

De Principiis (Book IV)

Origen

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

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INTRODUCTION

Book IV of Origen's great systematic treatise turns from cosmology and anthropology to the question that undergirds the whole enterprise: how Scripture is to be read. Writing in third-century Alexandria, where allegorical reading of Homer was already a refined art, Origen argues that the biblical text possesses body, soul, and spirit — a threefold sense that would shape Christian exegesis from Ambrose and Jerome through the medieval fourfold method and into Bonaventure. The Latin here is Rufinus's, whose softening of Origen's more speculative passages became its own controversy and is part of why the Greek original largely perished. Read it as a working manual for interpretation, one that moves by accumulation of scriptural evidence rather than by argument alone, and expect a mind willing to press every apparent difficulty in the text as an invitation to deeper meaning.

De Principiis (Book IV)

Translated from the Latin of Rufinus

1\.. But as it is not sufficient, in the discussion of matters of such importance, to entrust the decision to the human senses and to the human understanding, and to pronounce on things invisible as if they were seen by us, we must, in order to establish the positions which we have laid down, adduce the testimony of Holy Scripture. And that this testimony may produce a sure and unhesitating belief, either with regard to what we have still to advance, or to what has been already stated, it seems necessary to show, in the first place, that the Scriptures themselves are divine, i.e., were inspired by the Spirit of God. We shall therefore with all possible brevity draw forth from the Holy Scriptures themselves, such evidence on this point as may produce upon us a suitable impression, (making our quotations) from Moses, the first legislator of the Hebrew nation, and from the words of Jesus Christ, the Author and Chief of the Christian religious system. For although there have been numerous legislators among the Greeks and Barbarians, and also countless teachers and philosophers who professed to declare the truth, we do not remember any legislator who was able to produce in the minds of foreign nations an affection and a zeal (for him) such as led them either voluntarily to adopt his laws, or to defend them with all the efforts of their mind. No one, then, has been able to introduce and make known what seemed to himself the truth, among, I do not say many foreign nations, but even among the individuals of one single nation,

in such a manner that a knowledge and belief of the same should extend to all. And yet there can be no doubt that it was the wish of the legislators that their laws should be observed by all men, if possible; and of the teachers, that what appeared to themselves to be truth, should become known to all. But knowing that they could by no means succeed in producing any such mighty power within them as would lead foreign nations to obey their laws, or have regard to their statements, they did not venture even to essay the attempt, lest the failure of the undertaking should stamp their conduct with the mark of imprudence. And yet there are throughout the whole world — throughout all Greece, and all foreign countries — countless individuals who have abandoned the laws of their country, and those whom they had believed to be gods, and have yielded themselves up to the obedience of the law of Moses, and to the discipleship and worship of Christ; and have done this, not without exciting against themselves the intense hatred of the worshippers of images, so as frequently to be exposed to cruel tortures from the latter, and sometimes even to be put to death. And yet they embrace, and with all affection preserve, the words and teaching of Christ.

2\ And we may see, moreover, how that religion itself grew up in a short time, making progress by the punishment and death of its worshippers, by the plundering of their goods, and by the tortures of every kind which they endured; and this result is the more surprising, that even the teachers of it themselves neither were men of skill, nor very numerous; and yet these words are preached throughout the whole world, so that Greeks and Barbarians, wise and foolish, adopt the doctrines of the Christian religion. From which it is no doubtful inference, that it is not by human power or might that the words of Jesus Christ come to prevail with all faith and power over the understandings and souls of all men. For, that these results were both predicted by Him, and established by divine answers proceeding from Him, is clear from His own words: You shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. And again: This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached among all nations. And again: Many shall say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunk in Your name, and in Your name cast out devils? And I will say unto them, Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity, I never knew you. If these sayings, indeed, had been so uttered by Him, and yet if these predictions had not been fulfilled, they might perhaps appear to be untrue, and not to possess any authority. But now, when His declarations do pass into fulfilment, seeing they were predicted with such power and authority, it is most clearly shown to be true that He, when He was made man, delivered to men the precepts of salvation.

3\ What, then, are we to say of this, which the prophets had beforehand foretold of Him, that princes would not cease from Judah, nor leaders from between his thighs, until He should come for whom it has been reserved (viz., the kingdom), and until the expectation of the Gentiles should come? For it is most distinctly evident from the history itself, from what is clearly seen at the present day, that from the times of Christ onwards there were no kings among the Jews. Nay, even all those objects of Jewish pride, of which they vaunted so much, and in which they exulted, whether regarding the beauty of the temple or the ornaments of the altar, and all those sacerdotal fillets and robes of the high priests, were all destroyed together. For the prophecy was fulfilled which had declared, For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king and prince: there shall be no victim, nor altar, nor priesthood, nor answers. These testimonies, accordingly, we employ against those who seem to assert that what is

spoken in Genesis by Jacob refers to Judah; and who say that there still remains a prince of the race of Judah — he, viz., who is the prince of their nation, whom they style Patriarch — and that there cannot fail (a ruler) of his seed, who will remain until the advent of that Christ whom they picture to themselves. But if the prophet's words be true, when he says, The children of Israel shall abide many days without king, without prince; and there shall be no victim, nor altar, nor priesthood; and if, certainly, since the overthrow of the temple, victims are neither offered, nor any altar found, nor any priesthood exists, it is most certain that, as it is written, princes have departed from Judah, and a leader from between his thighs, until the coming of Him for whom it has been reserved. It is established, then, that He has come for whom it has been reserved, and in whom is the expectation of the Gentiles. And this manifestly seems to be fulfilled in the multitude of those who have believed on God through Christ out of the different nations.

4\ In the song of Deuteronomy, also, it is prophetically declared that, on account of the sins of the former people, there was to be an election of a foolish nation — no other, certainly, than that which was brought about by Christ; for thus the words run: They have moved Me to anger with their images, and I will stir them up to jealousy; I will arouse them to anger against a foolish nation. We may therefore evidently see how the Hebrews, who are said to have excited God's anger by means of those (idols), which are no gods, and to have aroused His wrath by their images, were themselves also excited to jealousy by means of a foolish nation, which God has chosen by the advent of Jesus Christ and His disciples. For the following is the language of the apostle: For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men among you after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble (are called): but God has chosen the foolish things of the world, and the things which are not, to destroy the things which formerly existed. Carnal Israel, therefore, should not boast; for such is the term used by the apostle: No flesh, I say, should glory in the presence of God.

5\ What are we to say, moreover, regarding those prophecies of Christ contained in the Psalms, especially the one with the superscription, A song for the Beloved; in which it is stated that His tongue is the pen of a ready writer; fairer than the children of men; that grace is poured into His lips? Now, the indication that grace has been poured upon His lips is this, that, after a short period had elapsed — for He taught only during a year and some months — the whole world, nevertheless, became filled with His doctrine, and with faith in His religion. There arose, then, in His days righteous men, and abundance of peace, abiding even to the end, which end is entitled the taking away of the moon; and His dominion shall extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. There was a sign also given to the house of David. For a virgin conceived, and bare Emmanuel, which, when interpreted, signifies, God with us: know it, O nations, and be overcome. For we are conquered and overcome, who are of the Gentiles, and remain as a kind of spoils of His victory, who have subjected our necks to His grace. Even the place of His birth was predicted in the prophecies of Micah, who said, And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, art by no means small among the leaders of Judah: for out of you shall come forth a Leader, who shall rule My people Israel. The weeks of years, also, which the prophet Daniel had predicted, extending to the leadership of Christ, have been fulfilled. Moreover, he is at hand, who in the book of Job is said to be about to destroy the huge beast, who also gave power to his own disciples to tread on serpents and scorpions, and on all the power of the enemy, without being injured by him.

But if any one will consider the journeys of Christ's apostles throughout the different places, in which as His messengers they preached the Gospel, he will find that both what they ventured to undertake is beyond the power of man, and what they were enabled to accomplish is from God alone. If we consider how men, on hearing that a new doctrine was introduced by these, were able to receive them; or rather, when desiring often to destroy them, they were prevented by a divine power which was in them, we shall find that in this nothing was effected by human strength, but that the whole was the result of the divine power and providence — signs and wonders, manifest beyond all doubt, bearing testimony to their word and doctrine.

6\ These points now being briefly established, viz., regarding the deity of Christ, and the fulfilment of all that was prophesied respecting Him, I think that this position also has been made good, viz., that the Scriptures themselves, which contained these predictions, were divinely inspired, — those, namely, which had either foretold His advent, or the power of His doctrine, or the bringing over of all nations (to His obedience). To which this remark must be added, that the divinity and inspiration both of the predictions of the prophets and of the law of Moses have been clearly revealed and confirmed, especially since the advent of Christ into the world. For before the fulfilment of those events which were predicted by them, they could not, although true and inspired by God, be shown to be so, because they were as yet unfulfilled. But the coming of Christ was a declaration that their statements were true and divinely inspired, although it was certainly doubtful before that whether there would be an accomplishment of those things which had been foretold.

If any one, moreover, consider the words of the prophets with all the zeal and reverence which they deserve, it is certain that, in the perusal and careful examination thus given them, he will feel his mind and senses touched by a divine breath, and will acknowledge that the words which he reads were no human utterances, but the language of God; and from his own emotions he will feel that these books were the composition of no human skill, nor of any mortal eloquence, but, so to speak, of a style that is divine. The splendour of Christ's advent, therefore, illuminating the law of Moses by the light of truth, has taken away that veil which had been placed over the letter (of the law), and has unsealed, for every one who believes upon Him, all the blessings which were concealed by the covering of the word.

7\ It is, however, a matter attended with considerable labour, to point out, in every instance, how and when the predictions of the prophets were fulfilled, so as to appear to confirm those who are in doubt, seeing it is possible for everyone who wishes to become more thoroughly acquainted with these things, to gather abundant proofs from the records of the truth themselves. But if the sense of the letter, which is beyond man, does not appear to present itself at once, on the first glance, to those who are less versed in divine discipline, it is not at all to be wondered at, because divine things are brought down somewhat slowly to (the comprehension of) men, and elude the view in proportion as one is either sceptical or unworthy. For although it is certain that all things which exist in this world, or take place in it, are ordered by the providence of God, and certain events indeed do appear with sufficient clearness to be under the disposal of His providential government, yet others again unfold themselves so mysteriously and incomprehensibly, that the plan of Divine Providence with regard to them is completely concealed; so that it is occasionally believed by some that particular occurrences do not belong to (the plan of) Providence, because the principle eludes their grasp, according to which the works of Divine Providence are administered with indescribable skill; which principle of administration, however, is not equally concealed from all. For even among men themselves, one individual devotes less consideration to it, another more; while by every man, He who is on earth, whoever is the inhabitant of heaven, is more acknowledged. And the nature of bodies is clear to us in one way, that of trees in another, that of animals in a third; the nature of souls, again, is concealed in a different way; and the manner in which the diverse movements of rational understandings are ordered by Providence, eludes the view of men in a greater degree, and even, in my opinion, in no small degree that of the angels also. But as the existence of divine providence is not refuted by those especially who are certain of its existence,

but who do not comprehend its workings or arrangements by the powers of the human mind; so neither will the divine inspiration of holy Scripture, which extends throughout its body, be believed to be non-existent, because the weakness of our understanding is unable to trace out the hidden and secret meaning in each individual word, the treasure of divine wisdom being hid in the vulgar and unpolished vessels of words, as the apostle also points out when he says, We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the virtue of the divine power may shine out the more brightly, no coloring of human eloquence being intermingled with the truth of the doctrines. For if our books induced men to believe because they were composed either by rhetorical arts or by the wisdom of philosophy, then undoubtedly our faith would be considered to be based on the art of words, and on human wisdom, and not upon the power of God; whereas it is now known to all that the word of this preaching has been so accepted by numbers throughout almost the whole world, because they understood their belief to rest not on the persuasive words of human wisdom, but on the manifestation of the Spirit and of power. On which account, being led by a heavenly, nay, by a more than heavenly power, to faith and acceptance, that we may worship the sole Creator of all things as our God, let us also do our utmost endeavour, by abandoning the language of the elements of Christ, which are but the first beginnings of wisdom, to go on to perfection, in order that that wisdom which is given to them who are perfect, may be given to us also. For such is the promise of him to whom was entrusted the preaching of this wisdom, in the words: Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, who will be brought to nought; by which he shows that this wisdom of ours has nothing in common, so far as regards the beauty of language, with the wisdom of this world. This wisdom, then, will be inscribed more clearly and perfectly on our hearts, if it be made known to us according to the revelation of the mystery which has been hid from eternity, but now is manifest through the Scriptures of prophecy, and the advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Many, not understanding the Scriptures in a spiritual sense, but incorrectly, have fallen into heresies.

8\ These particulars, then, being briefly stated regarding the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures by the Holy Spirit, it seems necessary to explain this point also, viz., how certain persons, not reading them correctly, have given themselves over to erroneous opinions, inasmuch as the procedure to be followed, in order to attain an understanding of the holy writings, is unknown to many. The Jews, in fine, owing to the hardness of their heart, and from a desire to appear wise in their own eyes, have not believed in our Lord and Saviour, judging that those statements which were uttered respecting Him ought to be understood literally, i.e., that He ought in a sensible and visible manner to preach deliverance to the captives, and first build a city which they truly deem the city of God, and cut off at the same time the chariots of Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; that He ought also to eat butter and honey, in order to choose the good before He should come to know how to bring forth evil. They think, also, that it has been predicted that the wolf — that four-footed animal — is, at the coming of Christ, to feed with the lambs, and the leopard to lie down with kids, and the calf and the bull to pasture with lions, and that they are to be led by a little child to the pasture; that the ox and the bear are to lie down together in the green fields, and that their young ones are to be fed together; that lions also will frequent stalls with the oxen, and feed on straw. And seeing that, according to history, there was no accomplishment of any

of those things predicted of Him, in which they believed the signs of Christ's advent were especially to be observed, they refused to acknowledge the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ; nay, contrary to all the principles of human and divine law, i.e., contrary to the faith of prophecy, they crucified Him for assuming to Himself the name of Christ. Thereupon the heretics, reading that it is written in the law, A fire has been kindled in Mine anger; and that I the Lord am a jealous (God), visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation; and that it repents Me that I anointed Saul to be king; and, I am the Lord, who make peace and create evil; and again, There is not evil in a city which the Lord has not done; and, Evils came down from the Lord upon the gates of Jerusalem; and, An evil spirit from the Lord plagued Saul; and reading many other passages similar to these, which are found in Scripture, they did not venture to assert that these were not the Scriptures of God, but they considered them to be the words of that creator God whom the Jews worshipped, and who, they judged, ought to be regarded as just only, and not also as good; but that the Saviour had come to announce to us a more perfect God, who, they allege; is not the creator of the world — there being different and discordant opinions among them even on this very point, because, when they once depart from a belief in God the Creator, who is Lord of all, they have given themselves over to various inventions and fables, devising certain (fictions), and asserting that some things were visible, and made by one (God), and that certain other things were invisible, and were created by another, according to the vain and fanciful suggestions of their own minds. But not a few also of the more simple of those, who appear to be restrained within the faith of the Church, are of opinion that there is no greater God than the Creator, holding in this a correct and sound opinion; and yet they entertain regarding Him such views as would not be entertained regarding the most unjust and cruel of men.

9\ Now the reason of the erroneous apprehension of all these points on the part of those whom we have mentioned above, is no other than this, that holy Scripture is not understood by them according to its spiritual, but according to its literal meaning. And therefore we shall endeavour, so far as our moderate capacity will permit, to point out to those who believe the holy Scriptures to be no human compositions, but to be written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and to be transmitted and entrusted to us by the will of God the Father, through His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, what appears to us, who observe things by a right way of understanding, to be the standard and discipline delivered to the apostles by Jesus Christ, and which they handed down in succession to their posterity, the teachers of the holy Church. Now, that there are certain mystical economies indicated in holy Scripture, is admitted by all, I think, even the simplest of believers. But what these are, or of what kind they are, he who is rightly minded, and not overcome with the vice of boasting, will scrupulously acknowledge himself to be ignorant. For if anyone, e.g., were to adduce the case of the daughters of Lot, who seem, contrary to the law of God, to have had intercourse with their father, or that of the two wives of Abraham, or of the two sisters who were married to Jacob, or of the two handmaids who increased the number of his sons, what other answer could be returned than that these were certain mysteries, and forms of spiritual things, but that we are ignorant of what nature they are? Nay, even when we read of the construction of the tabernacle, we deem it certain that the written descriptions are the figures of certain hidden things; but to adapt these to their appropriate standards, and to open up and discuss every individual point, I consider to be exceedingly difficult, not to say impossible. That that description, however, is, as I have said, full of mysteries, does not escape even the common understanding. But all the narrative portion, relating either to the marriages, or to the begetting of the children, or to battles of different kinds, or to any other histories whatever, what else can they be supposed to be, save the forms and figures of hidden and sacred things? As men, however, make little effort to exercise their intellect, or imagine that they possess knowledge before they really learn, the consequence is that they never begin to have knowledge or if there be no want of a desire, at least, nor of an instructor, and if divine knowledge be sought after, as it ought to be, in a religious and holy spirit, and in the hope that many points will be opened up by the revelation of God— since to human sense they are exceedingly difficult and obscure — then, perhaps, he who seeks in such a manner will find what it is lawful to discover.

10\ But lest this difficulty perhaps should be supposed to exist only in the language of the prophets, seeing the prophetic style is allowed by all to abound in figures and enigmas, what do we find when we come to the Gospels? Is there not hidden there also an inner, namely a divine sense, which is revealed by that grace alone which he had received who said, But we have the mind of Christ, that we might know the things freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Spirit teaches? And if one now were to read the revelations which were made to John, how amazed would he not be that there should be contained within them so great an amount of hidden, ineffable mysteries, in which it is clearly understood, even by those who cannot comprehend _what_ is concealed, that _something_ certainly _is_ concealed. And yet are not the Epistles of the Apostles, which seem to some to be plainer, filled with meanings so profound, that by means of them, as by some small receptacle, the clearness of incalculable light appears to be poured into those who are capable of understanding the meaning of divine wisdom? And therefore, because this is the case, and because there are many who go wrong in this life, I do not consider that it is easy to pronounce,

without danger, that anyone knows or understands those things, which, in order to be opened up, need the key of knowledge; which key, the Saviour declared, lay with those who were skilled in the law. And here, although it is a digression, I think we should inquire of those who assert that before the advent of the Saviour there was no truth among those who were engaged in the study of the law, how it could be said by our Lord Jesus Christ that the keys of knowledge were with them, who had the books of the prophets and of the law in their hands. For thus did He speak: Woe unto you, you teachers of the law, who have taken away the key of knowledge: you entered not in yourselves, and you hindered those who wished to enter in.

11\). But, as we had begun to observe, the way which seems to us the correct one for the understanding of the Scriptures, and for the investigation of their meaning, we consider to be of the following kind: for we are instructed by Scripture itself in regard to the ideas which we ought to form of it. In the Proverbs of Solomon we find some such rule as the following laid down, respecting the consideration of holy Scripture: And do, he says, describe these things to yourself in a threefold manner, in counsel and knowledge, and that you may answer the words of truth to those who have proposed them to you. Each one, then, ought to describe in his own mind, in a threefold manner, the understanding of the divine letters — that is, in order that all the more simple individuals may be edified, so to speak, by the very body of Scripture; for such we term that common and historical sense: while, if some have commenced to make considerable progress, and are able to see something more (than that), *they* may be edified by the very soul of Scripture. Those, again, who are perfect, and who resemble those of whom the apostle says, We speak wisdom among them that are perfect, but not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, who will be brought to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God, hidden in a mystery, which God has decreed before the ages unto our glory; — all such as these may be edified by the spiritual law itself (which has a shadow of good things to come), as if by the Spirit. For as man is said to consist of body, and soul, and spirit, so also does sacred Scripture, which has been granted by the divine bounty for the salvation of man; which we see pointed out, moreover, in the little book of *The Shepherd*, which seems to be despised by some, where Hermas is commanded to write two little books, and afterwards to announce to the presbyters of the Church what he learned from the Spirit. For these are the words that are written: And you will write, he says, two books; and you will give the one to Clement, and the other to Grapte. And let Grapte admonish the widows and orphans, and let Clement send through all the cities which are abroad, while you will announce to the presbyters of the Church. Grapte, accordingly, who is commanded to admonish the orphans and widows, is the pure understanding of the letter itself; by which those youthful minds are admonished, who have not yet deserved to have God as their Father, and are on that account styled orphans. They, again, are the widows, who have withdrawn themselves from the unjust man, to whom they had been united contrary to law; but who have remained widows, because they have not yet advanced to the stage of being joined to a heavenly Bridegroom. Clement, moreover, is ordered to send into those cities which are abroad what is written to those individuals who already are withdrawing from the letter — as if the meaning were to those souls who, being built up by this means, have begun to rise above the cares of the body and the desires of the flesh; while he himself, who had learned from the Holy Spirit, is commanded to announce, not by letter nor by book, but by the living voice, to the presbyters of the Church of Christ, i.e., to those who possess a mature faculty of wisdom, capable of receiving spiritual teaching.

12\). This point, indeed, is not to be passed by without notice, viz., that there are certain passages of Scripture where this body, as we termed it, i.e., this inferential historical sense, is not always found, as we shall prove to be the case in the following pages, but where that which we termed soul or spirit can only be understood. And this, I think, is indicated in the Gospels, where there are said to be placed, according to the manner of purification among the Jews, six water-vessels, containing two or three firkins a-piece; by which, as I have said, the language of the Gospel seems to indicate, with respect to those who are secretly called by the apostle Jews, that they are purified by the word of Scripture — receiving indeed sometimes two firkins, i.e., the understanding of the soul or spirit, according to our

statement as above; sometimes even three (firkins), when in the reading (of Scripture) the bodily sense, which is the historical, may be preserved for the edification of the people. Now six water-vessels are appropriately spoken of, with regard to those persons who are purified by being placed in the world; for we read that in six days— which is the perfect number — this world and all things in it were finished. How great, then, is the utility of this first historical sense which we have mentioned, is attested by the multitude of all believers, who believe with adequate faith and simplicity, and does not need much argument, because it is openly manifest to all; whereas of that sense which we have called above the soul, as it were, of Scripture, the Apostle Paul has given us numerous examples in the first Epistle to the Corinthians. For we find the expression, You shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the grain. And afterwards, when explaining what precept ought to be understood by this, he adds the words: Does God take care for oxen? Or says He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written; that he who ploughs should plough in hope, and he that threshes, in hope of partaking. Very many other passages also of this nature, which are in this way explained of the law, contribute extensive information to the hearers.

13\). Now a spiritual interpretation is of this nature: when one is able to point out what are the heavenly things of which these serve as the patterns and shadow, who are Jews according to the flesh, and of what things future the law contains a shadow, and any other expressions of this kind that may be found in holy Scripture; or when it is a subject of inquiry, what is that wisdom hidden in a mystery which God ordained before the world for our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew; or the meaning of the apostle's language, when, employing certain illustrations from Exodus or Numbers, he says: These things happened to them in a figure, and they are written on our account, on whom the ends of the ages have come. Now, an opportunity is afforded us of understanding of what those things which happened to them were figures, when he adds: And they drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ. In another Epistle also, when referring to the tabernacle, he mentions the direction which was given to Moses: You shall make (all things) according to the pattern which was showed you in the mount. And writing to the Galatians, and upbraiding certain individuals who seem to themselves to read the law, and yet without understanding it, because of their ignorance of the fact that an allegorical meaning underlies what is written, he says to them in a certain tone of rebuke: Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons; the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bond-woman was born according to the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants. And here this point is to be attended to, viz., the caution with which the apostle employs the expression, You who are under the law, do you not hear the law? Do you not hear, i.e., do you not understand and know? In the Epistle to the Colossians, again, briefly summing up and condensing the meaning of the whole law, he says: Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of holy days, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath, which are a shadow of things to come. Writing to the Hebrews also, and treating of those who belong to the circumcision, he says: Those who serve to the example and shadow of heavenly things. Now perhaps, through these illustrations, no doubt will be entertained regarding the five books of Moses, by those who hold the writings of the apostle, as divinely inspired. And if they require, with respect to the rest of the history, that those events which are contained in it should be considered as having happened for an ensample to those of whom they are written, we have observed that this also has been stated in the Epistle to the Romans, where the apostle adduces an instance from the third book of Kings, saying, I have left me seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal; which expression Paul understood as figuratively spoken of those who are called Israelites according to the election, in order to show that the advent of Christ had not only now been of advantage to the Gentiles, but that very many even of the race of Israel had been called to salvation.

14\). This being the state of the case, we shall sketch out, as if by way of illustration and pattern, what may occur to us with regard to the manner in which holy Scripture is to be understood on these several points, repeating in the first instance, and pointing out this fact, that the Holy Spirit, by the providence and will of God, through the power of His only-begotten Word, who was in the beginning God with God, enlightened the ministers of truth, the prophets and apostles, to understand the mysteries of those things or causes which take place among men, or with respect to men. And by men, I now mean souls that are placed in bodies, who, relating those mysteries that are known to them, and revealed through Christ, as if they were a kind of human transactions, or handing down certain legal observances and

injunctions, described them figuratively; not that anyone who pleased might view these expositions as deserving to be trampled under foot, but that he who should devote himself with all chastity, and sobriety, and watchfulness, to studies of this kind, might be able by this means to trace out the meaning of the Spirit of God, which is perhaps lying profoundly buried, and the context, which may be pointing again in another direction than the ordinary usage of speech would indicate. And in this way he might become a sharer in the knowledge of the Spirit, and a partaker in the divine counsel, because the soul cannot come to the perfection of knowledge otherwise than by inspiration of the truth of the divine wisdom. Accordingly, it is of God, i.e., of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, that these men, filled with the Divine Spirit, chiefly treat; then the mysteries relating to the Son of God— how the Word became flesh, and why He descended even to the assumption of the form of a servant — are the subject, as I have said, of explanation by those persons who are filled with the Divine Spirit. It next followed, necessarily, that they should instruct mortals by divine teaching, regarding rational creatures, both those of heaven and the happier ones of earth; and also (should explain) the differences among souls, and the origin of these differences; and then should tell what this world is, and why it was created; whence also sprung the great and terrible wickedness which extends over the earth. And whether that wickedness is found on this earth only, or in other places, is a point which it was necessary for us to learn from divine teaching. Since, then, it was the intention of the Holy Spirit to enlighten with respect to these and similar subjects, those holy souls who had devoted themselves to the service of the truth, this object was kept in view, in the second place, viz., for the sake of those who either could not or would not give themselves to this labour and toil by which they might deserve to be instructed in or to recognise things of such value and importance, to wrap up and conceal, as we said before, in ordinary language, under the covering of some history and narrative of visible things, hidden mysteries. There is therefore introduced the narrative of the visible creation, and the creation and formation of the first man; then the offspring which followed from him in succession, and some of the actions which were done by the good among his posterity, are related, and occasionally certain crimes also, which are stated to have been committed by them as being human; and afterwards certain unchaste or wicked deeds also are narrated as being the acts of the wicked. The description of battles, moreover, is given in a wonderful manner, and the alternations of victors and vanquished, by which certain ineffable mysteries are made known to those who know how to investigate statements of that kind. By an admirable discipline of wisdom, too, the law of truth, even of the prophets, is implanted in the Scriptures of the law, each of which is woven by a divine art of wisdom, as a kind of covering and veil of spiritual truths; and this is what we have called the body of Scripture, so that also, in this way, what we have called the covering of the letter, woven by the art of wisdom, might be capable of edifying and profiting many, when others would derive no benefit.

15\). But as if, in all the instances of this covering (i.e., of this history), the logical connection and order of the law had been preserved, we would not certainly believe, when thus possessing the meaning of Scripture in a continuous series, that anything else was contained in it save what was indicated on the surface; so for that reason divine wisdom took care that certain stumbling-blocks, or interruptions, to the historical meaning should take place, by the introduction into the midst (of the narrative) of certain impossibilities and incongruities; that in this way the very interruption of the narrative might, as by the interposition of a bolt, present an obstacle to the reader, whereby he might refuse to acknowledge

the way which conducts to the ordinary meaning; and being thus excluded and debarred from it, we might be recalled to the beginning of another way, in order that, by entering upon a narrow path, and passing to a loftier and more sublime road, he might lay open the immense breadth of divine wisdom. This, however, must not be unnoted by us, that as the chief object of the Holy Spirit is to preserve the coherence of the spiritual meaning, either in those things which ought to be done or which have been already performed, if He anywhere finds that those events which, according to the history, took place, can be adapted to a spiritual meaning, He composed a texture of both kinds in one style of narration, always concealing the hidden meaning more deeply; but where the historical narrative could not be made appropriate to the spiritual coherence of the occurrences, He inserted sometimes certain things which either did not take place or could not take place; sometimes also what might happen, but what did not: and He does this at one time in a few words, which, taken in their bodily meaning, seem incapable of containing truth, and at another by the insertion of many. And this we find frequently to be the case in the legislative portions, where there are many things manifestly useful among the bodily precepts, but a very great number also in which no principle of utility is at all discernible, and sometimes even things which are judged to be impossibilities. Now all this, as we have remarked, was done by the Holy Spirit in order that, seeing those events which lie on the surface can be neither true nor useful, we may be led to the investigation of that truth which is more deeply concealed, and to the ascertaining of a meaning worthy of God in those Scriptures which we believe to be inspired by Him.

16\). Nor was it only with regard to those Scriptures which were composed down to the advent of Christ that the Holy Spirit thus dealt; but as being one and the same Spirit, and proceeding from one God, He dealt in the same way with the evangelists and apostles. For even those narratives which He inspired them to write were not composed without the aid of that wisdom of His, the nature of which we have above explained. Whence also in them were intermingled not a few things by which, the historical order of the narrative being interrupted and broken up, the attention of the reader might be recalled, by the impossibility of the case, to an examination of the inner meaning. But, that our meaning may be ascertained by the facts themselves, let us examine the passages of Scripture. Now who is there, pray, possessed of understanding, that will regard the statement as appropriate, that the first day, and the second, and the third, in which also both evening and morning are mentioned, existed without sun, and moon, and stars — the first day even without a sky? And who is found so ignorant as to suppose that God, as if He had been a husbandman, planted trees in paradise, in Eden towards the east, and a tree of life in it, i.e., a visible and palpable tree of wood, so that anyone eating of it with bodily teeth should obtain life, and, eating again of another tree, should come to the knowledge of good and evil? No one, I think, can doubt that the statement that God walked in the afternoon in paradise, and that Adam lay hid under a tree, is related figuratively in Scripture, that some mystical meaning may be indicated by it. The departure of Cain from the presence of the Lord will manifestly cause a careful reader to inquire what is the presence of God, and how anyone can go out from it. But not to extend the task which we have before us beyond its due limits, it is very easy for anyone who pleases to gather out of holy Scripture what is recorded indeed as having been done, but what nevertheless cannot be believed as having reasonably and appropriately occurred according to the historical account. The same style of Scriptural narrative occurs abundantly in the Gospels, as when the devil is said to have placed Jesus on a lofty mountain, that he might show Him from thence all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. How could it literally come to pass, either that Jesus should be led up by the devil into a high mountain, or that the latter should show him all the kingdoms of the world (as if they were lying beneath his bodily eyes, and adjacent to one mountain), i.e., the kingdoms of the Persians, and Scythians, and Indians? Or how could he show in what manner the kings of these kingdoms are glorified by men? And many other instances similar to this will be found in the Gospels by anyone who will read them with attention, and will observe that in those narratives which appear to be literally recorded, there are inserted and interwoven things which cannot be admitted historically, but which may be accepted in a spiritual signification.

17\). In the passages containing the commandments also, similar things are found. For in the law Moses is commanded to destroy every male that is not circumcised on the eighth day, which is exceedingly incongruous; since it would be necessary, if it were related that the law was executed according to the history, to command those parents to be punished who did not circumcise their children, and also those who were the nurses of little children. The declaration of Scripture now is, The uncircumcised male, i.e., who shall not have been circumcised, shall be cut off from his people. And if we are to inquire regarding the impossibilities of the law, we find an animal called the goat-stag, which cannot possibly exist, but which, as being in the number of clean beasts, Moses commands to be eaten; and a griffin, which no one ever remembers or heard of as yielding to human power, but which the legislator forbids to be used for food. Respecting the celebrated observance of the Sabbath also he thus speaks: You shall

sit, everyone in your dwellings; no one shall move from his place on the Sabbath day. Which precept it is impossible to observe literally; for no man can sit a whole day so as not to move from the place where he sat down. With respect to each one of these points now, those who belong to the circumcision, and all who would have no more meaning to be found in sacred Scripture than what is indicated by the letter, consider that there should be no investigation regarding the goat-stag, and the griffin, and the vulture; and they invent some empty and trifling tales about the Sabbath, drawn from some traditional sources or other, alleging that everyone's place is computed to him within two thousand cubits. Others, again, among whom is Dositheus the Samaritan, censure indeed expositions of this kind, but themselves lay down something more ridiculous, viz., that each one must remain until the evening in the posture, place, or position in which he found himself on the Sabbath day; i.e., if found sitting, he is to sit the whole day, or if reclining, he is to recline the whole day. Moreover, the injunction which runs, Bear no burden on the Sabbath day, seems to me an impossibility. For the Jewish doctors, in consequence of these (prescriptions), have betaken themselves, as the holy apostle says, to innumerable fables, saying that it is not accounted a burden if a man wear shoes without nails, but that it is a burden if shoes with nails be worn; and that if it be carried on one shoulder, they consider it a burden but if on both, they declare it to be none.

18\.. And now, if we institute a similar examination with regard to the Gospels, how shall it appear otherwise than absurd to take the injunction literally, Salute no man by the way? And yet there are simple individuals, who think that our Saviour gave this command to His apostles! How, also, can it appear possible for such an order as this to be observed, especially in those countries where there is a rigorous winter, attended by frost and ice, viz., that one should possess neither two coats, nor shoes? And this, that when one is smitten on the right cheek, he is ordered to present the left also, since everyone who strikes with the _right_ hand smites the _left_ cheek? This precept also in the Gospels must be accounted among impossibilities, viz., that if the right eye offend you, it is to be plucked out; for even if we were to suppose that bodily eyes were spoken of, how shall it appear appropriate, that when both eyes have the property of sight, the responsibility of the offense should be transferred to one eye, and that the right one? Or who shall be considered free of a crime of the greatest enormity, that lays hands upon himself? But perhaps the Epistles of the Apostle Paul will appear to be beyond this. For what is his meaning, when he says, Is any man called, being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. This expression indeed, in the first place, does not on careful consideration seem to be spoken with reference to the subject of which he was treating at the time, for this discourse consisted of injunctions relating to marriage and to chastity; and these words, therefore, will have the appearance an unnecessary addition to such a subject. In the second place, however, what objection would there be, if, for the sake of avoiding that unseemliness which is caused by circumcision, a man were able to become uncircumcised? And, in the third place, that is altogether impossible.

The object of all these statements on our part, is to show that it was the design of the Holy Spirit, who deigned to bestow upon us the sacred Scriptures, to show that we were not to be edified by the letter alone, or by everything in it — a thing which we see to be frequently impossible and inconsistent; for in that way not only absurdities, but impossibilities, would be the result; but that we are to understand that

certain occurrences were interwoven in this visible history, which, when considered and understood in their inner meaning, give forth a law which is advantageous to men and worthy of God.

19\). Let no one, however, entertain the suspicion that we do not believe any history in Scripture to be real, because we suspect certain events related in it not to have taken place; or that no precepts of the law are to be taken literally, because we consider certain of them, in which either the nature or possibility of the case so requires, incapable of being observed; or that we do not believe those predictions which were written of the Saviour to have been fulfilled in a manner palpable to the senses; or that His commandments are not to be literally obeyed. We have therefore to state in answer, since we are manifestly so of opinion, that the truth of the history may and ought to be preserved in the majority of instances. For who can deny that Abraham was buried in the double cave at Hebron, as well as Isaac and Jacob, and each of their wives? Or who doubts that Shechem was given as a portion to Joseph? or that Jerusalem is the metropolis of Judea, on which the temple of God was built by Solomon? — and countless other statements. For the passages which hold good in their historical acceptation are much more numerous than those which contain a purely spiritual meaning. Then, again, who would not maintain that the command to honour your father and your mother, that it may be well with you, is sufficient of itself without any spiritual meaning, and necessary for those who observe it? Especially when Paul also has confirmed the command by repeating it in the same words. And what need is there to speak of the prohibitions, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, and others of the same kind? And with respect to the precepts enjoined in the Gospels, no doubt can be entertained that very many of these are to be literally observed, as, e.g., when our Lord says, But I say unto you, Swear not at all; and when He says, Whosoever looks upon a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart; the admonitions also which are found in the writings of the Apostle Paul, Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men, and very many others. And yet I have no doubt that an attentive reader will, in numerous instances, hesitate whether this or that history can be considered to be literally true or not; or whether this or that precept ought to be observed according to the letter or no. And therefore great pains and labour are to be employed, until every reader reverentially understand that he is dealing with divine and not human words inserted in the sacred books.

20\). The understanding, therefore, of holy Scripture which we consider ought to be deservedly and consistently maintained, is of the following kind. A certain nation is declared by holy Scripture to have been chosen by God upon the earth, which nation has received several names: for sometimes the whole of it is termed Israel, and sometimes Jacob; and it was divided by Jeroboam son of Nebat into two portions; and the ten tribes which were formed under him were called Israel, while the two remaining ones (with which were united the tribe of Levi, and that which was descended from the royal race of David) was named Judah. Now the whole of the country possessed by that nation, which it had received from God, was called Judea, in which was situated the metropolis, Jerusalem; and it is called metropolis, being as it were the mother of many cities, the names of which you will frequently find mentioned here and there in the other books of Scripture, but which are collected together into one catalogue in the book of Joshua the Son of Nun.

21\.. This, then, being the state of the case, the holy apostle desiring to elevate in some degree, and to raise our understanding above the earth, says in a certain place, Behold Israel after the flesh; by which he certainly means that there is another Israel which is not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. And again in another passage, For they are not all Israelites who are of Israel.

22\.. Being taught, then, by him that there is one Israel according to the flesh, and another according to the Spirit, when the Saviour says, I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, we do not understand these words as those do who savour of earthly things, i.e., the Ebionites, who derive the appellation of poor from their very name (for Ebion means poor in Hebrew); but we understand that there exists a race of souls which is termed Israel, as is indicated by the interpretation of the name itself: for Israel is interpreted to mean a mind, or man seeing God. The apostle, again, makes a similar revelation respecting Jerusalem, saying, The Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. And in another of his Epistles he says: But you have come unto mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, and to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the Church of the first-born which is written in heaven. If, then, there are certain souls in this world who are called Israel, and a city in heaven which is called Jerusalem, it follows that those cities which are said to belong to the nation of Israel have the heavenly Jerusalem as their metropolis; and that, agreeably to this, we understand as referring to the whole of Judah (of which also we are of opinion that the prophets have spoken in certain mystical narratives), any predictions delivered either regarding Judea or Jerusalem, or invasions of any kind, which the sacred histories declare to have happened to Judea or Jerusalem. Whatever, then, is either narrated or predicted of Jerusalem, must, if we accept the words of Paul as those of Christ speaking in him, be understood as spoken in conformity with his opinion regarding that city which he calls the heavenly Jerusalem, and all those places or cities which are said to be cities of the holy land, of which Jerusalem is the metropolis. For we are to suppose that it is from these very cities that the Saviour, wishing to raise us to a higher grade of intelligence, promises to those who have well managed the money entrusted to them by Himself, that they are to have power over ten or five cities. If, then, the prophecies delivered concerning Judea, and Jerusalem, and Judah, and Israel, and Jacob, not being understood by us in a carnal sense, signify certain divine mysteries, it certainly follows that those prophecies also which were delivered either concerning Egypt or the Egyptians, or Babylonia and the Babylonians, and Sidon and the Sidonians, are not to be understood as spoken of that Egypt which is situated on the earth, or of the earthly Babylon, Tyre, or Sidon. Nor can those predictions which the prophet Ezekiel delivered concerning Pharaoh king of Egypt, apply to any man who may seem to have reigned over Egypt, as the nature of the passage itself declares. In a similar manner also, what is spoken of the prince of Tyre cannot be understood of any man or king of Tyre. And how could we possibly accept, as spoken of a man, what is related in many passages of Scripture, and especially in Isaiah, regarding Nebuchadnezzar? For he is not a man who is said to have fallen from heaven, or who was Lucifer, or who arose in the morning. But with respect to those predictions which are found in Ezekiel concerning Egypt, such as that it is to be destroyed in forty years, so that the foot of man should not be found within it, and that it should suffer such devastation, that throughout the whole land the blood of men should rise to the knees, I do not know that anyone possessed of understanding could refer this to that earthly Egypt which adjoins Ethiopia. But let us see whether it may not be understood more fittingly in the following manner: viz., that as there is a heavenly Jerusalem and Judea, and a

nation undoubtedly which inhabits it, and is named Israel; so also it is possible that there are certain localities near to these which may seem to be called either Egypt, or Babylon, or Tyre, or Sidon, and that the princes of these places, and the souls, if there be any, that inhabit them, are called Egyptians, Babylonians, Tyrians, and Sidonians. From whom also, according to the mode of life which they lead there, a sort of captivity would seem to result, in consequence of which they are said to have fallen from Judea into Babylonia or Egypt, from a higher and better condition, or to have been scattered into other countries.

23\ For perhaps as those who, departing this world in virtue of that death which is common to all, are arranged, in conformity with their actions and deserts — according as they shall be deemed worthy — some in the place which is called hell, others in the bosom of Abraham, and in different localities or mansions; so also from those places, as if dying there, if the expression can be used, do they come down from the upper world to this hell. For that hell to which the souls of the dead are conducted from this world, is, I believe, on account of this distinction, called the lower hell by Scripture, as is said in the book of Psalms: You have delivered my soul from the lowest hell. Everyone, accordingly, of those who descend to the earth is, according to his deserts, or agreeably to the position which he occupied there, ordained to be born in this world, in a different country, or among a different nation, or in a different mode of life, or surrounded by infirmities of a different kind, or to be descended from religious parents, or parents who are not religious; so that it may sometimes happen that an Israelite descends among the Scythians, and a poor Egyptian is brought down to Judea. And yet our Saviour came to gather together the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and as many of the Israelites did not accept His teaching, those who belonged to the Gentiles were called. From which it will appear to follow, that those prophecies which are delivered to the individual nations ought to be referred rather to the souls, and to their different heavenly mansions. Nay, the narratives of the events which are said to have happened either to the nation of Israel, or to Jerusalem, or to Judea, when assailed by this or that nation, cannot in many instances be understood as having actually occurred, and are much more appropriate to those nations of souls who inhabit that heaven which is said to pass away, or who even now are supposed to be inhabitants of it.

If now anyone demand of us clear and distinct declarations on these points out of holy Scripture, we must answer that it was the design of the Holy Spirit, in those portions which appear to relate the history of events, rather to cover and conceal the meaning: in those passages, e.g., where they are said to go down into Egypt, or to be carried captive to Babylonia, or when in these very countries some are said to be brought to excessive humiliation, and to be placed under bondage to their masters; while others, again, in these very countries of their captivity, were held in honour and esteem, so as to occupy positions of rank and power, and were appointed to the government of provinces — all which things, as we have said, are kept hidden and covered in the narratives of holy Scripture, because the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hid in a field; which when a man finds, he hides it, and for joy thereof goes away and sells all that he has, and buys that field. By which similitude, consider whether it be not pointed out that the very soil and surface, so to speak, of Scripture — that is, the literal meaning — is the field, filled with plants and flowers of all kinds; while that deeper and profounder spiritual meaning are the very hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge which the Holy Spirit by Isaiah calls the dark and

invisible and hidden treasures, for the finding out of which the divine help is required: for God alone can burst the brazen gates by which they are enclosed and concealed, and break in pieces the iron bolts and levers by which access is prevented to all those things which are written and concealed in Genesis respecting the different kinds of souls, and of those seeds and generations which either have a close connection with Israel or are widely separated from his descendants; as well as what is that descent of seventy souls into Egypt, which seventy souls became in that land as the stars of heaven in multitude. But as not all of them were the light of this world— for all who are of Israel are not Israel — they grow from being seventy souls to be an important people, and as the sand by the sea-shore innumerable.

Translated from the Greek

(_The translation from the Greek is designedly literal, that the difference between the original and the paraphrase of Rufinus may be more clearly seen._)

1\ Since, in our investigation of matters of such importance, not satisfied with the common opinions, and with the clear evidence of visible things, we take in addition, for the proof of our statements, testimonies from what are believed by us to be divine writings, viz., from that which is called the Old Testament, and that which is styled the New, and endeavour by reason to confirm our faith; and as we have not yet spoken of the Scriptures as divine, come and let us, as if by way of an epitome, treat of a few points respecting them, laying down those reasons which lead us to regard them as divine writings. And before making use of the words of the writings themselves, and of the things which are exhibited in them, we must make the following statement regarding Moses and Jesus Christ — the lawgiver of the Hebrews, and the Introducer of the saving doctrines according to Christianity. For, although there have been very many legislators among the Greeks and Barbarians, and teachers who announced opinions which professed to be the truth, we have heard of no legislator who was able to imbue other nations with a zeal for the reception of his words; and although those who professed to philosophize about truth brought forward a great apparatus of apparent logical demonstration, no one has been able to impress what was deemed by him the truth upon other nations, or even on any number of persons worth mentioning in a single nation. And yet not only would the legislators have liked to enforce those laws which appeared to be good, if possible, upon the whole human race, but the teachers also to have spread what they imagined to be truth everywhere throughout the world. But as they were unable to call men of other languages and from many nations to observe their laws, and accept their teaching, they did not at all attempt to do this, considering not unwisely the impossibility of such a result happening to them. Whereas all Greece, and the barbarous part of our world, contains innumerable zealots, who have deserted the laws of their fathers and the established gods, for the observance of the laws of Moses and the discipleship of the words of Jesus Christ; although those who clave to the law of Moses were hated by the worshippers of images, and those who accepted the words of Jesus Christ were exposed, in addition, to the danger of death.

2\.. And if we observe how powerful the word has become in a very few years, notwithstanding that against those who acknowledged Christianity conspiracies were formed, and some of them on its account put to death, and others of them lost their property, and that, notwithstanding the small number of its teachers, it was preached everywhere throughout the world, so that Greeks and Barbarians, wise and foolish, gave themselves up to the worship that is through Jesus, we have no difficulty in saying that the result is beyond any human power, Jesus having taught with all authority and persuasiveness that His word should not be overcome; so that we may rightly regard as oracular responses those utterances of His, such as, You shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles; and, Many shall say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not eaten in Your name, and drunk in Your name, and in Your name cast out devils? And I shall say unto them, Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity, I never knew you. Now it was perhaps (once) probable that, in uttering these words, He spoke them in vain, so that they were not true; but when that which was delivered with so much authority has come to pass, it shows that God, having really become man, delivered to men the doctrines of salvation.

3\.. And what need is there to mention also that it was predicted of Christ that then would the rulers fail from Judah, and the leaders from his thighs, when He came for whom it is reserved (the kingdom, namely); and that the expectation of the Gentiles should dwell in the land? For it is clearly manifest from the history, and from what is seen at the present day, that from the times of Jesus there were no longer any who were called kings of the Jews; all those Jewish institutions on which they prided themselves — I mean those arrangements relating to the temple and the altar, and the offering of the service, and the robes of the high priest having been destroyed. For the prophecy was fulfilled which said, The children of Israel shall sit many days, there being no king, nor ruler, nor sacrifice, nor altar, nor priesthood, nor responses. And these predictions we employ to answer those who, in their perplexity as to the words spoken in Genesis by Jacob to Judah, assert that the Ethnarch, being of the race of Judah, is the ruler of the people, and that there will not fail some of his seed, until the advent of that Christ whom they figure to their imagination. But if the children of Israel are to sit many days without a king, or ruler, or altar, or priesthood, or responses; and if, since the temple was destroyed, there exists no longer sacrifice, nor altar, nor priesthood, it is manifest that the ruler has failed out of Judah, and the leader from between his thighs. And since the prediction declares that the ruler shall not fail from Judah, and the leader from between his thighs, until what is reserved for Him shall come, it is manifest that He has come to whom (belongs) what is reserved — the expectation of the Gentiles. And this is clear from the multitude of the heathen who have believed on God through Jesus Christ.

4\.. And in the song in Deuteronomy, also, it is prophetically made known that, on account of the sins of the former people, there was to be an election of foolish nations, which has been brought to pass by no other than by Jesus. For they, He says, moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God, they have provoked Me to anger with their idols; and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people, and will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. Now it is possible to understand with all clearness how the Hebrews, who are said to have moved God to jealousy by that which is not God, and to have provoked Him to anger by their idols, were (themselves) aroused to jealousy by that which was not a people — the foolish nation, namely, which God chose by the advent of Jesus Christ and His

disciples. We see, indeed, our calling, that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble (are called); but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and base things, and things that are despised, has God chosen, and things that are not, to bring to nought the things which formerly existed; and let not the Israel according to the flesh, which is called by the apostle flesh, boast in the presence of God.

5\ And what are we to say regarding the prophecies of Christ in the Psalms, there being a certain ode with the superscription For the Beloved, whose tongue is said to be the pen of a ready writer, who is fairer than the sons of men, since grace was poured on His lips? For a proof that grace was poured on His lips is this, that although the period of His teaching was short — for He taught somewhere about a year and a few months — the world has been filled with his teaching, and with the worship of God (established) through Him. For there arose in His days righteousness and abundance of peace, which abides until the consummation, which has been called the taking away of the moon; and He continues ruling from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth. And to the house of David has been given a sign: for the Virgin bore, and was pregnant, and brought forth a son, and His name is Emmanuel, which is, God with us; and as the same prophet says, the prediction has been fulfilled, God (is) with us; know it, O nations, and be overcome; you who are strong, be vanquished: for we of the heathen have been overcome and vanquished, we who have been taken by the grace of His teaching. The place also of His birth has been foretold in (the prophecies of) Micah: For you, Bethlehem, he says, land of Judah, art by no means the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler, who shall rule My people Israel. And according to Daniel, seventy weeks were fulfilled until (the coming of) Christ the Ruler. And He came, who, according to Job, has subdued the great fish, and has given power to His true disciples to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and all the power of the enemy, without sustaining any injury from them. And let one notice also the universal advent of the apostles sent by Jesus to announce the Gospel, and he will see both that the undertaking was beyond human power, and that the commandment came from God. And if we examine how men, on hearing new doctrines, and strange words, yielded themselves up to these teachers, being overcome, amid the very desire to plot against them, by a divine power that watched over these (teachers), we shall not be incredulous as to whether they also wrought miracles, God bearing witness to their words both by signs, and wonders, and various miracles.

6\ And while we thus briefly demonstrate the deity of Christ, and (in so doing) make use of the prophetic declarations regarding Him, we demonstrate at the same time that the writings which prophesied of Him were divinely inspired; and that those documents which announced His coming and His doctrine were given forth with all power and authority, and that on this account they obtained the election from the Gentiles. We must say, also, that the divinity of the prophetic declarations, and the spiritual nature of the law of Moses, shone forth after the advent of Christ. For before the advent of Christ it was not altogether possible to exhibit manifest proofs of the divine inspiration of the ancient Scripture; whereas His coming led those who might suspect the law and the prophets not to be divine, to the clear conviction that they were composed by (the aid of) heavenly grace. And he who reads the words of the prophets with care and attention, feeling by the very perusal the traces of the divinity that is in them, will be led by his own emotions to believe that those words which have been deemed to be the words of God are

not the compositions of men. The light, moreover, which was contained in the law of Moses, but which had been concealed by a veil, shone forth at the advent of Jesus, the veil being taken away, and those blessings, the shadow of which was contained in the letter, coming forth gradually to the knowledge (of men).

7\.. It would be tedious now to enumerate the most ancient prophecies respecting each future event, in order that the doubter, being impressed by their divinity, may lay aside all hesitation and distraction, and devote himself with his whole soul to the words of God. But if in every part of the Scriptures the superhuman element of thought does not seem to present itself to the uninstructed, that is not at all wonderful for, with respect to the works of that providence which embraces the whole world, some show with the utmost clearness that they are works of providence, while others are so concealed as to seem to furnish ground for unbelief with respect to that God who orders all things with unspeakable skill and power. For the artistic plan of a providential Ruler is not so evident in those matters belonging to the earth, as in the case of the sun, and moon, and stars; and not so clear in what relates to human occurrences, as it is in the souls and bodies of animals — the object and reason of the impulses, and phantasies and natures of animals, and the structure of their bodies, being carefully ascertained by those who attend to these things. But as (the doctrine of) providence is not at all weakened (on account of those things which are not understood) in the eyes of those who have once honestly accepted it, so neither is the divinity of Scripture, which extends to the whole of it, (lost) on account of the inability of our weakness to discover in every expression the hidden splendour of the doctrines veiled in common and unattractive phraseology. For we have the treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power of God may shine forth, and that it may not be deemed to proceed from us (who are but) human beings. For if the hackneyed methods of demonstration (common) among men, contained in the books (of the Bible), had been successful in producing conviction; then our faith would rightly have been supposed to rest on the wisdom of men, and not on the power of God; but now it is manifest to everyone who lifts up his eyes, that the word and preaching have not prevailed among the multitude by persuasive words of wisdom, but by demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Wherefore, since a celestial or even a super-celestial power compels us to worship the only Creator, let us leave the doctrine of the beginning of Christ, i.e., the elements, and endeavour to go on to perfection, in order that the wisdom spoken to the perfect may be spoken to us also. For he who possesses it promises to speak wisdom among them that are perfect, but another wisdom than that of this world, and of the rulers of this world, which is brought to nought. And this wisdom will be distinctly stamped upon us, and will produce a revelation of the mystery that was kept silent in the eternal ages, but now has been manifested through the prophetic Scriptures, and the appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

8\ Having spoken thus briefly on the subject of the divine inspiration of the holy Scriptures, it is necessary to proceed to the (consideration of the) manner in which they are to be read and understood, seeing numerous errors have been committed in consequence of the method in which the holy documents ought to be examined; not having been discovered by the multitude. For both the hardened in heart, and the ignorant persons belonging to the circumcision, have not believed on our Saviour, thinking that they are following the language of the prophecies respecting Him, and not perceiving in a manner palpable to their senses that He had proclaimed liberty to the captives, nor that He had built up what they truly consider the city of God, nor cut off the chariots of Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, nor eaten butter and honey, and, before knowing or preferring the evil, had selected the good. And thinking, moreover, that it was prophesied that the wolf — the four-footed animal — was to feed with the lamb, and the leopard to lie down with the kid, and the calf and bull and lion to feed together, being led by a little child, and that the ox and bear were to pasture together, their young ones growing up together, and that the lion was to eat straw like the ox: seeing none of these things visibly accomplished during the advent of Him who is believed by us to be Christ, they did not accept our Lord Jesus; but, as having called Himself Christ improperly, they crucified Him. And those belonging to heretical sects reading this (statement), A fire has been kindled in Mine anger; and this, I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation; and this, I repent of having anointed Saul to be king; and this, I am a God that makes peace, and creates evil; and, among others, this, There is not wickedness in the city which the Lord has not done; and again this, Evils came down from the Lord upon the gates of Jerusalem; and, An evil spirit from the Lord plagued Saul; and countless other passages like these — they have not ventured to disbelieve these as the Scriptures of God; but believing them to be the (words) of the Demiurge, whom the Jews worship, they thought that as the Demiurge was an imperfect and unbenevolent God, the Saviour had come to announce a more perfect Deity, who, they say, is not the Demiurge, being of different opinions regarding Him; and having once departed from the Demiurge, who is the only uncreated God, they have given themselves up to fictions, inventing to themselves hypotheses, according to which they imagine that there are some things which are visible, and certain other things which are not visible, all which are the fancies of their own minds. And yet, indeed, the more simple among those who profess to belong to the Church have supposed that there is no deity greater than the Demiurge, being right in so thinking, while they imagine regarding Him such things as would not be believed of the most savage and unjust of mankind.

9\ Now the cause, in all the points previously enumerated, of the false opinions, and of the impious statements or ignorant assertions about God, appears to be nothing else than the not understanding the Scripture according to its spiritual meaning, but the interpretation of it agreeably to the mere letter. And therefore, to those who believe that the sacred books are not the compositions of men, but that they were composed by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, agreeably to the will of the Father of all things through Jesus Christ, and that they have come down to us, we must point out the ways (of interpreting them) which appear (correct) to us, who cling to the standard of the heavenly Church of Jesus Christ according to the succession of the apostles. Now, that there are certain mystical economies made known by the holy Scriptures, all — even the most simple of those who adhere to the word — have believed; but what these are, candid and modest individuals confess that they know not. If, then, one were to be perplexed about the intercourse of Lot with his daughters, and about the two wives of Abraham, and

the two sisters married to Jacob, and the two handmaids who bore him children, they can return no other answer than this, that these are mysteries not understood by us. Nay, also, when the (description of the) fitting out of the tabernacle is read, believing that what is written is a type, they seek to adapt what they can to each particular related about the tabernacle — not being wrong so far as regards their belief that the tabernacle is a type of _something_, but erring sometimes in adapting the description of that of which the tabernacle is a type, to some special thing in a manner worthy of Scripture. And all the history that is considered to tell of marriages, or the begetting of children, or of wars, or any histories whatever that are in circulation among the multitude, they declare to be types; but of what in each individual instance, partly owing to their habits not being thoroughly exercised — partly, too, owing to their precipitation — sometimes, even when an individual does happen to be well trained and clear-sighted, owing to the excessive difficulty of discovering things on the part of men — the nature of each particular regarding these (types) is not clearly ascertained.

10\.. And what need is there to speak of the prophecies, which we all know to be filled with enigmas and dark sayings? And if we come to the Gospels, the exact understanding of these also, as being the mind of Christ, requires the grace that was given to him who said, But we have the mind of Christ, that we might know the things freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Spirit teaches. And who, on reading the revelations made to John, would not be amazed at the unspeakable mysteries therein concealed, and which are evident (even) to him who does not comprehend what is written? And to what person, skilful in investigating words, would the Epistles of the Apostles seem to be clear and easy of understanding, since even in them there are countless numbers of most profound ideas, which, (issuing forth) as by an aperture, admit of no rapid comprehension? And therefore, since these things are so, and since innumerable individuals fall into mistakes, it is not safe in reading (the Scriptures) to declare that one easily understands what needs the key of knowledge, which the Saviour declares is with the lawyers. And let those answer who will not allow that the truth was with these before the advent of Christ, how the key of knowledge is said by our Lord Jesus Christ to be with those who, as they allege, had not the books which contain the secrets of knowledge, and perfect mysteries. For His words run thus: Woe unto you, you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge: you have not entered in yourselves, and them that were entering in you hindered.

11\.. The way, then, as it appears to us, in which we ought to deal with the Scriptures, and extract from them their meaning, is the following, which has been ascertained from the Scriptures themselves. By Solomon in the Proverbs we find some such rule as this enjoined respecting the divine doctrines of Scripture: And portray them in a threefold manner, in counsel and knowledge, to answer words of truth to them who propose them to you. The individual ought, then, to portray the ideas of holy Scripture in a threefold manner upon his own soul; in order that the simple man may be edified by the flesh, as it were, of the Scripture, for so we name the obvious sense; while he who has ascended a certain way (may be edified) by the soul, as it were. The perfect man, again, and he who resembles those spoken of by the apostle, when he says, We speak wisdom among them that are perfect, but not the wisdom of the world, nor of the rulers of this world, who come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God has ordained before the ages, unto our glory, (may receive

edification) from the spiritual law, which has a shadow of good things to come. For as man consists of body, and soul, and spirit, so in the same way does Scripture, which has been arranged to be given by God for the salvation of men. And therefore we deduce this also from a book which is despised by some — *The Shepherd* — in respect of the command given to Hermas to write two books, and after so doing to announce to the presbyters of the Church what he had learned from the Spirit. The words are as follows: You will write two books, and give one to Clement, and one to Grapte. And Grapte shall admonish the widows and the orphans, and Clement will send to the cities abroad, while you will announce to the presbyters of the Church. Now Grapte, who admonishes the widows and the orphans, is the mere letter (of Scripture), which admonishes those who are yet children in soul, and not able to call God their Father, and who are on that account styled orphans — admonishing, moreover, those who no longer have an unlawful bridegroom, but who remain widows, because they have not yet become worthy of the (heavenly) Bridegroom; while Clement, who is already beyond the letter, is said to send what is written to the cities abroad, as if we were to call these the souls, who are above (the influence of) bodily (affections) and degraded ideas, — the disciple of the Spirit himself being enjoined to make known, no longer by letters, but by living words, to the presbyters of the whole Church of God, who have become grey through wisdom.

12\ But as there are certain passages of Scripture which do not at all contain the corporeal sense, as we shall show in the following (paragraphs), there are also places where we must seek only for the soul, as it were, and spirit of Scripture. And perhaps on this account the water-vessels containing two or three firkins a-piece are said to lie for the purification of the Jews, as we read in the Gospel according to John: the expression darkly intimating, with respect to those who (are called) by the apostle Jews secretly, that they are purified by the word of Scripture, receiving sometimes two firkins, i.e., so to speak, the psychical and spiritual sense; and sometimes three firkins, since some have, in addition to those already mentioned, also the corporeal sense, which is capable of (producing) edification. And six water-vessels are reasonably (appropriate) to those who are purified in the world, which was made in six days — the perfect number. That the first sense, then, is profitable in this respect, that it is capable of imparting edification, is testified by the multitudes of genuine and simple believers; while of that interpretation which is referred back to the soul, there is an illustration in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. The expression is, You shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the grain; to which he adds, Does God take care of oxen? Or says He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this was written: that he that ploughs should plough in hope, and that he who threshes, in hope of partaking. And there are numerous interpretations adapted to the multitude which are in circulation, and which edify those who are unable to understand profounder meanings, and which have somewhat the same character.

13\). But the interpretation is spiritual, when one is able to show of what heavenly things the Jews according to the flesh served as an example and a shadow, and of what future blessings the law contains a shadow. And, generally, we must investigate, according to the apostolic promise, the wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world for the glory of the just, which none of the princes of this world knew. And the same apostle says somewhere, after referring to certain events mentioned as occurring in Exodus and Numbers, that these things happened to them figuratively, but that they were written on our account, on whom the ends of the world have come. And he gives an opportunity for ascertaining of what things these were patterns, when he says: For they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. And in another Epistle, when sketching the various matters relating to the tabernacle, he used the words: You shall make everything according to the pattern showed you in the mount. Moreover, in the Epistle to the Galatians, as if upbraiding those who think that they read the law, and yet do not understand it, judging that those do not understand it who do not reflect that allegories are contained under what is written, he says: Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written, Abraham had two sons; the one by the bond-maid, the other by the free woman. But he who was by the bond-maid was born according to the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants, and so on. Now we must carefully observe each word employed by him. He says: You who desire to be under the law, not You that are under the law; and, Do you not hear the law? — hearing being understood to mean comprehending and knowing. And in the Epistle to the Colossians, briefly abridging the meaning of the whole legislation, he says: Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a festival, or of a new moon, or of Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come. Moreover, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, discoursing of those who belong to the circumcision, he writes: who serve for an ensample and shadow of heavenly things. Now it is probable that, from these illustrations, those will entertain no doubt with respect to the five books of Moses, who have once given in their adhesion to the apostle, as divinely inspired; but do you wish to know, with regard to the rest of the history, if it also happened as a pattern? We must note, then, the expression in the Epistle to the Romans, I have left to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal, quoted from the third book of Kings, which Paul has understood as equivalent (in meaning) to those who are Israelites according to election, because not only were the Gentiles benefited by the advent of Christ, but also certain of the race of God.

14\). This being the state of the case, we have to sketch what seem to us to be the marks of the (true) understanding of Scriptures. And, in the first place, this must be pointed out, that the object of the Spirit, which by the providence of God, through the Word who was in the beginning with God, illuminated the ministers of truth, the prophets and apostles, was especially (the communication) of ineffable mysteries regarding the affairs of men (now by men I mean those souls that make use of bodies), in order that he who is capable of instruction may by investigation, and by devoting himself to the study of the profundities of meaning contained in the words, become a participator of all the doctrines of his counsel. And among those matters which relate to souls (who cannot otherwise obtain perfection apart from the rich and wise truth of God), the (doctrines) belonging to God and His only-begotten Son are necessarily laid down as primary, viz., of what nature He is, and in what manner He is the Son of God, and what are the causes of His descending even to (the assumption of) human flesh, and of

complete humanity; and what, also, is the operation of this (Son), and upon whom and when exercised. And it was necessary also that the subject of kindred beings, and other rational creatures, both those who are divine and those who have fallen from blessedness, together with the reasons of their fall, should be contained in the divine teaching; and also that of the diversities of souls, and of the origin of these diversities, and of the nature of the world, and the cause of its existence. We must learn also the origin of the great and terrible wickedness which overspreads the earth, and whether it is confined to this earth only, or prevails elsewhere. Now, while these and similar objects were present to the Spirit, who enlightened the souls of the holy ministers of the truth, there was a second object, for the sake of those who were unable to endure the fatigue of investigating matters so important, viz., to conceal the doctrine relating to the previously mentioned subjects, in expressions containing a narrative which conveyed an announcement regarding the things of the visible creation, the creation of man, and the successive descendants of the first men until they became numerous; and other histories relating the acts of just men, and the sins occasionally committed by these same men as being human beings, and the wicked deeds, both of unchastity and vice, committed by sinful and ungodly men. And what is most remarkable, by the history of wars, and of the victors, and the vanquished, certain mysteries are indicated to those who are able to test these statements. And more wonderful still, the laws of truth are predicted by the written legislation;— all these being described in a connected series, with a power which is truly in keeping with the wisdom of God. For it was intended that the covering also of the spiritual truths — I mean the bodily part of Scripture — should not be without profit in many cases, but should be capable of improving the multitude, according to their capacity.

15\). But since, if the usefulness of the legislation, and the sequence and beauty of the history, were universally evident of itself, we should not believe that any other thing could be understood in the Scriptures save what was obvious, the word of God has arranged that certain stumbling-blocks, as it were, and offenses, and impossibilities, should be introduced into the midst of the law and the history, in order that we may not, through being drawn away in all directions by the merely attractive nature of the language, either altogether fall away from the (true) doctrines, as learning nothing worthy of God, or, by not departing from the letter, come to the knowledge of nothing more divine. And this also we must know, that the principal aim being to announce the spiritual connection in those things that are done, and that ought to be done, where the Word found that things done according to the history could be adapted to these mystical senses, He made use of them, concealing from the multitude the deeper meaning; but where, in the narrative of the development of super-sensual things, there did not follow the performance of those certain events, which was already indicated by the mystical meaning, the Scripture interwove in the history (the account of) some event that did not take place, sometimes what could not have happened; sometimes what could, but did not. And sometimes a few words are interpolated which are not true in their literal acceptance, and sometimes a larger number. And a similar practice also is to be noticed with regard to the legislation, in which is often to be found what is useful in itself, and appropriate to the times of the legislation; and sometimes also what does not appear to be of utility; and at other times impossibilities are recorded for the sake of the more skilful and inquisitive, in order that they may give themselves to the toil of investigating what is written, and thus attain to a becoming conviction of the manner in which a meaning worthy of God must be sought out in such subjects.

16\). It was not only, however, with the (Scriptures composed) before the advent (of Christ) that the Spirit thus dealt; but as being the same Spirit, and (proceeding) from the one God, He did the same thing both with the evangelists and the apostles — as even these do not contain throughout a pure history of events, which are interwoven indeed according to the letter, but which did not actually occur. Nor even do the law and the commandments wholly convey what is agreeable to reason. For who that has understanding will suppose that the first, and second, and third day, and the evening and the morning, existed without a sun, and moon, and stars? And that the first day was, as it were, also without a sky? And who is so foolish as to suppose that God, after the manner of a husbandman, planted a paradise in Eden, towards the east, and placed in it a tree of life, visible and palpable, so that one tasting of the fruit by the bodily teeth obtained life? And again, that one was a partaker of good and evil by masticating what was taken from the tree? And if God is said to walk in the paradise in the evening, and Adam to hide himself under a tree, I do not suppose that anyone doubts that these things figuratively indicate certain mysteries, the history having taken place in appearance, and not literally. Cain also, when going forth from the presence of God, certainly appears to thoughtful men as likely to lead the reader to inquire what is the presence of God, and what is the meaning of going out from Him. And what need is there to say more, since those who are not altogether blind can collect countless instances of a similar kind recorded as having occurred, but which did not literally take place? Nay, the Gospels themselves are filled with the same kind of narratives; e.g., the devil leading Jesus up into a high mountain, in order to show him from thence the kingdoms of the whole world, and the glory of them. For who is there among those who do not read such accounts carelessly, that would not condemn those who think that with the eye of

the body— which requires a lofty height in order that the parts lying (immediately) under and adjacent may be seen — the kingdoms of the Persians, and Scythians, and Indians, and Parthians, were beheld, and the manner in which their princes are glorified among men? And the attentive reader may notice in the Gospels innumerable other passages like these, so that he will be convinced that in the histories that are literally recorded, circumstances that did not occur are inserted.

17\.. And if we come to the legislation of Moses, many of the laws manifest the irrationality, and others the impossibility, of their literal observance. The irrationality (in this), that the people are forbidden to eat vultures, although no one even in the direst famines was (ever) driven by want to have recourse to this bird; and that children eight days old, which are uncircumcised, are ordered to be exterminated from among their people, it being necessary, if the law were to be carried out at all literally with regard to these, that their fathers, or those with whom they are brought up, should be commanded to be put to death. Now the Scripture says: Every male that is uncircumcised, who shall not be circumcised on the eighth day, shall be cut off from among his people. And if you wish to see impossibilities contained in the legislation, let us observe that the goat-stag is one of those animals that cannot exist, and yet Moses commands us to offer it as being a clean beast; whereas a griffin, which is not recorded ever to have been subdued by man, the lawgiver forbids to be eaten. Nay, he who carefully considers (the famous injunction relating to) the Sabbath, You shall sit each one in your dwellings: let no one go out from his place on the seventh day, will deem it impossible to be literally observed: for no living being is able to sit throughout a whole day, and remain without moving from a sitting position. And therefore those who belong to the circumcision, and all who desire that no meaning should be exhibited, save the literal one, do not investigate at all such subjects as those of the goat-stag and griffin and vulture, but indulge in foolish talk on certain points, multiplying words and adducing tasteless traditions; as, for example, with regard to the Sabbath, saying that two thousand cubits is each one's limit. Others, again, among whom is Dositheus the Samaritan, condemning such an interpretation, think that in the position in which a man is found on the Sabbath day, he is to remain until evening. Moreover, the not carrying of a burden on the Sabbath day is an impossibility; and therefore the Jewish teachers have fallen into countless absurdities, saying that a shoe of such a kind was a burden, but not one of another kind; and that a sandal which had nails was a burden, but not one that was without them; and in like manner what was borne on one shoulder (was a load), but not that which was carried on both.

18\.. And if we go to the Gospel and institute a similar examination, what would be more irrational than (to take literally the injunction), Salute no man by the way, which simple persons think the Saviour enjoined on the apostles? The command, moreover, that the right cheek should be smitten, is most incredible, since everyone who strikes, unless he happen to have some bodily defect, smites the left cheek with his right hand. And it is impossible to take (literally, the statement) in the Gospel about the offending of the right eye. For, to grant the possibility of one being offended by the sense of sight, how, when there are two eyes that see, should the blame be laid upon the right eye? And who is there that, condemning himself for having looked upon a woman to lust after her, would rationally transfer the blame to the right eye alone, and throw it away? The apostle, moreover, lays down the law, saying, Is any man called, being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. In the first place, anyone will see that he does not utter these words in connection with the subject before him. For, when laying down precepts on marriage and purity, how will it not appear that he has introduced these words at random? But, in the second place, who will say that a man does wrong who endeavours to become uncircumcised, if that be possible, on account of the disgrace that is considered by the multitude to attach to circumcision.

All these statements have been made by us, in order to show that the design of that divine power which gave us the sacred Scriptures is, that we should not receive what is presented by the letter alone (such things being sometimes not true in their literal acceptation, but absurd and impossible), but that certain things have been introduced into the actual history and into the legislation that are useful in their literal sense.

19\ But that no one may suppose that we assert respecting the whole that no history is real because a certain one is not; and that no law is to be literally observed, because a certain one, (understood) according to the letter, is absurd or impossible; or that the statements regarding the Saviour are not true in a manner perceptible to the senses; or that no commandment and precept of His ought to be obeyed — we have to answer that, with regard to certain things, it is perfectly clear to us that the historical account is true; as that Abraham was buried in the double cave at Hebron, as also Isaac and Jacob, and the wives of each of them; and that Shechem was given as a portion to Joseph; and that Jerusalem is the metropolis of Judea, in which the temple of God was built by Solomon; and innumerable other statements. For the passages that are true in their historical meaning are much more numerous than those which are interspersed with a purely spiritual signification. And again, who would not say that the command which enjoins to honour your father and your mother, that it may be well with you, is useful, apart from all allegorical meaning, and ought to be observed, the Apostle Paul also having employed these very same words? And what need is there to speak of the (prohibitions), You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness? And again, there are commandments contained in the Gospel which admit of no doubt whether they are to be observed according to the letter or not; e.g., that which says, But I say unto you, Whoever is angry with his brother, and so on. And again, But I say unto you, Swear not at all. And in the writings of the apostle the literal sense is to be retained: Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men; although it is possible for those ambitious of a deeper meaning to retain the profundities of the wisdom of God, without setting aside the commandment in its literal meaning. The careful (reader), however, will be in doubt as to certain points, being unable to show without long investigation whether this history so deemed literally occurred or not, and whether the literal meaning of this law is to be observed or not. And therefore the exact reader must, in obedience to the Saviour's injunction to search the Scriptures, carefully ascertain in how far the literal meaning is true, and in how far impossible; and so far as he can, trace out, by means of similar statements, the meaning everywhere scattered through Scripture of that which cannot be understood in a literal signification.

20\ Since, therefore, as will be clear to those who read, the connection taken literally is impossible, while the sense preferred is not impossible, but even the true one, it must be our object to grasp the whole meaning, which connects the account of what is literally impossible in an intelligible manner with what is not only not impossible, but also historically true, and which is allegorically understood, in respect of its not having literally occurred. For, with respect to holy Scripture, our opinion is that the whole of it has a spiritual, but not the whole a bodily meaning, because the bodily meaning is in many places proved to be impossible. And therefore great attention must be bestowed by the cautious reader on the divine books, as being divine writings; the manner of understanding which appears to us to be as follows:— The Scriptures relate that God chose a certain nation upon the earth, which they call by

several names. For the whole of this nation is termed Israel, and also Jacob. And when it was divided in the times of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the ten tribes related as being subject to him were called Israel; and the remaining two, along with the tribe of Levi, being ruled over by the descendants of David, were named Judah. And the whole of the territory which the people of this nation inhabited, being given them by God, receives the name of Judah, the metropolis of which is Jerusalem, — a metropolis, namely, of numerous cities, the names of which lie scattered about in many other passages (of Scripture), but are enumerated together in the book of Joshua the Son of Nun.

21\). Such, then, being the state of the case, the apostle, elevating our power of discernment (above the letter), says somewhere, Behold Israel after the flesh, as if there were an Israel according to the Spirit. And in another place he says, For they who are the children of the flesh are not the children of God; nor are they all Israel who are of Israel; nor is he a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is that 'circumcision' which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one 'inwardly;' and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter. For if the judgment respecting the Jew inwardly be adopted, we must understand that, as there is a bodily race of Jews, so also is there a race of Jews inwardly, the soul having acquired this nobility for certain mysterious reasons. Moreover, there are many prophecies which predict regarding Israel and Judah what is about to befall them. And do not such promises as are written concerning them, in respect of their being mean in expression, and manifesting no elevation (of thought), nor anything worthy of the promise of God, need a mystical interpretation? And if the spiritual promises are announced by visible signs, then they to whom the promises are made are not corporeal. And not to linger over the point of the Jew who is a Jew inwardly, nor over that of the Israelite according to the inner man — these statements being sufficient for those who are not devoid of understanding — we return to our subject, and say that Jacob is the father of the twelve patriarchs, and they of the rulers of the people; and these, again, of the other Israelites. Do not, then, the corporeal Israelites refer their descent to the rulers of the people, and the rulers of the people to the patriarchs, and the patriarchs to Jacob, and those still higher up; while are not the spiritual Israelites, of whom the corporeal Israelites were the type, sprung from the families, and the families from the tribes, and the tribes from some one individual whose descent is not of a corporeal but of a better kind — he, too, being born of Isaac, and he of Abraham — all going back to Adam, whom the apostle declares to be Christ? For every beginning of those families which have relation to God as to the Father of all, took its commencement lower down with Christ, who is next to the God and Father of all, being thus the Father of every soul, as Adam is the father of all men. And if Eve also is intended by the apostle to refer to the Church, it is not surprising that Cain, who was born of Eve, and all after him, whose descent goes back to Eve, should be types of the Church, inasmuch as in a pre-eminent sense they are all descended from the Church.

22\ Now, if the statements made to us regarding Israel, and its tribes and its families, are calculated to impress us, when the Saviour says, I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, we do not understand the expression as the Ebionites do, who are poor in understanding (deriving their name from the poverty of their intellect— Ebion signifying poor in Hebrew), so as to suppose that the Saviour came specially to the carnal Israelites; for they who are the children of the flesh are not the children of God. Again, the apostle teaches regarding Jerusalem as follows: The Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. And in another Epistle: But you have come unto mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and to the Church of the first-born which are written in heaven. If, then, Israel is among the race of souls, and if there is in heaven a city of Jerusalem, it follows that the cities of Israel have for their metropolis the heavenly Jerusalem, and it consequently is the metropolis of all Judea. Whatever, therefore, is predicted of Jerusalem, and spoken of it, if we listen to the words of Paul as those of God, and of one who utters wisdom, we must understand the Scriptures as speaking of the heavenly city, and of the whole territory included within the cities of the holy land. For perhaps it is to these cities that the Saviour refers us, when to those who have gained credit by having managed their pounds well, He assigns the presidency over five or ten cities. If, therefore, the prophecies relating to Judea, and Jerusalem, and Israel, and Judah, and Jacob, not being understood by us in a carnal sense, indicate some such mysteries (as already mentioned), it will follow also that the predictions concerning Egypt and the Egyptians, Babylon and the Babylonians, Tyre and the Tyrians, Sidon and the Sidonians, or the other nations, are spoken not only of these bodily Egyptians, and Babylonians, and Tyrians, and Sidonians, but also of their spiritual (counterparts). For if there be spiritual Israelites, it follows that there are also spiritual Egyptians and Babylonians. For what is related in Ezekiel concerning Pharaoh king of Egypt does not at all apply to the case of a certain man who ruled or was said to rule over Egypt, as will be evident to those who give it careful consideration. Similarly, what is said about the ruler of Tyre cannot be understood of a certain man who ruled over Tyre. And what is said in many places, and especially in Isaiah, of Nebuchadnezzar, cannot be explained of that individual. For the man Nebuchadnezzar neither fell from heaven, nor was he the morning star, nor did he arise upon the earth in the morning. Nor would any man of understanding interpret what is said in Ezekiel about Egypt— viz., that in forty years it should be laid desolate, so that the footstep of man should not be found thereon, and that the ravages of war should be so great that the blood should run throughout the whole of it, and rise to the knees — of that Egypt which is situated beside the Ethiopians whose bodies are blackened by the sun.

23\ And perhaps as those here, dying according to the death common to all, are, in consequence of the deeds done here, so arranged as to obtain different places according to the proportion of their sins, if they should be deemed worthy of the place called Hades; so those there dying, so to speak, descend into this Hades, being judged deserving of different abodes — better or worse — throughout all this space of earth, and (of being descended) from parents of different kinds, so that an Israelite may sometimes fall among Scythians, and an Egyptian descend into Judea. And yet the Saviour came to gather together the lost sheep of the house of Israel; but many of the Israelites not having yielded to His teaching, those from the Gentiles were called....And these points, as we suppose, have been concealed in the histories. For the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hid in a field; the which when a man has found, he hides,

and for joy thereof goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field. Let us notice, then, whether the apparent and superficial and obvious meaning of Scripture does not resemble a field filled with plants of every kind, while the things lying in it, and not visible to all, but buried, as it were, under the plants that are seen, are the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge; which the Spirit through Isaiah calls dark and invisible and concealed, God alone being able to break the brazen gates that conceal them, and to burst the iron bars that are upon the gates, in order that all the statements in the book of Genesis may be discovered which refer to the various genuine kinds, and seeds, as it were, of souls, which stand nearly related to Israel, or at a distance from it; and the descent into Egypt of the seventy souls, that they may there become as the stars of heaven in multitude. But since not all who are of them are the light of the world — for not all who are of Israel are Israel — they become from seventy souls as the sand that is beside the sea-shore innumerable.

From the Latin

24\ This descent of the holy fathers into Egypt will appear as granted to this world by the providence of God for the illumination of others, and for the instruction of the human race, that so by this means the souls of others might be assisted in the work of enlightenment. For to them was first granted the privilege of converse with God, because theirs is the only race which is said to see God; this being the meaning, by interpretation, of the word Israel. And now it follows that, agreeably to this view, ought the statement to be accepted and explained that Egypt was scourged with ten plagues, to allow the people of God to depart, or the account of what was done with the people in the wilderness, or of the building of the tabernacle by means of contributions from all the people, or of the wearing of the priestly robes, or of the vessels of the public service, because, as it is written, they truly contain within them the shadow and form of heavenly things. For Paul openly says of them, that they serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things. There are, moreover, contained in this same law the precepts and institutions, according to which men are to live in the holy land. Threatenings also are held out as impending over those who shall transgress the law; different kinds of purifications are moreover prescribed for those who required purification, as being persons who were liable to frequent pollution, that by means of these they may arrive at last at that one purification after which no further pollution is permitted. The very people are numbered, though not all; for the souls of children are not yet old enough to be numbered according to the divine command: nor are those souls who cannot become the head of another, but are themselves subordinated to others as to a head, who are called women, who certainly are not included in that numbering which is enjoined by God; but they alone are numbered who are called men, by which it might be shown that the women could not be counted separately, but were included in those called men. Those, however, especially belong to the sacred number, who are prepared to go forth to the battles of the Israelites, and are able to fight against those public and private enemies whom the Father subjects to the Son, who sits on His right hand that He may destroy all principality and power, and by means of these bands of His soldiery, who, being engaged in a warfare for God, do not entangle themselves in secular business, He may overturn the Kingdom of His adversary; by whom the shields of faith are borne, and the weapons of wisdom brandished; among whom also the helmet of hope and salvation gleams forth, and the breastplate of brightness fortifies the breast that is filled with God. Such soldiers appear to me to be indicated, and to be prepared for wars of this kind, in those

persons who in the sacred books are ordered by God's command to be numbered. But of these, by far the more perfect and distinguished are shown to be those of whom the very hairs of the head are said to be numbered. Such, indeed, as were punished for their sins, whose bodies fell in the wilderness, appear to possess a resemblance to those who had made indeed no little progress, but who could not at all, for various reasons, attain to the end of perfection; because they are reported either to have murmured, or to have worshipped idols, or to have committed fornication, or to have done some evil work which the mind ought not even to conceive. I do not consider the following even to be without some mystical meaning, viz., that certain (of the Israelites), possessing many flocks and animals, take possession by anticipation of a country adapted for pasture and the feeding of cattle, which was the very first that the right hand of the Hebrews had secured in war. For, making a request of Moses to receive this region, they are divided off by the waters of the Jordan, and set apart from any possession in the holy land. And this Jordan, according to the form of heavenly things, may appear to water and irrigate thirsty souls, and the senses that are adjacent to it. In connection with which, even this statement does not appear superfluous, that Moses indeed hears from God what is described in the book of Leviticus, while in Deuteronomy it is the people that are the auditors of Moses, and who learn from him what they could not hear from God. For as Deuteronomy is called, as it were, the second law, which to some will appear to convey this signification, that when the first law which was given through Moses had come to an end, so a second legislation seems to have been enacted, which was specially transmitted by Moses to his successor Joshua, who is certainly believed to embody a type of our Saviour, by whose second law — that is, the precepts of the Gospel — all things are brought to perfection.

25\). We have to see, however, whether this deeper meaning may not perhaps be indicated, viz., that as in Deuteronomy the legislation is made known with greater clearness and distinctness than in those books which were first written, so also by that advent of the Saviour which He accomplished in His state of humiliation, when He assumed the form of a servant, that more celebrated and renowned second advent in the glory of His Father may not be pointed out, and in it the types of Deuteronomy may be fulfilled, when in the kingdom of heaven all the saints shall live according to the laws of the everlasting Gospel; and as in His coming now He fulfilled that law which has a shadow of good things to come, so also by that (future) glorious advent will be fulfilled and brought to perfection the shadows of the present advent. For thus spoke the prophet regarding it: The breath of our countenance, Christ the Lord, to whom we said, that under Your shadow we shall live among the nations; at the time, viz., when He will more worthily transfer all the saints from a temporal to an everlasting Gospel, according to the designation, employed by John in the Apocalypse, of an everlasting Gospel.

26\). But let it be sufficient for us in all these matters to adapt our understanding to the rule of religion, and so to think of the words of the Holy Spirit as not to deem the language the ornate composition of feeble human eloquence, but to hold, according to the scriptural statement, that all the glory of the King is within, and that the treasure of divine meaning is enclosed within the frail vessel of the common letter. And if any curious reader were still to ask an explanation of individual points, let him come and hear, along with ourselves, how the Apostle Paul, seeking to penetrate by help of the Holy Spirit, who searches even the deep things of God, into the depths of divine wisdom and knowledge, and yet, unable to reach the end, so to speak, and to come to a thorough knowledge, exclaims in despair and amazement, Oh the depth of the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of God! Now, that it was from despair of attaining a perfect understanding that he uttered this exclamation, listen to his own words: How unsearchable are God's judgments! And His ways, how past finding out! For he did not say that God's judgments were difficult to discover, but that they were altogether inscrutable; nor that it was (simply) difficult to trace out His ways, but that they were altogether past finding out. For however far a man may advance in his investigations, and how great soever the progress that he may make by unremitting study, assisted even by the grace of God, and with his mind enlightened, he will not be able to attain to the end of those things which are the object of his inquiries. Nor can any created mind deem it possible in any way to attain a full comprehension (of things); but after having discovered certain of the objects of its research, it sees again others which have still to be sought out. And even if it should succeed in mastering these, it will see again many others succeeding them which must form the subject of investigation. And on this account, therefore, Solomon, the wisest of men, beholding by his wisdom the nature of things, says, I said, I will become wise; and wisdom herself was made far from me, far further than it was; and a profound depth, who shall find? Isaiah also, knowing that the beginnings of things could not be discovered by a mortal nature, and not even by those natures which, although more divine than human, were nevertheless themselves created or formed; knowing then, that by none of these could either the beginning or the end be discovered, says, Tell the former things which have been, and we know that you are gods; or announce what are the last things, and then we shall see that you are gods. For my Hebrew teacher also used thus to teach, that as the beginning or end of all things could be comprehended by no one, save only our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, so under the form of a vision Isaiah spoke of two seraphim alone, who with two wings cover the countenance of God, and with two His feet, and with two do fly, calling to each other alternately, and saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth; the whole earth is full of Your glory. That the seraphim alone have both their wings over the face of God, and over His feet, we venture to declare as meaning that neither the hosts of holy angels, nor the holy seats, nor the dominions, nor the principalities, nor the powers, can fully understand the beginning of all things, and the limits of the universe. But we are to understand that those saints whom the Spirit has enrolled, and the virtues, approach very closely to those very beginnings, and attain to a height which the others cannot reach; and yet whatever it be that these virtues have learned through revelation from the Son of God and from the Holy Spirit— and they will certainly be able to learn very much, and those of higher rank much more than those of a lower — nevertheless it is impossible for them to comprehend all things, according to the statement, The most part of the works of God are hid. Sirach 16:21 And therefore also it is to be desired that every one, according to his strength, should ever stretch out to those things that are before, forgetting the things

that are behind, both to better works and to a clearer apprehension and understanding, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, to whom be glory for ever!

27\ Let every one, then, who cares for truth, be little concerned about words and language, seeing that in every nation there prevails a different usage of speech; but let him rather direct his attention to the meaning conveyed by the words, than to the nature of the words that convey the meaning, especially in matters of such importance and difficulty: as, e.g., when it is an object of investigation whether there is any substance in which neither color, nor form, nor touch, nor magnitude is to be understood as existing visible to the mind alone, which any one names as he pleases; for the Greeks call such *ἄσχητον*, incorporeal, while holy Scripture declares it to be invisible, for Paul calls Christ the image of the invisible God, and says again, that by Christ were created all things visible and invisible. And by this it is declared that there are, among created things, certain substances that are, according to their peculiar nature, invisible. But although these are not themselves corporeal, they nevertheless make use of bodies, while they are themselves better than any bodily substances. But that substance of the Trinity which is the beginning and cause of all things, from which are all things, and through which are all things, and in which are all things, cannot be believed to be either a body or in a body, but is altogether incorporeal. And now let it suffice to have spoken briefly on these points (although in a digression, caused by the nature of the subject), in order to show that there are certain things, the meaning of which cannot be unfolded at all by any words of human language, but which are made known more through simple apprehension than by any properties of words. And under this rule must be brought also the understanding of the sacred Scripture, in order that its statements may be judged not according to the worthlessness of the letter, but according to the divinity of the Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration they were caused to be written.

Summary (of Doctrine) Regarding the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and the Other Topics Discussed in the Preceding Pages.

28\ It is now time, after the rapid consideration which to the best of our ability we have given to the topics discussed, to recapitulate, by way of summing up what we have said in different places, the individual points, and first of all to restate our conclusions regarding the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Seeing God the Father is invisible and inseparable from the Son, the Son is not generated from Him by prolation, as some suppose. For if the Son be a prolation of the Father (the term prolation being used to signify such a generation as that of animals or men usually is), then, of necessity, both He who prolated and He who *_was_* prolated are corporeal. For we do not say, as the heretics suppose, that some part of the substance of God was converted into the Son, or that the Son was procreated by the Father out of things non-existent, i.e., beyond His own substance, so that there once was a time when He did not exist; but, putting away all corporeal conceptions, we say that the Word and Wisdom was begotten out of the invisible and incorporeal without any corporeal feeling, as if it were an act of the will proceeding from the understanding. Nor, seeing He is called the Son of (His) love, will it appear absurd if in this way He be called the Son of (His) will. Nay, John also indicates that God is Light, and Paul also declares that the Son is the splendour of everlasting light. As light, accordingly, could never exist without splendour, so neither can the Son be understood to exist without the Father; for He is called the express image of

His person, and the Word and Wisdom. How, then, can it be asserted that there once was a time when He was not the Son? For that is nothing else than to say that there was once a time when He was not the Truth, nor the Wisdom, nor the Life, although in all these He is judged to be the perfect essence of God the Father; for these things cannot be severed from Him, or even be separated from His essence. And although these qualities are said to be many in understanding, yet in their nature and essence they are one, and in them is the fullness of divinity. Now this expression which we employ — that there never was a time when He did not exist — is to be understood with an allowance. For these very words when or never have a meaning that relates to time, whereas the statements made regarding Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are to be understood as transcending all time, all ages, and all eternity. For it is the Trinity alone which exceeds the comprehension not only of temporal but even of eternal intelligence; while other things which are not included in it are to be measured by times and ages. This Son of God, then, in respect of the Word being God, which was in the beginning with God, no one will logically suppose to be contained in any place; nor yet in respect of His being Wisdom, or Truth, or the Life, or Righteousness, or Sanctification, or Redemption: for all these properties do not require space to be able to act or to operate, but each one of them is to be understood as meaning those individuals who participate in His virtue and working.

29\ Now, if any one were to say that, through those who are partakers of the Word of God, or of His Wisdom, or His Truth, or His Life, the Word and Wisdom itself appeared to be contained in a place, we should have to say to him in answer, that there is no doubt that Christ, in respect of being the Word or Wisdom, or all other things, was in Paul, and that he therefore said, Do you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me? and again, I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me. Seeing, then, He was in Paul, who will doubt that He was in a similar manner in Peter and in John, and in each one of the saints; and not only in those who are upon the earth, but in those also who are in heaven? For it is absurd to say that Christ was in Peter and in Paul, but not in Michael the archangel, nor in Gabriel. And from this it is distinctly shown that the divinity of the Son of God was not shut up in some place; otherwise it would have been in it only, and not in another. But since, in conformity with the majesty of its incorporeal nature, it is confined to no place; so, again, it cannot be understood to be wanting in any. But this is understood to be the sole difference, that although He is in different individuals as we have said — as Peter, or Paul, or Michael, or Gabriel — He is not in a similar way in all beings whatever. For He is more fully and clearly, and, so to speak, more openly in archangels than in other holy men. And this is evident from the statement, that when all who are saints have arrived at the summit of perfection, they are said to be made like, or equal to, the angels, agreeably to the declaration in the Gospels. Whence it is clear that Christ is in each individual in as great a degree as the amount of his deserts allows.

30\ Having, then, briefly restated these points regarding the nature of the Trinity, it follows that we notice shortly this statement also, that by the Son are said to be created all things that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all, and all things consist by Him, who is the Head. In conformity with which John also in his Gospel says: All things were created by Him; and without Him was not anything made. And David, intimating that the mystery of the entire Trinity was (concerned) in the creation of all things, says: By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the Spirit of His mouth.

After these points we shall appropriately remind (the reader) of the bodily advent and incarnation of the only-begotten Son of God, with respect to whom we are not to suppose that all the majesty of His divinity is confined within the limits of His slender body, so that all the word of God, and His wisdom, and essential truth, and life, was either rent asunder from the Father, or restrained and confined within the narrowness of His bodily person, and is not to be considered to have operated anywhere besides; but the cautious acknowledgment of a religious man ought to be between the two, so that it ought neither to be believed that anything of divinity was wanting in Christ, nor that any separation at all was made from the essence of the Father, which is everywhere. For some such meaning seems to be indicated by John the Baptist, when he said to the multitude in the bodily absence of Jesus, There stands one among you whom you know not: He it is who comes after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose. For it certainly could not be said of Him, who was absent, so far as His bodily presence is concerned, that He was standing in the midst of those among whom the Son of God was not bodily present.

31\ Let no one, however, suppose that by this we affirm that some portion of the divinity of the Son of God was in Christ, and that the remaining portion was elsewhere or everywhere, which may be the opinion of those who are ignorant of the nature of an incorporeal and invisible essence. For it is impossible to speak of the parts of an incorporeal being, or to make any division of them; but He is in all things, and through all things, and above all things, in the manner in which we have spoken above, i.e., in the manner in which He is understood to be either wisdom, or the word, or the life, or the truth, by which method of understanding all confinement of a local kind is undoubtedly excluded. The Son of God, then, desiring for the salvation of the human race to appear unto men, and to sojourn among them, assumed not only a human body, as some suppose, but also a soul resembling our souls indeed in nature, but in will and power resembling Himself, and such as might unfailingly accomplish all the desires and arrangements of the word and wisdom. Now, that He had a soul, is most clearly shown by the Saviour in the Gospels, when He said, No man takes my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again. And again, My soul is sorrowful even unto death. And again, Now is my soul troubled. For the Word of God is not to be understood to be a sorrowful and troubled soul, because with the authority of divinity He says, I have power to lay down my life. Nor yet do we assert that the Son of God was in that soul as he was in the soul of Paul or Peter and the other saints, in whom Christ is believed to speak as He does in Paul. But regarding all these we are to hold, as Scripture declares, No one is clean from filthiness, not even if his life lasted but a single day. But this soul which was in Jesus, before it knew the evil, selected the good; and because

He loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, therefore God anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. He is anointed, then, with the oil of gladness when He is united to the word of God in a stainless union, and by this means alone of all souls was incapable of sin, because it was capable of (receiving) well and fully the Son of God; and therefore also it is one with Him, and is named by His titles, and is called Jesus Christ, by whom all things are said to be made. Of which soul, seeing it had received into itself the whole wisdom of God, and the truth, and the life, I think that the apostle also said this: Our life is hidden with Christ in God; but when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. For what other Christ can be here understood, who is said to be hidden in God, and who is afterwards to appear, except Him who is related to have been anointed with the oil of gladness, i.e., to have been filled with God essentially, in whom he is now said to be hidden? For on this account is Christ proposed as an example to all believers, because as He always, even before he knew evil at all, selected the good, and loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, and therefore God anointed Him with the oil of gladness; so also ought each one, after a lapse or sin, to cleanse himself from his stains, making Him his example, and, taking Him as the guide of his journey, enter upon the steep way of virtue, that so perchance by this means, as far as possible we may, by imitating Him, be made partakers of the divine nature, according to the words of Scripture: He that says that he believes in Christ, ought so to walk, as He also walked.

This word, then, and this wisdom, by the imitation of which we are said to be either wise or rational (beings), becomes all things to all men, that it may gain all; and because it is made weak, it is therefore said of it, Though He was crucified through weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. Finally, to the Corinthians who were weak, Paul declares that he knew nothing, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

32\ Some, indeed, would have the following language of the apostle applied to the soul itself, as soon as it had assumed flesh from Mary, viz., Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but divested Himself (of His glory) taking upon Himself the form of a servant; since He undoubtedly restored it to the form of God by means of better examples and training, and recalled it to that fullness of which He had divested Himself.

As now by participation in the Son of God one is adopted as a son, and by participating in that wisdom which is in God is rendered wise, so also by participation in the Holy Spirit is a man rendered holy and spiritual. For it is one and the same thing to have a share in the Holy Spirit, which is (the Spirit) of the Father and the Son, since the nature of the Trinity is one and incorporeal. And what we have said regarding the participation of the soul is to be understood of angels and heavenly powers in a similar way as of souls, because every rational creature needs a participation in the Trinity.

Respecting also the plan of this visible world — seeing one of the most important questions usually raised is as to the manner of its existence— we have spoken to the best of our ability in the preceding pages, for the sake of those who are accustomed to seek the grounds of their belief in our religion, and also for those who stir against us heretical questions, and who are accustomed to bandy about the word matter, which they have not yet been able to understand; of which subject I now deem it necessary briefly to remind (the reader).

33\ And, in the first place, it is to be noted that we have nowhere found in the canonical Scriptures, up to the present time, the word matter used for that substance which is said to underlie bodies. For in the expression of Isaiah, And he shall devour Uæ., matter, like hay, when speaking of those who were appointed to undergo their punishments, the word matter was used instead of sins. And if this word matter should happen to occur in any other passage, it will never be found, in my opinion, to have the signification of which we are now in quest, unless perhaps in the book which is called the Wisdom of Solomon, a work which is certainly not esteemed authoritative by all. In that book, however, we find written as follows: For your almighty hand, that made the world out of shapeless matter, wanted not means to send among them a multitude of bears and fierce lions. Very many, indeed, are of opinion that the matter of which things are made is itself signified in the language used by Moses in the beginning of Genesis: In the beginning God made heaven and earth; and the earth was invisible, and not arranged: for by the words invisible and not arranged Moses would seem to mean nothing else than shapeless matter. But if this be truly matter, it is clear then that the original elements of bodies are not incapable of change. For those who posited atoms— either those particles which are incapable of subdivision, or those which are subdivided into equal parts — or any one element, as the principles of bodily things, could not posit the word matter in the proper sense of the term among the first principles of things. For if they will have it that matter underlies every body — a substance convertible or changeable, or divisible in all its parts — they will not, as is proper, assert that it exists without qualities. And with them we agree, for we altogether deny that matter ought to be spoken of as unbegotten or uncreated, agreeably to our former statements, when we pointed out that from water, and earth, and air or heat, different kinds of fruits were produced by different kinds of trees; or when we showed that fire, and air, and water, and earth were alternately converted into each other, and that one element was resolved into another by a kind of mutual consanguinity; and also when we proved that from the food either of men or animals the substance of the flesh was derived, or that the moisture of the natural seed was converted into solid flesh and bones — all which go to prove that the substance of the body is changeable, and may pass from one quality into all others.

34\). Nevertheless we must not forget that a substance never exists without a quality, and that it is by an act of the understanding alone that this (substance) which underlies bodies, and which is capable of quality, is discovered to be matter. Some indeed, in their desire to investigate these subjects more profoundly, have ventured to assert that bodily nature is nothing else than qualities. For if hardness and softness, heat and cold, moisture and aridity, be qualities; and if, when these or other (qualities) of this sort be cut away, nothing else is understood to remain, then all things will appear to be qualities. And therefore also those persons who make these assertions have endeavoured to maintain, that since all who say that matter was uncreated will admit that qualities were created by God, it may be in this way shown that even according to them matter was not uncreated; since qualities constitute everything, and these are declared by all without contradiction to have been made by God. Those, again, who would make out that qualities are superimposed from without upon a certain underlying matter, make use of illustrations of this kind: e.g., Paul undoubtedly is either silent, or speaks, or watches, or sleeps, or maintains a certain attitude of body; for he is either in a sitting, or standing, or recumbent position. For these are accidents belonging to men, without which they are almost never found. And yet our conception of man does not lay down any of these things as a definition of him; but we so understand and regard him by their means, that we do not at all take into account the reason of his (particular) condition either in watching, or in sleeping, or in speaking, or in keeping silence, or in any other action that must necessarily happen to men. If any one, then, can regard Paul as being without all these things which are capable of happening, he will in the same way also be able to understand this underlying (substance) without qualities. When, then, our mind puts away all qualities from its conception, and gazes, so to speak, upon the underlying element alone, and keeps its attention closely upon it, without any reference to the softness or hardness, or heat or cold, or humidity or aridity of the substance, then by means of this somewhat simulated process of thought it will appear to behold matter clear from qualities of every kind.

35\). But some one will perhaps inquire whether we can obtain out of Scripture any grounds for such an understanding of the subject. Now I think some such view is indicated in the Psalms, when the prophet says, My eyes have seen your imperfection; by which the mind of the prophet, examining with keener glance the first principles of things, and separating in thought and imagination only between matter and its qualities, perceived the imperfection of God, which certainly is understood to be perfected by the addition of qualities. Enoch also, in his book, speaks as follows: I have walked on even to imperfection; which expression I consider may be understood in a similar manner, viz., that the mind of the prophet proceeded in its scrutiny and investigation of all visible things, until it arrived at that first beginning in which it beheld imperfect matter (existing) without qualities. For it is written in the same Book of Enoch, I beheld the whole of matter; which is so understood as if he had said: I have clearly seen all the divisions of matter which are broken up from one into each individual species either of men, or animals, or of the sky, or of the sun, or of all other things in this world. After these points, now, we proved to the best of our power in the preceding pages that all things which exist were made by God, and that there was nothing which was not made, save the nature of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that God, who is by nature good, desiring to have those upon whom He might confer benefits, and who might rejoice in receiving His benefits, created creatures worthy (of this), i.e., who were capable of receiving Him in a worthy manner, who, He says, are also begotten by Him as his

sons. He made all things, moreover, by number and measure. For there is nothing before God without either limit or measure. For by His power He comprehends all things, and He Himself is comprehended by the strength of no created thing, because that nature is known to itself alone. For the Father alone knows the Son, and the Son alone knows the Father, and the Holy Spirit alone searches even the deep things of God. All created things, therefore, i.e., either the number of rational beings or the measure of bodily matter, are distinguished by Him as being within a certain number or measurement; since, as it was necessary for an intellectual nature to employ bodies, and this nature is shown to be changeable and convertible by the very condition of its being created (for what did not exist, but began to exist, is said by this very circumstance to be of mutable nature), it can have neither goodness nor wickedness as an essential, but only as an accidental attribute of its being. Seeing, then, as we have said, that rational nature was mutable and changeable, so that it made use of a different bodily covering of this or that sort of quality, according to its merits, it was necessary, as God foreknew there would be diversities in souls or spiritual powers, that He should create also a bodily nature the qualities of which might be changed at the will of the Creator into all that was required. And this bodily nature must last as long as those things which require it as a covering: for there will be always rational natures which need a bodily covering; and there will therefore always be a bodily nature whose coverings must necessarily be used by rational creatures, unless some one be able to demonstrate by arguments that a rational nature can live without a body. But how difficult — nay, how almost impossible — this is for our understanding, we have shown in the preceding pages, in our discussion of the individual topics.

36\ It will not, I consider, be opposed to the nature of our undertaking, if we restate with all possible brevity our opinions on the immortality of rational natures. Every one who participates in anything, is unquestionably of one essence and nature with him who is partaker of the same thing. For example, as all eyes participate in the light, so accordingly all eyes which partake of the light are of one nature; but although every eye partakes of the light, yet, inasmuch as one sees more clearly, and another more obscurely, every eye does not equally share in the light. And again, all hearing receives voice or sound, and therefore all hearing is of one nature; but each one hears more rapidly or more slowly, according as the quality of his hearing is clear and sound. Let us pass now from these sensuous illustrations to the consideration of intellectual things. Every mind which partakes of intellectual light ought undoubtedly to be of one nature with every mind which partakes in a similar manner of intellectual light. If the heavenly virtues, then, partake of intellectual light, i.e., of divine nature, because they participate in wisdom and holiness, and if human souls, have partaken of the same light and wisdom, and thus are mutually of one nature and of one essence — then, since the heavenly virtues are incorruptible and immortal, the essence of the human soul will also be immortal and incorruptible. And not only so, but because the nature of Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, whose intellectual light alone all created things have a share, is incorruptible and eternal, it is altogether consistent and necessary that every substance which partakes of that eternal nature should last for ever, and be incorruptible and eternal, so that the eternity of divine goodness may be understood also in this respect, that they who obtain its benefits are also eternal. But as, in the instances referred to, a diversity in the participation of the light was observed, when the glance of the beholder was described as being duller or more acute, so also a diversity is to be noted in the participation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, varying with the degree of zeal or capacity of mind. If such were not the case, we have to consider whether it would not seem

to be an act of impiety to say that the mind which is capable of (receiving) God should admit of a destruction of its essence; as if the very fact that it is able to feel and understand God could not suffice for its perpetual existence, especially since, if even through neglect the mind fall away from a pure and complete reception of God, it nevertheless contains within it certain seeds of restoration and renewal to a better understanding, seeing the inner, which is also called the rational man, is renewed after the image and likeness of God, who created him. And therefore the prophet says, All the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before You.

37\.. If any one, indeed, venture to ascribe essential corruption to Him who was made after the image and likeness of God, then, in my opinion, this impious charge extends even to the Son of God Himself, for He is called in Scripture the image of God. Or he who holds this opinion would certainly impugn the authority of Scripture, which says that man was made in the image of God; and in him are manifestly to be discovered traces of the divine image, not by any appearance of the bodily frame, which is corruptible, but by mental wisdom, by justice, moderation, virtue, wisdom, discipline; in fine, by the whole band of virtues, which are innate in the essence of God, and which may enter into man by diligence and imitation of God; as the Lord also intimates in the Gospel, when He says, Be therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful; and, Be perfect, even as your Father also is perfect. From which it is clearly shown that all these virtues are perpetually in God, and that they can never approach to or depart from Him, whereas by men they are acquired only slowly, and one by one. And hence also by these means they seem to have a kind of relationship with God; and since God knows all things, and none of things intellectual in themselves can elude His notice (for God the Father alone, and His only-begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit, not only possess a knowledge of those things which they have created, but also of themselves), a rational understanding also, advancing from small things to great, and from things visible to things invisible, may attain to a more perfect knowledge. For it is placed in the body, and advances from sensible things themselves, which are corporeal, to things that are intellectual. But lest our statement that things intellectual are not cognisable by the senses should appear unbecoming, we shall employ the instance of Solomon, who says, You will find also a divine sense; by which he shows that those things which are intellectual are to be sought out not by means of a bodily sense, but by a certain other which he calls divine. And with this sense must we look on each of those rational beings which we have enumerated above; and with this sense are to be understood those words which we speak, and those statements to be weighed which we commit to writing. For the divine nature knows even those thoughts which we revolve within us in silence. And on those matters of which we have spoken, or on the others which follow from them, according to the rule above laid down, are our opinions to be formed.

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