or less degree in different instances, and that certain understandings retain something even of their former vigour, and others again either nothing or a very small amount. Whence some are found from the very commencement of their lives to be of more active intellect, others again of a slower habit of mind, and some are born wholly obtuse, and altogether incapable of instruction. Our statement, however, that the understanding is converted into a soul, or whatever else seems to have such a meaning, the reader must carefully consider and settle for himself, as these views are not to be regarded as advanced by us in a dogmatic manner, but simply as opinions, treated in the style of investigation and discussion. Let the reader take this also into consideration, that it is observed with regard to the soul of the Saviour, that of those things which are written in the Gospel, some are ascribed to it under the name of soul, and others under that of spirit. For when it wishes to indicate any suffering or perturbation affecting Him, it indicates it under the name of soul; as when it says, Now is My soul troubled; and, My soul is sorrowful, even unto death; and, No man takes My soul from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. Into the hands of His Father He commends not His soul, but His spirit; and when He says that the flesh is weak, He does not say that the soul is willing, but the spirit: whence it appears that the soul is something intermediate between the weak flesh and the willing spirit.

5\ But perhaps some one may meet us with one of those objections which we have ourselves warned you of in our statements, and say, How then is there said to be also a soul of God? To which we answer as follows: That as with respect to everything corporeal which is spoken of God, such as fingers, or hands, or arms, or eyes, or feet, or mouth, we say that these are not to be understood as human members, but that certain of His powers are indicated by these names of members of the body; so also we are to suppose that it is something else which is pointed out by this title — soul of God. And if it is allowable for us to venture to say anything more on such a subject, the soul of God may perhaps be understood to mean the only-begotten Son of God. For as the soul, when implanted in the body, moves all things in it, and exerts its force over everything on which it operates; so also the only-begotten Son of God, who is His Word and Wisdom, stretches and extends to every power of God, being implanted in it; and perhaps to indicate this mystery is God either called or described in Scripture as a body. We must, indeed, take into consideration whether it is not perhaps on this account that the soul of God may be understood

to mean His only-begotten Son, because He Himself came into this world of affliction, and descended into this valley of tears, and into this place of our humiliation; as He says in the Psalm, Because You have humiliated us in the place of affliction. Finally, I am aware that certain critics, in explaining the words used in the Gospel by the Saviour, My soul is sorrowful, even unto death, have interpreted them of the apostles, whom He termed His soul, as being better than the rest of His body. For as the multitude of believers is called His body, they say that the apostles, as being better than the rest of the body, ought to be understood to mean His soul.

We have brought forward as we best could these points regarding the rational soul, as topics of discussion for our readers, rather than as dogmatic and well-defined propositions. And with respect to the souls of animals and other dumb creatures, let that suffice which we have stated above in general terms.

Chapter 9. On the World and the Movements of Rational Creatures, Whether Good or Bad; And on the Causes of Them.

1\ But let us now return to the order of our proposed discussion, and behold the commencement of creation, so far as the understanding can behold the beginning of the creation of God. In that commencement, then, we are to suppose that God created so great a number of rational or intellectual creatures (or by whatever name they are to be called), which we have formerly termed understandings, as He foresaw would be sufficient. It is certain that He made them according to some definite number, predetermined by Himself: for it is not to be imagined, as some would have it, that creatures have not a limit, because where there is no limit there can neither be any comprehension nor any limitation. Now if this were the case, then certainly created things could neither be restrained nor administered by God. For, naturally, whatever is infinite will also be incomprehensible. Moreover, as Scripture says, God has arranged all things in number and measure; and therefore number will be correctly applied to rational creatures or understandings, that they may be so numerous as to admit of being arranged, governed, and controlled by God. But measure will be appropriately applied to a material body; and this measure, we are to believe, was created by God such as He knew would be sufficient for the adorning of the world. These, then, are the things which we are to believe were created by God in the beginning, i.e., before all things. And this, we think, is indicated even in that beginning which Moses has introduced in terms somewhat ambiguous, when he says, In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth. For it is certain that the firmament is not spoken of, nor the dry land, but that heaven and earth from which this present heaven and earth which we now see afterwards borrowed their names.

2\). But since those rational natures, which we have said above were made in the beginning, were created when they did not previously exist, in consequence of this very fact of their nonexistence and commencement of being, are they necessarily changeable and mutable; since whatever power was in their substance was not in it by nature, but was the result of the goodness of their Maker. What they are, therefore, is neither their own nor endures for ever, but is bestowed by God. For it did not always exist; and everything which is a gift may also be taken away, and disappear. And a reason for removal will consist in the movements of souls not being conducted according to right and propriety. For the Creator gave, as an indulgence to the understandings created by Him, the power of free and voluntary action, by which the good that was in them might become their own, being preserved by the exertion of their own will; but slothfulness, and a dislike of labour in preserving what is good, and an aversion to and a neglect of better things, furnished the beginning of a departure from goodness. But to depart from good is nothing else than to be made bad. For it is certain that to want goodness is to be wicked. Whence it happens that, in proportion as one falls away from goodness, in the same proportion does he become involved in wickedness. In which condition, according to its actions, each understanding, neglecting goodness either to a greater or more limited extent, was dragged into the opposite of good, which undoubtedly is evil. From which it appears that the Creator of all things admitted certain seeds and causes of variety and diversity, that He might create variety and diversity in proportion to the diversity of understandings, i.e., of rational creatures, which diversity they must be supposed to have conceived from that cause which we have mentioned above. And what we mean by variety and diversity is what we now wish to explain.

3\). Now we term world everything which is above the heavens, or in the heavens, or upon the earth, or in those places which are called the lower regions, or all places whatever that anywhere exist, together with their inhabitants. This whole, then, is called world. In which world certain beings are said to be super-celestial, i.e., placed in happier abodes, and clothed with heavenly and resplendent bodies; and among these many distinctions are shown to exist, the apostle, e.g., saying, That one is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, another the glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. Certain beings are called earthly, and among them, i.e., among men, there is no small difference; for some of them are Barbarians, others Greeks; and of the Barbarians some are savage and fierce, and others of a milder disposition. And certain of them live under laws that have been thoroughly approved; others, again, under laws of a more common or severe kind; while some, again, possess customs of an inhuman and savage character, rather than laws. And certain of them, from the hour of their birth, are reduced to humiliation and subjection, and brought up as slaves, being placed under the dominion either of masters, or princes, or tyrants. Others, again, are brought up in a manner more consonant with freedom and reason: some with sound bodies, some with bodies diseased from their early years; some defective in vision, others in hearing and speech; some born in that condition, others deprived of the use of their senses immediately after birth, or at least undergoing such misfortune on reaching manhood. And why should I repeat and enumerate all the horrors of human misery, from which some have been free, and in which others have been involved, when each one can weigh and consider them for himself? There are also certain invisible powers to which earthly things have been entrusted for administration; and among them no small difference must be believed to exist, as is also found to be the case among men. The Apostle Paul indeed intimates that there are certain lower powers, and that among them, in

like manner, must undoubtedly be sought a ground of diversity. Regarding dumb animals, and birds, and those creatures which live in the waters, it seems superfluous to require; since it is certain that these ought to be regarded not as of primary, but of subordinate rank.

4\ Seeing, then, that all things which have been created are said to have been made through Christ, and in Christ, as the Apostle Paul most clearly indicates, when he says, For in Him and by Him were all things created, whether things in heaven or things on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or powers, or principalities, or dominions; all things were created by Him, and in Him; and as in his Gospel John indicates the same thing, saying, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God: the same was in the beginning with God: all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made; and as in the Psalm also it is written, In wisdom have You made them all; — seeing, then, Christ is, as it were, the Word and Wisdom, and so also the Righteousness, it will undoubtedly follow that those things which were created in the Word and Wisdom are said to be created also in that righteousness which is Christ; that in created things there may appear to be nothing unrighteous or accidental, but that all things may be shown to be in conformity with the law of equity and righteousness. How, then, so great a variety of things, and so great a diversity, can be understood to be altogether just and righteous, I am sure no human power or language can explain, unless as prostrate suppliants we pray to the Word, and Wisdom, and Righteousness Himself, who is the only-begotten Son of God, and who, pouring Himself by His graces into our senses, may deign to illuminate what is dark, to lay open what is concealed, and to reveal what is secret; if, indeed, we should be found either to seek, or ask, or knock so worthily as to deserve to receive when we ask, or to find when we seek, or to have it opened to us when we knock. Not relying, then, on our own powers, but on the help of that Wisdom which made all things, and of that Righteousness which we believe to be in all His creatures, although we are in the meantime unable to declare it, yet, trusting in His mercy, we shall endeavour to examine and inquire how that great variety and diversity in the world may appear to be consistent with all righteousness and reason. I mean, of course, merely reason in general; for it would be a mark of ignorance either to seek, or of folly to give, a special reason for each individual case.

5\ Now, when we say that this world was established in the variety in which we have above explained that it was created by God, and when we say that this God is good, and righteous, and most just, there are numerous individuals, especially those who, coming from the school of Marcion, and Valentinus, and Basilides, have heard that there are souls of different natures, who object to us, that it cannot consist with the justice of God in creating the world to assign to some of His creatures an abode in the heavens, and not only to give such a better habitation, but also to grant them a higher and more honourable position; to favour others with the grant of principalities; to bestow powers upon some, dominions on others; to confer upon some the most honourable seats in the celestial tribunals; to enable some to shine with more resplendent glory, and to glitter with a starry splendour; to give to some the glory of the sun, to others the glory of the moon, to others the glory of the stars; to cause one star to differ from another star in glory. And, to speak once for all, and briefly, if the Creator God wants neither the will to undertake nor the power to complete a good and perfect work, what reason can there be that, in the creation of rational natures, i.e., of beings of whose existence He Himself is the cause, He should make some of higher rank, and others of second, or third, or of many lower and inferior degrees? In the next

place, they object to us, with regard to terrestrial beings, that a happier lot by birth is the case with some rather than with others; as one man, e.g., is begotten of Abraham, and born of the promise; another, too, of Isaac and Rebekah, and who, while still in the womb, supplants his brother, and is said to be loved by God before he is born. Nay, this very circumstance — especially that one man is born among the Hebrews, with whom he finds instruction in the divine law; another among the Greeks, themselves also wise, and men of no small learning; and then another among the Ethiopians, who are accustomed to feed on human flesh; or among the Scythians, with whom parricide is an act sanctioned by law; or among the people of Taurus, where strangers are offered in sacrifice — is a ground of strong objection. Their argument accordingly is this: If there be this great diversity of circumstances, and this diverse and varying condition by birth, in which the faculty of free-will has no scope (for no one chooses for himself either where, or with whom, or in what condition he is born); if, then, this is not caused by the difference in the nature of souls, i.e., that a soul of an evil nature is destined for a wicked nation, and a good soul for a righteous nation, what other conclusion remains than that these things must be supposed to be regulated by accident and chance? And if that be admitted, then it will be no longer believed that the world was made by God, or administered by His providence; and as a consequence, a judgment of God upon the deeds of each individual will appear a thing not to be looked for. In which matter, indeed, what is clearly the truth of things is the privilege of Him alone to know who searches all things, even the deep things of God.

6\ We, however, although but men, not to nourish the insolence of the heretics by our silence, will return to their objections such answers as occur to us, so far as our abilities enable us. We have frequently shown, by those declarations which we were able to produce from the holy Scriptures, that God, the Creator of all things, is good, and just, and all-powerful. When He in the beginning created those beings which He desired to create, i.e., rational natures, He had no other reason for creating them than on account of Himself, i.e., His own goodness. As He Himself, then, was the cause of the existence of those things which were to be created, in whom there was neither any variation nor change, nor want of power, He created all whom He made equal and alike, because there was in Himself no reason for producing variety and diversity. But since those rational creatures themselves, as we have frequently shown, and will yet show in the proper place, were endowed with the power of free-will, this freedom of will incited each one either to progress by imitation of God, or reduced him to failure through negligence. And this, as we have already stated, is the cause of the diversity among rational creatures, deriving its origin not from the will or judgment of the Creator, but from the freedom of the individual will. Now God, who deemed it just to arrange His creatures according to their merit, brought down these different understandings into the harmony of one world, that He might adorn, as it were, one dwelling, in which there ought to be not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay (and some indeed to honour, and others to dishonour), with those different vessels, or souls, or understandings. And these are the causes, in my opinion, why that world presents the aspect of diversity, while Divine Providence continues to regulate each individual according to the variety of his movements, or of his feelings and purpose. On which account the Creator will neither appear to be unjust in distributing (for the causes already mentioned) to every one according to his merits; nor will the happiness or unhappiness of each one's birth, or whatever be the condition that falls to his lot, be deemed accidental; nor will different creators, or souls of different natures, be believed to exist.

7\ But even holy Scripture does not appear to me to be altogether silent on the nature of this secret, as when the Apostle Paul, in discussing the case of Jacob and Esau, says: For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him who calls, it was said, The elder shall serve the younger, as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. And after that, he answers himself, and says, What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? And that he might furnish us with an opportunity of inquiring into these matters, and of ascertaining how these things do not happen without a reason, he answers himself, and says, God forbid. For the same question, as it seems to me, which is raised concerning Jacob and Esau, may be raised regarding all celestial and terrestrial creatures, and even those of the lower world as well. And in like manner it seems to me, that as he there says, The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, so it might also be said of all other things, When they were not yet created, neither had yet done any good or evil, that the decree of God according to election may stand, that (as certain think) some things on the one hand were created heavenly, some on the other earthly, and others, again, beneath the earth, not of works (as they think), but of Him who calls, what shall we say then, if these things are so? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. As, therefore, when the Scriptures are carefully examined regarding Jacob and Esau, it is not found to be unrighteousness with God that it should be said, before they were born, or had done anything in this life, the elder shall serve the younger; and as it is found not to be unrighteousness that even in the

womb Jacob supplanted his brother, if we feel that he was worthily beloved by God, according to the deserts of his previous life, so as to deserve to be preferred before his brother; so also is it with regard to heavenly creatures, if we notice that diversity was not the original condition of the creature, but that, owing to causes that have previously existed, a different office is prepared by the Creator for each one in proportion to the degree of his merit, on this ground, indeed, that each one, in respect of having been created by God an understanding, or a rational spirit, has, according to the movements of his mind and the feelings of his soul, gained for himself a greater or less amount of merit, and has become either an object of love to God, or else one of dislike to Him; while, nevertheless, some of those who are possessed of greater merit are ordained to suffer with others for the adorning of the state of the world, and for the discharge of duty to creatures of a lower grade, in order that by this means they themselves may be participators in the endurance of the Creator, according to the words of the apostle: For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who has subjected the same in hope. Keeping in view, then, the sentiment expressed by the apostle, when, speaking of the birth of Esau and Jacob, he says, Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid, I think it right that this same sentiment should be carefully applied to the case of all other creatures, because, as we formerly remarked, the righteousness of the Creator ought to appear in everything. And this, it appears to me, will be seen more clearly at last, if each one, whether of celestial or terrestrial or infernal beings, be said to have the causes of his diversity in himself, and antecedent to his bodily birth. For all things were created by the Word of God, and by His Wisdom, and were set in order by His Justice. And by the grace of His compassion He provides for all men, and encourages all to the use of whatever remedies may lead to their cure, and incites them to salvation.

8\ As, then, there is no doubt that at the day of judgment the good will be separated from the bad, and the just from the unjust, and all by the sentence of God will be distributed according to their deserts throughout those places of which they are worthy, so I am of opinion some such state of things was formerly the case, as, God willing, we shall show in what follows. For God must be believed to do and order all things and at all times according to His judgment. For the words which the apostle uses when he says, In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour; and those which he adds, saying, If a man purge himself, he will be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, unto every good work, undoubtedly point out this, that he who shall purge himself when he is in this life, will be prepared for every good work in that which is to come; while he who does not purge himself will be, according to the amount of his impurity, a vessel unto dishonour, i.e., unworthy. It is therefore possible to understand that there have been also formerly rational vessels, whether purged or not, i.e., which either purged themselves or did not do so, and that consequently every vessel, according to the measure of its purity or impurity, received a place, or region, or condition by birth, or an office to discharge, in this world. All of which, down to the humblest, God providing for and distinguishing by the power of His wisdom, arranges all things by His controlling judgment, according to a most impartial retribution, so far as each one ought to be assisted or cared for in conformity with his deserts. In which certainly every principle of equity is shown, while the inequality of circumstances preserves the justice of a retribution according to merit. But the grounds of the merits in each individual case are only recognised truly and clearly by God Himself, along with His only-begotten Word, and His Wisdom, and the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 10. On the Resurrection, and the Judgment, the Fire of Hell, and Punishments.

1\ But since the discourse has reminded us of the subjects of a future judgment and of retribution, and of the punishments of sinners, according to the threatenings of holy Scripture and the contents of the Church's teaching — viz., that when the time of judgment comes, everlasting fire, and outer darkness, and a prison, and a furnace, and other punishments of like nature, have been prepared for sinners — let us see what our opinions on these points ought to be. But that these subjects may be arrived at in proper order, it seems to me that we ought first to consider the nature of the resurrection, that we may know what that (body) is which shall come either to punishment, or to rest, or to happiness; which question in other treatises which we have composed regarding the resurrection we have discussed at greater length, and have shown what our opinions were regarding it. But now, also, for the sake of logical order in our treatise, there will be no absurdity in restating a few points from such works, especially since some take offense at the creed of the Church, as if our belief in the resurrection were foolish, and altogether devoid of sense; and these are principally heretics, who, I think, are to be answered in the following manner. If they also admit that there is a resurrection of the dead, let them answer us this, What is that which died? Was it not a body? It is of the body, then, that there will be a resurrection. Let them next tell us if they think that we are to make use of bodies or not. I think that when the Apostle Paul says, that it is sown a natural body, it will arise a spiritual body, they cannot deny that it is a body which arises, or that in the resurrection we are to make use of bodies. What then? If it is certain that we are to make use of bodies, and if the bodies which have fallen are declared to rise again (for only that which before has fallen can be properly said to rise again), it can be a matter of doubt to no one that they

rise again, in order that we may be clothed with them a second time at the resurrection. The one thing is closely connected with the other. For if bodies rise again, they undoubtedly rise to be coverings for us; and if it is necessary for us to be invested with bodies, as it is certainly necessary, we ought to be invested with no other than our own. But if it is true that these rise again, and that they arise spiritual bodies, there can be no doubt that they are said to rise from the dead, after casting away corruption and laying aside mortality; otherwise it will appear vain and superfluous for any one to arise from the dead in order to die a second time. And this, finally, may be more distinctly comprehended thus, if one carefully consider what are the qualities of an animal body, which, when sown into the earth, recovers the qualities of a spiritual body. For it is out of the animal body that the very power and grace of the resurrection educe the spiritual body, when it transmutes it from a condition of indignity to one of glory.

2\ Since the heretics, however, think themselves persons of great learning and wisdom, we shall ask them if every body has a form of some kind, i.e., is fashioned according to some shape. And if they shall say that a body is that which is fashioned according to no shape, they will show themselves to be the most ignorant and foolish of mankind. For no one will deny this, save him who is altogether without any learning. But if, as a matter of course, they say that every body is certainly fashioned according to some definite shape, we shall ask them if they can point out and describe to us the shape of a spiritual body; a thing which they can by no means do. We shall ask them, moreover, about the differences of those who rise again. How will they show that statement to be true, that there is one flesh of birds, another of fishes; bodies celestial, and bodies terrestrial; that the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial another; that one is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, another the glory of the stars; that one star differs from another star in glory; and that so is the resurrection of the dead? According to that gradation, then, which exists among heavenly bodies, let them show to us the differences in the glory of those who rise again; and if they have endeavoured by any means to devise a principle that may be in accordance with the differences in heavenly bodies, we shall ask them to assign the differences in the resurrection by a comparison of earthly bodies. Our understanding of the passage indeed is, that the apostle, wishing to describe the great difference among those who rise again in glory, i.e., of the saints, borrowed a comparison from the heavenly bodies, saying, One is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, another the glory of the stars. And wishing again to teach us the differences among those who shall come to the resurrection, without having purged themselves in this life, i.e., sinners, he borrowed an illustration from earthly things, saying, There is one flesh of birds, another of fishes. For heavenly things are worthily compared to the saints, and earthly things to sinners. These statements are made in reply to those who deny the resurrection of the dead, i.e., the resurrection of bodies.

3\ We now turn our attention to some of our own (believers), who, either from feebleness of intellect or want of proper instruction, adopt a very low and abject view of the resurrection of the body. We ask these persons in what manner they understand that an animal body is to be changed by the grace of the resurrection, and to become a spiritual one; and how that which is sown in weakness will arise in power; how that which is planted in dishonour will arise in glory; and that which was sown in corruption, will be changed to a state of incorruption. Because if they believe the apostle, that a body which arises in glory, and power, and incorruptibility, has already become spiritual, it appears absurd and contrary to his meaning to say that it can again be entangled with the passions of flesh and blood, seeing the apostle manifestly declares that flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God, nor shall corruption inherit incorruption. But how do they understand the declaration of the apostle, We shall all be changed? This transformation certainly is to be looked for, according to the order which we have taught above; and in it, undoubtedly, it becomes us to hope for something worthy of divine grace; and this we believe will take place in the order in which the apostle describes the sowing in the ground of a bare grain of grain, or of any other fruit, to which God gives a body as it pleases Him, as soon as the grain of grain is dead. For in the same way also our bodies are to be supposed to fall into the earth like a grain; and (that germ being implanted in them which contains the bodily substance) although the bodies die, and become corrupted, and are scattered abroad, yet by the word of God, that very germ which is always safe in the substance of the body, raises them from the earth, and restores and repairs

them, as the power which is in the grain of wheat, after its corruption and death, repairs and restores the grain into a body having stalk and ear. And so also to those who shall deserve to obtain an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, that germ of the body's restoration, which we have before mentioned, by God's command restores out of the earthly and animal body a spiritual one, capable of inhabiting the heavens; while to each one of those who may be of inferior merit, or of more abject condition, or even the lowest in the scale, and altogether thrust aside, there is yet given, in proportion to the dignity of his life and soul, a glory and dignity of body — nevertheless in such a way, that even the body which rises again of those who are to be destined to everlasting fire or to severe punishments, is by the very change of the resurrection so incorruptible, that it cannot be corrupted and dissolved even by severe punishments. If, then, such be the qualities of that body which will arise from the dead, let us now see what is the meaning of the threatening of eternal fire.

4\ We find in the prophet Isaiah, that the fire with which each one is punished is described as his own; for he says, Walk in the light of your own fire, and in the flame which you have kindled. By these words it seems to be indicated that every sinner kindles for himself the flame of his own fire, and is not plunged into some fire which has been already kindled by another, or was in existence before himself. Of this fire the fuel and food are our sins, which are called by the Apostle Paul wood, and hay, and stubble. And I think that, as abundance of food, and provisions of a contrary kind and amount, breed fevers in the body, and fevers, too, of different sorts and duration, according to the proportion in which the collected poison supplies material and fuel for disease (the quality of this material, gathered together from different poisons, proving the causes either of a more acute or more lingering disease); so, when the soul has gathered together a multitude of evil works, and an abundance of sins against itself, at a suitable time all that assembly of evils boils up to punishment, and is set on fire to chastisements; when the mind itself, or conscience, receiving by divine power into the memory all those things of which it had stamped on itself certain signs and forms at the moment of sinning, will see a kind of history, as it were, of all the foul, and shameful, and unholy deeds which it has done, exposed before its eyes: then is the conscience itself harassed, and, pierced by its own goads, becomes an accuser and a witness against itself. And this, I think, was the opinion of the Apostle Paul himself, when he said, Their thoughts mutually accusing or excusing them in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel. From which it is understood that around the substance of the soul certain tortures are produced by the hurtful affections of sins themselves.

5\ And that the understanding of this matter may not appear very difficult, we may draw some considerations from the evil effects of those passions which are wont to befall some souls, as when a soul is consumed by the fire of love, or wasted away by zeal or envy, or when the passion of anger is kindled, or one is consumed by the greatness of his madness or his sorrow; on which occasions some, finding the excess of these evils unbearable, have deemed it more tolerable to submit to death than to endure perpetually torture of such a kind. You will ask indeed whether, in the case of those who have been entangled in the evils arising from those vices above enumerated, and who, while existing in this life, have been unable to procure any amelioration for themselves, and have in this condition departed from the world, it be sufficient in the way of punishment that they be tortured by the remaining in them of these hurtful affections, i.e., of the anger, or of the fury, or of the madness, or of the sorrow, whose fatal

poison was in this life lessened by no healing medicine; or whether, these affections being changed, they will be subjected to the pains of a general punishment. Now I am of opinion that another species of punishment may be understood to exist; because, as we feel that when the limbs of the body are loosened and torn away from their mutual supports, there is produced pain of a most excruciating kind, so, when the soul shall be found to be beyond the order, and connection, and harmony in which it was created by God for the purposes of good and useful action and observation, and not to harmonize with itself in the connection of its rational movements, it must be deemed to bear the chastisement and torture of its own dissension, and to feel the punishments of its own disordered condition. And when this dissolution and rending asunder of soul shall have been tested by the application of fire, a solidification undoubtedly into a firmer structure will take place, and a restoration be effected.

6\ There are also many other things which escape our notice, and are known to Him alone who is the physician of our souls. For if, on account of those bad effects which we bring upon ourselves by eating and drinking, we deem it necessary for the health of the body to make use of some unpleasant and painful drug, sometimes even, if the nature of the disease demand, requiring the severe process of the amputating knife; and if the virulence of the disease shall transcend even these remedies, the evil has at last to be burned out by fire; how much more is it to be understood that God our Physician, desiring to remove the defects of our souls, which they had contracted from their different sins and crimes, should employ penal measures of this sort, and should apply even, in addition, the punishment of fire to those who have lost their soundness of mind! Pictures of this method of procedure are found also in the holy Scriptures. In the book of Deuteronomy, the divine word threatens sinners with the punishments of fevers, and colds, and jaundice, and with the pains of feebleness of vision, and alienation of mind and paralysis, and blindness, and weakness of the reins. If any one, then, at his leisure gather together out of the whole of Scripture all the enumerations of diseases which in the threatenings addressed to sinners are called by the names of bodily maladies, he will find that either the vices of souls, or their punishments, are figuratively indicated by them. To understand now, that in the same way in which physicians apply remedies to the sick, in order that by careful treatment they may recover their health, God so deals towards those who have lapsed and fallen into sin, is proved by this, that the cup of God's fury is ordered, through the agency of the prophet Jeremiah, to be offered to all nations, that they may drink it, and be in a state of madness, and vomit it forth. In doing which, He threatens them, saying, That if any one refuse to drink, he shall not be cleansed. By which certainly it is understood that the fury of God's vengeance is profitable for the purgation of souls. That the punishment, also, which is said to be applied by fire, is understood to be applied with the object of healing, is taught by Isaiah, who speaks thus of Israel: The Lord will wash away the filth of the sons or daughters of Zion, and shall purge away the blood from the midst of them by the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning. Of the Chaldeans he thus speaks: You have the coals of fire; sit upon them: they will be to you a help. And in other passages he says, The Lord will sanctify in a burning fire and in the prophecies of Malachi he says, The Lord sitting will blow, and purify, and will pour forth the cleansed sons of Judah.

7\ But that fate also which is mentioned in the Gospels as overtaking unfaithful stewards who, it is said, are to be divided, and a portion of them placed along with unbelievers, as if that portion which is not their own were to be sent elsewhere, undoubtedly indicates some kind of punishment on those whose spirit, as it seems to me, is shown to be separated from the soul. For if this Spirit is of divine nature, i.e., is understood to be a Holy Spirit, we shall understand this to be said of the gift of the Holy Spirit: that when, whether by baptism, or by the grace of the Spirit, the word of wisdom, or the word of knowledge, or of any other gift, has been bestowed upon a man, and not rightly administered, i.e., either buried in the earth or tied up in a napkin, the gift of the Spirit will certainly be withdrawn from his soul, and the other portion which remains, that is, the substance of the soul, will be assigned its place with unbelievers, being divided and separated from that Spirit with whom, by joining itself to the Lord, it ought to have been one spirit. Now, if this is not to be understood of the Spirit of God, but of the nature of the soul itself, that will be called its better part which was made in the image and likeness of God; whereas the other part, that which afterwards, through its fall by the exercise of free-will, was assumed contrary to the nature of its original condition of purity — this part, as being the friend and beloved of matter, is punished with the fate of unbelievers. There is also a third sense in which that separation may be understood, this viz., that as each believer, although the humblest in the Church, is said to be attended by an angel, who is declared by the Saviour always to behold the face of God the Father, and as this angel was certainly one with the object of his guardianship; so, if the latter is rendered unworthy by his want of obedience, the angel of God is said to be taken from him, and then that part of him — the part, viz., which belongs to his human nature— being rent away from the divine part, is assigned a place along with unbelievers, because it has not faithfully observed the admonitions of the angel allotted it by God.

8\ But the outer darkness, in my judgment, is to be understood not so much of some dark atmosphere without any light, as of those persons who, being plunged in the darkness of profound ignorance, have been placed beyond the reach of any light of the understanding. We must see, also, lest this perhaps should be the meaning of the expression, that as the saints will receive those bodies in which they have lived in holiness and purity in the habitations of this life, bright and glorious after the resurrection, so the wicked also, who in this life have loved the darkness of error and the night of ignorance, may be clothed with dark and black bodies after the resurrection, that the very mist of ignorance which had in this life taken possession of their minds within them, may appear in the future as the external covering of the body. Similar is the view to be entertained regarding the prison. Let these remarks, which have been made as brief as possible, that the order of our discourse in the meantime might be preserved, suffice for the present occasion.

Chapter 11. On Counter Promises.

1\ Let us now briefly see what views we are to form regarding promises. It is certain that there is no living thing which can be altogether inactive and immoveable, but delights in motion of every kind, and in perpetual activity and volition; and this nature, I think it evident, is in all living things. Much more, then, must a rational animal, i.e., the nature of man, be in perpetual movement and activity. If, indeed, he is forgetful of himself, and ignorant of what becomes him, all his efforts are directed to serve the

uses of the body, and in all his movements he is occupied with his own pleasures and bodily lusts; but if he be one who studies to care or provide for the general good, then, either by consulting for the benefit of the state or by obeying the magistrates, he exerts himself for that, whatever it is, which may seem certainly to promote the public advantage. And if now any one be of such a nature as to understand that there is something better than those things which seem to be corporeal, and so bestow his labour upon wisdom and science, then he will undoubtedly direct all his attention towards pursuits of that kind, that he may, by inquiring into the truth, ascertain the causes and reason of things. As therefore, in this life, one man deems it the highest good to enjoy bodily pleasures, another to consult for the benefit of the community, a third to devote attention to study and learning; so let us inquire whether in that life which is the true one (which is said to be hidden with Christ in God, i.e., in that eternal life), there will be for us some such order and condition of existence.

2\.. Certain persons, then, refusing the labour of thinking, and adopting a superficial view of the letter of the law, and yielding rather in some measure to the indulgence of their own desires and lusts, being disciples of the letter alone, are of opinion that the fulfilment of the promises of the future are to be looked for in bodily pleasure and luxury; and therefore they especially desire to have again, after the resurrection, such bodily structures as may never be without the power of eating, and drinking, and performing all the functions of flesh and blood, not following the opinion of the Apostle Paul regarding the resurrection of a spiritual body. And consequently they say, that after the resurrection there will be marriages, and the begetting of children, imagining to themselves that the earthly city of Jerusalem is to be rebuilt, its foundations laid in precious stones, and its walls constructed of jasper, and its battlements of crystal; that it is to have a wall composed of many precious stones, as jasper, and sapphire, and chalcedony, and emerald, and sardonyx, and onyx, and chrysolite, and chrysoprase, and jacinth, and amethyst. Moreover, they think that the natives of other countries are to be given them as the ministers of their pleasures, whom they are to employ either as tillers of the field or builders of walls, and by whom their ruined and fallen city is again to be raised up; and they think that they are to receive the wealth of the nations to live on, and that they will have control over their riches; that even the camels of Midian and Kedar will come, and bring to them gold, and incense, and precious stones. And these views they think to establish on the authority of the prophets by those promises which are written regarding Jerusalem; and by those passages also where it is said, that they who serve the Lord shall eat and drink, but that sinners shall hunger and thirst; that the righteous shall be joyful, but that sorrow shall possess the wicked. And from the New Testament also they quote the saying of the Saviour, in which He makes a promise to His disciples concerning the joy of wine, saying, Henceforth I shall not drink of this cup, until I drink it with you new in My Father's kingdom. They add, moreover, that declaration, in which the Saviour calls those blessed who now hunger and thirst, promising them that they shall be satisfied; and many other scriptural illustrations are adduced by them, the meaning of which they do not perceive is to be taken figuratively. Then, again, agreeably to the form of things in this life, and according to the gradations of the dignities or ranks in this world, or the greatness of their powers, they think they are to be kings and princes, like those earthly monarchs who now exist; chiefly, as it appears, on account of that expression in the Gospel: Have power over five cities. And to speak shortly, according to the manner of things in this life in all similar matters, do they desire the fulfilment of all things looked for in the promises, viz., that what now is should exist again. Such are the views of those who, while believing

in Christ, understand the divine Scriptures in a sort of Jewish sense, drawing from them nothing worthy of the divine promises.

3\ Those, however, who receive the representations of Scripture according to the understanding of the apostles, entertain the hope that the saints will eat indeed, but that it will be the bread of life, which may nourish the soul with the food of truth and wisdom, and enlighten the mind, and cause it to drink from the cup of divine wisdom, according to the declaration of holy Scripture: Wisdom has prepared her table, she has killed her beasts, she has mingled her wine in her cup, and she cries with a loud voice, Come to me, eat the bread which I have prepared for you, and drink the wine which I have mingled. By this food of wisdom, the understanding, being nourished to an entire and perfect condition like that in which man was made at the beginning, is restored to the image and likeness of God; so that, although an individual may depart from this life less perfectly instructed, but who has done works that are approved of, he will be capable of receiving instruction in that Jerusalem, the city of the saints, i.e., he will be educated and moulded, and made a living stone, a stone elect and precious, because he has undergone with firmness and constancy the struggles of life and the trials of piety; and will there come to a truer and clearer knowledge of that which here has been already predicted, viz., that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God. And they also are to be understood to be the princes and rulers who both govern those of lower rank, and instruct them, and teach them, and train them to divine things.

4\ But if these views should not appear to fill the minds of those who hope for such results with a becoming desire, let us go back a little, and, irrespective of the natural and innate longing of the mind for the thing itself, let us make inquiry so that we may be able at last to describe, as it were, the very forms of the bread of life, and the quality of that wine, and the peculiar nature of the principalities, all in conformity with the spiritual view of things. Now, as in those arts which are usually performed by means of manual labour, the reason why a thing is done, or why it is of a special quality, or for a special purpose, is an object of investigation to the mind, while the actual work itself is unfolded to view by the agency of the hands; so, in those works of God which were created by Him, it is to be observed that the reason and understanding of those things which we see done by Him remains undisclosed. And as, when our eye beholds the products of an artist's labour, the mind, immediately on perceiving anything of unusual artistic excellence, burns to know of what nature it is, or how it was formed, or to what purposes it was fashioned; so, in a much greater degree, and in one that is beyond all comparison, does the mind burn with an inexpressible desire to know the reason of those things which we see done by God. This desire, this longing, we believe to be unquestionably implanted within us by God; and as the eye naturally seeks the light and vision, and our body naturally desires food and drink, so our mind is possessed with a becoming and natural desire to become acquainted with the truth of God and the causes of things. Now we have received this desire from God, not in order that it should never be gratified or be capable of gratification; otherwise the love of truth would appear to have been implanted by God into our minds to no purpose, if it were never to have an opportunity of satisfaction. Whence also, even in this life, those who devote themselves with great labour to the pursuits of piety and religion, although obtaining only some small fragments from the numerous and immense treasures of divine knowledge, yet, by the very circumstance that their mind and soul is engaged in these pursuits, and that in the eagerness of their desire they outstrip themselves, do they derive much advantage; and, because their minds are directed to the study and love of the investigation of truth, are they made fitter for receiving the instruction that is to come; as if, when one would paint an image, he were first with a light pencil to trace out the outlines of the coming picture, and prepare marks for the reception of the features that are to be afterwards added, this preliminary sketch in outline is found to prepare the way for the laying on of the true colors of the painting; so, in a measure, an outline and sketch may be traced on the tablets of our heart by the pencil of our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore perhaps is it said, Unto every one that has shall be given, and be added. By which it is established, that to those who possess in this life a kind of outline of truth and knowledge, shall be added the beauty of a perfect image in the future.

5\ Some such desire, I apprehend, was indicated by him who said, I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better; knowing that when he should have returned to Christ he would then know more clearly the reasons of all things which are done on earth, either respecting man, or the soul of man, or the mind; or regarding any other subject, such as, for instance, what is the Spirit that operates, what also is the vital spirit, or what is the grace of the Holy Spirit that is given to believers. Then also will he understand what Israel appears to be, or what is meant by the diversity of nations; what the twelve tribes of Israel mean, and what the individual people of each tribe. Then, too, will he understand the reason of the priests and Levites, and of the different priestly orders, the type of which was in Moses, and also what is the true meaning of the jubilees, and of the weeks

of years with God. He will see also the reasons for the festival days, and holy days, and for all the sacrifices and purifications. He will perceive also the reason of the purgation from leprosy, and what the different kinds of leprosy are, and the reason of the purgation of those who lose their seed. He will come to know, moreover, what are the good influences, and their greatness, and their qualities; and those too which are of a contrary kind, and what the affection of the former, and what the strife-causing emulation of the latter is towards men. He will behold also the nature of the soul, and the diversity of animals (whether of those which live in the water, or of birds, or of wild beasts), and why each of the genera is subdivided into so many species; and what intention of the Creator, or what purpose of His wisdom, is concealed in each individual thing. He will become acquainted, too, with the reason why certain properties are found associated with certain roots or herbs, and why, on the other hand, evil effects are averted by other herbs and roots. He will know, moreover, the nature of the apostate angels, and the reason why they have power to flatter in some things those who do not despise them with the whole power of faith, and why they exist for the purpose of deceiving and leading men astray. He will learn, too, the judgment of Divine Providence on each individual thing; and that, of those events which happen to men, none occur by accident or chance, but in accordance with a plan so carefully considered, and so stupendous, that it does not overlook even the number of the hairs of the heads, not merely of the saints, but perhaps of all human beings, and the plan of which providential government extends even to caring for the sale of two sparrows for a denarius, whether sparrows there be understood figuratively or literally. Now indeed this providential government is still a subject of investigation, but then it will be fully manifested. From all which we are to suppose, that meanwhile not a little time may pass by until the reason of those things only which are upon the earth be pointed out to the worthy and deserving after their departure from life, that by the knowledge of all these things, and by the grace of full knowledge, they may enjoy an unspeakable joy. Then, if that atmosphere which is between heaven and earth is not devoid of inhabitants, and those of a rational kind, as the apostle says, Wherein in times past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience. And again he says, We shall be caught up in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

6\). We are therefore to suppose that the saints will remain there until they recognise the twofold mode of government in those things which are performed in the air. And when I say twofold mode, I mean this: When we were upon earth, we saw either animals or trees, and beheld the differences among them, and also the very great diversity among men; but although we saw these things, we did not understand the reason of them; and this only was suggested to us from the visible diversity, that we should examine and inquire upon what principle these things were either created or diversely arranged. And a zeal or desire for knowledge of this kind being conceived by us on earth, the full understanding and comprehension of it will be granted after death, if indeed the result should follow according to our expectations. When, therefore, we shall have fully comprehended its nature, we shall understand in a twofold manner what we saw on earth. Some such view, then, must we hold regarding this abode in the air. I think, therefore, that all the saints who depart from this life will remain in some place situated on the earth, which holy Scripture calls paradise, as in some place of instruction, and, so to speak, class-room or school of souls, in which they are to be instructed regarding all the things which they had seen on earth, and are to receive also some information respecting things that are to follow in the future, as even when in this

life they had obtained in some degree indications of future events, although through a glass darkly, all of which are revealed more clearly and distinctly to the saints in their proper time and place. If any one indeed be pure in heart, and holy in mind, and more practised in perception, he will, by making more rapid progress, quickly ascend to a place in the air, and reach the kingdom of heaven, through those mansions, so to speak, in the various places which the Greeks have termed spheres, i.e., globes, but which holy Scripture has called heavens; in each of which he will first see clearly what is done there, and in the second place, will discover the reason why things are so done: and thus he will in order pass through all gradations, following Him who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, who said, I will that where I am, these may be also. And of this diversity of places He speaks, when He says, In My Father's house are many mansions. He Himself is everywhere, and passes swiftly through all things; nor are we any longer to understand Him as existing in those narrow limits in which He was once confined for our sakes, i.e., not in that circumscribed body which He occupied on earth, when dwelling among men, according to which He might be considered as enclosed in some one place.

7\.

When, then, the saints shall have reached the celestial abodes, they will clearly see the nature of the stars one by one, and will understand whether they are endued with life, or their condition, whatever it is. And they will comprehend also the other reasons for the works of God, which He Himself will reveal to them. For He will show to them, as to children, the causes of things and the power of His creation, and will explain why that star was placed in that particular quarter of the sky, and why it was separated from another by so great an intervening space; what, e.g., would have been the consequence if it had been nearer or more remote; or if that star had been larger than this, how the totality of things would not have remained the same, but all would have been transformed into a different condition of being. And so, when they have finished all those matters which are connected with the stars, and with the heavenly revolutions, they will come to those which are not seen, or to those whose names only we have heard, and to things which are invisible, which the Apostle Paul has informed us are numerous, although what they are, or what difference may exist among them, we cannot even conjecture by our feeble intellect. And thus the rational nature, growing by each individual step, not as it grew in this life in flesh, and body, and soul, but enlarged in understanding and in power of perception, is raised as a mind already perfect to perfect knowledge, no longer at all impeded by those carnal senses, but increased in intellectual growth; and ever gazing purely, and, so to speak, face to face, on the causes of things, it attains perfection, firstly, viz., that by which it ascends to (the truth), and secondly, that by which it abides in it, having problems and the understanding of things, and the causes of events, as the food on which it may feast. For as in this life our bodies grow physically to what they are, through a sufficiency of food in early life supplying the means of increase, but after the due height has been attained we use food no longer to grow, but to live, and to be preserved in life by it; so also I think that the mind, when it has attained perfection, eats and avails itself of suitable and appropriate food in such a degree, that nothing ought to be either deficient or superfluous. And in all things this food is to be understood as the contemplation and understanding of God, which is of a measure appropriate and suitable to this nature, which was made and created; and this measure it is proper should be observed by every one of those who are beginning to see God, i.e., to understand Him through purity of heart.

Source: Translated by Frederick Crombie (ANF, Vol. IV).

Text sourced from New Advent (newadvent.org). Accessed September 2026.

Translation: Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. 4 translation by Frederick Crombie, 1885; long public domain. Author d. 253. — copyright pre-verified (author pre-1900; PD English translation identified).

<https://www.thestromata.com/texts/de-principiis-book-ii>