

**Against Heresies: Book IV**

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### Preface.

1. By transmitting to thee, my very dear friend, this fourth book of the work which is [entitled] *The Detection and Refutation of False Knowledge*, I shall, as I have promised, add weight, by means of the words of the Lord, to what I have already advanced; so that thou also, as thou hast requested, mayest obtain from me the means of confuting all the heretics everywhere, and not permit them, beaten back at all points, to launch out further into the deep of error, nor to be drowned in the sea of ignorance; but that thou, turning them into the haven of the truth, mayest cause them to attain their salvation.

2. The man, however, who would undertake their conversion, must possess an accurate knowledge of their systems or schemes of doctrine. For it is impossible for any one to heal the sick, if he has no knowledge of the disease of the patients. This was the reason that my predecessors—much superior men to myself, too—were unable, notwithstanding, to refute the Valentinians satisfactorily, because they were ignorant of these men's system;<sup>1150</sup> which I have with all care delivered to thee in the first book in which I have also shown that their doctrine is a recapitulation of all the heretics. For which reason also, in the second, we have had, as in a mirror, a sight of their entire discomfiture. For they who oppose these men (the Valentinians) by the right method, do [thereby] oppose all who are of an evil mind; and they who overthrow them, do in fact overthrow every kind of heresy.

3. For their system is blasphemous above all [others], since they represent that the Maker and Framer, who is one God, as I have shown, was produced from a defect or apostasy. They utter blasphemy, also, against our Lord, by cutting off and dividing Jesus from Christ, and Christ from the Saviour, and again the Saviour from the Word, and the Word from the Only-begotten. And since they allege that the Creator originated from a defect or apostasy, so have they also taught that Christ and the Holy Spirit were emitted on account of this defect, and that the Saviour was a product of those Æons who were produced from a defect; so that there is nothing but blasphemy to be found among them. In the preceding book, then, the ideas of the apostles as to all these points have been set forth, [to the effect] that not only did they, "who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word"<sup>1151</sup> of truth, hold no such opinions, but that they did also preach to us to shun these doctrines,<sup>1152</sup> foreseeing by the Spirit those weak-minded persons who should be led astray.<sup>1153</sup>

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1150 [The reader who marvels at the tedious recitals must note this (1) as proof of the author's practical wisdom, and (2) as evidence of his fidelity in what he exhibits.]

1151 [Luke i. 2.](#)

1152 [2 Tim. ii. 23.](#)

1153 [The solemnity of the apostolic testimonies against the crop of tares that was to spring up receives great illustration from Irenæus. [1 John ii. 18.](#)]

4. For as the serpent beguiled Eve, by promising her what he had not himself,<sup>1154</sup> so also do these men, by pretending [to possess] superior knowledge, and [to be acquainted with] ineffable mysteries; and, by promising that admittance which they speak of as taking place within the Pleroma, plunge those that believe them into death, rendering them apostates from Him who made them. And at that time, indeed, the apostate angel, having effected the disobedience of mankind by means of the serpent, imagined that he escaped the notice of the Lord; wherefore God assigned him the form<sup>1155</sup> and name [of a serpent]. But now, since the last times are [come upon us], evil is spread abroad among men, which not only renders them apostates, but by many machinations does [the devil] raise up blasphemers against the Creator, namely, by means of all the heretics already mentioned. For all these, although they issue forth from diverse regions, and promulgate different [opinions], do nevertheless concur in the same blasphemous design, wounding [men] unto death, by teaching blasphemy against God our Maker and Supporter, and derogating from the salvation of man. Now man is a mixed organization of soul and flesh, who was formed after the likeness of God, and moulded by His hands, that is, by the Son and Holy Spirit, to whom also He said, "Let Us make man."<sup>1156</sup> This, then, is the aim of him who envies our life, to render men disbelievers in their own salvation, and blasphemous against God the Creator. For whatsoever all the heretics may have advanced with the utmost solemnity, they come to this at last, that they blaspheme the Creator, and disallow the salvation of God's workmanship, which the flesh truly is; on behalf of which I have proved, in a variety of ways, that the Son of God accomplished the whole dispensation [of mercy], and have shown that there is none other called God by the Scriptures except the Father of all, and the Son, and those who possess the adoption.

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1154 [2 Pet. ii. 19.]

1155 [Rev. xii. 9. A little essay, *Messias and Anti-Messias*, by the Rev. C. I. Black, London (Masters, 1847), is commended to those who need light on this very mysterious subject.]

1156 Gen. i. 26.

## Chapter I.—The Lord acknowledged but one God and Father.

1. Since, therefore, this is sure and steadfast, that no other God or Lord was announced by the Spirit, except Him who, as God, rules over all, together with His Word, and those who receive the Spirit of adoption,<sup>1157</sup> that is, those who believe in the one and true God, and in Jesus Christ the Son of God; and likewise that the apostles did of themselves term no one else as God, or name [no other] as Lord; and, what is much more important, [since it is true] that our Lord [acted likewise], who did also command us to confess no one as Father, except Him who is in the heavens, who is the one God and the one Father;—those things are clearly shown to be false which these deceivers and most perverse sophists advance, maintaining that the being whom they have themselves invented is by nature both God and Father; but that the Demiurge is naturally neither God nor Father, but is so termed merely by courtesy (*verbo tenus*), because of his ruling the creation, these perverse mythologists state, setting their thoughts against God; and, putting aside the doctrine of Christ, and of themselves divining falsehoods, they dispute against the entire dispensation of God. For they maintain that their Æons, and gods, and fathers, and lords, are also still further termed heavens, together with their Mother, whom they do also call “the Earth,” and “Jerusalem,” while they also style her many other names.

2. Now to whom is it not clear, that if the Lord had known many fathers and gods, He would not have taught His disciples to know [only] one God,<sup>1158</sup> and to call Him alone Father? But He did the rather distinguish those who by word merely (*verbo tenus*) are termed gods, from Him who is truly God, that they should not err as to His doctrine, nor understand one [in mistake] for another. And if He did indeed teach us to call one Being Father and God, while He does from time to time Himself confess other fathers and gods in the same sense, then He will appear to enjoin a different course upon His disciples from what He follows Himself. Such conduct, however, does not bespeak the good teacher, but a misleading and invidious one. The apostles, too, according to these men’s showing, are proved to be transgressors of the commandment, since they confess the Creator as God, and Lord, and Father, as I have shown—if He is not alone God and Father. Jesus, therefore, will be to them the author and teacher of such transgression, inasmuch as He commanded that one Being should be called Father,<sup>1159</sup> thus imposing upon them the necessity of confessing the Creator as their Father, as has been pointed out.

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1157 See iii. 6, 1.

1158 [St. John xvii. 3.]

1159 Matt. xxiii. 9.

**Chapter II.—Proofs from the plain testimony of Moses, and of the other prophets, whose words are the words of Christ, that there is but one God, the founder of the world, whom Our Lord preached, and whom He called His Father.**

1. Moses, therefore, making a recapitulation of the whole law, which he had received from the Creator (Demiurge), thus speaks in Deuteronomy: "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth."<sup>1160</sup> Again, David saying that his help came from the Lord, asserts: "My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."<sup>1161</sup> And Esaias confesses that words were uttered by God, who made heaven and earth, and governs them. He says: "Hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken."<sup>1162</sup> And again: "Thus saith the Lord God, who made the heaven, and stretched it out; who established the earth, and the things in it; and who giveth breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them who walk therein."<sup>1163</sup>

2. Again, our Lord Jesus Christ confesses this same Being as His Father, where He says: "I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth."<sup>1164</sup> What Father will those men have us to understand [by these words], those who are most perverse sophists of Pandora? Whether shall it be Bythus, whom they have fabled of themselves; or their Mother; or the Only-begotten? Or shall it be he whom the Marcionites or the others have invented as god (whom I indeed have amply demonstrated to be no god at all); or shall it be (what is really the case) the Maker of heaven and earth, whom also the prophets proclaimed,—whom Christ, too, confesses as His Father,—whom also the law announces, saying: "Hear, O Israel; The Lord thy God is one God?"<sup>1165</sup>

3. But since the writings (*literæ*) of Moses are the words of Christ, He does Himself declare to the Jews, as John has recorded in the Gospel: "If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, neither will ye believe My words."<sup>1166</sup> He thus indicates in the clearest manner that the writings of Moses are His words. If, then, [this be the case with regard] to Moses, so also, beyond a doubt, the words of the other prophets are His [words], as I have pointed out. And again, the Lord Himself exhibits Abraham as having said to the rich man, with reference to all those who were still alive: "If they do not obey Moses and the prophets, neither, if any one were to rise from the dead and go to them, will they believe him."<sup>1167</sup>

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1160 Deut. xxxii. 1.

1161 Ps. cxxiv. 8.

1162 Isa. i. 2.

1163 Isa. xlii. 5.

1164 Matt. xi. 25; Luke x. 21.

1165 Deut. vi. 4.

1166 John v. 46, 47.

1167 Luke xvi. 31.

4. Now, He has not merely related to us a story respecting a poor man and a rich one; but He has taught us, in the first place, that no one should lead a luxurious life, nor, living in worldly pleasures and perpetual feasting, should be the slave of his lusts, and forget God. "For there was," He says, "a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and delighted himself with splendid feasts."<sup>1168</sup>

5. Of such persons, too, the Spirit has spoken by Esaias: "They drink wine with [the accompaniment of] harps, and tablets, and psalteries, and flutes; but they regard not the works of God, neither do they consider the work of His hands."<sup>1169</sup> Lest, therefore, we should incur the same punishment as these men, the Lord reveals [to us] their end; showing at the same time, that if they obeyed Moses and the prophets, they would believe in Him whom these had preached, the Son of God, who rose from the dead, and bestows life upon us; and He shows that all are from one essence, that is, Abraham, and Moses, and the prophets, and also the Lord Himself, who rose from the dead, in whom many believe who are of the circumcision, who do also hear Moses and the prophets announcing the coming of the Son of God. But those who scoff [at the truth] assert that these men were from another essence, and they do not know the first-begotten from the dead; understanding Christ as a distinct being, who continued as if He were impassible, and Jesus, who suffered, as being altogether separate [from Him].

6. For they do not receive from the Father the knowledge of the Son; neither do they learn who the Father is from the Son, who teaches clearly and without parables Him who truly is God. He says: "Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King."<sup>1170</sup> For these words are evidently spoken with reference to the Creator, as also Esaias says: "Heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool."<sup>1171</sup> And besides this Being there is no other God; otherwise He would not be termed by the Lord either "God" or "the great King;" for a Being who can be so described admits neither of any other being compared with nor set above Him. For he who has any superior over him, and is under the power of another, this being never can be called either "God" or "the great King."

7. But neither will these men be able to maintain that such words were uttered in an ironical manner, since it is proved to them by the words themselves that they were in earnest. For He who uttered them was Truth, and did truly vindicate His own house, by driving out of it the changers of money, who were buying and selling, saying unto them: "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."<sup>1172</sup> And

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1168 [Luke xvi. 19.](#)

1169 [Isa. v. 12.](#)

1170 [Matt. v. 34.](#)

1171 [Isa. lxvi. 1.](#)

1172 [Matt. xxi. 13.](#)

what reason had He for thus doing and saying, and vindicating His house, if He did preach another God? But [He did so], that He might point out the transgressors of His Father's law; for neither did He bring any accusation against the house, nor did He blame the law, which He had come to fulfil; but He reproved those who were putting His house to an improper use, and those who were transgressing the law. And therefore the scribes and Pharisees, too, who from the times of the law had begun to despise God, did not receive His Word, that is, they did not believe on Christ. Of these Esaias says: "Thy princes are rebellious, companions of thieves, loving gifts, following after rewards, not judging the fatherless, and negligent of the cause of the widows."<sup>1173</sup> And Jeremiah, in like manner: "They," he says, "who rule my people did not know me; they are senseless and imprudent children; they are wise to do evil, but to do well they have no knowledge."<sup>1174</sup>

8. But as many as feared God, and were anxious about His law, these ran to Christ, and were all saved. For He said to His disciples: "Go ye to the sheep of the house of Israel,"<sup>1175</sup> which have perished." And many more Samaritans, it is said, when the Lord had tarried among them, two days, "believed because of His words, and said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we ourselves have heard [Him], and know that this man is truly the Saviour of the world."<sup>1176</sup> And Paul likewise declares, "And so all Israel shall be saved;"<sup>1177</sup> but he has also said, that the law was our pedagogue [to bring us] to Christ Jesus.<sup>1178</sup> Let them not therefore ascribe to the law the unbelief of certain [among them]. For the law never hindered them from believing in the Son of God; nay, but it even exhorted them<sup>1179</sup> so to do, saying<sup>1180</sup> that men can be saved in no other way from the old wound of the serpent than by believing in Him who, in the likeness of sinful flesh, is lifted up from the earth upon the tree of martyrdom, and draws all things to Himself,<sup>1181</sup> and vivifies the dead.

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1173 [Isa. i. 23.](#)

1174 [Jer. iv. 22.](#)

1175 [Matt. x. 6.](#)

1176 [John iv. 41.](#)

1177 [Rom. xi. 26.](#)

1178 [Gal. iii. 24.](#)

1179 [Num. xxi. 8.](#)

1180 This passage is quoted by Augustine, in his treatise on original sin, written to oppose Pelagius (lib. i. c. ii.), about 400 A.D.

1181 [John xii. 32,](#) [John iii. 14.](#)

**Chapter III.—Answer to the cavils of the Gnostics. We are not to suppose that the true God can be changed, or come to an end because the heavens, which are His throne and the earth, His footstool, shall pass away.**

1. Again, as to their malignantly asserting that if heaven is indeed the throne of God, and earth His footstool, and if it is declared that the heaven and earth shall pass away, then when these pass away the God who sitteth above must also pass away, and therefore He cannot be the God who is over all; in the first place, they are ignorant what the expression means, that heaven is [His] throne and earth [His] footstool. For they do not know what God is, but they imagine that He sits after the fashion of a man, and is contained within bounds, but does not contain. And they are also unacquainted with [the meaning of] the passing away of the heaven and earth; but Paul was not ignorant of it when he declared, “For the figure of this world passeth away.”<sup>1182</sup> In the next place, David explains their question, for he says that when the fashion of this world passes away, not only shall God remain, but His servants also, expressing himself thus in the 101st Psalm: “In the beginning, Thou, O Lord, hast founded the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure, and all shall wax old as a garment; and as a vesture Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail. The children of Thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established for ever;”<sup>1183</sup> pointing out plainly what things they are that pass away, and who it is that doth endure for ever—God, together with His servants. And in like manner Esaias says: “Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heaven has been set together as smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they who dwell therein shall die in like manner. But my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not pass away.”<sup>1184</sup>

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1182 1 Cor. vii. 31.

1183 Ps. cii. 25–28. The cause of the difference in the numbering of the Psalms is that the Septuagint embraces in one psalm—the ninth—the two which form the ninth and tenth in the Hebrew text.

1184 Isa. li. 6.



**Chapter IV.—Answer to another objection, showing that the destruction of Jerusalem, which was the city of the great King, diminished nothing from the supreme majesty and power of God, for that this destruction was put in execution by the most wise counsel of the same God.**

1. Further, also, concerning Jerusalem and the Lord, they venture to assert that, if it had been “the city of the great King,”<sup>1185</sup> it would not have been deserted.<sup>1186</sup> This is just as if any one should say, that if straw were a creation of God, it would never part company with the wheat; and that the vine twigs, if made by God, never would be lopped away and deprived of the clusters. But as these [vine twigs] have not been originally made for their own sake, but for that of the fruit growing upon them, which being come to maturity and taken away, they are left behind, and those which do not conduce to fructification are lopped off altogether; so also [was it with] Jerusalem, which had in herself borne the yoke of bondage (under which man was reduced, who in former times was not subject to God when death was reigning, and being subdued, became a fit subject for liberty), when the fruit of liberty had come, and reached maturity, and been reaped and stored in the barn, and when those which had the power to produce fruit had been carried away from her [i.e., from Jerusalem], and scattered throughout all the world. Even as Esaias saith, “The children of Jacob shall strike root, and Israel shall flourish, and the whole world shall be filled with his fruit.”<sup>1187</sup> The fruit, therefore, having been sown throughout all the world, she (Jerusalem) was deservedly forsaken, and those things which had formerly brought forth fruit abundantly were taken away; for from these, according to the flesh, were Christ and the apostles enabled to bring forth fruit. But now these are no longer useful for bringing forth fruit. For all things which have a beginning in time must of course have an end in time also.

2. Since, then, the law originated with Moses, it terminated with John as a necessary consequence. Christ had come to fulfil it: wherefore “the law and the prophets were” with them “until John.”<sup>1188</sup> And therefore Jerusalem, taking its commencement from David,<sup>1189</sup> and fulfilling its own times, must have an end of legislation<sup>1190</sup> when the new covenant was revealed. For God does all things by measure and in order; nothing is unmeasured with Him, because nothing is out of order. Well spake he, who said that the unmeasurable Father

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1185 [Matt. v. 35.](#)

1186 [\[Jer. vii. 4.](#) One of the most powerful arguments in all Scripture is contained in the first twelve verses of this chapter, and it rebukes an inveterate superstition of the human heart. [Comp. Rev. ii. 5,](#) and the message to Rome, [Rom. xi. 21.\]](#)

1187 [Isa. xxvii. 6.](#)

1188 [Luke xvi. 16.](#)

1189 [2 Sam. v. 7,](#) where David is described as taking the stronghold of Zion from the Jebusites.

1190 The text fluctuates between “legis dationem” and “legis dationis.” We have followed the latter.

was Himself subjected to measure in the Son; for the Son is the measure of the Father, since He also comprehends Him. But that the administration of them (the Jews) was temporary, Esaias says: “And the daughter of Zion shall be left as a cottage in a vineyard, and as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers.”<sup>1191</sup> And when shall these things be left behind? Is it not when the fruit shall be taken away, and the leaves alone shall be left, which now have no power of producing fruit?

3. But why do we speak of Jerusalem, since, indeed, the fashion of the whole world must also pass away, when the time of its disappearance has come, in order that the fruit indeed may be gathered into the garner, but the chaff, left behind, may be consumed by fire? “For the day of the Lord cometh as a burning furnace, and all sinners shall be stubble, they who do evil things, and the day shall burn them up.”<sup>1192</sup> Now, who this Lord is that brings such a day about, John the Baptist points out, when he says of Christ, “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, having His fan in His hand to cleanse His floor; and He will gather His fruit into the garner, but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire.”<sup>1193</sup> For He who makes the chaff and He who makes the wheat are not different persons, but one and the same, who judges them, that is, separates them. But the wheat and the chaff, being inanimate and irrational, have been made such by nature. But man, being endowed with reason, and in this respect like to God, having been made free in his will, and with power over himself, is himself the cause to himself, that sometimes he becomes wheat, and sometimes chaff. Wherefore also he shall be justly condemned, because, having been created a rational being, he lost the true rationality, and living irrationally, opposed the righteousness of God, giving himself over to every earthly spirit, and serving all lusts; as says the prophet, “Man, being in honour, did not understand: he was assimilated to senseless beasts, and made like to them.”<sup>1194</sup>

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1191 [Isa. i. 8.](#)

1192 [Mal. iv. 1.](#)

1193 [Matt. iii. 11](#), etc.

1194 [Ps. xlix. 12.](#)

**Chapter V.—The author returns to his former argument, and shows that there was but one God announced by the law and prophets, whom Christ confesses as His Father, and who, through His word, one living God with Him, made Himself known to men in both covenants.**

1. God, therefore, is one and the same, who rolls up the heaven as a book, and renews the face of the earth; who made the things of time for man, so that coming to maturity in them, he may produce the fruit of immortality; and who, through His kindness, also bestows [upon him] eternal things, “that in the ages to come He may show the exceeding riches of His grace;”<sup>1195</sup> who was announced by the law and the prophets, whom Christ confessed as His Father. Now He is the Creator, and He it is who is God over all, as Esaias says, “I am witness, saith the Lord God, and my servant whom I have chosen, that ye may know, and believe, and understand that I am. Before me there was no other God, neither shall be after me. I am God, and besides me there is no Saviour. I have proclaimed, and I have saved.”<sup>1196</sup> And again: “I myself am the first God, and I am above things to come.”<sup>1197</sup> For neither in an ambiguous, nor arrogant, nor boastful manner, does He say these things; but since it was impossible, without God, to come to a knowledge of God, He teaches men, through His Word, to know God. To those, therefore, who are ignorant of these matters, and on this account imagine that they have discovered another Father, justly does one say, “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.”<sup>1198</sup>

2. For our Lord and Master, in the answer which He gave to the Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection, and who do therefore dishonour God, and lower the credit of the law, did both indicate a resurrection, and reveal God, saying to them, “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.” “For, touching the resurrection of the dead,” He says, “have ye not read that which was spoken by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?”<sup>1199</sup> And He added, “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to Him.” By these arguments He unquestionably made it clear, that He who spake to Moses out of the bush, and declared Himself to be the God of the fathers, He is the God of the living. For who is the God of the living unless He who is God, and above whom there is no other God? Whom also Daniel the prophet, when Cyrus king of the Persians said to him, “Why dost thou not worship Bel?”<sup>1200</sup> did proclaim, saying,

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1195 Eph. ii. 7.

1196 Isa. xliii. 10, etc.

1197 Isa. xii. 4.

1198 Matt. xxii. 29.

1199 Matt. xxii. 29, etc.; Ex. iii. 6.

1200 In the Septuagint and Vulgate versions, this story constitutes the fourteenth chapter of the book of Daniel. It is not extant in Hebrew, and has therefore been removed to the Apocrypha, in the Anglican canon [the Greek and St. Jerome's] of Scripture, under the title of “Bel and the Dragon.”

“Because I do not worship idols made with hands, but the living God, who established the heaven and the earth and has dominion over all flesh.” Again did he say, “I will adore the Lord my God, because He is the living God.” He, then, who was adored by the prophets as the living God, He is the God of the living; and His Word is He who also spake to Moses, who also put the Sadducees to silence, who also bestowed the gift of resurrection, thus revealing [both] truths to those who are blind, that is, the resurrection and God [in His true character]. For if He be not the God of the dead, but of the living, yet was called the God of the fathers who were sleeping, they do indubitably live to God, and have not passed out of existence, since they are children of the resurrection. But our Lord is Himself the resurrection, as He does Himself declare, “I am the resurrection and the life.”<sup>1201</sup> But the fathers are His children; for it is said by the prophet: “Instead of thy fathers, thy children have been made to thee.”<sup>1202</sup> Christ Himself, therefore, together with the Father, is the God of the living, who spake to Moses, and who was also manifested to the fathers.

3. And teaching this very thing, He said to the Jews: “Your father Abraham rejoiced that he should see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.”<sup>1203</sup> What is intended? “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.”<sup>1204</sup> In the first place, [he believed] that He was the maker of heaven and earth, the only God; and in the next place, that He would make his seed as the stars of heaven. This is what is meant by Paul, [when he says,] “as lights in the world.”<sup>1205</sup> Righteously, therefore, having left his earthly kindred, he followed the Word of God, walking as a pilgrim with the Word, that he might [afterwards] have his abode with the Word.

4. Righteously also the apostles, being of the race of Abraham, left the ship and their father, and followed the Word. Righteously also do we, possessing the same faith as Abraham, and taking up the cross as Isaac did the wood,<sup>1206</sup> follow Him. For in Abraham man had learned beforehand, and had been accustomed to follow the Word of God. For Abraham, according to his faith, followed the command of the Word of God, and with a ready mind delivered up, as a sacrifice to God, his only-begotten and beloved son, in order that God also might be pleased to offer up for all his seed His own beloved and only-begotten Son, as a sacrifice for our redemption.

5. Since, therefore, Abraham was a prophet and saw in the Spirit the day of the Lord’s coming, and the dispensation of His suffering, through whom both he himself and all who,

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1201 [John xi. 25.](#)

1202 [Ps. xlv. 16.](#)

1203 [John viii. 56.](#)

1204 [Rom. iv. 3.](#)

1205 [Phil. ii. 15.](#)

1206 [Gen. xxii. 6.](#)

following the example of his faith, trust in God, should be saved, he rejoiced exceedingly. The Lord, therefore, was not unknown to Abraham, whose day he desired to see;<sup>1207</sup> nor, again, was the Lord's Father, for he had learned from the Word of the Lord, and believed Him; wherefore it was accounted to him by the Lord for righteousness. For faith towards God justifies a man; and therefore he said, "I will stretch forth my hand to the most high God, who made the heaven and the earth."<sup>1208</sup> All these truths, however, do those holding perverse opinions endeavour to overthrow, because of one passage, which they certainly do not understand correctly.

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1207 [John viii. 56.](#)

1208 [Gen. xiv. 22.](#)

**Chapter VI.—Explanation of the words of Christ, “No man knoweth the Father, but the Son,” etc.; which words the heretics misinterpret. Proof that, by the Father revealing the Son, and by the Son being revealed, the Father was never unknown.**

1. For the Lord, revealing Himself to His disciples, that He Himself is the Word, who imparts knowledge of the Father, and reproving the Jews, who imagined that they, had [the knowledge of] God, while they nevertheless rejected His Word, through whom God is made known, declared, “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son has willed to reveal [Him].”<sup>1209</sup> Thus hath Matthew set it down, and Luke in like manner, and Mark<sup>1210</sup> the very same; for John omits this passage. They, however, who would be wiser than the apostles, write [the verse] in the following manner: “No man *knew* the Father, but the Son; nor the Son, but the Father, and he to whom the Son has willed to reveal [Him];” and they explain it as if the true God were known to none prior to our Lord’s advent; and that God who was announced by the prophets, they allege not to be the Father of Christ.

2. But if Christ did then [only] begin to have existence when He came [into the world] as man, and [if] the Father did remember [only] in the times of Tiberius Cæsar to provide for [the wants of] men, and His Word was shown to have not always coexisted with His creatures; [it may be remarked that] neither then was it necessary that another God should be proclaimed, but [rather] that the reasons for so great carelessness and neglect on His part should be made the subject of investigation. For it is fitting that no such question should arise, and gather such strength, that it would indeed both change God, and destroy our faith in that Creator who supports us by means of His creation. For as we do direct our faith towards the Son, so also should we possess a firm and immoveable love towards the Father. In his book against Marcion, Justin<sup>1211</sup> does well say: “I would not have believed the Lord Himself, if He had announced any other than He who is our framer, maker, and nourisher. But because the only-begotten Son came to us from the one God, who both made this world and formed us, and contains and administers all things, summing up His own handiwork in Himself, my faith towards Him is stedfast, and my love to the Father immoveable, God bestowing both upon us.”

1209 [Matt. xi. 27](#); [Luke x. 22](#).

1210 Not now to be found in Mark’s Gospel.

1211 Photius, 125, makes mention of Justin Martyr’s work, λόγος κατὰ Μαρκίωνος. See also Eusebius’s *Ecclesiastical History*, book iv. c. 18, where this passage of Irenæus is quoted. [The vast importance of Justin’s startling remark is that it hinges on the words of Christ Himself, concerning His antecedents and notes as set forth in the Scriptures, St. [John v. 30–39](#).]

3. For no one can know the Father, unless through the Word of God, that is, unless by the Son revealing [Him]; neither can he have knowledge of the Son, unless through the good pleasure of the Father. But the Son performs the good pleasure of the Father; for the Father sends, and the Son is sent, and comes. And His Word knows that His Father is, as far as regards us, invisible and infinite; and since He cannot be declared [by any one else], He does Himself declare Him to us; and, on the other hand, it is the Father alone who knows His own Word. And both these truths has our Lord declared. Wherefore the Son reveals the knowledge of the Father through His own manifestation. For the manifestation of the Son is the knowledge of the Father; for all things are manifested through the Word. In order, therefore, that we might know that the Son who came is He who imparts to those believing on Him a knowledge of the Father, He said to His disciples:<sup>1212</sup> “No man knoweth the Son but the Father, nor the Father but the Son, and those to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him;” thus setting Himself forth and the Father as He [really] is, that we may not receive any other Father, except Him who is revealed by the Son.

4. But this [Father] is the Maker of heaven and earth, as is shown from His words; and not he, the false father, who has been invented by Marcion, or by Valentinus, or by Basilides, or by Carpocrates, or by Simon, or by the rest of the “Gnostics,” falsely so called. For none of these was the Son of God; but Christ Jesus our Lord [was], against whom they set their teaching in opposition, and have the daring to preach an unknown God. But they ought to hear [this] against themselves: How is it that He is unknown, who is known by them? for, whatever is known even by a few, is not unknown. But the Lord did not say that both the Father and the Son could not be known at all (*in totum*), for in that case His advent would have been superfluous. For why did He come hither? Was it that He should say to us, “Never mind seeking after God; for He is unknown, and ye shall not find Him;” as also the disciples of Valentinus falsely declare that Christ said to their Æons? But this is indeed vain. For the Lord taught us that no man is capable of knowing God, unless he be taught of God; that is, that God cannot be known without God: but that this is the express will of the Father, that God should be known. For they shall know<sup>1213</sup> Him to whomsoever the Son has revealed Him.

5. And for this purpose did the Father reveal the Son, that through His instrumentality He might be manifested to all, and might receive those righteous ones who believe in Him into incorruption and everlasting enjoyment (now, to believe in Him is to do His will); but He shall righteously shut out into the darkness which they have chosen for themselves, those who do not believe, and who do consequently avoid His light. The Father therefore has re-

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1212 [A most emphatic and pregnant text which Irenæus here expounds with great beauty. The reference (St. Matt. xi. 27) seems to have been inadvertently omitted in this place where the repetition is desirable.]

1213 The ordinary text reads *cognoscunt*, i.e., do know; but Harvey thinks it should be the future—*cognoscent*.

vealed Himself to all, by making His Word visible to all; and, conversely, the Word has declared to all the Father and the Son, since He has become visible to all. And therefore the righteous judgment of God [shall fall] upon all who, like others, have seen, but have not, like others, believed.

6. For by means of the creation itself, the Word reveals God the Creator; and by means of the world [does He declare] the Lord the Maker of the world; and by means of the formation [of man] the Artificer who formed him; and by the Son that Father who begat the Son: and these things do indeed address all men in the same manner, but all do not in the same way believe them. But by the law and the prophets did the Word preach both Himself and the Father alike [to all]; and all the people heard Him alike, but all did not alike believe. And through the Word Himself who had been made visible and palpable, was the Father shown forth, although all did not equally believe in Him; but all saw the Father in the Son: for the Father is the invisible of the Son, but the Son the visible of the Father. And for this reason all spake with Christ when He was present [upon earth], and they named Him God. Yea, even the demons exclaimed, on beholding the Son: “We know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God.”<sup>1214</sup> And the devil looking at Him, and tempting Him, said: “If Thou art the Son of God;”<sup>1215</sup>—all thus indeed seeing and speaking of the Son and the Father, but all not believing [in them].

7. For it was fitting that the truth should receive testimony from all, and should become [a means of] judgment for the salvation indeed of those who believe, but for the condemnation of those who believe not; that all should be fairly judged, and that the faith in the Father and Son should be approved by all, that is, that it should be established by all [as the one means of salvation], receiving testimony from all, both from those belonging to it, since they are its friends, and by those having no connection with it, though they are its enemies. For that evidence is true, and cannot be gainsaid, which elicits even from its adversaries striking<sup>1216</sup> testimonies in its behalf; they being convinced with respect to the matter in hand by their own plain contemplation of it, and bearing testimony to it, as well as declaring it.<sup>1217</sup> But after a while they break forth into enmity, and become accusers [of what they had approved], and are desirous that their own testimony should not be [regarded as] true. He, therefore, who was known, was not a different being from Him who declared “No man knoweth the Father,” but one and the same, the Father making all things subject to Him; while He received testimony from all that He was very man, and that He was very God, from the Father, from the Spirit, from angels, from the creation itself, from men, from apostate

1214 [Mark i. 24.](#)

1215 [Matt. iv. 3;](#) [Luke iv. 3.](#)

1216 *Singula*, which with Massuet we here understand in the sense of *singularia*.

1217 Some, instead of *significanti*, read *signantibus*, “stamping it as true.”



spirits and demons, from the enemy, and last of all, from death itself. But the Son, administering all things for the Father, works from the beginning even to the end, and without Him no man can attain the knowledge of God. For the Son is the knowledge of the Father; but the knowledge of the Son is in the Father, and has been revealed through the Son; and this was the reason why the Lord declared: “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; nor the Father, save the Son, and those to whomsoever the Son shall reveal [Him].”<sup>1218</sup> For “shall reveal” was said not with reference to the future alone, as if then [only] the Word had begun to manifest the Father when He was born of Mary, but it applies indifferently throughout all time. For the Son, being present with His own handiwork from the beginning, reveals the Father to all; to whom He wills, and when He wills, and as the Father wills. Wherefore, then, in all things, and through all things, there is one God, the Father, and one Word, and one Son, and one Spirit, and one salvation to all who believe in Him.

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1218 [Matt. xi. 27](#); [Luke x. 22](#). Harvey observes here, that “it is remarkable that this text, having been correctly quoted a short time previously in accordance with the received Greek text, *ὃς ἐὰν βούληται ὁ υἱὸς ἀποκαλύψαι*, the translator now not only uses the single verb *revelaverit*, but says pointedly that it was so written by the venerable author.” It is probable, therefore, that the previous passage has been made to harmonize with the received text by a later hand; with which, however, the Syriac form agrees.

**Chapter VII.—Recapitulation of the foregoing argument, showing that Abraham, through the revelation of the Word, knew the Father, and the coming of the Son of God. For this cause, he rejoiced to see the day of Christ, when the promises made to him should be fulfilled. The fruit of this rejoicing has flowed to posterity, viz., to those who are partakers in the faith of Abraham, but not to the Jews who reject the Word of God.**

1. Therefore Abraham also, knowing the Father through the Word, who made heaven and earth, confessed Him to be God; and having learned, by an announcement [made to him], that the Son of God would be a man among men, by whose advent his seed should be as the stars of heaven, he desired to see that day, so that he might himself also embrace Christ; and, seeing it through the spirit of prophecy, he rejoiced.<sup>1219</sup> Wherefore Simeon also, one of his descendants, carried fully out the rejoicing of the patriarch, and said: “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace. For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light for the revelation of the Gentiles,<sup>1220</sup> and the glory of the people Israel.”<sup>1221</sup> And the angels, in like manner, announced tidings of great joy to the shepherds who were keeping watch by night.<sup>1222</sup> Moreover, Mary said, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my salvation;”<sup>1223</sup>—the rejoicing of Abraham descending upon those who sprang from him,—those, namely, who were watching, and who beheld Christ, and believed in Him; while, on the other hand, there was a reciprocal rejoicing which passed backwards from the children to Abraham, who did also desire to see the day of Christ’s coming. Rightly, then, did our Lord bear witness to him, saying, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.”

2. For not alone upon Abraham’s account did He say these things, but also that He might point out how all who have known God from the beginning, and have foretold the advent of Christ, have received the revelation from the Son Himself; who also in the last times was made visible and passible, and spake with the human race, that He might from the stones raise up children unto Abraham, and fulfil the promise which God had given him, and that He might make his seed as the stars of heaven,<sup>1224</sup> as John the Baptist says: “For God is able from these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”<sup>1225</sup> Now, this Jesus did by drawing us off from the religion of stones, and bringing us over from hard and

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1219 [Gen. xvii. 17.](#)

1220 The text has *oculorum*, probably by mistake for *populorum*.

1221 [Luke ii. 29](#), etc.

1222 [Luke ii. 8.](#)

1223 [Luke i. 46.](#)

1224 [Gen. xv. 5.](#)

1225 [Matt. iii. 9.](#)

fruitless cogitations, and establishing in us a faith like to Abraham. As Paul does also testify, saying that we are children of Abraham because of the similarity of our faith, and the promise of inheritance.<sup>1226</sup>

3. He is therefore one and the same God, who called Abraham and gave him the promise. But He is the Creator, who does also through Christ prepare lights in the world, [namely] those who believe from among the Gentiles. And He says, “Ye are the light of the world;”<sup>1227</sup> that is, as the stars of heaven. Him, therefore, I have rightly shown to be known by no man, unless by the Son, and to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him. But the Son reveals the Father to all to whom He wills that He should be known; and neither without the goodwill of the Father nor without the agency of the Son, can any man know God. Wherefore did the Lord say to His disciples, “I am the way, the truth, and the life and no man cometh unto the Father but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye would have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye have both known Him, and have seen Him.”<sup>1228</sup> From these words it is evident, that He is known by the Son, that is, by the Word.

4. Therefore have the Jews departed from God, in not receiving His Word, but imagining that they could know the Father [apart] by Himself, without the Word, that is, without the Son; they being ignorant of that God who spake in human shape to Abraham,<sup>1229</sup> and again to Moses, saying, “I have surely seen the affliction of My people in Egypt, and I have come down to deliver them.”<sup>1230</sup> For the Son, who is the Word of God, arranged these things beforehand from the beginning, the Father being in no want of angels, in order that He might call the creation into being, and form man, for whom also the creation was made; nor, again, standing in need of any instrumentality for the framing of created things, or for the ordering of those things which had reference to man; while, [at the same time,] He has a vast and unspeakable number of servants. For His *offspring* and His *similitude*<sup>1231</sup> do minister to Him in every respect; that is, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Word and Wisdom; whom all the angels serve, and to whom they are subject. Vain, therefore, are those who, because of that declaration, “No man knoweth the Father, but the Son,”<sup>1232</sup> do introduce another unknown Father.

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1226 [Rom. iv. 12](#); [Gal. iv. 28](#).

1227 [Matt. v. 14](#).

1228 [John xiv. 6, 7](#).

1229 [Gen. xviii. 1](#).

1230 [Ex. iii. 7, 8](#).

1231 Massuet here observes, that the fathers called the Holy Spirit the similitude of the Son.

1232 [Matt. xi. 27](#); [Luke x. 22](#).

**Chapter VIII.—Vain attempts of Marcion and his followers, who exclude Abraham from the salvation bestowed by Christ, who liberated not only Abraham, but the seed of Abraham, by fulfilling and not destroying the law when He healed on the Sabbath-day.**

1. Vain, too, is [the effort of] Marcion and his followers when they [seek to] exclude Abraham from the inheritance, to whom the Spirit through many men, and now by Paul, bears witness, that “he believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.”<sup>1233</sup> And the Lord [also bears witness to him,] in the first place, indeed, by raising up children to him from the stones, and making his seed as the stars of heaven, saying, “They shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;”<sup>1234</sup> and then again by saying to the Jews, “When ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven, but you yourselves cast out.”<sup>1235</sup> This, then, is a clear point, that those who disallow his salvation, and frame the idea of another God besides Him who made the promise to Abraham, are outside the kingdom of God, and are disinherited from [the gift of] incorruption, setting at naught and blaspheming God, who introduces, through Jesus Christ, Abraham to the kingdom of heaven, and his seed, that is, the Church, upon which also is conferred the adoption and the inheritance promised to Abraham.

2. For the Lord vindicated Abraham’s posterity by loosing them from bondage and calling them to salvation, as He did in the case of the woman whom He healed, saying openly to those who had not faith like Abraham, “Ye hypocrites,<sup>1236</sup> doth not each one of you on the Sabbath-days loose his ox or his ass, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-days?”<sup>1237</sup> It is clear therefore, that He loosed and vivified those who believe in Him as Abraham did, doing nothing contrary to the law when He healed upon the Sabbath-day. For the law did not prohibit men from being healed upon the Sabbaths; [on the contrary,] it even circumcised them upon that day, and gave command that the offices should be performed by the priests for the people; yea, it did not disallow the healing even of dumb animals. Both at Siloam and on frequent subsequent<sup>1238</sup> occasions, did He perform cures upon the Sabbath; and for this reason many used to resort to Him on the Sabbath-days. For the law commanded them to abstain from every servile work, that is,

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1233 [Rom. iv. 3.](#)

1234 [Matt. viii. 11.](#)

1235 [Luke xiii. 28.](#)

1236 Harvey prefers the singular— “*hypocrite*.”

1237 [Luke xiii. 15, 16.](#)

1238 The text here is rather uncertain. Harvey’s conjectural reading of *et jam* for *etiam* has been followed.

from all grasping after wealth which is procured by trading and by other worldly business; but it exhorted them to attend to the exercises of the soul, which consist in reflection, and to addresses of a beneficial kind for their neighbours' benefit. And therefore the Lord re-proved those who unjustly blamed Him for having healed upon the Sabbath-days. For He did not make void, but fulfilled the law, by performing the offices of the high priest, propitiating God for men, and cleansing the lepers, healing the sick, and Himself suffering death, that exiled man might go forth from condemnation, and might return without fear to his own inheritance.

3. And again, the law did not forbid those who were hungry on the Sabbath-days to take food lying ready at hand: it did, however, forbid them to reap and to gather into the barn. And therefore did the Lord say to those who were blaming His disciples because they plucked and ate the ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands, "Have ye not read this, what David did, when himself was an hungered; how he went into the house of God, and ate the shew-bread, and gave to those who were with him; which it is not lawful to eat, but for the priests alone?"<sup>1239</sup> justifying His disciples by the words of the law, and pointing out that it was lawful for the priests to act freely. For David had been appointed a priest by God, although Saul persecuted him. For all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank.<sup>1240</sup> And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually. Of whom Moses also says in Deuteronomy, when blessing Levi, "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, and he disinherited his own sons: he kept Thy commandments, and observed Thy covenant."<sup>1241</sup> But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord? Of whom again Moses says, "They shall have no inheritance, for the Lord Himself is their inheritance."<sup>1242</sup> And again, "The priests the Levites shall have no part in the whole tribe of Levi, nor substance with Israel; their substance is the offerings (*fructifications*) of the Lord: these shall they eat."<sup>1243</sup> Wherefore also Paul says, "I do not seek after a gift, but I seek after fruit."<sup>1244</sup> To His disciples He said, who had a priesthood of the Lord,<sup>1245</sup>

1239 Luke vi. 3, 4.

1240 This clause is differently quoted by Antonius Melissa and John Damascenus, thus: Πᾶς βασιλεὺς δίκαιος ἱερατικὴν ἔχει τάξιν, i.e., *Every righteous king possesses a priestly order*. Comp. 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. [And with St. Peter's testimony to the priesthood of the laity, compare the same under the law. Ex. xix. 6. The Western Church has recognised the "Episcopate *ab extra*" of sovereigns; while, in the East, it has grown into *Cæsaropapism*.]

1241 Deut. xxxiii. 9.

1242 Num. xviii. 20.

1243 Deut. xviii. 1.

1244 Phil. iv. 17.

1245 Literally, "the Lord's Levitical substance"—*Domini Leviticam substantiam*.

to whom it was lawful when hungry to eat the ears of corn,<sup>1246</sup> “For the workman is worthy of his meat.”<sup>1247</sup> And the priests in the temple profaned the Sabbath, and were blameless. Wherefore, then, were they blameless? Because when in the temple they were not engaged in secular affairs, but in the service of the Lord, fulfilling the law, but not going beyond it, as that man did, who of his own accord carried dry wood into the camp of God, and was justly stoned to death.<sup>1248</sup> “For every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire;”<sup>1249</sup> and “whosoever shall defile the temple of God, him shall God defile.”<sup>1250</sup>

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1246 Literally, “to take food from seeds.”

1247 [Matt. x. 10.](#)

1248 [Num. xv. 32,](#) etc.

1249 [Matt. iii. 10.](#)

1250 [1 Cor. iii. 17.](#)

**Chapter IX.—There is but one author, and one end to both covenants.**

1. All things therefore are of one and the same substance, that is, from one and the same God; as also the Lord says to the disciples “Therefore every scribe, which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.”<sup>1251</sup> He did not teach that he who brought forth the old was one, and he that brought forth the new, another; but that they were one and the same. For the Lord is the good man of the house, who rules the entire house of His Father; and who delivers a law suited both for slaves and those who are as yet undisciplined; and gives fitting precepts to those that are free, and have been justified by faith, as well as throws His own inheritance open to those that are sons. And He called His disciples “scribes” and “teachers of the kingdom of heaven;” of whom also He elsewhere says to the Jews: “Behold, I send unto you wise men, and scribes, and teachers; and some of them ye shall kill, and persecute from city to city.”<sup>1252</sup> Now, without contradiction, He means by those things which are brought forth from the treasure new and old, the two covenants; the old, that giving of the law which took place formerly; and He points out as the new, that manner of life required by the Gospel, of which David says, “Sing unto the Lord a new song;”<sup>1253</sup> and Esaias, “Sing unto the Lord a new hymn. His beginning (*initium*), His name is glorified from the height of the earth: they declare His powers in the isles.”<sup>1254</sup> And Jeremiah says: “Behold, I will make a new covenant, not as I made with your fathers”<sup>1255</sup> in Mount Horeb. But one and the same householder produced both covenants, the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who spake with both Abraham and Moses, and who has restored us anew to liberty, and has multiplied that grace which is from Himself.

2. He declares: “For in this place is One greater than the temple.”<sup>1256</sup> But [the words] *greater* and *less* are not applied to those things which have nothing in common between themselves, and are of an opposite nature, and mutually repugnant; but are used in the case of those of the same substance, and which possess properties in common, but merely differ in number and size; such as water from water, and light from light, and grace from grace. Greater, therefore, is that legislation which has been given in order to liberty than that given in order to bondage; and therefore it has also been diffused, not throughout one nation [only], but over the whole world. For one and the same Lord, who is greater than the temple, greater than Solomon, and greater than Jonah, confers gifts upon men, that is, His own

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1251 [Matt. xiii. 52.](#)

1252 [Matt. xxiii. 34.](#)

1253 [Ps. xcvi. 1.](#)

1254 [Isa. xlii. 10.](#) quoted from memory.

1255 [Jer. xxxi. 31.](#)

1256 [Matt. xii. 6.](#)

presence, and the resurrection from the dead; but He does not change God, nor proclaim another Father, but that very same one, who always has more to measure out to those of His household. And as their love towards God increases, He bestows more and greater [gifts]; as also the Lord said to His disciples: “Ye shall see greater things than these.”<sup>1257</sup> And Paul declares: “Not that I have already attained, or that I am justified, or already have been made perfect. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect has come, the things which are in part shall be done away.”<sup>1258</sup> As, therefore, when that which is perfect is come, we shall not see another Father, but Him whom we now desire to see (for “blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God”<sup>1259</sup>); neither shall we look for another Christ and Son of God, but Him who [was born] of the Virgin Mary, who also suffered, in whom too we trust, and whom we love; as Esaias says: “And they shall say in that day, Behold our Lord God, in whom we have trusted, and we have rejoiced in our salvation;”<sup>1260</sup> and Peter says in his Epistle: “Whom, not seeing, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, ye have believed, ye shall rejoice with joy unspeakable;”<sup>1261</sup> neither do we receive another Holy Spirit, besides Him who is with us, and who cries, “Abba, Father;”<sup>1262</sup> and we shall make increase in the very same things [as now], and shall make progress, so that no longer through a glass, or by means of enigmas, but face to face, we shall enjoy the gifts of God;—so also now, receiving more than the temple, and more than Solomon, that is, the advent of the Son of God, we have not been taught another God besides the Framer and the Maker of all, who has been pointed out to us from the beginning; nor another Christ, the Son of God, besides Him who was foretold by the prophets.

3. For the new covenant having been known and preached by the prophets, He who was to carry it out according to the good pleasure of the Father was also preached, having been revealed to men as God pleased; that they might always make progress through believing in Him, and by means of the [successive] covenants, should gradually attain to perfect salvation.<sup>1263</sup> For there is one salvation and one God; but the precepts which form the man are numerous, and the steps which lead man to God are not a few. It is allowable for an

1257 [John i. 50.](#)

1258 These words of Scripture are quoted by memory from [Phil. iii. 12](#), [1 Cor. iv. 4](#), and [1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10](#). It is remarkable that the second is incorporated with the preceding in a similar way, in the ancient Italic version known as the St. Germain copy.

1259 [Matt. v. 8.](#)

1260 [Isa. xxv. 9.](#)

1261 [1 Pet. i. 8.](#)

1262 [Rom. viii. 15.](#)

1263 This is in accordance with Harvey’s text— “*Maturescere profectum salutis.*” Grabe, however, reads, “*Maturescere profectum salutis;*” making this equivalent to “*ad prefectam salutem.*” In most mss. “*profectum*”



earthly and temporal king, though he is [but] a man, to grant to his subjects greater advantages at times: shall not this then be lawful for God, since He is [ever] the same, and is always willing to confer a greater [degree of] grace upon the human race, and to honour continually with many gifts those who please Him? But if this be to make progress, [namely,] to find out another Father besides Him who was preached from the beginning; and again, besides him who is imagined to have been discovered in the second place, to find out a third other, —then the progress of this man will consist in his also proceeding from a third to a fourth; and from this, again, to another and another: and thus he who thinks that he is always making progress of such a kind, will never rest in one God. For, being driven away from Him who truly is [God], and being turned backwards, he shall be for ever seeking, yet shall never find out God;<sup>1264</sup> but shall continually swim in an abyss without limits, unless, being converted by repentance, he return to the place from which he had been cast out, confessing one God, the Father, the Creator, and believing [in Him] who was declared by the law and the prophets, who was borne witness to by Christ, as He did Himself declare to those who were accusing His disciples of not observing the tradition of the elders: “Why do ye make void the law of God by reason of your tradition? For God said, Honour thy father and mother; and, Whosoever curseth father or mother, let him die the death.”<sup>1265</sup> And again, He says to them a second time: “And ye have made void the word of God<sup>1266</sup> by reason of your tradition;” Christ confessing in the plainest manner Him to be Father and God, who said in the law, “Honour thy father and mother; that it may be well with thee.”<sup>1267</sup> For the true God did confess the commandment of the law as the word of God, and called no one else God besides His own Father.

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and “*profectum*” would be written alike. The same word (“*profectus*”) occurs again almost immediately, with an evident reference to and comparison with this clause.

1264 2 Tim. iii. 7.

1265 Matt. xv. 3, 4.

1266 Another variation from the *textus receptus* borne out by the Codex Bezae, and some ancient versions.

1267 Ex. xx. 12, LXX.

**Chapter X.—The Old Testament Scriptures, and those written by Moses in particular, do everywhere make mention of the Son of God, and foretell His advent and passion. From this fact it follows that they were inspired by one and the same God.**

1. Wherefore also John does appropriately relate that the Lord said to the Jews: “Ye search the Scriptures, in which ye think ye have eternal life; these are they which testify of me. And ye are not willing to come unto Me, that ye may have life.”<sup>1268</sup> How therefore did the Scriptures testify of Him, unless they were from one and the same Father, instructing men beforehand as to the advent of His Son, and foretelling the salvation brought in by Him? “For if ye had believed Moses, ye would also have believed Me; for he wrote of Me;”<sup>1269</sup> [saying this,] no doubt, because the Son of God is implanted everywhere throughout his writings: at one time, indeed, speaking with Abraham, when about to eat with him; at another time with Noah, giving to him the dimensions [of the ark]; at another; inquiring after Adam; at another, bringing down judgment upon the Sodomites; and again, when He becomes visible,<sup>1270</sup> and directs Jacob on his journey, and speaks with Moses from the bush.<sup>1271</sup> And it would be endless to recount [the occasions] upon which the Son of God is shown forth by Moses. Of the day of His passion, too, he was not ignorant; but foretold Him, after a figurative manner, by the name given to the passover;<sup>1272</sup> and at that very festival, which had been proclaimed such a long time previously by Moses, did our Lord suffer, thus fulfilling the passover. And he did not describe the day only, but the place also, and the time of day at which the sufferings ceased,<sup>1273</sup> and the sign of the setting of the sun, saying: “Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any other of thy cities which the Lord God gives thee; but in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose that His name be called on there, thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, towards the setting of the sun.”<sup>1274</sup>

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1268 John v. 39, 40.

1269 John v. 46.

1270 See Gen. xviii. 13 and Gen. xxxi. 11, etc. There is an allusion here to a favourite notion among the Fathers, derived from Philo the Jew, that the name *Israel* was compounded from the three Hebrew words **אֵל** **יִשְׂרָאֵל**, i.e., “the man seeing God.”

1271 Ex. iii. 4, etc.

1272 Feuardent infers with great probability from this passage, that Irenæus, like Tertullian and others of the Fathers, connected the word *Pascha* with *πάσχειν*, *to suffer*. [The LXX. constantly giving colour to early Christian ideas in this manner, they concluded, perhaps, that such coincidences were designed. The LXX. were credited with a sort of inspiration, as we learn from our author.]

1273 Latin, “et extremitatem temporum.”

1274 Deut. xvi. 5, 6.

2. And already he had also declared His advent, saying, “There shall not fail a chief in Judah, nor a leader from his loins, until He come for whom it is laid up, and He is the hope of the nations; binding His foal to the vine, and His ass’s colt to the creeping ivy. He shall wash His stole in wine, and His upper garment in the blood of the grape; His eyes shall be more joyous than wine,<sup>1275</sup> and His teeth whiter than milk.”<sup>1276</sup> For, let those who have the reputation of investigating everything, inquire at what time a prince and leader failed out of Judah, and who is the hope of the nations, who also is the vine, what was the ass’s colt [referred to as] His, what the clothing, and what the eyes, what the teeth, and what the wine, and thus let them investigate every one of the points mentioned; and they shall find that there was none other announced than our Lord, Christ Jesus. Wherefore Moses, when chiding the ingratitude of the people, said, “Ye infatuated people, and unwise, do ye thus requite the Lord?”<sup>1277</sup> And again, he indicates that He who from the beginning founded and created them, the Word, who also redeems and vivifies us in the last times, is shown as hanging on the tree, and they will not believe on Him. For he says, “And thy life shall be hanging before thine eyes, and thou wilt not believe thy life.”<sup>1278</sup> And again, “Has not this same one thy Father owned thee, and made thee, and created thee?”<sup>1279</sup>

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1275 The Latin is, “*lætifici oculi ejus a vino*,” the Hebrew method of indicating comparison being evidently imitated.

1276 [Gen. xlix. 10–12](#), LXX.

1277 [Deut. xxxii. 6](#).

1278 [Deut. xxviii. 66](#). Tertullian, Cyprian, and other early Fathers, agree with Irenæus in his exposition of this text.

1279 [Deut. xxxii. 6](#). “Owned thee,” i.e., following the meaning of the Hebrew, “owned thee by generation.”

**Chapter XI.—The old prophets and righteous men knew beforehand of the advent of Christ, and earnestly desired to see and hear Him, He revealing himself in the Scriptures by the Holy Ghost, and without any change in Himself, enriching men day by day with benefits, but conferring them in greater abundance on later than on former generations.**

1. But that it was not only the prophets and many righteous men, who, foreseeing through the Holy Spirit His advent, prayed that they might attain to that period in which they should see their Lord face to face, and hear His words, the Lord has made manifest, when He says to His disciples, “Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”<sup>1280</sup> In what way, then, did they desire both to hear and to see, unless they had foreknowledge of His future advent? But how could they have foreknown it, unless they had previously received foreknowledge from Himself? And how do the Scriptures testify of Him, unless all things had ever been revealed and shown to believers by one and the same God through the Word; He at one time conferring with His creature, and at another propounding His law; at one time, again, reproofing, at another exhorting, and then setting free His servant, and adopting him as a son (*in filium*); and, at the proper time, bestowing an incorruptible inheritance, for the purpose of bringing man to perfection? For He formed him for growth and increase, as the Scripture says: “Increase and multiply.”<sup>1281</sup>

2. And in this respect God differs from man, that God indeed makes, but man is made; and truly, He who makes is always the same; but that which is made must receive both beginning, and middle, and addition, and increase. And God does indeed create after a skilful manner, while, [as regards] man, he *is* created skilfully. God also is truly perfect in all things, Himself equal and similar to Himself, as He is all light, and all mind, and all substance, and the fount of all good; but man receives advancement and increase towards God. For as God is always the same, so also man, when found in God, shall always go on towards God. For neither does God at any time cease to confer benefits upon, or to enrich man; nor does man ever cease from receiving the benefits, and being enriched by God. For the receptacle of His goodness, and the instrument of His glorification, is the man who is grateful to Him that made him; and again, the receptacle of His just judgment is the ungrateful man, who both despises his Maker and is not subject to His Word; who has promised that He will give very much to those always bringing forth fruit, and more [and more] to those who have the Lord’s money. “Well done,” He says, “good and faithful servant: because thou hast been faithful in little, I will appoint thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”<sup>1282</sup> The Lord Himself thus promises very much.

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1280 [Matt. xiii. 17.](#)

1281 [Gen. i. 28.](#)

1282 [Matt. xxv. 21,](#) etc.

3. As, therefore, He has promised to give very much to those who do now bring forth fruit, according to the gift of His grace, but not according to the changeableness of “knowledge;” for the Lord remains the same, and the same Father is revealed; thus, therefore, has the one and the same Lord granted, by means of His advent, a greater gift of grace to those of a later period, than what He had granted to those under the Old Testament dispensation. For they indeed used to hear, by means of [His] servants, that the King would come, and they rejoiced to a certain extent, inasmuch as they hoped for His coming; but those who have beheld Him actually present, and have obtained liberty, and been made partakers of His gifts, do possess a greater amount of grace, and a higher degree of exultation, rejoicing because of the King’s arrival: as also David says, “My soul shall rejoice in the Lord; it shall be glad in His salvation.”<sup>1283</sup> And for this cause, upon His entrance into Jerusalem, all those who were in the way<sup>1284</sup> recognised David their king in His sorrow of soul, and spread their garments for Him, and ornamented the way with green boughs, crying out with great joy and gladness, “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: hosanna in the highest.”<sup>1285</sup> But to the envious wicked stewards, who circumvented those under them, and ruled over those that had no great intelligence,<sup>1286</sup> and for this reason were unwilling that the king should come, and who said to Him, “Hearest thou what these say?” did the Lord reply, “Have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou perfected praise?”<sup>1287</sup>—thus pointing out that what had been declared by David concerning the Son of God, was accomplished in His own person; and indicating that they were indeed ignorant of the meaning of the Scripture and the dispensation of God; but declaring that it was Himself who was announced by the prophets as Christ, whose name is praised in all the earth, and who perfects praise to His Father from the mouth of babes and sucklings; wherefore also His glory has been raised above the heavens.

4. If, therefore, the self-same person is present who was announced by the prophets, our Lord Jesus Christ, and if His advent has brought in a fuller [measure of] grace and greater gifts to those who have received Him, it is plain that the Father also is Himself the same who was proclaimed by the prophets, and that the Son, on His coming, did not spread the knowledge of another Father, but of the same who was preached from the beginning; from whom also He has brought down liberty to those who, in a lawful manner, and with

1283 Ps. xxxv. 9.

1284 Or, “all those who were in the way of David”—*omnes qui erant in viâ David, in dolore animæ cognoverunt suum regem.*

1285 Matt. xxi. 8.

1286 The Latin text is ambiguous: “*dominabantur eorum, quibus ratio non constabat.*” The rendering may be, “and ruled over those things with respect to which it was not right that they should do so.”

1287 Matt. xxi. 16; Ps. viii. 3.

a willing mind, and with all the heart, do Him service; whereas to scoffers, and to those not subject to God, but who follow outward purifications for the praise of men (which observances had been given as a type of future things,—the law typifying, as it were, certain things in a shadow, and delineating eternal things by temporal, celestial by terrestrial), and to those who pretend that they do themselves observe more than what has been prescribed, as if preferring their own zeal to God Himself, while within they are full of hypocrisy, and covetousness, and all wickedness,— [to such] has He assigned everlasting perdition by cutting them off from life.

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**Chapter XII.—It clearly appears that there was but one author of both the old and the new law, from the fact that Christ condemned traditions and customs repugnant to the former, while He confirmed its most important precepts, and taught that He was Himself the end of the Mosaic law.**

1. For the tradition of the elders themselves, which they pretended to observe from the law, was contrary to the law given by Moses. Wherefore also Esaias declares: “Thy dealers mix the wine with water,”<sup>1288</sup> showing that the elders were in the habit of mingling a watered tradition with the simple command of God; that is, they set up a spurious law, and one contrary to the [true] law; as also the Lord made plain, when He said to them, “Why do ye transgress the commandment of God, for the sake of your tradition?”<sup>1289</sup> For not only by actual transgression did they set the law of God at nought, mingling the wine with water; but they also set up their own law in opposition to it, which is termed, even to the present day, the pharisaical. In this [law] they suppress certain things, add others, and interpret others, again, as they think proper, which their teachers use, each one in particular; and desiring to uphold these traditions, they were unwilling to be subject to the law of God, which prepares them for the coming of Christ. But they did even blame the Lord for healing on the Sabbath-days, which, as I have already observed, the law did not prohibit. For they did themselves, in one sense, perform acts of healing upon the Sabbath-day, when they circumcised a man [on that day]; but they did not blame themselves for transgressing the command of God through tradition and the aforesaid pharisaical law, and for not keeping the commandment of the law, which is the love of God.

2. But that this is the first and greatest commandment, and that the next [has respect to love] towards our neighbour, the Lord has taught, when He says that the entire law and the prophets hang upon these two commandments. Moreover, He did not Himself bring down [from heaven] any other commandment greater than this one, but renewed this very same one to His disciples, when He enjoined them to love God with all their heart, and others as themselves. But if He had descended from another Father, He never would have made use of the first and greatest commandment of the law; but He would undoubtedly have endeavoured by all means to bring down a greater one than this from the perfect Father, so as not to make use of that which had been given by the God of the law. And Paul in like manner declares, “Love is the fulfilling of the law.”<sup>1290</sup> and [he declares] that when all other things have been destroyed, there shall remain “faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of all is love;”<sup>1291</sup> and that apart from the love of God, neither knowledge avails anything,<sup>1292</sup>

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1288 [Isa. i. 22.](#)

1289 [Matt. xv. 3.](#)

1290 [Rom. xiii. 10.](#)

1291 [1 Cor. xiii. 13.](#)

1292 [1 Cor. xiii. 2.](#)

nor the understanding of mysteries, nor faith, nor prophecy, but that without love all are hollow and vain; moreover, that love makes man perfect; and that he who loves God is perfect, both in this world and in that which is to come. For we do never cease from loving God; but in proportion as we continue to contemplate Him, so much the more do we love Him.

3. As in the law, therefore, and in the Gospel [likewise], the first and greatest commandment is, to love the Lord God with the whole heart, and then there follows a commandment like to it, to love one's neighbour as one's self; the author of the law and the Gospel is shown to be one and the same. For the precepts of an absolutely perfect life, since they are the same in each Testament, have pointed out [to us] the same God, who certainly has promulgated particular laws adapted for each; but the more prominent and the greatest [commandments], without which salvation cannot [be attained], He has exhorted [us to observe] the same in both.

4. The Lord, too, does not do away with this [God], when He shows that the law was not derived from another God, expressing Himself as follows to those who were being instructed by Him, to the multitude and to His disciples: "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens, and lay them upon men's shoulders; but they themselves will not so much as move them with a finger."<sup>1293</sup> He therefore did not throw blame upon that law which was given by Moses, when He exhorted it to be observed, Jerusalem being as yet in safety; but He *did* throw blame upon those persons, because they repeated indeed the words of the law, yet were without love. And for this reason were they held as being unrighteous as respects God, and as respects their neighbours. As also Isaiah says: "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me: howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching the doctrines and the commandments of men."<sup>1294</sup> He does not call the law given by Moses commandments of men, but the traditions of the elders themselves which they had invented, and in upholding which they made the law of God of none effect, and were on this account also not subject to His Word. For this is what Paul says concerning these men: "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."<sup>1295</sup> And how is Christ the end of the law, if He be not also the final cause of it? For He who has brought in the end has Himself also wrought the beginning; and it is He who does Himself say to Moses, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people

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1293 [Matt. xxiii. 2–4.](#)

1294 [Isa. xxix. 13.](#)

1295 [Rom. x. 3, 4.](#)



which is in Egypt, and I have come down to deliver them;”<sup>1296</sup> it being customary from the beginning with the Word of God to ascend and descend for the purpose of saving those who were in affliction.

5. Now, that the law did beforehand teach mankind the necessity of following Christ, He does Himself make manifest, when He replied as follows to him who asked Him what he should do that he might inherit eternal life: “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”<sup>1297</sup> But upon the other asking “Which?” again the Lord replies: “Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honour father and mother, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,”—setting as an ascending series (*velut gradus*) before those who wished to follow Him, the precepts of the law, as the entrance into life; and what He then said to one He said to all. But when the former said, “All these have I done” (and most likely he had not kept them, for in that case the Lord would not have said to him, “Keep the commandments”), the Lord, exposing his covetousness, said to him, “If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast, and distribute to the poor; and come, follow me;” promising to those who would act thus, the portion belonging to the apostles (*apostolorum partem*). And He did not preach to His followers another God the Father, besides Him who was proclaimed by the law from the beginning; nor another Son; nor the Mother, the enthymesis of the Æon, who existed in suffering and apostasy; nor the Pleroma of the thirty Æons, which has been proved vain, and incapable of being believed in; nor that fable invented by the other heretics. But He taught that they should obey the commandments which God enjoined from the beginning, and do away with their former covetousness by good works,<sup>1298</sup> and follow after Christ. But that possessions distributed to the poor do annul former covetousness, Zaccheus made evident, when he said, “Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one, I restore fourfold.”<sup>1299</sup>

1296 Ex. iii. 7, 8.

1297 Matt. xix. 17, 18, etc.

1298 Harvey here remarks: “In a theological point of view, it should be observed, that no saving merit is ascribed to almsgiving: it is spoken of here as the negation of the vice of covetousness, which is wholly inconsistent with the state of salvation to which we are called.”

1299 Luke xix. 8.

**Chapter XIII.—Christ did not abrogate the natural precepts of the law, but rather fulfilled and extended them. He removed the yoke and bondage of the old law, so that mankind, being now set free, might serve God with that trustful piety which becometh sons.**

1. And that the Lord did not abrogate the natural [precepts] of the law, by which man<sup>1300</sup> is justified, which also those who were justified by faith, and who pleased God, did observe previous to the giving of the law, but that He extended and fulfilled them, is shown from His words. “For,” He remarks, “it has been said to them of old time, Do not commit adultery. But I say unto you, That every one who hath looked upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”<sup>1301</sup> And again: “It has been said, Thou shalt not kill. But I say unto you, Every one who is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment.”<sup>1302</sup> And, “It hath been said, Thou shalt not forswear thyself. But I say unto you, Swear not at all; but let your conversation be, Yea, yea, and Nay, nay.”<sup>1303</sup> And other statements of a like nature. For all these do not contain or imply an opposition to and an overturning of the [precepts] of the past, as Marcion’s followers do strenuously maintain; but [they exhibit] a fulfilling and an extension of them, as He does Himself declare: “Unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>1304</sup> For what meant the excess referred to? In the first place, [we must] believe not only in the Father, but also in His Son now revealed; for He it is who leads man into fellowship and unity with God. In the next place, [we must] not only say, but we must do; for they said, but did not. And [we must] not only abstain from evil deeds, but even from the desires after them. Now He did not teach us these things as being opposed to the law, but as fulfilling the law, and implanting in us the varied righteousness of the law. That would have been contrary to the law, if He had commanded His disciples to do anything which the law had prohibited. But this which He did command—namely, not only to abstain from things forbidden by the law, but even from longing after them—is not contrary to [the law], as I have remarked, neither is it the utterance of one destroying the law, but of one fulfilling, extending, and affording greater scope to it.

2. For the law, since it was laid down for those in bondage, used to instruct the soul by means of those corporeal objects which were of an external nature, drawing it, as by a bond, to obey its commandments, that man might learn to serve God. But the Word set free the soul, and taught that through it the body should be willingly purified. Which having been

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1300 That is, as Harvey observes, *the natural man*, as described in [Rom. ii. 27](#).

1301 [Matt. v. 27, 28](#).

1302 [Matt. v. 21, 22](#).

1303 [Matt. v. 33](#), etc.

1304 [Matt. v. 20](#).

accomplished, it followed as of course, that the bonds of slavery should be removed, to which man had now become accustomed, and that he should follow God without fetters: moreover, that the laws of liberty should be extended, and subjection to the king increased, so that no one who is converted should appear unworthy to Him who set him free, but that the piety and obedience due to the Master of the household should be equally rendered both by servants and children; while the children possess greater confidence [than the servants], inasmuch as the working of liberty is greater and more glorious than that obedience which is rendered in [a state of] slavery.

3. And for this reason did the Lord, instead of that [commandment], “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” forbid even concupiscence; and instead of that which runs thus, “Thou shalt not kill,” He prohibited anger; and instead of the law enjoining the giving of tithes, [He told us] to share<sup>1305</sup> all our possessions with the poor; and not to love our neighbours only, but even our enemies; and not merely to be liberal givers and bestowers, but even that we should present a gratuitous gift to those who take away our goods. For “to him that taketh away thy coat,” He says, “give to him thy cloak also; and from him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again; and as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye unto them.”<sup>1306</sup> so that we may not grieve as those who are unwilling to be defrauded, but may rejoice as those who have given willingly, and as rather conferring a favour upon our neighbours than yielding to necessity. “And if any one,” He says, “shall compel thee [to go] a mile, go with him twain;”<sup>1307</sup> so that thou mayest not follow him as a slave, but may as a free man go before him, showing thyself in all things kindly disposed and useful to thy neighbour, not regarding their evil intentions, but performing thy kind offices, assimilating thyself to the Father, “who maketh His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust.”<sup>1308</sup> Now all these [precepts], as I have already observed, were not [the injunctions] of one doing away with the law, but of one fulfilling, extending, and widening it among us; just as if one should say, that the more extensive operation of liberty implies that a more complete subjection and affection towards our Liberator had been implanted within us. For He did not set us free for this purpose, that we should depart from Him (no one, indeed, while placed out of reach of the Lord’s benefits, has power to procure for himself the means of salvation), but that the more we receive His grace, the more we should love Him. Now the more we have loved Him, the more glory shall we receive from Him, when we are continually in the presence of the Father.

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1305 [Matt. xix. 21.](#)

1306 [Luke vi. 29–31.](#)

1307 [Matt. v. 41.](#)

1308 [Matt. v. 45.](#)

4. Inasmuch, then, as all natural precepts are common to us and to them (the Jews), they had in them indeed the beginning and origin; but in us they have received growth and completion. For to yield assent to God, and to follow His Word, and to love Him above all, and one's neighbour as one's self (now man is neighbour to man), and to abstain from every evil deed, and all other things of a like nature which are common to both [covenants], do reveal one and the same God. But this is our Lord, the Word of God, who in the first instance certainly drew slaves to God, but afterwards He set those free who were subject to Him, as He does Himself declare to His disciples: "I will not now call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things which I have heard from My Father I have made known."<sup>1309</sup> For in that which He says, "I will not now call you servants," He indicates in the most marked manner that it was Himself who did originally appoint for men that bondage with respect to God through the law, and then afterwards conferred upon them freedom. And in that He says, "For the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth," He points out, by means of His own advent, the ignorance of a people in a servile condition. But when He terms His disciples "the friends of God," He plainly declares Himself to be the Word of God, whom Abraham also followed voluntarily and under no compulsion (*sine vinculis*), because of the noble nature of his faith, and so became "the friend of God."<sup>1310</sup> But the Word of God did not accept of the friendship of Abraham, as though He stood in need of it, for He was perfect from the beginning ("Before Abraham was," He says, "I am"<sup>1311</sup>), but that He in His goodness might bestow eternal life upon Abraham himself, inasmuch as the friendship of God imparts immortality to those who embrace it.

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1309 [John xv. 15.](#)

1310 [Jas. ii. 23.](#)

1311 [John viii. 58.](#)

**Chapter XIV.—If God demands obedience from man, if He formed man, called him and placed him under laws, it was merely for man’s welfare; not that God stood in need of man, but that He graciously conferred upon man His favours in every possible manner.**

1. In the beginning, therefore, did God form Adam, not as if He stood in need of man, but that He might have [some one] upon whom to confer His benefits. For not alone antecedently to Adam, but also before all creation, the Word glorified His Father, remaining in Him; and was Himself glorified by the Father, as He did Himself declare, “Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.”<sup>1312</sup> Nor did He stand in need of our service when He ordered us to follow Him; but He thus bestowed salvation upon ourselves. For to follow the Saviour is to be a partaker of salvation, and to follow light is to receive light. But those who are in light do not themselves illumine the light, but are illumined and revealed by it: they do certainly contribute nothing to it, but, receiving the benefit, they are illumined by the light. Thus, also, service [rendered] to God does indeed profit God nothing, nor has God need of human obedience; but He grants to those who follow and serve Him life and incorruption and eternal glory, bestowing benefit upon those who serve [Him], because they do serve Him, and on His followers, because they do follow Him; but does not receive any benefit from them: for He is rich, perfect, and in need of nothing. But for this reason does God demand service from men, in order that, since He is good and merciful, He may benefit those who continue in His service. For, as much as God is in want of nothing, so much does man stand in need of fellowship with God. For this is the glory of man, to continue and remain permanently in God’s service. Wherefore also did the Lord say to His disciples, “Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you;”<sup>1313</sup> indicating that they did not glorify Him when they followed Him; but that, in following the Son of God, they were glorified by Him. And again, “I will, that where I am, there they also may be, that they may behold My glory;”<sup>1314</sup> not vainly boasting because of this, but desiring that His disciples should share in His glory: of whom Esaias also says, “I will bring thy seed from the east, and will gather thee from the west; and I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; all, as many as have been called in My name: for in My glory I have prepared, and formed, and made him.”<sup>1315</sup> Inasmuch as then, “wheresoever the carcase is, there shall also the eagles be gathered together,”<sup>1316</sup> we do participate in the glory of the Lord, who has

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1312 [John xvii. 5.](#)

1313 [John xv. 16.](#)

1314 [John xvii. 24.](#)

1315 [Isa. xliii. 5.](#)

1316 [Matt. xxiv. 28.](#)

both formed us, and prepared us for this, that, when we are with Him, we may partake of His glory.

2. Thus it was, too, that God formed man at the first, because of His munificence; but chose the patriarchs for the sake of their salvation; and prepared a people beforehand, teaching the headstrong to follow God; and raised up prophets upon earth, accustoming man to bear His Spirit [within him], and to hold communion with God: He Himself, indeed, having need of nothing, but granting communion with Himself to those who stood in need of it, and sketching out, like an architect, the plan of salvation to those that pleased Him. And He did Himself furnish guidance to those who beheld Him not in Egypt, while to those who became unruly in the desert He promulgated a law very suitable [to their condition]. Then, on the people who entered into the good land He bestowed a noble inheritance; and He killed the fatted calf for those converted to the Father, and presented them with the finest robe.<sup>1317</sup> Thus, in a variety of ways, He adjusted the human race to an agreement with salvation. On this account also does John declare in the Apocalypse, “And His voice as the sound of many waters.”<sup>1318</sup> For the Spirit [of God] is truly [like] many waters, since the Father is both rich and great. And the Word, passing through all those [men], did liberally confer benefits upon His subjects, by drawing up in writing a law adapted and applicable to every class [among them].

3. Thus, too, He imposed upon the [Jewish] people the construction of the tabernacle, the building of the temple, the election of the Levites, sacrifices also, and oblations, legal monitions, and all the other service of the law. He does Himself truly want none of these things, for He is always full of all good, and had in Himself all the odour of kindness, and every perfume of sweet-smelling savours, even before Moses existed. Moreover, He instructed the people, who were prone to turn to idols, instructing them by repeated appeals to persevere and to serve God, calling them to the things of primary importance by means of those which were secondary; that is, to things that are real, by means of those that are typical; and by things temporal, to eternal; and by the carnal to the spiritual; and by the earthly to the heavenly; as was also said to Moses, “Thou shalt make all things after the pattern of those things which thou sawest in the mount.”<sup>1319</sup> For during forty days He was learning to keep [in his memory] the words of God, and the celestial patterns, and the spiritual images, and the types of things to come; as also Paul says: “For they drank of the rock which followed them: and the rock was Christ.”<sup>1320</sup> And again, having first mentioned what are contained in the law, he goes on to say: “Now all these things happened to them in a figure; but they

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1317 [Luke xv. 22, 23.](#)

1318 [Rev. i. 15.](#)

1319 [Ex. xxv. 40.](#)

1320 [1 Cor. x. 11.](#)

were written for our admonition, upon whom the end of the ages is come.” For by means of types they learned to fear God, and to continue devoted to His service.

**Chapter XV.—At first God deemed it sufficient to inscribe the natural law, or the Decalogue, upon the hearts of men; but afterwards He found it necessary to bridle, with the yoke of the Mosaic law, the desires of the Jews, who were abusing their liberty; and even to add some special commands, because of the hardness of their hearts.**

1. They (the Jews) had therefore a law, a course of discipline, and a prophecy of future things. For God at the first, indeed, warning them by means of natural precepts, which from the beginning He had implanted in mankind, that is, by means of the Decalogue (which, if any one does not observe, he has no salvation), did then demand nothing more of them. As Moses says in Deuteronomy, “These are all the words which the Lord spake to the whole assembly of the sons of Israel on the mount, and He added no more; and He wrote them on two tables of stone, and gave them to me.”<sup>1321</sup> For this reason [He did so], that they who are willing to follow Him might keep these commandments. But when they turned themselves to make a calf, and had gone back in their minds to Egypt, desiring to be slaves instead of free-men, they were placed for the future in a state of servitude suited to their wish,—[a slavery] which did not indeed cut them off from God, but subjected them to the yoke of bondage; as Ezekiel the prophet, when stating the reasons for the giving of such a law, declares: “And their eyes were after the desire of their heart; and I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live.”<sup>1322</sup> Luke also has recorded that Stephen, who was the first elected into the diaconate by the apostles,<sup>1323</sup> and who was the first slain for the testimony of Christ, spoke regarding Moses as follows: “This man did indeed receive the commandments of the living God to give to us, whom your fathers would not obey, but thrust [Him from them], and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us; for we do not know what has happened to [this] Moses, who led us from the land of Egypt. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifices to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their own hands. But God turned, and gave them up to worship the hosts of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets:<sup>1324</sup> O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to Me sacrifices and oblations for forty years in the wilderness? And ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of the god Remphan,<sup>1325</sup> figures which ye made to worship them;”<sup>1326</sup> pointing out plainly, that the law being such, was not given to them by another God, but that, adapted to their condition of

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1321 Deut. v. 22.

1322 Ezek. xx. 24.

1323 [Acts vi. 3–7. It is evident that the laity *elected*, and the apostles ordained.]

1324 Amos v. 25, 26.

1325 In accordance with the Codex Bezae.

1326 Acts vii. 38, etc.



servitude, [it originated] from the very same [God as we worship]. Wherefore also He says to Moses in Exodus: “I will send forth My angel before thee; for I will not go up with thee, because thou art a stiff-necked people.”<sup>1327</sup>

2. And not only so, but the Lord also showed that certain precepts were enacted for them by Moses, on account of their hardness [of heart], and because of their unwillingness to be obedient, when, on their saying to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to send away a wife?” He said to them, “Because of the hardness of your hearts he permitted these things to you; but from the beginning it was not so;”<sup>1328</sup> thus exculpating Moses as a faithful servant, but acknowledging one God, who from the beginning made male and female, and reproving them as hard-hearted and disobedient. And therefore it was that they received from Moses this law of divorcement, adapted to their hard nature. But why say I these things concerning the Old Testament? For in the New also are the apostles found doing this very thing, on the ground which has been mentioned, Paul plainly declaring, “But these things I say, not the Lord.”<sup>1329</sup> And again: “But this I speak by permission, not by commandment.”<sup>1330</sup> And again: “Now, as concerning virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.”<sup>1331</sup> But further, in another place he says: “That Satan tempt you not for your incontinence.”<sup>1332</sup> If, therefore, even in the New Testament, the apostles are found granting certain precepts in consideration of human infirmity, because of the incontinence of some, lest such persons, having grown obdurate, and despairing altogether of their salvation, should become apostates from God,—it ought not to be wondered at, if also in the Old Testament the same God permitted similar indulgences for the benefit of His people, drawing them on by means of the ordinances already mentioned, so that they might obtain the gift of salvation through them, while they obeyed the Decalogue, and being restrained by Him, should not revert to idolatry, nor apostatize from God, but learn to love Him with the whole heart. And if certain persons, because of the disobedient and ruined Israelites, do assert that the giver (*doctor*) of the law was limited in power, they will find in our dispensation, that “many are called, but few chosen;”<sup>1333</sup> and that there are those who inwardly are wolves, yet wear sheep’s clothing in the eyes of the world (*foris*); and that God has always preserved freedom, and the power of self-government in man,<sup>1334</sup> while at the

1327 Ex. xxxiii. 2, 3.

1328 Matt. xix. 7, 8.

1329 1 Cor. vii. 12.

1330 1 Cor. vii. 6.

1331 1 Cor. vii. 25.

1332 1 Cor. vii. 5.

1333 Matt. xx. 16.

1334 [Note this stout assertion of the freedom of human actions.]

same time He issued His own exhortations, in order that those who do not obey Him should be righteously judged (condemned) because they have not obeyed Him; and that those who have obeyed and believed on Him should be honoured with immortality.

**Chapter XVI.—Perfect righteousness was conferred neither by circumcision nor by any other legal ceremonies. The Decalogue, however, was not cancelled by Christ, but is always in force: men were never released from its commandments.**

1. Moreover, we learn from the Scripture itself, that God gave circumcision, not as the completer of righteousness, but as a sign, that the race of Abraham might continue recognisable. For it declares: “God said unto Abraham, Every male among you shall be circumcised; and ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, as a token of the covenant between Me and you.”<sup>1335</sup> This same does Ezekiel the prophet say with regard to the Sabbaths: “Also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord, that sanctify them.”<sup>1336</sup> And in Exodus, God says to Moses: “And ye shall observe My Sabbaths; for it shall be a sign between Me and you for your generations.”<sup>1337</sup> These things, then, were given for a sign; but the signs were not unsymbolical, that is, neither unmeaning nor to no purpose, inasmuch as they were given by a wise Artist; but the circumcision after the flesh typified that after the Spirit. For “we,” says the apostle, “have been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.”<sup>1338</sup> And the prophet declares, “Circumcise the hardness of your heart.”<sup>1339</sup> But the Sabbaths taught that we should continue day by day in God’s service.<sup>1340</sup> “For we have been counted,” says the Apostle Paul, “all the day long as sheep for the slaughter;”<sup>1341</sup> that is, consecrated [to God], and ministering continually to our faith, and persevering in it, and abstaining from all avarice, and not acquiring or possessing treasures upon earth.<sup>1342</sup> Moreover, the Sabbath of God (*requietio Dei*), that is, the kingdom, was, as it were, indicated by created things; in which [kingdom], the man who shall have persevered in serving God (*Deo assistere*) shall, in a state of rest, partake of God’s table.

2. And that man was not justified by these things, but that they were given as a sign to the people, this fact shows,— that Abraham himself, without circumcision and without observance of Sabbaths, “believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God.”<sup>1343</sup> Then, again, Lot, without circumcision, was brought

1335 Gen. xvii. 9–11.

1336 Ezek. xx. 12.

1337 Ex. xxi. 13.

1338 Col. ii. 11.

1339 Deut. x. 16, LXX. version.

1340 The Latin text here is: “Sabbata autem perseverantiam totius diei erga Deum deservitionis edocebant;” which might be rendered, “The Sabbaths taught that we should continue the whole day in the service of God;” but Harvey conceives the original Greek to have been, τὴν καθημερινὴν διαμονὴν τῆς περὶ τὸν Θεὸν λατρείας.

1341 Rom. viii. 36.

1342 Matt. vi. 19.

1343 Jas. ii. 23.

out from Sodom, receiving salvation from God. So also did Noah, pleasing God, although he was uncircumcised, receive the dimensions [of the ark], of the world of the second race [of men]. Enoch, too, pleasing God, without circumcision, discharged the office of God's legate to the angels although he was a man, and was translated, and is preserved until now as a witness of the just judgment of God, because the angels when they had transgressed fell to the earth for judgment, but the man who pleased [God] was translated for salvation.<sup>1344</sup> Moreover, all the rest of the multitude of those righteous men who lived before Abraham, and of those patriarchs who preceded Moses, were justified independently of the things above mentioned, and without the law of Moses. As also Moses himself says to the people in Deuteronomy: "The Lord thy God formed a covenant in Horeb. The Lord formed not this covenant with your fathers, but for you."<sup>1345</sup>

3. Why, then, did the Lord not form the covenant for the fathers? Because "the law was not established for righteous men."<sup>1346</sup> But the righteous fathers had the meaning of the Decalogue written in their hearts and souls,<sup>1347</sup> that is, they loved the God who made them, and did no injury to their neighbour. There was therefore no occasion that they should be cautioned by prohibitory mandates (*correptoriis literis*),<sup>1348</sup> because they had the righteousness of the law in themselves. But when this righteousness and love to God had passed into oblivion, and became extinct in Egypt, God did necessarily, because of His great goodwill to men, reveal Himself by a voice, and led the people with power out of Egypt, in order that man might again become the disciple and follower of God; and He afflicted those who were disobedient, that they should not condemn their Creator; and He fed them with manna, that they might receive food for their souls (*uti rationalem acciperent escam*); as also Moses says in Deuteronomy: "And fed thee with manna, which thy fathers did not know, that thou mightest know that man doth not live by bread alone; but by every word of God proceeding out of His mouth doth man live."<sup>1349</sup> And it enjoined love to God, and taught just dealing towards our neighbour, that we should neither be unjust nor unworthy of God, who prepares

1344 Massuet remarks here that Irenæus makes a reference to the apocryphal book of Enoch, in which this history is contained. It was the belief of the later Jews, followed by the Christian fathers, that "the sons of God" ([Gen. vi. 2](#)) who took wives of the daughters of men, were the apostate angels. The LXX. translation of that passage accords with this view. See the articles "Enoch," "Enoch, Book of," in *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*. [See *Paradise Lost*, b. i. 323–431.]

1345 [Deut. v. 2](#).

1346 [1 Tim. i. 9](#).

1347 [Hearts and souls; i.e., moral and mental natures. For a correct view of the patristic conceptions of the Gentiles before the law, this is valuable.]

1348 i.e., the *letters* of the Decalogue on the two tables of stone.

1349 [Deut. viii. 3](#).

man for His friendship through the medium of the Decalogue, and likewise for agreement with his neighbour,—matters which did certainly profit man himself; God, however, standing in no need of anything from man.

4. And therefore does the Scripture say, “These words the Lord spake to all the assembly of the children of Israel in the mount, and He added no more;”<sup>1350</sup> for, as I have already observed, He stood in need of nothing from them. And again Moses says: “And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?”<sup>1351</sup> Now these things did indeed make man glorious, by supplying what was wanting to him, namely, the friendship of God; but they profited God nothing, for God did not at all stand in need of man’s love. For the glory of God was wanting to man, which he could obtain in no other way than by serving God. And therefore Moses says to them again: “Choose life, that thou mayest live, and thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, to hear His voice, to cleave unto Him; for this is thy life, and the length of thy days.”<sup>1352</sup> Preparing man for this life, the Lord Himself did speak in His own person to all alike the words of the Decalogue; and therefore, in like manner, do they remain permanently with us,<sup>1353</sup> receiving by means of His advent in the flesh, extension and increase, but not abrogation.

5. The laws of bondage, however, were one by one promulgated to the people by Moses, suited for their instruction or for their punishment, as Moses himself declared: “And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments.”<sup>1354</sup> These things, therefore, which were given for bondage, and for a sign to them, He cancelled by the new covenant of liberty. But He has increased and widened those laws which are natural, and noble, and common to all, granting to men largely and without grudging, by means of adoption, to know God the Father, and to love Him with the whole heart, and to follow His word unswervingly, while they abstain not only from evil deeds, but even from the desire after them. But He has also increased the feeling of reverence; for sons should have more veneration than slaves, and greater love for their father. And therefore the Lord says, “As to every idle word that men have spoken, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment.”<sup>1355</sup> And, “he who has looked upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart;”<sup>1356</sup> and, “he that is angry with his brother without

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1350 [Deut. v. 22.](#)

1351 [Deut. x. 12.](#)

1352 [Deut. xxx. 19, 20.](#)

1353 [Most noteworthy among primitive testimonies to the catholic reception of the Decalogue.]

1354 [Deut. iv. 14.](#)

1355 [Matt. xii. 36.](#)

1356 [Matt. v. 28.](#)

a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment.”<sup>1357</sup> [All this is declared,] that we may know that we shall give account to God not of deeds only, as slaves, but even of words and thoughts, as those who have truly received the power of liberty, in which [condition] a man is more severely tested, whether he will reverence, and fear, and love the Lord. And for this reason Peter says “that we have not liberty as a cloak of maliciousness,”<sup>1358</sup> but as the means of testing and evidencing faith.

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1357 [Matt. v. 22.](#)

1358 [1 Pet. ii. 16.](#)

**Chapter XVII.—Proof that God did not appoint the Levitical dispensation for His own sake, or as requiring such service; for He does, in fact, need nothing from men.**

1. Moreover, the prophets indicate in the fullest manner that God stood in no need of their slavish obedience, but that it was upon their own account that He enjoined certain observances in the law. And again, that God needed not their oblation, but [merely demanded it], on account of man himself who offers it, the Lord taught distinctly, as I have pointed out. For when He perceived them neglecting righteousness, and abstaining from the love of God, and imagining that God was to be propitiated by sacrifices and the other typical observances, Samuel did even thus speak to them: “God does not desire whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices, but He will have His voice to be hearkened to. Behold, a ready obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”<sup>1359</sup> David also says: “Sacrifice and oblation Thou didst not desire, but mine ears hast Thou perfected;<sup>1360</sup> burnt-offerings also for sin Thou hast not required.”<sup>1361</sup> He thus teaches them that God desires obedience, which renders them secure, rather than sacrifices and holocausts, which avail them nothing towards righteousness; and [by this declaration] he prophesies the new covenant at the same time. Still clearer, too, does he speak of these things in the fiftieth Psalm: “For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, then would I have given it: Thou wilt not delight in burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart the Lord will not despise.”<sup>1362</sup> Because, therefore, God stands in need of nothing, He declares in the preceding Psalm: “I will take no calves out of thine house, nor he-goats out of thy fold. For Mine are all the beasts of the earth, the herds and the oxen on the mountains: I know all the fowls of heaven, and the various tribes<sup>1363</sup> of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof. Shall I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?”<sup>1364</sup> Then, lest it might be supposed that He refused these things in His anger, He continues, giving him (man) counsel: “Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows to the Most High; and call upon Me in the day of thy trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me;”<sup>1365</sup> rejecting, indeed, those things by which sinners imagined

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1359 1 Sam. xv. 22.

1360 Latin, “*aures autem perfecisti mihi*,” a reading agreeable to neither the Hebrew nor Septuagint version, as quoted by St. Paul in [Heb. x. 9](#). Harvey, however, is of opinion that the text of the old Latin translation was originally “*perforasti*,” indicating thus an entire concurrence with the Hebrew, as now read in this passage. [Both readings illustrated by their apparent reference to [Ex. xxi. 6](#), compared with [Heb. v. 7–9](#).]

1361 Ps. xl. 6.

1362 Ps. li. 17.

1363 Or, “the beauty,” *species*.

1364 Ps. l. 9.

1365 Ps. l. 14, 15.

they could propitiate God, and showing that He does Himself stand in need of nothing; but He exhorts and advises them to those things by which man is justified and draws nigh to God. This same declaration does Esaias make: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord. I am full."<sup>1366</sup> And when He had repudiated holocausts, and sacrifices, and oblations, as likewise the new moons, and the sabbaths, and the festivals, and all the rest of the services accompanying these, He continues, exhorting them to what pertained to salvation: "Wash you, make you clean, take away wickedness from your hearts from before mine eyes: cease from your evil ways, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; and come, let us reason together, saith the Lord."

2. For it was not because He was angry, like a man, as many venture to say, that He rejected their sacrifices; but out of compassion to their blindness, and with the view of suggesting to them the true sacrifice, by offering which they shall appease God, that they may receive life from Him. As He elsewhere declares: "The sacrifice to God is an afflicted heart: a sweet savour to God is a heart glorifying Him who formed it."<sup>1367</sup> For if, when angry, He had repudiated these sacrifices of theirs, as if they were persons unworthy to obtain His compassion, He would not certainly have urged these same things upon them as those by which they might be saved. But inasmuch as God is merciful, He did not cut them off from good counsel. For after He had said by Jeremiah, "To what purpose bring ye Me incense from Saba, and cinnamon from a far country? Your whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices are not acceptable to Me;"<sup>1368</sup> He proceeds: "Hear the word of the Lord, all Judah. These things saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Make straight your ways and your doings, and I will establish you in this place. Put not your trust in lying words, for they will not at all profit you, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, it is [here]."<sup>1369</sup>

3. And again, when He points out that it was not for this that He led them out of Egypt, that they might offer sacrifice to Him, but that, forgetting the idolatry of the Egyptians, they should be able to hear the voice of the Lord, which was to them salvation and glory, He declares by this same Jeremiah: "Thus saith the Lord; Collect together your burnt-offerings with your sacrifices and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but

1366 Isa. i. 11.

1367 This passage is not now found in holy Scripture. Harvey conjectures that it may have been taken from the apocryphal Gospel according to the Egyptians. It is remarkable that we find the same words quoted also by Clement of Alexandria. [But he (possibly with this place in view) merely quotes it as a *saying*, in close connection with Ps. li. 19, which is here partially cited. See Clement, *Pædagogus*, b. iii. cap. xii.]

1368 Jer. vi. 20.

1369 Jer. vii. 2, 3.



this word I commanded them, saying, Hear My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people; and walk in all My ways whatsoever I have commanded you, that it may be well with you. But they obeyed not, nor hearkened; but walked in the imaginations of their own evil heart, and went backwards, and not forwards.”<sup>1370</sup> And again, when He declares by the same man, “But let him that glorieth, glory in this, to understand and know that I am the Lord, who doth exercise loving-kindness, and righteousness, and judgment in the earth;”<sup>1371</sup> He adds, “For in these things I delight, says the Lord,” but not in sacrifices, nor in holocausts, nor in oblations. For the people did not receive these precepts as of primary importance (*principaliter*), but as secondary, and for the reason already alleged, as Isaiah again says: “Thou hast not [brought to] Me the sheep of thy holocaust, nor in thy sacrifices hast thou glorified Me: thou hast not served Me in sacrifices, nor in [the matter of] frankincense hast thou done anything laboriously; neither hast thou bought for Me incense with money, nor have I desired the fat of thy sacrifices; but thou hast stood before Me in thy sins and in thine iniquities.”<sup>1372</sup> He says, therefore, “Upon this man will I look, even upon him that is humble, and meek, and who trembles at My words.”<sup>1373</sup> “For the fat and the fat flesh shall not take away from thee thine unrighteousness.”<sup>1374</sup> “This is the fast which I have chosen, saith the Lord. Loose every band of wickedness, dissolve the connections of violent agreements, give rest to those that are shaken, and cancel every unjust document. Deal thy bread to the hungry willingly, and lead into thy house the roofless stranger. If thou hast seen the naked, cover him, and thou shalt not despise those of thine own flesh and blood (*domesticos seminis tui*). Then shall thy morning light break forth, and thy health shall spring forth more speedily; and righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall surround thee: and whilst thou art yet speaking, I will say, Behold, here I am.”<sup>1375</sup> And Zechariah also, among the twelve prophets, pointing out to the people the will of God, says: “These things does the Lord Omnipotent declare: Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion each one to his brother. And oppress not the widow, and the orphan, and the proselyte, and the poor; and let none imagine evil against your brother in his heart.”<sup>1376</sup> And again, he says: “These are the words which ye shall utter. Speak ye the truth every man to his neighbour, and execute peaceful judgment in your gates, and let none of you imagine evil in his heart against his brother, and ye shall not love false swearing: for all

1370 Jer. vii. 21.

1371 Jer. ix. 24.

1372 Isa. xliii. 23, 24.

1373 Isa. xlvi. 2.

1374 Jer. xi. 15.

1375 Isa. lviii. 6, etc.

1376 Zech. vii. 9, 10.

these things I hate, saith the Lord Almighty.”<sup>1377</sup> Moreover, David also says in like manner: “What man is there who desireth life, and would fain see good days? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile. Shun evil, and do good: seek peace, and pursue it.”<sup>1378</sup>

4. From all these it is evident that God did not seek sacrifices and holocausts from them, but faith, and obedience, and righteousness, because of their salvation. As God, when teaching them His will in Hosea the prophet, said, “I desire mercy rather than sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.”<sup>1379</sup> Besides, our Lord also exhorted them to the same effect, when He said, “But if ye had known what [this] meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.”<sup>1380</sup> Thus does He bear witness to the prophets, that they preached the truth; but accuses these men (His hearers) of being foolish through their own fault.

5. Again, giving directions to His disciples to offer to God the first-fruits<sup>1381</sup> of His own, created things—not as if He stood in need of them, but that they might be themselves neither unfruitful nor ungrateful—He took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, “This is My body.”<sup>1382</sup> And the cup likewise, which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood, and taught the new oblation of the new covenant; which the Church receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world, to Him who gives us as the means of subsistence the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament, concerning which Malachi, among the twelve prophets, thus spoke beforehand: “I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord Omnipotent, and I will not accept sacrifice at your hands. For from the rising of the sun, unto the going down [of the same], My name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice; for great is My name among the Gentiles, saith the Lord Omnipotent;”<sup>1383</sup>—indicating in the plainest manner, by these words, that the former people [the Jews] shall indeed cease to make offerings to God, but that in every place sacrifice shall be offered to Him, and that a pure one; and His name is glorified among the Gentiles.<sup>1384</sup>

1377 Zech. viii. 16, 17.

1378 Ps. xxxiv. 13, 14.

1379 Hos. vi. 6.

1380 Matt. xii. 7.

1381 Grabe has a long and important note on this passage and what follows, which may be seen in Harvey, *in loc.* See, on the other side, and in connection with the whole of the following chapter, Massuet’s third dissertation on the doctrine of Irenæus, art. vii., reprinted in Migne’s edition.

1382 Matt. xxvi. 26, etc.

1383 Mal. i. 10, 11.

1384 [One marvels that there should be any critical difficulty here as to our author’s teaching. Creatures of bread and wine are the body and the blood; materially one thing, mystically another. See cap. xviii. 5 below.]

6. But what other name is there which is glorified among the Gentiles than that of our Lord, by whom the Father is glorified, and man also? And because it is [the name] of His own Son, who was made man by Him, He calls it His own. Just as a king, if he himself paints a likeness of his son, is right in calling this likeness his own, for both these reasons, because it is [the likeness] of his son, and because it is his own production; so also does the Father confess the name of Jesus Christ, which is throughout all the world glorified in the Church, to be His own, both because it is that of His Son, and because He who thus describes it gave Him for the salvation of men. Since, therefore, the name of the Son belongs to the Father, and since in the omnipotent God the Church makes offerings through Jesus Christ, He says well on both these grounds, “And in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice.” Now John, in the Apocalypse, declares that the “incense” is “the prayers of the saints.”<sup>1385</sup>

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1385    [Rev. v. 8](#). [Material incense seems to be always disclaimed by the primitive writers.]

## Chapter XVIII.—Concerning sacrifices and oblations, and those who truly offer them.

1. The oblation of the Church, therefore, which the Lord gave instructions to be offered throughout all the world, is accounted with God a pure sacrifice, and is acceptable to Him; not that He stands in need of a sacrifice from us, but that he who offers is himself glorified in what he does offer, if his gift be accepted. For by the gift both honour and affection are shown forth towards the King; and the Lord, wishing us to offer it in all simplicity and innocence, did express Himself thus: “Therefore, when thou offerest thy gift upon the altar, and shalt remember that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then return and offer thy gift.”<sup>1386</sup> We are bound, therefore, to offer to God the first-fruits of His creation, as Moses also says, “Thou shalt not appear in the presence of the Lord thy God empty;”<sup>1387</sup> so that man, being accounted as grateful, by those things in which he has shown his gratitude, may receive that honour which flows from Him.<sup>1388</sup>

2. And the class of oblations in general has not been set aside; for there were both oblations there [among the Jews], and there are oblations here [among the Christians]. Sacrifices there were among the people; sacrifices there are, too, in the Church: but the species alone has been changed, inasmuch as the offering is now made, not by slaves, but by freemen. For the Lord is [ever] one and the same; but the character of a servile oblation is peculiar [to itself], as is also that of freemen, in order that, by the very oblations, the indication of liberty may be set forth. For with Him there is nothing purposeless, nor without signification, nor without design. And for this reason they (the Jews) had indeed the tithes of their goods consecrated to Him, but those who have received liberty set aside all their possessions for the Lord’s purposes, bestowing joyfully and freely not the less valuable portions of their property, since they have the hope of better things [hereafter]; as that poor widow acted who cast all her living into the treasury of God.<sup>1389</sup>

3. For at the beginning God had respect to the gifts of Abel, because he offered with single-mindedness and righteousness; but He had no respect unto the offering of Cain, because his heart was divided with envy and malice, which he cherished against his brother, as God says when reproving his hidden [thoughts], “Though thou offerest rightly, yet, if thou dost not divide rightly, hast thou not sinned? Be at rest;”<sup>1390</sup> since God is not appeased

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1386 [Matt. v. 23, 24.](#)

1387 [Deut. xvi. 16.](#)

1388 The text of this passage is doubtful in some words.

1389 [Luke xxi. 4.](#) [The law of tithes abrogated; the law of [Acts ii. 44, 45](#), morally binding. This seems to be our author’s view.]

1390 [Gen. iv. 7](#), LXX.

by sacrifice. For if any one shall endeavour to offer a sacrifice merely to outward appearance, unexceptionably, in due order, and according to appointment, while in his soul he does not assign to his neighbour that fellowship with him which is right and proper, nor is under the fear of God;— he who thus cherishes secret sin does not deceive God by that sacrifice which is offered correctly as to outward appearance; nor will such an oblation profit him anything, but [only] the giving up of that evil which has been conceived within him, so that sin may not the more, by means of the hypocritical action, render him the destroyer of himself.<sup>1391</sup> Wherefore did the Lord also declare: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like whited sepulchres. For the sepulchre appears beautiful outside, but within it is full of dead men’s bones, and all uncleanness; even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of wickedness and hypocrisy.”<sup>1392</sup> For while they were thought to offer correctly so far as outward appearance went, they had in themselves jealousy like to Cain; therefore they slew the Just One, slighting the counsel of the Word, as did also Cain. For [God] said to him, “Be at rest;” but he did not assent. Now what else is it to “be at rest” than to forego purposed violence? And saying similar things to these men, He declares: “Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse that which is within the cup, that the outside may be clean also.”<sup>1393</sup> And they did not listen to Him. For Jeremiah says, “Behold, neither thine eyes nor thy heart are good; but [they are turned] to thy covetousness, and to shed innocent blood, and for injustice, and for man-slaying, that thou mayest do it.”<sup>1394</sup> And again Isaiah saith, “Ye have taken counsel, but not of Me; and made covenants, [but] not by My Spirit.”<sup>1395</sup> In order, therefore, that their inner wish and thought, being brought to light, may show that God is without blame, and worketh no evil—that God who reveals what is hidden [in the heart], but who worketh not evil—when Cain was by no means at rest, He saith to him: “To thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.”<sup>1396</sup> Thus did He in like manner speak to Pilate: “Thou shouldest have no power at all against Me, unless it were given thee from above;”<sup>1397</sup> God always giving up the righteous one [in this life to suffering], that he, having been tested by what he suffered and endured, may [at last] be accepted; but that the evildoer, being judged by the actions he has performed, may be rejected. Sacrifices, therefore, do not sanctify a man, for God stands in no need of sacrifice; but it is the conscience of the offerer

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1391 The Latin text is: “ne per assimilatam operationem, magis autem peccatum, ipsum sibi homicidam faciat hominem.”

1392 [Matt. xxiii. 27, 28.](#)

1393 [Matt. xxiii. 26.](#)

1394 [Jer. xxii. 17.](#)

1395 [Isa. xxx. 1.](#)

1396 [Gen. iv. 7.](#)

1397 [John xix. 11.](#)

that sanctifies the sacrifice when it is pure, and thus moves God to accept [the offering] as from a friend. “But the sinner,” says He, “who kills a calf [in sacrifice] to Me, is as if he slew a dog.”<sup>1398</sup>

4. Inasmuch, then, as the Church offers with single-mindedness, her gift is justly reckoned a pure sacrifice with God. As Paul also says to the Philippians, “I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things that were sent from you, the odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, pleasing to God.”<sup>1399</sup> For it behoves us to make an oblation to God, and in all things to be found grateful to God our Maker, in a pure mind, and in faith without hypocrisy, in well-grounded hope, in fervent love, offering the first-fruits of His own created things. And the Church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, offering to Him, with giving of thanks, [the things taken] from His creation. But the Jews do not offer thus: for their hands are full of blood; for they have not received the Word, through whom it is offered to God.<sup>1400</sup> Nor, again, do any of the conventicles (*synagogæ*) of the heretics [offer this]. For some, by maintaining that the Father is different from the Creator, do, when they offer to Him what belongs to this creation of ours, set Him forth as being covetous of another’s property, and desirous of what is not His own. Those, again, who maintain that the things around us originated from apostasy, ignorance, and passion, do, while offering unto Him the fruits of ignorance, passion, and apostasy, sin against their Father, rather subjecting Him to insult than giving Him thanks. But how can they be consistent with themselves, [when they say] that the bread over which thanks have been given is the body of their Lord,<sup>1401</sup> and the cup His blood, if they do not call Himself the Son of the Creator of the world, that is, His Word, through whom the wood fructifies, and the fountains gush forth, and the earth gives “first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.”<sup>1402</sup>

5. Then, again, how can they say that the flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood, goes to corruption, and does not partake of life? Let them, therefore, either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the things just mentioned.<sup>1403</sup> But our

1398 Isa. lxvi. 3.

1399 Phil. iv. 18.

1400 The text here fluctuates between *quod offertur Deo*, and *per quod offertur Deo*. Massuet adopts the former, and Harvey the latter. If the first reading be chosen, the translation will be, “the Word who is offered to God,” implying, according to Massuet, that the body of Christ is really offered as a sacrifice in the Eucharist; if the second reading be followed, the translation will be as above. [Massuet’s idea is no more to be found, even in his text, than Luther’s or Calvin’s. The crucial point is, *how* offered? One may answer “figuratively,” “corporally,” “mystically,” or otherwise. Irenæus gives no answer in this place. But see below.]

1401 Comp. Massuet and Harvey respectively for the meaning to be attached to these words.

1402 Mark iv. 28.

1403 “Either let them acknowledge that *the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof*, or let them cease to offer to God those elements that they deny to be vouchsafed by Him.” —Harvey.

opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion. For we offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit.<sup>1404</sup> For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread,<sup>1405</sup> but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.

6. Now we make offering to Him, not as though He stood in need of it, but rendering thanks for His gift,<sup>1406</sup> and thus sanctifying what has been created. For even as God does not need our possessions, so do we need to offer something to God; as Solomon says: “He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord.”<sup>1407</sup> For God, who stands in need of nothing, takes our good works to Himself for this purpose, that He may grant us a recompense of His own good things, as our Lord says: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you. For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me to eat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me; sick, and ye visited Me; in prison, and ye came to Me.”<sup>1408</sup> As, therefore, He does not stand in need of these [services], yet does desire that we should render them for our own benefit, lest we be unfruitful; so did the Word give to the people that very precept as to the making of oblations, although He stood in no need of them, that they might learn to serve God: thus is it, therefore, also His will that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar, frequently and without intermission. The altar, then, is in heaven<sup>1409</sup> (for towards that place are our prayers and oblations directed); the temple likewise [is there], as John says in the Apocalypse, “And the temple of God was opened:”<sup>1410</sup> the tabernacle also: “For, behold,” He says, “the tabernacle of God, in which He will dwell with men.”

1404 That is, according to Harvey, “while we offer to Him His own creatures of bread and wine, we tell forth the fellowship of flesh with spirit; i.e., that the flesh of every child of man is receptive of the Spirit.” The words καὶ ὁμολογοῦντες ... ἔγερσιν, which here occur in the Greek text, are rejected as an interpolation by Grabe and Harvey, but defended as genuine by Massuet.

1405 See Harvey’s long note on this passage, and what immediately follows. [But, note, we are only asking what Irenæus teaches. Could words be plainer,—“two realities,”—(i.) bread, (ii.) spiritual food? Bread— but not “common bread;” matter and grace, flesh and Spirit. In the Eucharist, an earthly and a heavenly part.]

1406 The text fluctuates between *dominationi* and *donationi*.

1407 Prov. xix. 17.

1408 Matt. xxv. 34, etc.

1409 [The *Sursum Corda* seems here in mind. The object of Eucharistic adoration is the Creator, our “great High Priest, passed into the heavens,” and in bodily substance there enthroned, according to our author.]

1410 Rev. xi. 19.

**Chapter XIX.—Earthly things may be the type of heavenly, but the latter cannot be the types of others still superior and unknown; nor can we, without absolute madness, maintain that God is known to us only as the type of a still unknown and superior being.**

1. Now the gifts, oblations, and all the sacrifices, did the people receive in a figure, as was shown to Moses in the mount, from one and the same God, whose name is now glorified in the Church among all nations. But it is congruous that those earthly things, indeed, which are spread all around us, should be types of the celestial, being [both], however, created by the same God. For in no other way could He assimilate an image of spiritual things [to suit our comprehension]. But to allege that those things which are super-celestial and spiritual, and, as far as we are concerned, invisible and ineffable, are in their turn the types of celestial things and of another Pleroma, and [to say] that God is the image of another Father, is to play the part both of wanderers from the truth, and of absolutely foolish and stupid persons. For, as I have repeatedly shown, such persons will find it necessary to be continually finding out types of types, and images of images, and will never [be able to] fix their minds on one and the true God. For their imaginations range beyond God, they having in their hearts surpassed the Master Himself, being indeed in idea elated and exalted above [Him], but in reality turning away from the true God.

2. To these persons one may with justice say (as Scripture itself suggests), To what distance above God do ye lift up your imaginations, O ye rashly elated men? Ye have heard “that the heavens are meted out in the palm of [His] hand.”<sup>1411</sup> tell me the measure, and recount the endless multitude of cubits, explain to me the fulness, the breadth, the length, the height, the beginning and end of the measurement,—things which the heart of man understands not, neither does it comprehend them. For the heavenly treasures are indeed great: God cannot be measured in the heart, and incomprehensible is He in the mind; He who holds the earth in the hollow of His hand. Who perceives the measure of His right hand? Who knoweth His finger? Or who doth understand His hand,—that hand which measures immensity; that hand which, by its own measure, spreads out the measure of the heavens, and which comprises in its hollow the earth with the abysses; which contains in itself the breadth, and length, and the deep below, and the height above of the whole creation; which is seen, which is heard and understood, and which is invisible? And for this reason God is “above all principality, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named,”<sup>1412</sup> of all things which have been created and established. He it is who fills the heavens, and views the abysses, who is also present with every one of us. For he says, “Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? If any man is hid in secret places, shall I not see him?”<sup>1413</sup> For His

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1411 [Isa. xl. 12.](#)

1412 [Eph. i. 21.](#)

1413 [Jer. xxiii. 23.](#)



hand lays hold of all things, and that it is which illumines the heavens, and lightens also the things which are under the heavens, and trieth the reins and the hearts, is also present in hidden things, and in our secret [thoughts], and does openly nourish and preserve us.

3. But if man comprehends not the fulness and the greatness of His hand, how shall any one be able to understand or know in his heart so great a God? Yet, as if they had now measured and thoroughly investigated Him, and explored Him on every side,<sup>1414</sup> they feign that beyond Him there exists another Pleroma of Æons, and another Father; certainly not looking up to celestial things, but truly descending into a profound abyss (Bythus) of madness; maintaining that their Father extends only to the border of those things which are beyond the Pleroma, but that, on the other hand, the Demiurge does not reach so far as the Pleroma; and thus they represent neither of them as being perfect and comprehending all things. For the former will be defective in regard to the whole world formed outside of the Pleroma, and the latter in respect of that [ideal] world which was formed within the Pleroma; and [therefore] neither of these can be the God of all. But that no one can fully declare the goodness of God from the things made by Him, is a point evident to all. And that His greatness is not defective, but contains all things, and extends even to us, and is with us, every one will confess who entertains worthy conceptions of God.

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1414 The Latin is, “et universum eum decurrerint.” Harvey imagines that this last word corresponds to κατατρέχωσι but it is difficult to fit such a meaning into the context.

**Chapter XX.—That one God formed all things in the world, by means of the Word and the Holy Spirit: and that although He is to us in this life invisible and incomprehensible, nevertheless He is not unknown; inasmuch as His works do declare Him, and His Word has shown that in many modes He may be seen and known.**

1. As regards His greatness, therefore, it is not possible to know God, for it is impossible that the Father can be measured; but as regards His love (for this it is which leads us to God by His Word), when we obey Him, we do always learn that there is so great a God, and that it is He who by Himself has established, and selected, and adorned, and contains all things; and among the all things, both ourselves and this our world. We also then were made, along with those things which are contained by Him. And this is He of whom the Scripture says, “And God formed man, taking clay of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life.”<sup>1415</sup> It was not angels, therefore, who made us, nor who formed us, neither had angels power to make an image of God, nor any one else, except the Word of the Lord, nor any Power remotely distant from the Father of all things. For God did not stand in need of these [beings], in order to the accomplishing of what He had Himself determined with Himself beforehand should be done, as if He did not possess His own hands. For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also He speaks, saying, “Let Us make man after Our image and likeness;”<sup>1416</sup> He taking from Himself the substance of the creatures [formed], and the pattern of things made, and the type of all the adornments in the world.

2. Truly, then, the Scripture declared, which says, “First<sup>1417</sup> of all believe that there is one God, who has established all things, and completed them, and having caused that from what had no being, all things should come into existence:” He who contains all things, and is Himself contained by no one. Rightly also has Malachi said among the prophets: “Is it not one God who hath established us? Have we not all one Father?”<sup>1418</sup> In accordance with this, too, does the apostle say, “There is one God, the Father, who is above all, and in us all.”<sup>1419</sup> Likewise does the Lord also say: “All things are delivered to Me by My Father;”<sup>1420</sup> manifestly by Him who made all things; for He did not deliver to Him the things of another, but His own. But in *all things* [it is implied that] nothing has been kept back [from Him], and for this reason the same person is the Judge of the living and the dead; “having the key

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1415 [Gen. ii. 7.](#)

1416 [Gen. i. 26.](#)

1417 This quotation is taken from the *Shepherd of Hermas*, book ii. sim. 1.

1418 [Mal. ii. 10.](#)

1419 [Eph. iv. 6.](#)

1420 [Matt. xi. 27.](#)

of David: He shall open, and no man shall shut: He shall shut, and no man shall open.”<sup>1421</sup> For no one was able, either in heaven or in earth, or under the earth, to open the book of the Father, or to behold Him, with the exception of the Lamb who was slain, and who redeemed us with His own blood, receiving power over all things from the same God who made all things by the Word, and adorned them by [His] Wisdom, when “the Word was made flesh;” that even as the Word of God had the sovereignty in the heavens, so also might He have the sovereignty in earth, inasmuch as [He was] a righteous man, “who did no sin, neither was there found guile in His mouth;”<sup>1422</sup> and that He might have the pre-eminence over those things which are under the earth, He Himself being made “the first-begotten of the dead;”<sup>1423</sup> and that all things, as I have already said, might behold their King; and that the paternal light might meet with and rest upon the flesh of our Lord, and come to us from His resplendent flesh, and that thus man might attain to immortality, having been invested with the paternal light.

3. I have also largely demonstrated, that the Word, namely the Son, was always with the Father; and that Wisdom also, which is the Spirit, was present with Him, anterior to all creation, He declares by Solomon: “God by Wisdom founded the earth, and by understanding hath He established the heaven. By His knowledge the depths burst forth, and the clouds dropped down the dew.”<sup>1424</sup> And again: “The Lord created me the beginning of His ways in His work: He set me up from everlasting, in the beginning, before He made the earth, before He established the depths, and before the fountains of waters gushed forth; before the mountains were made strong, and before all the hills, He brought me forth.”<sup>1425</sup> And again: “When He prepared the heaven, I was with Him, and when He established the fountains of the deep; when He made the foundations of the earth strong, I was with Him preparing [them]. I was He in whom He rejoiced, and throughout all time I was daily glad before His face, when He rejoiced at the completion of the world, and was delighted in the sons of men.”<sup>1426</sup>

4. There is therefore one God, who by the Word and Wisdom created and arranged all things; but this is the Creator (Demiurge) who has granted this world to the human race, and who, as regards His greatness, is indeed unknown to all who have been made by Him (for no man has searched out His height, either among the ancients who have gone to their

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1421 [Rev. iii. 7.](#)

1422 [1 Pet. ii. 23.](#)

1423 [Col. i. 18.](#)

1424 [Prov. iii. 19, 20.](#)

1425 [Prov. viii. 22–25.](#) [This is one of the favourite Messianic quotations of the Fathers, and is considered as the base of the first chapter of St. John’s Gospel.]

1426 [Prov. viii. 27–31.](#)

rest, or any of those who are now alive); but as regards His love, He is always known through Him by whose means He ordained all things. Now this is His Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the last times was made a man among men, that He might join the end to the beginning, that is, man to God. Wherefore the prophets, receiving the prophetic gift from the same Word, announced His advent according to the flesh, by which the blending and communion of God and man took place according to the good pleasure of the Father, the Word of God foretelling from the beginning that God should be seen by men, and hold converse with them upon earth, should confer with them, and should be present with His own creation, saving it, and becoming capable of being perceived by it, and freeing us from the hands of all that hate us, that is, from every spirit of wickedness; and causing us to serve Him in holiness and righteousness all our days,<sup>1427</sup> in order that man, having embraced the Spirit of God, might pass into the glory of the Father.

5. These things did the prophets set forth in a prophetical manner; but they did not, as some allege, [proclaim] that He who was seen by the prophets was a different [God], the Father of all being invisible. Yet this is what those [heretics] declare, who are altogether ignorant of the nature of prophecy. For prophecy is a prediction of things future, that is, a setting forth beforehand of those things which shall be afterwards. The prophets, then, indicated beforehand that God should be seen by men; as the Lord also says, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”<sup>1428</sup> But in respect to His greatness, and His wonderful glory, “no man shall see God and live,”<sup>1429</sup> for the Father is incomprehensible; but in regard to His love, and kindness, and as to His infinite power, even this He grants to those who love Him, that is, to see God, which thing the prophets did also predict. “For those things that are impossible with men, are possible with God.”<sup>1430</sup> For man does not see God by his own powers; but when He pleases He is seen by men, by whom He wills, and when He wills, and as He wills. For God is powerful in all things, having been seen at that time indeed, prophetically through the Spirit, and seen, too, adoptively through the Son; and He shall also be seen paternally in the kingdom of heaven, the Spirit truly preparing man in the Son<sup>1431</sup> of God, and the Son leading him to the Father, while the Father, too, confers [upon him] incorruption for eternal life, which comes to every one from the fact of his seeing God. For as those who see the light are within the light, and partake of its brilliancy; even so, those who see God are in God, and receive of His splendour. But [His] splendour vivifies them; those, therefore, who see God, do receive life. And for this reason, He, [although] beyond

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1427 [Luke i. 71, 75.](#)

1428 [Matt. v. 8.](#)

1429 [Ex. xxxiii. 20.](#)

1430 [Luke xviii. 27.](#)

1431 Some read “in filium” instead of “in filio,” as above.

comprehension, and boundless and invisible, rendered Himself visible, and comprehensible, and within the capacity of those who believe, that He might vivify those who receive and behold Him through faith.<sup>1432</sup> For as His greatness is past finding out, so also His goodness is beyond expression; by which having been seen, He bestows life upon those who see Him. It is not possible to live apart from life, and the means of life is found in fellowship with God; but fellowship with God is to know God, and to enjoy His goodness.

6. Men therefore shall see God, that they may live, being made immortal by that sight, and attaining even unto God; which, as I have already said, was declared figuratively by the prophets, that God should be seen by men who bear His Spirit [in them], and do always wait patiently for His coming. As also Moses says in Deuteronomy, “We shall see in that day that God will talk to man, and he shall live.”<sup>1433</sup> For certain of these men used to see the prophetic Spirit and His active influences poured forth for all kinds of gifts; others, again, [beheld] the advent of the Lord, and that dispensation which obtained from the beginning, by which He accomplished the will of the Father with regard to things both celestial and terrestrial; and others [beheld] paternal glories adapted to the times, and to those who saw and who heard them then, and to all who were subsequently to hear them. Thus, therefore, was God revealed; for God the Father is shown forth through all these [operations], the Spirit indeed working, and the Son ministering, while the Father was approving, and man’s salvation being accomplished. As He also declares through Hosea the prophet: “I,” He says, “have multiplied visions, and have used similitudes by the ministry (*in manibus*) of the prophets.”<sup>1434</sup> But the apostle expounded this very passage, when he said, “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of ministrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”<sup>1435</sup> But as He who worketh all things in all is God, [as to the points] of what nature and how great He is, [God] is invisible and indescribable to all things which have been made by Him, but He is by no means unknown: for all things learn through His Word that there is one God the Father, who contains all things, and who grants existence to all, as is written in the Gospel: “No man hath seen God at any time, except the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; He has declared [Him].”<sup>1436</sup>

7. Therefore the Son of the Father declares [Him] from the beginning, inasmuch as He was with the Father from the beginning, who did also show to the human race prophetic

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1432 A part of the original Greek text is preserved here, and has been followed, as it makes the better sense.

1433 Deut. v. 24.

1434 Hos. xii. 10.

1435 1 Cor. xii. 4–7.

1436 John i. 18.

visions, and diversities of gifts, and His own ministrations, and the glory of the Father, in regular order and connection, at the fitting time for the benefit [of mankind]. For where there is a regular succession, there is also fixedness; and where fixedness, there suitability to the period; and where suitability, there also utility. And for this reason did the Word become the dispenser of the paternal grace for the benefit of men, for whom He made such great dispensations, revealing God indeed to men, but presenting man to God, and preserving at the same time the invisibility of the Father, lest man should at any time become a despiser of God, and that he should always possess something towards which he might advance; but, on the other hand, revealing God to men through many dispensations, lest man, falling away from God altogether, should cease to exist. For the glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God. For if the manifestation of God which is made by means of the creation, affords life to all living in the earth, much more does that revelation of the Father which comes through the Word, give life to those who see God.

8. Inasmuch, then, as the Spirit of God pointed out by the prophets things to come, forming and adapting us beforehand for the purpose of our being made subject to God, but it was still a future thing that man, through the good pleasure of the Holy Spirit, should see [God], it necessarily behoved those through whose instrumentality future things were announced, to see God, whom they intimated as to be seen by men; in order that God, and the Son of God, and the Son, and the Father, should not only be prophetically announced, but that He should also be seen by all His members who are sanctified and instructed in the things of God, that man might be disciplined beforehand and previously exercised for a reception into that glory which shall afterwards be revealed in those who love God. For the prophets used not to prophesy in word alone, but in visions also, and in their mode of life, and in the actions which they performed, according to the suggestions of the Spirit. After this invisible manner, therefore, did they see God, as also Esaias says, “I have seen with mine eyes the King, the Lord of hosts,”<sup>1437</sup> pointing out that man should behold God with his eyes, and hear His voice. In this manner, therefore, did they also see the Son of God as a man conversant with men, while they prophesied what was to happen, saying that He who was not come as yet was present proclaiming also the impassible as subject to suffering, and declaring that He who was then in heaven had descended into the dust of death.<sup>1438</sup> Moreover, [with regard to] the other arrangements concerning the summing up that He should make, some of these they beheld through visions, others they proclaimed by word, while others they indicated typically by means of [outward] action, seeing visibly those things which were to be seen; heralding by word of mouth those which should be heard; and performing by actual operation what should take place by action; but [at the same time]

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1437 [Isa. vi. 5.](#)

1438 [Ps. xxii. 15.](#)

announcing all prophetically. Wherefore also Moses declared that God was indeed a consuming fire<sup>1439</sup> (*igneum*) to the people that transgressed the law, and threatened that God would bring upon them a day of fire; but to those who had the fear of God he said, “The Lord God is merciful and gracious, and long-suffering, and of great commiseration, and true, and keeps justice and mercy for thousands, forgiving unrighteousness, and transgressions, and sins.”<sup>1440</sup>

9. And the Word spake to Moses, appearing before him, “just as any one might speak to his friend.”<sup>1441</sup> But Moses desired to see Him openly who was speaking with him, and was thus addressed: “Stand in the deep place of the rock, and with My hand I will cover thee. But when My splendour shall pass by, then thou shalt see My back parts, but My face thou shalt not see: for no man sees My face, and shall live.”<sup>1442</sup> Two facts are thus signified: that it is impossible for man to see God; and that, through the wisdom of God, man shall see Him in the last times, in the depth of a rock, that is, in His coming as a man. And for this reason did He [the Lord] confer with him face to face on the top of a mountain, Elias being also present, as the Gospel relates,<sup>1443</sup> He thus making good in the end the ancient promise.

10. The prophets, therefore, did not openly behold the actual face of God, but [they saw] the dispensations and the mysteries through which man should afterwards see God. As was also said to Elias: “Thou shalt go forth tomorrow, and stand in the presence of the Lord; and, behold, a wind great and strong, which shall rend the mountains, and break the rocks in pieces before the Lord. And the Lord [was] not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord [was] not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord [was] not in the fire; and after the fire a scarcely audible voice” (*vox auræ tenuis*).<sup>1444</sup> For by such means was the prophet—very indignant, because of the transgression of the people and the slaughter of the prophets—both taught to act in a more gentle manner; and the Lord’s advent as a man was pointed out, that it should be subsequent to that law which was given by Moses, mild and tranquil, in which He would neither break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.<sup>1445</sup> The mild and peaceful repose of His kingdom was indicated likewise. For, after the wind which rends the mountains, and after the earthquake, and after the fire, come the tranquil and peaceful times of His kingdom, in which the spirit of God

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1439 [Deut. iv. 24.](#)

1440 [Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7.](#)

1441 [Num. xii. 8.](#)

1442 [Ex. xxxiii. 20–22.](#)

1443 [Matt. xvii. 3,](#) etc.

1444 [1 Kings xix. 11, 12.](#)

1445 [Isa. xlii. 3.](#)

does, in the most gentle manner, vivify and increase mankind. This, too, was made still clearer by Ezekiel, that the prophets saw the dispensations of God in part, but not actually God Himself. For when this man had seen the vision<sup>1446</sup> of God, and the cherubim, and their wheels, and when he had recounted the mystery of the whole of that progression, and had beheld the likeness of a throne above them, and upon the throne a likeness as of the figure of a man, and the things which were upon his loins as the figure of amber, and what was below like the sight of fire, and when he set forth all the rest of the vision of the thrones, lest any one might happen to think that in those [visions] he had actually seen God, he added: "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God."<sup>1447</sup>

11. If, then, neither Moses, nor Elias, nor Ezekiel, who had all many celestial visions, did see God; but if what they did see were similitudes of the splendour of the Lord, and prophecies of things to come; it is manifest that the Father is indeed invisible, of whom also the Lord said, "No man hath seen God at any time."<sup>1448</sup> But His Word, as He Himself willed it, and for the benefit of those who beheld, did show the Father's brightness, and explained His purposes (as also the Lord said: "The only-begotten God,"<sup>1449</sup> which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared [Him];" and He does Himself also interpret the Word of the Father as being rich and great); not in one figure, nor in one character, did He appear to those seeing Him, but according to the reasons and effects aimed at in His dispensations, as it is written in Daniel. For at one time He was seen with those who were around Ananias, Azarias, Mishael, as present with them in the furnace of fire, in the burning, and preserving them from [the effects of] fire: "And the appearance of the fourth," it is said, "was like to the Son of God."<sup>1450</sup> At another time [He is represented as] "a stone cut out of the mountain without hands,"<sup>1451</sup> and as smiting all temporal kingdoms, and as blowing them away (*ventilans ea*), and as Himself filling all the earth. Then, too, is this same individual beheld as the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, and drawing near to the Ancient of Days, and receiving from Him all power and glory, and a kingdom. "His dominion," it is said, "is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom shall not perish."<sup>1452</sup> John also, the Lord's disciple, when beholding the sacerdotal and glorious advent of His kingdom, says in the Apocalypse:

1446 [Ezek. i. 1.](#)

1447 [Ezek. ii. 1.](#)

1448 [John i. 18.](#)

1449 "This text, as quoted a short time ago, indicated 'the only-begotten Son;' but the agreement of the Syriac version induces the belief that the present reading was that expressed by Irenæus, and that the previous quotation has been corrected to suit the Vulgate. The former reading, however, occurs in book iii. c. xi. 5."—Harvey.

1450 [Dan. iii. 26.](#)

1451 [Dan. vii. 13, 14.](#)

1452 [Dan. vii. 4.](#)



“I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And, being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks One like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle; and His head and His hairs were white, as white as wool, and as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if He burned in a furnace. And His voice [was] as the voice of waters; and He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and His countenance was as the sun shining in his strength.”<sup>1453</sup> For in these words He sets forth something of the glory [which He has received] from His Father, as [where He makes mention of] the head; something in reference to the priestly office also, as in the case of the long garment reaching to the feet. And this was the reason why Moses vested the high priest after this fashion. Something also alludes to the end [of all things], as [where He speaks of] the fine brass burning in the fire, which denotes the power of faith, and the continuing instant in prayer, because of the consuming fire which is to come at the end of time. But when John could not endure the sight (for he says, “I fell at his feet as dead;”<sup>1454</sup> that what was written might come to pass: “No man sees God, and shall live”<sup>1455</sup>), and the Word reviving him, and reminding him that it was He upon whose bosom he had leaned at supper, when he put the question as to who should betray Him, declared: “I am the first and the last, and He who liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of death and of hell.” And after these things, seeing the same Lord in a second vision, he says: “For I saw in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.”<sup>1456</sup> And again, he says, speaking of this very same Lamb: “And behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness doth He judge and make war. And His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; having a name written, that no man knoweth but Himself: and He was girded around with a vesture sprinkled with blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies of heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in pure white linen. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He may smite the nations; and He shall rule (*pascet*) them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of God Almighty. And He hath upon His vesture and upon His thigh a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”<sup>1457</sup> Thus does the Word of God always preserve

1453 [Rev. i. 12.](#)

1454 [Rev. i. 17.](#)

1455 [Ex. xxxiii. 20.](#)

1456 [Rev. v. 6.](#)

1457 [Rev. xix. 11–17.](#)

the outlines, as it were, of things to come, and points out to men the various forms (*species*), as it were, of the dispensations of the Father, teaching us the things pertaining to God.

12. However, it was not by means of visions alone which were seen, and words which were proclaimed, but also in actual works, that He was beheld by the prophets, in order that through them He might prefigure and show forth future events beforehand. For this reason did Hosea the prophet take “a wife of whoredoms,” prophesying by means of the action, “that in committing fornication the earth should fornicate from the Lord,”<sup>1458</sup> that is, the men who are upon the earth; and from men of this stamp it will be God’s good pleasure to take out<sup>1459</sup> a Church which shall be sanctified by fellowship with His Son, just as that woman was sanctified by intercourse with the prophet. And for this reason, Paul declares that the “unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband.”<sup>1460</sup> Then again, the prophet names his children, “Not having obtained mercy,” and “Not a people,”<sup>1461</sup> in order that, as says the apostle, “what was not a people may become a people; and she who did not obtain mercy may obtain mercy. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said, This is not a people, there shall they be called the children of the living God.”<sup>1462</sup> That which had been done typically through his actions by the prophet, the apostle proves to have been done truly by Christ in the Church. Thus, too, did Moses also take to wife an Ethiopian woman, whom he thus made an Israelitish one, showing by anticipation that the wild olive tree is grafted into the cultivated olive, and made to partake of its fatness. For as He who was born Christ according to the flesh, had indeed to be sought after by the people in order to be slain, but was to be set free in Egypt, that is, among the Gentiles, to sanctify those who were there in a state of infancy, from whom also He perfected His Church in that place (for Egypt was Gentile from the beginning, as was Ethiopia also); for this reason, by means of the marriage of Moses, was shown forth the marriage of the Word;<sup>1463</sup> and by means of the Ethiopian bride, the Church taken from among the Gentiles was made manifest; and those who do detract from, accuse, and deride it, shall not be pure. For they shall be full of leprosy, and expelled from the camp of the righteous. Thus also did Rahab the harlot, while condemning herself, inasmuch as she was a Gentile, guilty of all sins, nevertheless receive the three

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1458 [Hos. i. 2, 3.](#)

1459 [Acts xv. 14.](#)

1460 [1 Cor. vii. 14.](#) [But Hosea himself says ([Hos. xii. 10](#)), “I have used similitudes;” and this history may be fairly referred to prophetic vision. Dr. Pusey, in his *Minor Prophets*, in *loc.*, argues against this view, however; and his reasons deserve consideration.]

1461 [Hos. i. 6–9.](#)

1462 [Rom. ix. 25, 26.](#)

1463 The text is here uncertain; and while the general meaning of the sentence is plain, its syntax is confused and obscure.

spies,<sup>1464</sup> who were spying out all the land, and hid them at her home; [which three were] doubtless [a type of] the Father and the Son, together with the Holy Spirit. And when the entire city in which she lived fell to ruins at the sounding of the seven trumpets, Rahab the harlot was preserved, when all was over [*in ultimis*], together with all her house, through faith of the scarlet sign; as the Lord also declared to those who did not receive His advent,—the Pharisees, no doubt, nullify the sign of the scarlet thread, which meant the passover, and the redemption and exodus of the people from Egypt,—when He said, “The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you.”<sup>1465</sup>

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1464 Irenæus seems here to have written “three” for “two” from a lapse of memory.

1465 [Matt. xxi. 31.](#)

**Chapter XXI.—Abraham's faith was identical with ours; this faith was prefigured by the words and actions of the old patriarchs.**

1. But that our faith was also prefigured in Abraham, and that he was the patriarch of our faith, and, as it were, the prophet of it, the apostle has very fully taught, when he says in the Epistle to the Galatians: "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, [doeth he it] by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. But the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, announced beforehand unto Abraham, that in him all nations should be blessed. So then they which be of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham."<sup>1466</sup> For which [reasons the apostle] declared that this man was not only the prophet of faith, but also the father of those who from among the Gentiles believe in Jesus Christ, because his faith and ours are one and the same: for he believed in things future, as if they were already accomplished, because of the promise of God; and in like manner do we also, because of the promise of God, behold through faith that inheritance [laid up for us] in the [future] kingdom.

2. The history of Isaac, too, is not without a symbolical character. For in the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle declares: "Moreover, when Rebecca had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac," she received answer<sup>1467</sup> from the Word, "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people are in thy body; and the one people shall overcome the other, and the elder shall serve the younger."<sup>1468</sup> From which it is evident, that not only [were there] prophecies of the patriarchs, but also that the children brought forth by Rebecca were a prediction of the two nations; and that the one should be indeed the greater, but the other the less; that the one also should be under bondage, but the other free; but [that both should be] of one and the same father. Our God, one and the same, is also their God, who knows hidden things, who knoweth all things before they can come to pass; and for this reason has He said, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."<sup>1469</sup>

3. If any one, again, will look into Jacob's actions, he shall find them not destitute of meaning, but full of import with regard to the dispensations. Thus, in the first place, at his birth, since he laid hold on his brother's heel,<sup>1470</sup> he was called Jacob, that is, *the supplanter*—one who holds, but is not held; binding the feet, but not being bound; striving and

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1466 Gal. iii. 5–9; Gen. xii. 3.

1467 Massuet would cancel these words.

1468 Rom. ix. 10–13; Gen. xxv. 23.

1469 Rom. ix. 13; Mal. i. 2.

1470 Gen. xxv. 26.

conquering; grasping in his hand his adversary's heel, that is, victory. For to this end was the Lord born, the type of whose birth he set forth beforehand, of whom also John says in the Apocalypse: "He went forth conquering, that He should conquer."<sup>1471</sup> In the next place, [Jacob] received the rights of the first-born, when his brother looked on them with contempt; even as also the younger nation received Him, Christ, the first-begotten, when the elder nation rejected Him, saying, "We have no king but Cæsar."<sup>1472</sup> But in Christ every blessing [is summed up], and therefore the latter people has snatched away the blessings of the former from the Father, just as Jacob took away the blessing of this Esau. For which cause his brother suffered the plots and persecutions of a brother, just as the Church suffers this self-same thing from the Jews. In a foreign country were the twelve tribes born, the race of Israel, inasmuch as Christ was also, in a strange country, to generate the twelve-pillared foundation of the Church. Various coloured sheep were allotted to this Jacob as his wages; and the wages of Christ are human beings, who from various and diverse nations come together into one cohort of faith, as the Father promised Him, saying, "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession."<sup>1473</sup> And as from the multitude of his sons the prophets of the Lord [afterwards] arose, there was every necessity that Jacob should beget sons from the two sisters, even as Christ did from the two laws of one and the same Father; and in like manner also from the handmaids, indicating that Christ should raise up sons of God, both from freemen and from slaves after the flesh, bestowing upon all, in the same manner, the gift of the Spirit, who vivifies us.<sup>1474</sup> But he (Jacob) did all things for the sake of the younger, she who had the handsome eyes,<sup>1475</sup> Rachel, who prefigured the Church, for which Christ endured patiently; who at that time, indeed, by means of His patriarchs and prophets, was prefiguring and declaring beforehand future things, fulfilling His part by anticipation in the dispensations of God, and accustoming His inheritance to obey God, and to pass through the world as in a state of pilgrimage, to follow His word, and to indicate beforehand things to come. For with God there is nothing without purpose or due signification.

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1471 [Rev. vi. 2.](#)

1472 [John xix. 15.](#)

1473 [Ps. ii. 8.](#)

1474 The text of this sentence is in great confusion, and we can give only a doubtful translation.

1475 [Leah's eyes were *weak*, according to the LXX.; and Irenæus infers that Rachel's were "beautiful exceedingly." Canticles, i. 15.]

**Chapter XXII.—Christ did not come for the sake of the men of one age only, but for all who, living righteously and piously, had believed upon Him; and for those, too, who shall believe.**

1. Now in the last days, when the fulness of the time of liberty had arrived, the Word Himself did by Himself “wash away the filth of the daughters of Zion,”<sup>1476</sup> when He washed the disciples’ feet with His own hands.<sup>1477</sup> For this is the end of the human race inheriting God; that as in the beginning, by means of our first [parents], we were all brought into bondage, by being made subject to death; so at last, by means of the New Man, all who from the beginning [were His] disciples, having been cleansed and washed from things pertaining to death, should come to the life of God. For He who washed the feet of the disciples sanctified the entire body, and rendered it clean. For this reason, too, He administered food to them in a recumbent posture, indicating that those who were lying in the earth were they to whom He came to impart life. As Jeremiah declares, “The holy Lord remembered His dead Israel, who slept in the land of sepulture; and He descended to them to make known to them His salvation, that they might be saved.”<sup>1478</sup> For this reason also were the eyes of the disciples weighed down when Christ’s passion was approaching; and when, in the first instance, the Lord found them sleeping, He let it pass,—thus indicating the patience of God in regard to the state of slumber in which men lay; but coming the second time, He aroused them, and made them stand up, in token that His passion is the arousing of His sleeping disciples, on whose account “He also descended into the lower parts of the earth,”<sup>1479</sup> to behold with His eyes the state of those who were resting from their labours,<sup>1480</sup> in reference to whom He did also declare to the disciples: “Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see and hear what ye do see and hear.”<sup>1481</sup>

2. For it was not merely for those who believed on Him in the time of Tiberius Cæsar that Christ came, nor did the Father exercise His providence for the men only who are now alive, but for all men altogether, who from the beginning, according to their capacity, in their generation have both feared and loved God, and practised justice and piety towards their neighbours, and have earnestly desired to see Christ, and to hear His voice. Wherefore He shall, at His second coming, first rouse from their sleep all persons of this description, and shall raise them up, as well as the rest who shall be judged, and give them a place in His kingdom. For it is truly “one God who” directed the patriarchs towards His dispensations,

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1476 Isa. iv. 4.

1477 John xiii. 5.

1478 This spurious quotation has been introduced before. See book iii. 20. 4.

1479 Eph. iv. 9.

1480 So Harvey understands the obscure Latin text, “id quod erat inoperatum conditionis.”

1481 Matt. xiii. 17.

and “has justified the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.”<sup>1482</sup> For as in the first we were prefigured, so, on the other hand, are they represented in us, that is, in the Church, and receive the recompense for those things which they accomplished.

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1482 [Rom. iii. 30.](#)

**Chapter XXIII.—The patriarchs and prophets by pointing out the advent of Christ, fortified thereby, as it were, the way of posterity to the faith of Christ; and so the labours of the apostles were lessened inasmuch as they gathered in the fruits of the labours of others.**

1. For which reason the Lord declared to the disciples: “Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look upon the districts (*regiones*), for they are white [already] to harvest. For the harvest-man receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. For in this is the saying true, that one soweth and another reapeth. For I have sent you forward to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour; other men have laboured, and ye have entered into their labours.”<sup>1483</sup> Who, then, are they that have laboured, and have helped forward the dispensations of God? It is clear that they are the patriarchs and prophets, who even prefigured our faith, and disseminated through the earth the advent of the Son of God, who and what He should be: so that posterity, possessing the fear of God, might easily accept the advent of Christ, having been instructed by the prophets. And for this reason it was, that when Joseph became aware that Mary was with child, and was minded to put her away privily, the angel said to him in sleep: “Fear not to take to thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. For she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.”<sup>1484</sup> And exhorting him [to this], he added: “Now all this has been done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken from the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel;” thus influencing him by the words of the prophet, and warding off blame from Mary, pointing out that it was she who was the virgin mentioned by Isaiah beforehand, who should give birth to Emmanuel. Wherefore, when Joseph was convinced beyond all doubt, he both did take Mary, and joyfully yielded obedience in regard to all the rest of the education of Christ, undertaking a journey into Egypt and back again, and then a removal to Nazareth. [For this reason,] those who knew not the Scriptures nor the promise of God, nor the dispensation of Christ, at last called him the father of the child. For this reason, too, did the Lord Himself read at Capernaum the prophecies of Isaiah:<sup>1485</sup> “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me; to preach the Gospel to the poor hath He sent Me, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and sight to the blind.”<sup>1486</sup> At the same time, showing that it was He Himself who had been foretold by Esaias the prophet, He said to them: “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

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1483 [John iv. 35](#), etc.

1484 [Matt. i. 20](#), etc.

1485 [Luke iv. 18](#).

1486 [Isa. lxi. 1](#).



2. For this reason, also, Philip, when he had discovered the eunuch of the Ethiopians' queen reading these words which had been written: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb is dumb before the shearer, so He opened not His mouth: in His humiliation His judgment was taken away;"<sup>1487</sup> and all the rest which the prophet proceeded to relate in regard to His passion and His coming in the flesh, and how He was dishonoured by those who did not believe Him; easily persuaded him to believe on Him, that He was Christ Jesus, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and suffered whatsoever the prophet had predicted, and that He was the Son of God, who gives eternal life to men. And immediately when [Philip] had baptized him, he departed from him. For nothing else [but baptism] was wanting to him who had been already instructed by the prophets: he was not ignorant of God the Father, nor of the rules as to the [proper] manner of life, but was merely ignorant of the advent of the Son of God, which, when he had become acquainted with, in a short space of time, he went on his way rejoicing, to be the herald in Ethiopia of Christ's advent. Therefore Philip had no great labour to go through with regard to this man, because he was already prepared in the fear of God by the prophets. For this reason, too, did the apostles, collecting the sheep which had perished of the house of Israel, and discoursing to them from the Scriptures, prove that this crucified Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God; and they persuaded a great multitude, who, however, [already] possessed the fear of God. And there were, in one day, baptized three, and four, and five thousand men.<sup>1488</sup>

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1487 [Acts viii. 27](#); [Isa. liii. 7](#).

1488 [Acts ii. 41](#), [Acts iv. 4](#).

**Chapter XXIV.—The conversion of the Gentiles was more difficult than that of the Jews; the labours of those apostles, therefore who engaged in the former task, were greater than those who undertook the latter.**

1. Wherefore also Paul, since he was the apostle of the Gentiles, says, “I laboured more than they all.”<sup>1489</sup> For the instruction of the former, [viz., the Jews,] was an easy task, because they could allege proofs from the Scriptures, and because they, who were in the habit of hearing Moses and the prophets, did also readily receive the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the life of God, —Him who, by the spreading forth of hands, did destroy Amalek, and vivify man from the wound of the serpent, by means of faith which was [exercised] towards Him. As I have pointed out in the preceding book, the apostle did, in the first place, instruct the Gentiles to depart from the superstition of idols, and to worship one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and the Framer of the whole creation; and that His Son was His Word, by whom He founded all things; and that He, in the last times, was made a man among men; that He reformed the human race, but destroyed and conquered the enemy of man, and gave to His handiwork victory against the adversary. But although they who were of the circumcision still did not obey the words of God, for they were despisers, yet they were previously instructed not to commit adultery, nor fornication, nor theft, nor fraud; and that whatsoever things are done to our neighbours’ prejudice, were evil, and detested by God. Wherefore also they did readily agree to abstain from these things, because they had been thus instructed.

2. But they were bound to teach the Gentiles also this very thing, that works of such a nature were wicked, prejudicial, and useless, and destructive to those who engaged in them. Wherefore he who had received the apostolate to the Gentiles,<sup>1490</sup> did labour more than those who preached the Son of God among them of the circumcision. For they were assisted by the Scriptures, which the Lord confirmed and fulfilled, in coming such as He had been announced; but here, [in the case of the Gentiles,] there was a certain foreign erudition, and a new doctrine [to be received, namely], that the gods of the nations not only were no gods at all, but even the idols of demons; and that there is one God, who is “above all principality, and dominion, and power, and every name which is named;”<sup>1491</sup> and that His Word, invisible by nature, was made palpable and visible among men, and did descend “to death, even the death of the cross;”<sup>1492</sup> also, that they who believe in Him shall be incorruptible and not subject to suffering, and shall receive the kingdom of heaven. These things, too, were preached

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1489    [1 Cor. xv. 10.](#)

1490    [A clear note of recognition on the part of our author, that St. Paul’s mission was world-wide, while St. Peter’s was limited.]

1491    [Eph. i. 21.](#)

1492    [Phil. ii. 8.](#)

to the Gentiles by word, without [the aid of] the Scriptures: wherefore, also, they who preached among the Gentiles underwent greater labour. But, on the other hand, the faith of the Gentiles is proved to be of a more noble description, since they followed the word of God without the instruction [derived] from the [sacred] writings (*sine instructione literarum*).

**Chapter XXV.—Both covenants were prefigured in Abraham, and in the labour of Tamar; there was, however, but one and the same God to each covenant.**

1. For thus it had behoved the sons of Abraham [to be], whom God has raised up to him from the stones,<sup>1493</sup> and caused to take a place beside him who was made the chief and the forerunner of our faith (who did also receive the covenant of circumcision, after that justification by faith which had pertained to him, when he was yet in uncircumcision, so that in him both covenants might be prefigured, that he might be the father of all who follow the Word of God, and who sustain a life of pilgrimage in this world, that is, of those who from among the circumcision and of those from among the uncircumcision are faithful, even as also “Christ<sup>1494</sup> is the chief corner-stone” sustaining all things); and He gathered into the one faith of Abraham those who, from either covenant, are eligible for God’s building. But this faith which is in uncircumcision, as connecting the end with the beginning, has been made [both] the first and the last. For, as I have shown, it existed in Abraham antecedently to circumcision, as it also did in the rest of the righteous who pleased God: and in these last times, it again sprang up among mankind through the coming of the Lord. But circumcision and the law of works occupied the intervening period.<sup>1495</sup>

2. This fact is indeed set forth by many other [occurrences], but typically by [the history of] Thamar, Judah’s daughter-in-law.<sup>1496</sup> For when she had conceived twins, one of them put forth his hand first; and as the midwife supposed that he was the first-born, she bound a scarlet token on his hand. But after this had been done, and he had drawn back his hand, his brother Phares came forth the first; then, after him, Zara, upon whom was the scarlet line, [was born] the second: the Scripture clearly pointing out that people which possessed the scarlet sign, that is, faith in a state of circumcision, which was shown beforehand, indeed, in the patriarchs first; but after that withdrawn, that his brother might be born; and also, in like manner, him who was the elder, as being born in the second place, [him] who was distinguished by the scarlet token which was [fastened] on him, that is, the passion of the Just One, which was prefigured from the beginning in Abel, and described by the prophets, but perfected in the last times in the Son of God.

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1493 [Matt. iii. 9.](#)

1494 [Eph. ii. 20.](#)

1495 [Note, the Gentile Church was the old religion and was Catholic; in Christ it became Catholic again: the Mosaic system was a parenthetical thing of fifteen hundred years only. Such is the *luminous* and clarifying scheme of Irenæus, expounding St. Paul ([Gal. iii. 14–20](#)). Inferences: (1) They who speak as if the Mosaic system covered the whole *Old Testament* darken the divine counsels. (2) The God of Scripture was never the God of the Jews only.]

1496 [Gen. xxxviii. 28](#), etc.

3. For it was requisite that certain facts should be announced beforehand by the fathers in a paternal manner, and others prefigured by the prophets in a legal one, but others, described after the form of Christ, by those who have received the adoption; while in one God are all things shown forth. For although Abraham was one, he did in himself prefigure the two covenants, in which some indeed have sown, while others have reaped; for it is said, “In this is the saying true, that it is one ‘people’ who sows, but another who shall reap;”<sup>1497</sup> but it is one God who bestows things suitable upon both—seed to the sower, but bread for the reaper to eat. Just as it is one that planteth, and another who watereth, but one God who giveth the increase.<sup>1498</sup> For the patriarchs and prophets sowed the word [concerning] Christ, but the Church reaped, that is, received the fruit. For this reason, too, do these very men (the prophets) also pray to have a dwelling-place in it, as Jeremiah says, “Who will give me in the desert the last dwelling-place?”<sup>1499</sup> in order that both the sower and the reaper may rejoice together in the kingdom of Christ, who is present with all those who were from the beginning approved by God, who granted them His Word to be present with them.<sup>1500</sup>

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1497 [John iv. 37.](#)

1498 [1 Cor. iii. 7.](#)

1499 [Jer. ix. 2.](#) [A “remote dwelling-place” rather (σταθμὸν ἔσχατον according to LXX.) to square with the argument.]

1500 [The touching words which conclude the former paragraph are illustrated by the noble sentence which begins this paragraph. The childlike spirit of these Fathers recognises Christ everywhere, in the *Old Testament*, prefigured by countless images and tokens in *paternal* and legal (ceremonial) forms.]

## Chapter XXVI.—The treasure hid in the Scriptures is Christ; the true exposition of the Scriptures is to be found in the Church alone.

1. If any one, therefore, reads the Scriptures with attention, he will find in them an account of Christ, and a foreshadowing of the new calling (*vocationis*). For Christ is the treasure which was hid in the field,<sup>1501</sup> that is, in this world (for “the field is the world”<sup>1502</sup>); but the treasure hid in the Scriptures is Christ, since He was pointed out by means of types and parables. Hence His human nature could not<sup>1503</sup> be understood, prior to the consummation of those things which had been predicted, that is, the advent of Christ. And therefore it was said to Daniel the prophet: “Shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of consummation, until many learn, and knowledge be completed. For at that time, when the dispersion shall be accomplished, they shall know all these things.”<sup>1504</sup> But Jeremiah also says, “In the last days they shall understand these things.”<sup>1505</sup> For every prophecy, before its fulfilment, is to men [full of] enigmas and ambiguities. But when the time has arrived, and the prediction has come to pass, then the prophecies have a clear and certain exposition. And for this reason, indeed, when at this present time the law is read to the Jews, it is like a fable; for they do not possess the explanation of all things pertaining to the advent of the Son of God, which took place in human nature; but when it is read by the Christians, it is a treasure, hid indeed in a field, but brought to light by the cross of Christ, and explained, both enriching the understanding of men, and showing forth the wisdom of God and declaring His dispensations with regard to man, and forming the kingdom of Christ beforehand, and preaching by anticipation the inheritance of the holy Jerusalem, and proclaiming beforehand that the man who loves God shall arrive at such excellency as even to see God, and hear His word, and from the hearing of His discourse be glorified to such an extent, that others cannot behold the glory of his countenance, as was said by Daniel: “Those who do understand, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and many of the righteous<sup>1506</sup> as the stars for ever and ever.”<sup>1507</sup> Thus, then, I have shown it to be,<sup>1508</sup> if any one read the

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1501 [Matt. xiii. 44.](#)

1502 [Matt. xiii. 38.](#)

1503 Harvey cancels “non,” and reads the sentence interrogatively.

1504 [Dan. xii. 4, 7.](#)

1505 [Jer. xxiii. 20.](#)

1506 The Latin is “a multis justis,” corresponding to the Greek version of the Hebrew text. If the translation be supposed as corresponding to the Hebrew comparative, the English equivalent will be, “and above (more than) many righteous.”

1507 [Dan. xii. 3.](#)

1508 The text and punctuation are here in great uncertainty, and very different views of both are taken by the editors.

Scriptures. For thus it was that the Lord discoursed with the disciples after His resurrection from the dead, proving to them from the Scriptures themselves “that Christ must suffer, and enter into His glory, and that remission of sins should be preached in His name throughout all the world.”<sup>1509</sup> And the disciple will be perfected, and [rendered] like the householder, “who bringeth forth from his treasure things new and old.”<sup>1510</sup>

2. Wherefore it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church,—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father. But [it is also incumbent] to hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession, and assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever, [looking upon them] either as heretics of perverse minds, or as schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing, or again as hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory. For all these have fallen from the truth. And the heretics, indeed, who bring strange fire to the altar of God— namely, strange doctrines—shall be burned up by the fire from heaven, as were Nadab and Abiud.<sup>1511</sup> But such as rise up in opposition to the truth, and exhort others against the Church of God, [shall] remain among those in hell (*apud inferos*), being swallowed up by an earthquake, even as those who were with Chore, Dathan, and Abiron.<sup>1512</sup> But those who cleave asunder, and separate the unity of the Church, [shall] receive from God the same punishment as Jeroboam did.<sup>1513</sup>

3. Those, however, who are believed to be presbyters by many, but serve their own lusts, and, do not place the fear of God supreme in their hearts, but conduct themselves with contempt towards others, and are puffed up with the pride of holding the chief seat, and work evil deeds in secret, saying, “No man sees us,” shall be convicted by the Word, who does not judge after outward appearance (*secundum gloriam*), nor looks upon the countenance, but the heart; and they shall hear those words, to be found in Daniel the prophet: “O thou seed of Canaan, and not of Judah, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust perverted thy heart.”<sup>1514</sup> Thou that art waxen old in wicked days, now thy sins which thou hast committed

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1509 [Luke xxiv. 26, 47.](#) [The walk to Emmaus is the fountain-head of Scriptural exposition, and the forty days ([Acts i. 3](#)) is the river that came forth like that which went out of Eden. [Sirach iv. 31.](#)]

1510 [Matt. xiii. 52.](#) [I must express my delight in the great principle of exposition here unfolded. The Old Scriptures are a night-bound wilderness, till Christ rises and illuminates them, glorying alike hill and dale, and, as this author supposes, every shrub and flower, also, making the smallest leaf with its dewdrops glitter like the rainbow.]

1511 [Lev. x. 1, 2.](#)

1512 [Num. xvi. 33.](#)

1513 [1 Kings xiv. 10.](#)

1514 [Susanna 56.](#)

aforetime are come to light; for thou hast pronounced false judgments, and hast been accustomed to condemn the innocent, and to let the guilty go free, albeit the Lord saith, The innocent and the righteous shalt thou not slay.”<sup>1515</sup> Of whom also did the Lord say: “But if the evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite the man-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and be drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.”<sup>1516</sup>

4. From all such persons, therefore, it behoves us to keep aloof, but to adhere to those who, as I have already observed, do hold the doctrine of the apostles, and who, together with the order of priesthood (*presbyterii ordine*), display sound speech and blameless conduct for the confirmation and correction of others.<sup>1517</sup> In this way, Moses, to whom such a leadership was entrusted, relying on a good conscience, cleared himself before God, saying, “I have not in covetousness taken anything belonging to one of these men, nor have I done evil to one of them.”<sup>1518</sup> In this way, too, Samuel, who judged the people so many years, and bore rule over Israel without any pride, in the end cleared himself, saying, “I have walked before you from my childhood even unto this day: answer me in the sight of God, and before His anointed (*Christi ejus*); whose ox or whose ass of yours have I taken, or over whom have I tyrannized, or whom have I oppressed? or if I have received from the hand of any a bribe or [so much as] a shoe, speak out against me, and I will restore it to you.”<sup>1519</sup> And when the people had said to him, “Thou hast not tyrannized, neither hast thou oppressed us neither hast thou taken ought of any man’s hand,” he called the Lord to witness, saying, “The Lord is witness, and His Anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they said to him, He is witness.” In this strain also the Apostle Paul, inasmuch as he had a good conscience, said to the Corinthians: “For we are not as many, who corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ;”<sup>1520</sup> “We have injured no man, corrupted no man, circumvented no man.”<sup>1521</sup>

5. Such presbyters does the Church nourish, of whom also the prophet says: “I will give thy rulers in peace, and thy bishops in righteousness.”<sup>1522</sup> Of whom also did the Lord declare,

1515 *Ibid.* ver. 52, etc.; [Ex. xxiii. 7.](#)

1516 [Matt. xxiv. 48](#), etc.; [Luke xii. 45.](#)

1517 [Contrast this spirit of a primitive Father, with the state of things which Wiclif rose up to purify, five hundred years ago.]

1518 [Num. xvi. 15.](#)

1519 [1 Sam. xii. 3.](#)

1520 [2 Cor. ii. 17.](#)

1521 [2 Cor. vii. 2.](#)

1522 [Isa. lx. 17.](#)



“Who then shall be a faithful steward (*actor*), good and wise, whom the Lord sets over His household, to give them their meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing.”<sup>1523</sup> Paul then, teaching us where one may find such, says, “God hath placed in the Church, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers.”<sup>1524</sup> Where, therefore, the gifts of the Lord have been placed, there it behoves us to learn the truth, [namely,] from those who possess that succession of the Church which is from the apostles,<sup>1525</sup> and among whom exists that which is sound and blameless in conduct, as well as that which is unadulterated and incorrupt in speech. For these also preserve this faith of ours in one God who created all things; and they increase that love [which we have] for the Son of God, who accomplished such marvellous dispensations for our sake: and they expound the Scriptures to us without danger, neither blaspheming God, nor dishonouring the patriarchs, nor despising the prophets.

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1523 Matt. xxiv. 45, 46.

1524 1 Cor. xii. 28.

1525 [Note the limitation; not the succession only, but with it (1) pure morality and holiness and (2) unadulterated testimony. No catholicity apart from these.]

**Chapter XXVII—The sins of the men of old time, which incurred the displeasure of God, were, by His providence, committed to writing, that we might derive instruction thereby, and not be filled with pride. We must not, therefore, infer that there was another God than He whom Christ preached; we should rather fear, lest the one and the same God who inflicted punishment on the ancients, should bring down heavier upon us.**

1. As I have heard from a certain presbyter,<sup>1526</sup> who had heard it from those who had seen the apostles, and from those who had been their disciples, the punishment [declared] in Scripture was sufficient for the ancients in regard to what they did without the Spirit's guidance. For as God is no respecter of persons, He inflicted a proper punishment on deeds displeasing to Him. As in the case of David,<sup>1527</sup> when he suffered persecution from Saul for righteousness' sake, and fled from King Saul, and would not avenge himself of his enemy, he both sung the advent of Christ, and instructed the nations in wisdom, and did everything after the Spirit's guidance, and pleased God. But when his lust prompted him to take Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, the Scripture said concerning him, "Now, the thing (*sermo*) which David had done appeared wicked in the eyes of the Lord,"<sup>1528</sup> and Nathan the prophet is sent to him, pointing out to him his crime, in order that he, passing sentence upon and condemning himself, might obtain mercy and forgiveness from Christ: "And [Nathan] said to him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe-lamb, which he possessed, and nourished up; and it had been with him and with his children together: it did eat of his own bread, and drank of his cup, and was to him as a daughter. And there came a guest unto the rich man; and he spared to take of the flock of his own ewe-lambs, and from the herds of his own oxen, to entertain the guest; but he took the ewe-lamb of the poor man, and set it before the man that had come unto him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die (*filius mortis est*): and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he hath done this thing, and because he had no pity for the poor man. And Nathan said unto him, Thou art the man who hast done this."<sup>1529</sup> And then he proceeds with the rest [of the narrative], upbraiding him, and recounting God's benefits towards him, and [showing him] how much his conduct had displeased the Lord. For [he

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1526 Polycarp, Papias, Pothinus, and others, have been suggested as probably here referred to, but the point is involved in utter uncertainty. [Surely this testimony is a precious intimation of the apostle's meaning ([Rom. ii. 12–16](#)), and the whole chapter is radiant with the purity of the Gospel.]

1527 [1 Sam. xviii.](#)

1528 [2 Sam. xi. 27.](#)

1529 [2 Sam. xii. 1,](#) etc.

declared] that works of this nature were not pleasing to God, but that great wrath was suspended over his house. David, however, was struck with remorse on hearing this, and exclaimed, “I have sinned against the Lord;” and he sung a penitential psalm, waiting for the coming of the Lord, who washes and makes clean the man who had been fast bound with [the chain of] sin. In like manner it was with regard to Solomon, while he continued to judge uprightly, and to declare the wisdom of God, and built the temple as the type of truth, and set forth the glories of God, and announced the peace about to come upon the nations, and prefigured the kingdom of Christ, and spake three thousand parables about the Lord’s advent, and five thousand songs, singing praise to God, and expounded the wisdom of God in creation, [discoursing] as to the nature of every tree, every herb, and of all fowls, quadrupeds, and fishes; and he said, “Will God whom the heavens cannot contain, really dwell with men upon the earth?”<sup>1530</sup> And he pleased God, and was the admiration of all; and all kings of the earth sought an interview with him (*quærebant faciem ejus*) that they might hear the wisdom which God had conferred upon him.<sup>1531</sup> The queen of the south, too, came to him from the ends of the earth, to ascertain the wisdom that was in him:<sup>1532</sup> she whom the Lord also referred to as one who should rise up in the judgment with the nations of those men who do hear His words, and do not believe in Him, and should condemn them, inasmuch as she submitted herself to the wisdom announced by the servant of God, while these men despised that wisdom which proceeded directly from the Son of God. For Solomon was a servant, but Christ is indeed the Son of God, and the Lord of Solomon. While, therefore, he served God without blame, and ministered to His dispensations, then was he glorified: but when he took wives from all nations, and permitted them to set up idols in Israel, the Scripture spake thus concerning him: “And King Solomon was a lover of women, and he took to himself foreign women; and it came to pass, when Solomon was old, his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God. And the foreign women turned away his heart after strange gods. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord: he did not walk after the Lord, as did David his father. And the Lord was angry with Solomon; for his heart was not perfect with the Lord, as was the heart of David his father.”<sup>1533</sup> The Scripture has thus sufficiently reprovèd him, as the presbyter remarked, in order that no flesh may glory in the sight of the Lord.

2. It was for this reason, too, that the Lord descended into the regions beneath the earth, preaching His advent there also, and [declaring] the remission of sins received by those who believe in Him.<sup>1534</sup> Now all those believed in Him who had hope towards Him, that is, those

1530 1 Kings viii. 27.

1531 1 Kings iv. 34.

1532 1 Kings x. 1.

1533 1 Kings xi. 1.

1534 [1 Pet. iii. 19, 20.]

who proclaimed His advent, and submitted to His dispensations, the righteous men, the prophets, and the patriarchs, to whom He remitted sins in the same way as He did to us, which sins we should not lay to their charge, if we would not despise the grace of God. For as these men did not impute unto us (the Gentiles) our transgressions, which we wrought before Christ was manifested among us, so also it is not right that we should lay blame upon those who sinned before Christ's coming. For "all men come short of the glory of God,"<sup>1535</sup> and are not justified of themselves, but by the advent of the Lord,—they who earnestly direct their eyes towards His light. And it is for our instruction that their actions have been committed to writing, that we might know, in the first place, that our God and theirs is one, and that sins do not please Him although committed by men of renown; and in the second place, that we should keep from wickedness. For if these men of old time, who preceded us in the gifts [bestowed upon them], and for whom the Son of God had not yet suffered, when they committed any sin and served fleshly lusts, were rendered objects of such disgrace, what shall the men of the present day suffer, who have despised the Lord's coming, and become the slaves of their own lusts? And truly the death of the Lord became [the means of] healing and remission of sins to the former, but Christ shall not die again in behalf of those who now commit sin, for death shall no more have dominion over Him; but the Son shall come in the glory of the Father, requiring from His stewards and dispensers the money which He had entrusted to them, with usury; and from those to whom He had given most shall He demand most. We ought not, therefore, as that presbyter remarks, to be puffed up, nor be severe upon those of old time, but ought ourselves to fear, lest perchance, after [we have come to] the knowledge of Christ, if we do things displeasing to God, we obtain no further forgiveness of sins, but be shut out from His kingdom.<sup>1536</sup> And therefore it was that Paul said, "For if [God] spared not the natural branches, [take heed] lest He also spare not thee, who, when thou wert a wild olive tree, wert grafted into the fatness of the olive tree, and wert made a partaker of its fatness."<sup>1537</sup>

3. Thou wilt notice, too, that the transgressions of the common people have been described in like manner, not for the sake of those who did then transgress, but as a means of instruction unto us, and that we should understand that it is one and the same God against

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1535 [Rom. iii. 23](#). [Another testimony to the mercy of God in the judgment of the unevangelized. There must have been some reason for the secrecy with which "that presbyter's" name is guarded. Irenæus may have scrupled to draw the wrath of the Gnostics upon any name but his own.]

1536 [Rom. iii. 23](#). [Another testimony to the mercy of God in the judgment of the unevangelized. There must have been some reason for the secrecy with which "that presbyter's" name is guarded. Irenæus may have scrupled to draw the wrath of the Gnostics upon any name but his own.]

1537 [Rom. xi. 17, 21](#).

whom these men sinned, and against whom certain persons do now transgress from among those who profess to have believed in Him. But this also, [as the presbyter states,] has Paul declared most plainly in the Epistle to the Corinthians, when he says, “Brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and were all baptized unto Moses in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and the rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. These things were for our example (*in figuram nostri*), to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted; neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them, as it is written:<sup>1538</sup> The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them also did, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. But all these things happened to them in a figure, and were written for our admonition, upon whom the end of the world (*sæculorum*) is come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”<sup>1539</sup>

4. Since therefore, beyond all doubt and contradiction, the apostle shows that there is one and the same God, who did both enter into judgment with these former things, and who does inquire into those of the present time, and points out why these things have been committed to writing; all these men are found to be unlearned and presumptuous, nay, even destitute of common sense, who, because of the transgressions of them of old time, and because of the disobedience of a vast number of them, do allege that there was indeed one God of these men, and that He was the maker of the world, and existed in a state of degeneracy; but that there was another Father declared by Christ, and that this Being is He who has been conceived by the mind of each of them; not understanding that as, in the former case, God showed Himself not well pleased in many instances towards those who sinned, so also in the latter, “many are called, but few are chosen.”<sup>1540</sup> As then the unrighteous, the idolaters, and fornicators perished, so also is it now: for both the Lord declares, that such persons are sent into eternal fire;<sup>1541</sup> and the apostle says, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, not effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”<sup>1542</sup> And

1538 Ex. xxxii. 6.

1539 1 Cor. x. 1, etc.

1540 Matt. xx. 16.

1541 Matt. xxv. 41.

1542 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

as it was not to those who are without that he said these things, but to us, lest we should be cast forth from the kingdom of God, by doing any such thing, he proceeds to say, “And such indeed were ye; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God.” And just as then, those who led vicious lives, and put other people astray, were condemned and cast out, so also even now the offending eye is plucked out, and the foot and the hand, lest the rest of the body perish in like manner.<sup>1543</sup> And we have the precept: “If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one go not to eat.”<sup>1544</sup> And again does the apostle say, “Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of mistrust. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.”<sup>1545</sup> And as then the condemnation of sinners extended to others who approved of them, and joined in their society; so also is it the case at present, that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”<sup>1546</sup> And as the wrath of God did then descend upon the unrighteous, here also does the apostle likewise say: “For the wrath of God shall be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of those men who hold back the truth in unrighteousness.”<sup>1547</sup> And as, in those times, vengeance came from God upon the Egyptians who were subjecting Israel to unjust punishment, so is it now, the Lord truly declaring, “And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him? I tell you, that He will avenge them speedily.”<sup>1548</sup> So says the apostle, in like manner, in the Epistle to the Thessalonians: “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, at the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven with His mighty angels, and in a flame of fire, to take vengeance upon those who know not God, and upon those that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them who have believed in Him.”<sup>1549</sup>

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1543 [Matt. xviii. 8, 9.](#)

1544 [1 Cor. v. 11.](#)

1545 [Eph. v. 6, 7.](#)

1546 [1 Cor. v. 6.](#)

1547 [Rom. i. 18.](#)

1548 [Luke xviii. 7, 8.](#)

1549 [2 Thess. i. 6–10.](#)

**Chapter XXVIII.—Those persons prove themselves senseless who exaggerate the mercy of Christ, but are silent as to the judgment, and look only at the more abundant grace of the New Testament; but, forgetful of the greater degree of perfection which it demands from us, they endeavour to show that there is another God beyond Him who created the world.**

1. Inasmuch, then, as in both Testaments there is the same righteousness of God [displayed] when God takes vengeance, in the one case indeed typically, temporarily, and more moderately; but in the other, really, enduringly, and more rigidly: for the fire is eternal, and the wrath of God which shall be revealed from heaven from the face of our Lord (as David also says, “But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth”<sup>1550</sup>), entails a heavier punishment on those who incur it,—the elders pointed out that those men are devoid of sense, who, [arguing] from what happened to those who formerly did not obey God, do endeavour to bring in another Father, setting over against [these punishments] what great things the Lord had done at His coming to save those who received Him, taking compassion upon them; while they keep silence with regard to His judgment; and all those things which shall come upon such as have heard His words, but done them not, and that it were better for them if they had not been born,<sup>1551</sup> and that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the judgment than for that city which did not receive the word of His disciples.<sup>1552</sup>

2. For as, in the New Testament, that faith of men [to be placed] in God has been increased, receiving in addition [to what was already revealed] the Son of God, that man too might be a partaker of God; so is also our walk in life required to be more circumspect, when we are directed not merely to abstain from evil actions, but even from evil thoughts, and from idle words, and empty talk, and scurrilous language:<sup>1553</sup> thus also the punishment of those who do not believe the Word of God, and despise His advent, and are turned away backwards, is increased; being not merely temporal, but rendered also eternal. For to whomsoever the Lord shall say, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,”<sup>1554</sup> these shall be damned for ever; and to whomsoever He shall say, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you for eternity,”<sup>1555</sup> these do receive the kingdom for ever, and make constant advance in it; since there is one and the same God the Father, and

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1550 Ps. xxxiv. 16.

1551 Matt. xxvi. 24.

1552 Matt. x. 15.

1553 [Eph. v. 4. Even from the εὐτραπελία which might signify a *bon-mot*, literally, and which certainly is not “scurrility,” unless the apostle was ironical, reflecting on jokes with heathen considered “good.”]

1554 Matt. xxv. 41.

1555 Matt. xxv. 34.

His Word, who has been always present with the human race, by means indeed of various dispensations, and has wrought out many things, and saved from the beginning those who are saved, (for these are they who love God, and follow the Word of God according to the class to which they belong,) and has judged those who are judged, that is, those who forget God, and are blasphemous, and transgressors of His word.

3. For the self-same heretics already mentioned by us have fallen away from themselves, by accusing the Lord, in whom they say that they believe. For those points to which they call attention with regard to the God who then awarded temporal punishments to the unbelieving, and smote the Egyptians, while He saved those that were obedient; these same [facts, I say,] shall nevertheless repeat themselves in the Lord, who judges for eternity those whom He doth judge, and lets go free for eternity those whom He does let go free: and He shall [thus] be discovered, according to the language used by these men, as having been the cause of their most heinous sin to those who laid hands upon Him, and pierced Him. For if He had not so come, it follows that these men could not have become the slayers of their Lord; and if He had not sent prophets to them, they certainly could not have killed them, nor the apostles either. To those, therefore, who assail us, and say, If the Egyptians had not been afflicted with plagues, and, when pursuing after Israel, been choked in the sea, God could not have saved His people, this answer may be given;—Unless, then, the Jews had become the slayers of the Lord (which did, indeed, take eternal life away from them), and, by killing the apostles and persecuting the Church, had fallen into an abyss of wrath, we could not have been saved. For as they were saved by means of the blindness of the Egyptians, so are we, too, by that of the Jews; if, indeed, the death of the Lord is the condemnation of those who fastened Him to the cross, and who did not believe His advent, but the salvation of those who believe in Him. For the apostle does also say in the Second [Epistle] to the Corinthians: “For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them which are saved, and in them which perish: to the one indeed the savour of death unto death, but to the other the savour of life unto life.”<sup>1556</sup> To whom, then, is there the savour of death unto death, unless to those who believe not neither are subject to the Word of God? And who are they that did even then give themselves over to death? Those men, doubtless, who do not believe, nor submit themselves to God. And again, who are they that have been saved and received the inheritance? Those, doubtless, who do believe God, and who have continued in His love; as did Caleb [the son] of Jephunneh and Joshua [the son] of Nun,<sup>1557</sup> and innocent children,<sup>1558</sup> who have had no sense of evil. But who are they that are saved now, and receive

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1556 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

1557 Num. xiv. 30.

1558 [Jon. iv. 11. The tenderness of our author constantly asserts itself, as in this reference to children.]



life eternal? Is it not those who love God, and who believe His promises, and who “in malice have become as little children?”<sup>1559</sup>

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1559 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

**Chapter XXIX.—Refutation of the arguments of the Marcionites, who attempted to show that God was the author of sin, because He blinded Pharaoh and his servants.**

1. “But,” say they, “God hardened the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants.”<sup>1560</sup> Those, then, who allege such difficulties, do not read in the Gospel that passage where the Lord replied to the disciples, when they asked Him, “Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?”—“Because it is given unto you to know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven; but to them I speak in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not hear, understanding they may not understand; in order that the prophecy of Isaiah regarding them may be fulfilled, saying, Make the heart of this people gross and make their ears dull, and blind their eyes. But blessed are your eyes, which see the things that ye see; and your ears, which hear what ye do hear.”<sup>1561</sup> For one and the same God [that blesses others] inflicts blindness upon those who do not believe, but who set Him at naught; just as the sun, which is a creature of His, [acts with regard] to those who, by reason of any weakness of the eyes cannot behold his light; but to those who believe in Him and follow Him, He grants a fuller and greater illumination of mind. In accordance with this word, therefore, does the apostle say, in the Second [Epistle] to the Corinthians: “In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine [unto them].”<sup>1562</sup> And again, in that to the Romans: “And as they did not think fit to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things that are not convenient.”<sup>1563</sup> Speaking of antichrist, too, he says clearly in the Second to the Thessalonians: “And for this cause God shall send them the working of error, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but consented to iniquity.”<sup>1564</sup>

2. If, therefore, in the present time also, God, knowing the number of those who will not believe, since He foreknows all things, has given them over to unbelief, and turned away His face from men of this stamp, leaving them in the darkness which they have themselves chosen for themselves, what is there wonderful if He did also at that time give over to their unbelief, Pharaoh, who never would have believed, along with those who were with him? As the Word spake to Moses from the bush: “And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, unless by a mighty hand.”<sup>1565</sup> And for the reason that the Lord spake in parables,

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1560 Ex. ix. 35.

1561 Matt. xiii. 11–16; Isa. vi. 10.

1562 2 Cor. iv. 4.

1563 Rom. i. 28.

1564 2 Thess. ii. 11.

1565 Ex. iii. 19.

and brought blindness upon Israel, that seeing they might not see, since He knew the [spirit of] unbelief in them, for the same reason did He harden Pharaoh's heart; in order that, while seeing that it was the finger of God which led forth the people, he might not believe, but be precipitated into a sea of unbelief, resting in the notion that the exit of these [Israelites] was accomplished by magical power, and that it was not by the operation of God that the Red Sea afforded a passage to the people, but that this occurred by merely natural causes (*sed naturaliter sic se habere*).

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**Chapter XXX.—Refutation of another argument adduced by the Marcionites, that God directed the Hebrews to spoil the Egyptians.**

1. Those, again, who cavil and find fault because the people did, by God's command, upon the eve of their departure, take vessels of all kinds and raiment from the Egyptians,<sup>1566</sup> and so went away, from which [spoils], too, the tabernacle was constructed in the wilderness, prove themselves ignorant of the righteous dealings of God, and of His dispensations; as also the presbyter remarked: For if God had not accorded this in the typical exodus, no one could now be saved in our true exodus; that is, in the faith in which we have been established, and by which we have been brought forth from among the number of the Gentiles. For in some cases there follows us a small, and in others a large amount of property, which we have acquired from the mammon of unrighteousness. For from what source do we derive the houses in which we dwell, the garments in which we are clothed, the vessels which we use, and everything else ministering to our every-day life, unless it be from those things which, when we were Gentiles, we acquired by avarice, or received them from our heathen parents, relations, or friends who unrighteously obtained them?—not to mention that even now we acquire such things when we are in the faith. For who is there that sells, and does not wish to make a profit from him who buys? Or who purchases anything, and does not wish to obtain good value from the seller? Or who is there that carries on a trade, and does not do so that he may obtain a livelihood thereby? And as to those believing ones who are in the royal palace, do they not derive the utensils they employ from the property which belongs to Cæsar; and to those who have not, does not each one of these [Christians] give according to his ability? The Egyptians were debtors to the [Jewish] people, not alone as to property, but as their very lives, because of the kindness of the patriarch Joseph in former times; but in what way are the heathen debtors to us, from whom we receive both gain and profit? Whatsoever they amass with labour, these things do we make use of without labour, although we are in the faith.

2. Up to that time the people served the Egyptians in the most abject slavery, as saith the Scripture: "And the Egyptians exercised their power rigorously upon the children of Israel; and they made life bitter to them by severe labours, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field which they did, by all the works in which they oppressed them with rigour."<sup>1567</sup> And with immense labour they built for them fenced cities, increasing the substance of these men throughout a long course of years, and by means of every species of slavery; while these [masters] were not only ungrateful towards them, but had in contempla-

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1566 Ex. iii. 22, Ex. xi. 2. [Our English translation "borrow" is a gratuitous injury to the text. As "King of kings" the Lord enjoins a just tax, which any earthly sovereign might have imposed uprightly. Our author argues well.]

1567 Ex. i. 13, 14.

tion their utter annihilation. In what way, then, did [the Israelites] act unjustly, if out of many things they took a few, they who might have possessed much property had they not served them, and might have gone forth wealthy, while, in fact, by receiving only a very insignificant recompense for their heavy servitude, they went away poor? It is just as if any free man, being forcibly carried away by another, and serving him for many years, and increasing his substance, should be thought, when he ultimately obtains some support, to possess some small portion of his [master's] property, but should in reality depart, having obtained only a little as the result of his own great labours, and out of vast possessions which have been acquired, and this should be made by any one a subject of accusation against him, as if he had not acted properly.<sup>1568</sup> He (the accuser) will rather appear as an unjust judge against him who had been forcibly carried away into slavery. Of this kind, then, are these men also, who charge the people with blame, because they appropriated a few things out of many, but who bring no charge against those who did not render them the recompense due to their fathers' services; nay, but even reducing them to the most irksome slavery, obtained the highest profit from them. And [these objectors] allege that [the Israelites] acted dishonestly, because, forsooth, they took away for the recompense of their labours, as I have observed, unstamped gold and silver in a few vessels; while they say that they themselves (for let truth be spoken, although to some it may seem ridiculous) do act honestly, when they carry away in their girdles from the labours of others, coined gold, and silver, and brass, with Cæsar's inscription and image upon it.

3. If, however, a comparison be instituted between us and them, [I would ask] which party shall seem to have received [their worldly goods] in the fairer manner? Will it be the [Jewish] people, [who took] from the Egyptians, who were at all points their debtors; or we, [who receive property] from the Romans and other nations, who are under no similar obligation to us? Yea, moreover, through their instrumentality the world is at peace, and we walk on the highways without fear, and sail where we will.<sup>1569</sup> Therefore, against men of this kind (namely, the heretics) the word of the Lord applies, which says: "Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote out of thy brother's eye."<sup>1570</sup> For if he who lays these things to thy charge, and glories in his own wisdom, has been separated from the company of the Gentiles, and possesses nothing [derived from] other people's goods, but is literally naked, and barefoot, and dwells homeless among the mountains, as any of those animals do which feed on grass, he will stand excused [in using such language], as being ignorant of the necessities of our mode of life. But if he

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1568 This perplexed sentence is pointed by Harvey interrogatively, but we prefer the above.

1569 [A touching tribute to the imperial law, at a moment when Christians were "dying daily" and "as sheep for the slaughter." So powerfully worked the divine command, [Luke vi. 29.](#)]

1570 [Matt. vii. 5.](#)

do partake of what, in the opinion of men, is the property of others, and if [at the same time] he runs down their type,<sup>1571</sup> he proves himself most unjust, turning this kind of accusation against himself. For he will be found carrying about property not belonging to him, and coveting goods which are not his. And therefore has the Lord said: "Judge not, that ye be not judged: for with what judgment ye shall judge, ye shall be judged."<sup>1572</sup> [The meaning is] not certainly that we should not find fault with sinners, nor that we should consent to those who act wickedly; but that we should not pronounce an unfair judgment on the dispensations of God, inasmuch as He has Himself made provision that all things shall turn out for good, in a way consistent with justice. For, because He knew that we would make a good use of our substance which we should possess by receiving it from another, He says, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise."<sup>1573</sup> And, "For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was naked and ye clothed Me."<sup>1574</sup> And, "When thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."<sup>1575</sup> And we are proved to be righteous by whatsoever else we do well, redeeming, as it were, our property from strange hands. But thus do I say, "from strange hands," not as if the world were not God's possession, but that we have gifts of this sort, and receive them from others, in the same way as these men had them from the Egyptians who knew not God; and by means of these same do we erect in ourselves the tabernacle of God: for God dwells in those who act uprightly, as the Lord says: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that they, when ye shall be put to flight,<sup>1576</sup> may receive you into eternal tabernacles."<sup>1577</sup> For whatsoever we acquired from unrighteousness when we were heathen, we are proved righteous, when we have become believers, by applying it to the Lord's advantage.

4. As a matter of course, therefore, these things were done beforehand in a type, and from them was the tabernacle of God constructed; those persons justly receiving them, as I have shown, while we were pointed out beforehand in them,—[we] who should afterwards serve God by the things of others. For the whole exodus of the people out of Egypt, which took place under divine guidance,<sup>1578</sup> was a type and image of the exodus of the Church

1571 This is, if he inveighs against the Israelites for spoiling the Egyptians; the former being a type of the Christian Church in relation to the Gentiles.

1572 [Matt. vii. 1, 2.](#)

1573 [Luke iii. 11.](#)

1574 [Matt. xxv. 35, 36.](#)

1575 [Matt. vi. 3.](#)

1576 As Harvey remarks, this is "a strange translation for ἐκλίπητε" of the *text. rec.*, and he adds that "possibly the translator read ἐκτράπητε."

1577 [Luke xvi. 9.](#)

1578 We here follow the punctuation of Massuet in preference to that of Harvey.

which should take place from among the Gentiles;<sup>1579</sup> and for this cause He leads it out at last from this world into His own inheritance, which Moses the servant of God did not [bestow], but which Jesus the Son of God shall give for an inheritance. And if any one will devote a close attention to those things which are stated by the prophets with regard to the [time of the] end, and those which John the disciple of the Lord saw in the Apocalypse,<sup>1580</sup> he will find that the nations [are to] receive the same plagues universally, as Egypt then did particularly.

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1579 [The Fathers regarded the whole Mosaic system, and the history of the faithful under it, as one great allegory. In everything they saw “similitudes,” as we do in the *Faery Queen* of Spenser, or the *Pilgrim’s Progress*. The ancients may have carried this principle too far, but as a principle it receives countenance from our Lord Himself and His apostles. To us there is often a barren bush, where the Fathers saw a bush that burned with fire.]

1580 See [Rev. xv.](#), [Rev. xvi.](#)

**Chapter XXXI.—We should not hastily impute as crimes to the men of old time those actions which the Scripture has not condemned, but should rather seek in them types of things to come: an example of this in the incest committed by Lot.**

1. When recounting certain matters of this kind respecting them of old time, the presbyter [before mentioned] was in the habit of instructing us, and saying: “With respect to those misdeeds for which the Scriptures themselves blame the patriarchs and prophets, we ought not to inveigh against them, nor become like Ham, who ridiculed the shame of his father, and so fell under a curse; but we should [rather] give thanks to God in their behalf, inasmuch as their sins have been forgiven them through the advent of our Lord; for He said that they gave thanks [for us], and gloried in our salvation.”<sup>1581</sup> With respect to those actions, again, on which the Scriptures pass no censure, but which are simply set down [as having occurred], we ought not to become the accusers [of those who committed them], for we are not more exact than God, nor can we be superior to our Master; but we should search for a type [in them]. For not one of those things which have been set down in Scripture without being condemned is without significance.” An example is found in the case of Lot, who led forth his daughters from Sodom, and these then conceived by their own father; and who left behind him within the confines [of the land] his wife, [who remains] a pillar of salt unto this day. For Lot, not acting under the impulse of his own will, nor at the prompting of carnal concupiscence, nor having any knowledge or thought of anything of the kind, did [in fact] work out a type [of future events]. As says the Scripture: “And that night the elder went in and lay with her father; and Lot knew not when she lay down, nor when she arose.”<sup>1582</sup> And the same thing took place in the case of the younger: “And he knew not,” it is said, “when she slept with him, nor when she arose.”<sup>1583</sup> Since, therefore, Lot knew not [what he did], nor was a slave to lust [in his actions], the arrangement [designed by God] was carried out, by which the two daughters (that is, the two churches<sup>1584</sup>), who gave birth to children begotten of one and the same father, were pointed out, apart from [the influence of] the lust of the flesh. For there was no other person, [as they supposed], who could impart to them quickening seed, and the means of their giving birth to children, as it is written: “And the elder said unto the younger, And there is not a man on the earth to enter in unto us after the manner of all the earth: come, let us make our father drunk with wine, and let us lie with him, and raise up seed from our father.”<sup>1585</sup>

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1581 [Thus far we have a most edifying instruction. The reader will be less edified with what follows, but it is a very striking example of what is written: “to the pure all things are pure.” *Tit. i. 15.*]

1582 *Gen. xix. 33.*

1583 *Gen. xix. 35.*

1584 “*Id est duæ synagogæ*,” referring to the Jews and Gentiles. Some regard the words as a marginal gloss which has crept into the text.

1585 *Gen. xix. 31, 32.*



2. Thus, after their simplicity and innocence, did these daughters [of Lot] so speak, imagining that all mankind had perished, even as the Sodomites had done, and that the anger of God had come down upon the whole earth. Wherefore also they are to be held excusable, since they supposed that they only, along with their father, were left for the preservation of the human race; and for this reason it was that they deceived their father. Moreover, by the words they used this fact was pointed out—that there is no other one who can confer upon the elder and younger church the [power of] giving birth to children, besides our Father. Now the father of the human race is the Word of God, as Moses points out when he says, “Is not He thy father who hath obtained thee [by generation], and formed thee, and created thee?”<sup>1586</sup> At what time, then, did He pour out upon the human race the life-giving seed—that is, the Spirit of the remission of sins, through means of whom we are quickened? Was it not then, when He was eating with men, and drinking wine upon the earth? For it is said, “The Son of man came eating and drinking;”<sup>1587</sup> and when He had lain down, He fell asleep, and took repose. As He does Himself say in David, “I slept, and took repose.”<sup>1588</sup> And because He used thus to act while He dwelt and lived among us, He says again, “And my sleep became sweet unto me.”<sup>1589</sup> Now this whole matter was indicated through Lot, that the seed of the Father of all—that is, of the Spirit of God, by whom all things were made—was commingled and united with flesh—that is, with His own workmanship; by which commixture and unity the two synagogues—that is, the two churches—produced from their own father living sons to the living God.

3. And while these things were taking place, his wife remained in [the territory of] Sodom, no longer corruptible flesh, but a pillar of salt which endures for ever;<sup>1590</sup> and by those natural processes<sup>1591</sup> which appertain to the human race, indicating that the Church also, which is the salt of the earth,<sup>1592</sup> has been left behind within the confines of the earth, and subject to human sufferings; and while entire members are often taken away from it,

1586 Deut. xxxii. 6, LXX. [Let us reflect that this effort to spiritualize this awful passage in the history of Lot is an innocent but unsuccessful attempt to imitate St. Paul’s allegory, Gal. iv. 24.]

1587 Matt. xi. 19.

1588 Ps. iii. 6.

1589 Jer. xxxi. 26.

1590 Comp. Clem. Rom., chap. xi. Josephus (*Antiq.*, i. 11, 4) testifies that he had himself seen this pillar.

1591 The Latin is “per naturalia,” which words, according to Harvey, correspond to δι’ ἐμνηνοῦρροίας. There is a poem entitled *Sodoma* preserved among the works of Tertullian and Cyprian which contains the following lines:— “Dicitur et vivens, alio jam corpore, sexus Munificos solito dispungere sanguine menses.”

1592 Matt. v. 13.

the pillar of salt still endures,<sup>1593</sup> thus typifying the foundation of the faith which maketh strong, and sends forward, children to their Father.

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1593 The poem just referred to also says in reference to this pillar:— “Ipsaque imago sibi formam sine corpore servans Durat adhuc, et enim nuda statione sub æthram Nec pluviis dilapsa situ, nec diruta ventis. Quin etiam si quis mutilaverit advena formam, Protinus ex sese suggestu vulnera complet.” [That a pillar of salt is still to be seen in this vicinity, is now confirmed by many modern travellers (report of Lieut. Lynch, United States Navy), which accounts for the natural inference of Josephus and others on whom our author relied. The coincidence is noteworthy.]

**Chapter XXXII.—That one God was the author of both Testaments, is confirmed by the authority of a presbyter who had been taught by the apostles.**

1. After this fashion also did a presbyter,<sup>1594</sup> a disciple of the apostles, reason with respect to the two testaments, proving that both were truly from one and the same God. For [he maintained] that there was no other God besides Him who made and fashioned us, and that the discourse of those men has no foundation who affirm that this world of ours was made either by angels, or by any other power whatsoever, or by another God. For if a man be once moved away from the Creator of all things, and if he grant that this creation to which we belong was formed by any other or through any other [than the one God], he must of necessity fall into much inconsistency, and many contradictions of this sort; to which he will [be able to] furnish no explanations which can be regarded as either probable or true. And, for this reason, those who introduce other doctrines conceal from us the opinion which they themselves hold respecting God, because they are aware of the untenable<sup>1595</sup> and absurd nature of their doctrine, and are afraid lest, should they be vanquished, they should have some difficulty in making good their escape. But if any one believes in [only] one God, who also made all things by the Word, as Moses likewise says, “God said, Let there be light: and there was light;”<sup>1596</sup> and as we read in the Gospel, “All things were made by Him; and without Him was nothing made;”<sup>1597</sup> and the Apostle Paul [says] in like manner, “There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father, who is above all, and through all, and in us all”<sup>1598</sup>—this man will first of all “hold the head, from which the whole body is compacted and bound together, and, through means of every joint according to the measure of the ministration of each several part, maketh increase of the body to the edification of itself in love.”<sup>1599</sup> And then shall every word also seem consistent to him,<sup>1600</sup> if he for his part diligently read the Scriptures in company with those who are presbyters in the Church, among whom is the apostolic doctrine, as I have pointed out.

2. For all the apostles taught that there were indeed two testaments among the two peoples; but that it was one and the same God who appointed both for the advantage of those men (for whose<sup>1601</sup> sakes the testaments were given) who were to believe in God, I

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1594 Harvey remarks here, that this can hardly be the same presbyter mentioned before, “who was only a hearer of those who had heard the apostles. Irenæus may here mean the venerable martyr Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna.”

1595 “Quassum et futile.” The text varies much in the mss.

1596 [Gen. i. 3.](#)

1597 [John i. 3.](#)

1598 [Eph. iv. 5, 6.](#)

1599 [Eph. iv. 16; Col. ii. 19.](#)

1600 “Constabit ei.”

1601 We here read “secundum quos” with Massuet, instead of usual “secundum quod.”

have proved in the third book from the very teaching of the apostles; and that the first testament was not given without reason, or to no purpose, or in an accidental sort of manner; but that it subdued<sup>1602</sup> those to whom it was given to the service of God, for their benefit (for God needs no service from men), and exhibited a type of heavenly things, inasmuch as man was not yet able to see the things of God through means of immediate vision;<sup>1603</sup> and foreshadowed the images of those things which [now actually] exist in the Church, in order that our faith might be firmly established;<sup>1604</sup> and contained a prophecy of things to come, in order that man might learn that God has foreknowledge of all things.

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1602 “Concurvans,” corresponding to συγκάμπτων, which, says Harvey, “would be expressive of those who were brought under the law, as the neck of the steer is bent to the yoke.”

1603 The Latin is, “per proprium visum.”

1604 [If this and the former chapter seem to us superfluous, we must reflect that such testimony, from the beginning, has established the unity of Holy Scripture, and preserved to us—the Bible.]

**Chapter XXXIII.—Whosoever confesses that one God is the author of both Testaments, and diligently reads the Scriptures in company with the presbyters of the Church, is a true spiritual disciple; and he will rightly understand and interpret all that the prophets have declared respecting Christ and the liberty of the New Testament.**

1. A spiritual disciple of this sort truly receiving the Spirit of God, who was from the beginning, in all the dispensations of God, present with mankind, and announced things future, revealed things present, and narrated things past—[such a man] does indeed “judge all men, but is himself judged by no man.”<sup>1605</sup> For he judges the Gentiles, “who serve the creature more than the Creator,”<sup>1606</sup> and with a reprobate mind spend all their labour on vanity. And he also judges the Jews, who do not accept of the word of liberty, nor are willing to go forth free, although they have a Deliverer present [with them]; but they pretend, at a time unsuitable [for such conduct], to serve, [with observances] beyond [those required by] the law, God who stands in need of nothing, and do not recognise the advent of Christ, which He accomplished for the salvation of men, nor are willing to understand that all the prophets announced His two advents: the one, indeed, in which He became a man subject to stripes, and knowing what it is to bear infirmity,<sup>1607</sup> and sat upon the foal of an ass,<sup>1608</sup> and was a stone rejected by the builders,<sup>1609</sup> and was led as a sheep to the slaughter,<sup>1610</sup> and by the stretching forth of His hands destroyed Amalek;<sup>1611</sup> while He gathered from the ends of the earth into His Father’s fold the children who were scattered abroad,<sup>1612</sup> and remembered His own dead ones who had formerly fallen asleep,<sup>1613</sup> and came down to them that He might deliver them: but the second in which He will come on the clouds,<sup>1614</sup> bringing on the day which burns as a furnace,<sup>1615</sup> and smiting the earth with the word of His mouth,<sup>1616</sup> and slaying the impious with the breath of His lips, and having a fan in His

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1605 1 Cor. ii. 15. [The argument of this chapter hinges on [Ps. xxv. 14](#), and expounds a difficult text of St. Paul. A man who has the mind of God’s Spirit is the only judge of spiritual things. Worldly men are incompetent critics of Scripture and of Christian exposition.]

1606 [Rom. i. 21](#).

1607 [Isa. liii. 3](#).

1608 [Zech. ix. 9](#).

1609 [Ps. cxviii. 22](#).

1610 [Isa. liii. 7](#).

1611 [Ex. xvii. 11](#).

1612 [Isa. xi. 12](#).

1613 [Comp. book iii. 20, 4](#).

1614 [Dan. vii. 13](#).

1615 [Mal. iv. 1](#).

1616 [Isa. xi. 4](#).

hands, and cleansing His floor, and gathering the wheat indeed into His barn, but burning the chaff with unquenchable fire.<sup>1617</sup>

2. Moreover, he shall also examine the doctrine of Marcion, [inquiring] how he holds that there are two gods, separated from each other by an infinite distance.<sup>1618</sup> Or how can he be good who draws away men that do not belong to him from him who made them, and calls them into his own kingdom? And why is his goodness, which does not save all [thus], defective? Also, why does he, indeed, seem to be good as respects men, but most unjust with regard to him who made men, inasmuch as he deprives him of his possessions? Moreover, how could the Lord, with any justice, if He belonged to another father, have acknowledged the bread to be His body, while He took it from that creation to which we belong, and affirmed the mixed cup to be His blood?<sup>1619</sup> And why did He acknowledge Himself to be the Son of man, if He had not gone through that birth which belongs to a human being? How, too, could He forgive us those sins for which we are answerable to our Maker and God? And how, again, supposing that He was not flesh, but was a man merely in appearance, could He have been crucified, and could blood and water have issued from His pierced side?<sup>1620</sup> What body, moreover, was it that those who buried Him consigned to the tomb? And what was that which rose again from the dead?

3. [This spiritual man] shall also judge all the followers of Valentinus, because they do indeed confess with the tongue one God the Father, and that all things derive their existence from Him, but do at the same time maintain that He who formed all things is the fruit of an apostasy or defect. [He shall judge them, too, because] they do in like manner confess with the tongue one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, but assign in their [system of] doctrine a production of his own to the Only-begotten, one of his own also to the Word, another to Christ, and yet another to the Saviour; so that, according to them, all these beings are indeed said [in Scripture to be], as it were, one; [while they maintain], notwithstanding, that each one of them should be understood [to exist] separately [from the rest], and to have [had] his own special origin, according to his peculiar conjunction. [It appears], then<sup>1621</sup> that their tongues alone, forsooth, have conceded the unity [of God], while their [real] opinion and their understanding (by their habit of investigating profundities) have fallen away from

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1617 [Matt. iii. 12](#); [Luke iii. 17](#).

1618 Harvey points this sentence interrogatively.

1619 “*Temperamentum calicis*,” on which Harvey remarks that “the mixture of water with the wine in the holy Eucharist was the universal practice of antiquity ... the wine signifying the mystical Head of the Church, the water the body.” [Whatever the significance, it harmonizes with the Paschal chalice, and with [1 John v. 6](#), and St. John’s gospel [John xix. 34, 35](#).]

1620 [John xix. 34](#).

1621 This sentence is very obscure in the Latin text.

[this doctrine of] unity, and taken up the notion of manifold deities,—[this, I say, must appear] when they shall be examined by Christ as to the points [of doctrine] which they have invented. Him, too, they affirm to have been born at a later period than the Pleroma of the Æons, and that His production took place after [the occurrence of] a degeneracy or apostasy; and they maintain that, on account of the passion which was experienced by Sophia, they themselves were brought to the birth. But their own special prophet Homer, listening to whom they have invented such doctrines, shall himself reprove them, when he expresses himself as follows:—

“Hateful to me that man as Hades’ gates,  
Who one thing thinks, while he another states.”<sup>1622</sup>

[This spiritual man] shall also judge the vain speeches of the perverse Gnostics, by showing that they are the disciples of Simon Magus.

4. He will judge also the Ebionites; [for] how can they be saved unless it was God who wrought out their salvation upon earth? Or how shall man pass into God, unless God has [first] passed into man? And how shall he (man) escape from the generation subject to death, if not by means<sup>1623</sup> of a new generation, given in a wonderful and unexpected manner (but as a sign of salvation) by God—[I mean] that regeneration which flows from the virgin through faith?<sup>1624</sup> Or how shall they receive adoption from God if they remain in this [kind of] generation, which is naturally possessed by man in this world? And how could He (Christ) have been greater than Solomon,<sup>1625</sup> or greater than Jonah, or have been the Lord of David,<sup>1626</sup> who was of the same substance as they were? How, too, could He have subdued<sup>1627</sup> him who was stronger than men,<sup>1628</sup> who had not only overcome man, but also retained him under his power, and conquered him who had conquered, while he set free mankind who had been conquered, unless He had been greater than man who had thus been vanquished? But who else is superior to, and more eminent than, that man who was formed after the likeness of God, except the Son of God, after whose image man was created? And for this reason He did in these last days<sup>1629</sup> exhibit the similitude; [for] the Son of God was

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1622 *Iliad*, ix. 312, 313.

1623 The text is obscure, and the construction doubtful.

1624 The Latin here is, “quæ est ex virgine per fidem regenerationem.” According to Massuet, “virgine” here refers not to Mary, but to the Church. Grabe suspects that some words have been lost.

1625 [Matt. xii. 41, 42.](#)

1626 [Matt. xxii. 43.](#)

1627 [Matt. xxii. 29;](#) [Luke xi. 21, 22.](#)

1628 Literally, “who was strong against men.”

1629 In fine; lit. “in the end.”

made man, assuming the ancient production [of His hands] into His own nature,<sup>1630</sup> as I have shown in the immediately preceding book.

5. He shall also judge those who describe Christ as [having become man] only in [human] opinion. For how can they imagine that they do themselves carry on a real discussion, when their Master was a mere imaginary being? Or how can they receive anything stedfast from Him, if He was a merely imagined being, and not a verity? And how can these men really be partaken of salvation, if He in whom they profess to believe, manifested Himself as a merely imaginary being? Everything, therefore, connected with these men is unreal, and nothing [possessed of the character of] truth; and, in these circumstances, it may be made a question whether (since, perchance, they themselves in like manner are not men, but mere dumb animals) they do not present,<sup>1631</sup> in most cases, simply a shadow of humanity.

6. He shall also judge false prophets, who, without having received the gift of prophecy from God, and not possessed of the fear of God, but either for the sake of vainglory, or with a view to some personal advantage, or acting in some other way under the influence of a wicked spirit, pretend to utter prophecies, while all the time they lie against God.

7. He shall also judge those who give rise to schisms, who are destitute of the love of God, and who look to their own special advantage rather than to the unity of the Church; and who for trifling reasons, or any kind of reason which occurs to them, cut in pieces and divide the great and glorious body of Christ, and so far as in them lies, [positively] destroy it,—men who prate of peace while they give rise to war, and do in truth strain out a gnat, but swallow a camel.<sup>1632</sup> For no reformation of so great importance can be effected by them, as will compensate for the mischief arising from their schism. He shall also judge all those who are beyond the pale of the truth, that is, who are outside the Church; but he himself shall be judged by no one. For to him all things are consistent: he has a full faith in one God Almighty, of whom are all things; and in the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom are all things, and in the dispensations connected with Him, by means of which the Son of God became man; and a firm belief in the Spirit of God, who furnishes us with a knowledge of the truth, and has set forth the dispensations of the Father and the Son, in virtue of which He dwells with every generation of men,<sup>1633</sup> according to the will of the Father.

1630 In semetipsum: lit. “unto Himself.”

1631 We here follow the reading “proferant:” the passage is difficult and obscure, but the meaning is as above.

1632 [Matt. xxiii. 24.](#)

1633 The Greek text here is σκηνοβατοῦν (lit. “to tabernacle:” comp. ἐσκήνωσεν, [John i. 14](#)) καθ’ ἐκάστην γενεάν ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις; the Latin is, “Secundum quas (dispositiones) aderat generi humano.” We have endeavoured to express the meaning of both.



8. True knowledge<sup>1634</sup> is [that which consists in] the doctrine of the apostles, and the ancient constitution<sup>1635</sup> of the Church throughout all the world, and the distinctive manifestation of the body<sup>1636</sup> of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us, being guarded and preserved<sup>1637</sup> without any forging of Scriptures, by a very complete system<sup>1638</sup> of doctrine, and neither receiving addition nor [suffering] curtailment [in the truths which she believes]; and [it consists in] reading [the word of God] without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy; and [above all, it consists in] the pre-eminent gift of love,<sup>1639</sup> which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and which excels all the other gifts [of God].

9. Wherefore the Church does in every place, because of that love which she cherishes towards God, send forward, throughout all time, a multitude of martyrs to the Father; while all others<sup>1640</sup> not only have nothing of this kind to point to among themselves, but even maintain that such witness-bearing is not at all necessary, for that their system of doctrines is the true witness [for Christ], with the exception, perhaps, that one or two among them, during the whole time which has elapsed since the Lord appeared on earth, have occasionally, along with our martyrs, borne the reproach of the name (as if he too [the heretic] had obtained mercy), and have been led forth with them [to death], being, as it were, a sort of retinue granted unto them. For the Church alone sustains with purity the reproach of those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, and endure all sorts of punishments, and are put to death because of the love which they bear to God, and their confession of His Son; often weakened indeed, yet immediately increasing her members, and becoming whole again, after the same manner as her type,<sup>1641</sup> Lot's wife, who became a pillar of salt. Thus,

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1634 The following section is an important one, but very difficult to translate with undoubted accuracy. The editors differ considerably both as to the construction and the interpretation. We have done our best to represent the meaning in English, but may not have been altogether successful.

1635 The Greek is *σύστημα*: the Latin text has "status."

1636 The Latin is, "character corporis."

1637 The text here is, "custodita sine fictione scripturarum;" some prefer joining "scripturarum" to the following words.

1638 We follow Harvey's text, "tractatione;" others read "tractatio." According to Harvey, the creed of the Church is denoted by "tractatione;" but Massuet renders the clause thus: ["True knowledge consists in] a very complete *tractatio* of the Scriptures, which has come down to us by being preserved ('custoditione' being read instead of 'custodita') without falsification."

1639 Comp. [2 Cor. viii. 1](#); [1 Cor. xiii.](#)

1640 i.e., the heretics.

1641 Comp. above, [xxxi. 2](#).

too, [she passes through an experience] similar to that of the ancient prophets, as the Lord declares, “For so persecuted they the prophets who were before you;”<sup>1642</sup> inasmuch as she does indeed, in a new fashion, suffer persecution from those who do not receive the word of God, while the self-same spirit rests upon her<sup>1643</sup> [as upon these ancient prophets].

10. And indeed the prophets, along with other things which they predicted, also foretold this, that all those on whom the Spirit of God should rest, and who would obey the word of the Father, and serve Him according to their ability, should suffer persecution, and be stoned and slain. For the prophets prefigured in themselves all these things, because of their love to God, and on account of His word. For since they themselves were members of Christ, each one of them in his place as a member did, in accordance with this, set forth the prophecy [assigned him]; all of them, although many, prefiguring only one, and proclaiming the things which pertain to one. For just as the working of the whole body is exhibited through means of our members, while the figure of a complete man is not displayed by one member, but through means of all taken together, so also did all the prophets prefigure the one [Christ]; while every one of them, in his special place as a member, did, in accordance with this, fill up the [established] dispensation, and shadowed forth beforehand that particular working of Christ which was connected with that member.

11. For some of them, beholding Him in glory, saw His glorious life (*conversationem*) at the Father’s right hand;<sup>1644</sup> others beheld Him coming on the clouds as the Son of man;<sup>1645</sup> and those who declared regarding Him, “They shall look on Him whom they have pierced,”<sup>1646</sup> indicated His [second] advent, concerning which He Himself says, “Thinkest thou that when the Son of man cometh, He shall find faith on the earth?”<sup>1647</sup> Paul also refers to this event when he says, “If, however, it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you that are troubled rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, with His mighty angels, and in a flame of fire.”<sup>1648</sup> Others again, speaking of Him as a judge, and [referring], as if it were a burning furnace, [to] the day of the Lord, who “gathers the wheat into His barn, but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire,”<sup>1649</sup> were accustomed to threaten those who were unbelieving, concerning whom also the Lord Himself declares, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,

1642 [Matt. v. 12.](#)

1643 [Comp. 1 Pet. iv. 14.](#)

1644 [Isa. vi. 1; Ps. cx. 1.](#)

1645 [Dan. vii. 13.](#)

1646 [Zech. xii. 10.](#)

1647 [Luke xviii. 8.](#) There is nothing to correspond with “putas” in the received text.

1648 [2 Thess. i. 6–8.](#)

1649 [Matt. iii. 12.](#)

which my Father has prepared for the devil and his angels.”<sup>1650</sup> And the apostle in like manner says [of them], “Who shall be punished with everlasting death from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in those who believe in Him.”<sup>1651</sup> There are also some [of them] who declare, “Thou art fairer than the children of men;”<sup>1652</sup> and, “God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows;”<sup>1653</sup> and, “Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with Thy beauty and Thy fairness, and go forward and proceed prosperously; and rule Thou because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness.”<sup>1654</sup> And whatever other things of a like nature are spoken regarding Him, these indicated that beauty and splendour which exist in His kingdom, along with the transcendent and pre-eminent exaltation [belonging] to all who are under His sway, that those who hear might desire to be found there, doing such things as are pleasing to God. Again, there are those who say, “He is a man, and who shall know him?”<sup>1655</sup> and, “I came unto the prophetess, and she bare a son, and His name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God;”<sup>1656</sup> and those [of them] who proclaimed Him as Immanuel, [born] of the Virgin, exhibited the union of the Word of God with His own workmanship, [declaring] that the Word should become flesh, and the Son of God the Son of man (the pure One opening purely that pure womb which regenerates men unto God, and which He Himself made pure); and having become this which we also are, He [nevertheless] is the Mighty God, and possesses a generation which cannot be declared. And there are also some of them who say, “The Lord hath spoken in Zion, and uttered His voice from Jerusalem;”<sup>1657</sup> and, “In Judah is God known;”<sup>1658</sup> — these indicated His advent which took place in Judea. Those, again, who declare that “God comes from the south, and from a mountain thick with foliage,”<sup>1659</sup> announced His advent at Bethlehem, as I have pointed out in the preceding book.<sup>1660</sup> From that place, also, He who rules, and who feeds the people of His Father, has come. Those, again, who declare that at His coming

1650 Matt. xxv. 41.

1651 2 Thess. i. 9, 10.

1652 Ps. xlv. 2.

1653 Ps. xlv. 7.

1654 Ps. xlv. 3, 4.

1655 Jer. xvii. 9 (LXX.). Harvey here remarks: “The LXX. read אֱנוֹשׁ instead of אֱנוֹשׁ. Thus, from a text that teaches us that *the heart is deceitful above all things*, the Fathers extract a proof of the manhood of Christ.”

1656 Isa. viii. 3, Isa. ix. 6, Isa. vii. 14. [A confusion of texts.]

1657 Joel iii. 16.

1658 Ps. lxxvi. 1.

1659 Hab. iii. 3.

1660 See III. xx. 4.

“the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall [speak] plainly, and the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear,”<sup>1661</sup> and that “the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, shall be strengthened,”<sup>1662</sup> and that “the dead which are in the grave shall arise,”<sup>1663</sup> and that He Himself “shall take [upon Him] our weaknesses, and bear our sorrows,”<sup>1664</sup>— [all these] proclaimed those works of healing which were accomplished by Him.

12. Some of them, moreover—[when they predicted that] as a weak and inglorious man, and as one who knew what it was to bear infirmity,<sup>1665</sup> and sitting upon the foal of an ass,<sup>1666</sup> He should come to Jerusalem; and that He should give His back to stripes,<sup>1667</sup> and His cheeks to palms [which struck Him]; and that He should be led as a sheep to the slaughter;<sup>1668</sup> and that He should have vinegar and gall given Him to drink;<sup>1669</sup> and that He should be forsaken by His friends and those nearest to Him;<sup>1670</sup> and that He should stretch forth His hands the whole day long;<sup>1671</sup> and that He should be mocked and maligned by those who looked upon Him;<sup>1672</sup> and that His garments should be parted, and lots cast upon His raiment;<sup>1673</sup> and that He should be brought down to the dust of death<sup>1674</sup> with all [the other] things of a like nature—prophesied His coming in the character of a man as He entered Jerusalem, in which by His passion and crucifixion He endured all the things which have been mentioned. Others, again, when they said, “The holy Lord remembered His own dead ones who slept in the dust, and came down to them to raise them up, that He might save them,”<sup>1675</sup> furnished us with the reason on account of which He suffered all these things. Those, moreover, who said, “In that day, saith the Lord, the sun shall go down at noon, and there shall be darkness over the earth in the clear day; and I will turn your feast

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1661 Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.

1662 Isa. xxxv. 3.

1663 Isa. xxvi. 19.

1664 Isa. liii. 4.

1665 Isa. liii. 3.

1666 Zech. ix. 9.

1667 Isa. l. 6.

1668 Isa. liii. 7.

1669 Ps. lxix. 21.

1670 Ps. xxxviii. 11.

1671 Isa. lxx. 2.

1672 Ps. xxii. 7.

1673 Ps. xxii. 18.

1674 Ps. xxii. 15.

1675 Comp. book iii. cap. xx. 4 and book iv. cap. xxii. 1.

days into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation,”<sup>1676</sup> plainly announced that obscuration of the sun which at the time of His crucifixion took place from the sixth hour onwards, and that after this event, those days which were their festivals according to the law, and their songs, should be changed into grief and lamentation when they were handed over to the Gentiles. Jeremiah, too, makes this point still clearer, when he thus speaks concerning Jerusalem: “She that hath born [seven] languisheth; her soul hath become weary; her sun hath gone down while it was yet noon; she hath been confounded, and suffered reproach: the remainder of them will I give to the sword in the sight of their enemies.”<sup>1677</sup>

13. Those of them, again, who spoke of His having slumbered and taken sleep, and of His having risen again because the Lord sustained Him,<sup>1678</sup> and who enjoined the principalities of heaven to set open the everlasting doors, that the King of glory might go in,<sup>1679</sup> proclaimed beforehand His resurrection from the dead through the Father’s power, and His reception into heaven. And when they expressed themselves thus, “His going forth is from the height of heaven, and His returning even to the highest heaven; and there is no one who can hide himself from His heat,”<sup>1680</sup> they announced that very truth of His being taken up again to the place from which He came down, and that there is no one who can escape His righteous judgment. And those who said, “The Lord hath reigned; let the people be enraged: [even] He who sitteth upon the cherubim; let the earth be moved,”<sup>1681</sup> were thus predicting partly that wrath from all nations which after His ascension came upon those who believed in Him, with the movement of the whole earth against the Church; and partly the fact that, when He comes from heaven with His mighty angels, the whole earth shall be shaken, as He Himself declares, “There shall be a great earthquake, such as has not been from the beginning.”<sup>1682</sup> And again, when one says, “Whosoever is judged, let him stand opposite; and whosoever is justified, let him draw near to the servant<sup>1683</sup> of God;”<sup>1684</sup> and, “Woe unto you, for ye shall wax old as doth a garment, and the moth shall eat you up;” and, “All flesh shall be humbled, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in the highest,”<sup>1685</sup>—it is thus indicated that, after His passion and ascension, God shall cast down under His feet

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1676 [Amos viii. 9, 10.](#)

1677 [Jer. xv. 9.](#)

1678 [Ps. iii. 5.](#)

1679 [Ps. xxiv. 7.](#)

1680 [Ps. xix. 6.](#)

1681 [Ps. xcix. 1.](#)

1682 [Matt. xxiv. 21.](#)

1683 Or “son.”

1684 [Isa. l. 8, 9](#) (loosely quoted).

1685 [Isa. ii. 17.](#)

all who were opposed to Him, and He shall be exalted above all, and there shall be no one who can be justified or compared to Him.

14. And those of them who declare that God would make a new covenant<sup>1686</sup> with men, not such as that which He made with the fathers at Mount Horeb, and would give to men a new heart and a new spirit;<sup>1687</sup> and again, “And remember ye not the things of old: behold, I make new things which shall now arise, and ye shall know it; and I will make a way in the desert, and rivers in a dry land, to give drink to my chosen people, my people whom I have acquired, that they may show forth my praise,”<sup>1688</sup>—plainly announced that liberty which distinguishes the new covenant, and the new wine which is put into new bottles,<sup>1689</sup> [that is], the faith which is in Christ, by which He has proclaimed the way of righteousness sprung up in the desert, and the streams of the Holy Spirit in a dry land, to give water to the elect people of God, whom He has acquired, that they might show forth His praise, but not that they might blaspheme Him who made these things, that is, God.

15. And all those other points which I have shown the prophets to have uttered by means of so long a series of Scriptures, he who is truly spiritual will interpret by pointing out, in regard to every one of the things which have been spoken, to what special point in the dispensation of the Lord is referred, and [by thus exhibiting] the entire system of the work of the Son of God, knowing always the same God, and always acknowledging the same Word of God, although He has [but] now been manifested to us; acknowledging also at all times the same Spirit of God, although He has been poured out upon us after a new fashion in these last times, [knowing that He descends] even from the creation of the world to its end upon the human race simply as such, from whom those who believe God and follow His word receive that salvation which flows from Him. Those, on the other hand, who depart from Him, and despise His precepts, and by their deeds bring dishonour on Him who made them, and by their opinions blaspheme Him who nourishes them, heap up against themselves most righteous judgment.<sup>1690</sup> He therefore (i.e., the spiritual man) sifts and tries them all, but he himself is tried by no man:<sup>1691</sup> he neither blasphemes his Father, nor sets aside His dispensations, nor inveighs against the fathers, nor dishonours the prophets, by maintaining that they were [sent] from another God [than he worships], or again, that their prophecies were derived from different sources.<sup>1692</sup>

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1686 Jer. xxxi. 31, 32.

1687 Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

1688 Isa. xliii. 19–21.

1689 Matt. ix. 17.

1690 Rom. ii. 5.

1691 1 Cor. ii. 15.

1692 “Ex alia et alia substantia fuisse prophetias.”

**Chapter XXXIV.—Proof against the Marcionites, that the prophets referred in all their predictions to our Christ.**

1. Now I shall simply say, in opposition to all the heretics, and principally against the followers of Marcion, and against those who are like to these, in maintaining that the prophets were from another God [than He who is announced in the Gospel], read with earnest care that Gospel which has been conveyed to us by the apostles, and read with earnest care the prophets, and you will find that the whole conduct, and all the doctrine, and all the sufferings of our Lord, were predicted through them. But if a thought of this kind should then suggest itself to you, to say, What then did the Lord bring to us by His advent?—know ye that He brought all [possible] novelty, by bringing Himself who had been announced. For this very thing was proclaimed beforehand, that a novelty should come to renew and quicken mankind. For the advent of the King is previously announced by those servants who are sent [before Him], in order to the preparation and equipment of those men who are to entertain their Lord. But when the King has actually come, and those who are His subjects have been filled with that joy which was proclaimed beforehand, and have attained to that liberty which He bestows, and share in the sight of Him, and have listened to His words, and have enjoyed the gifts which He confers, the question will not then be asked by any that are possessed of sense what new thing the King has brought beyond [that proclaimed by] those who announced His coming. For He has brought Himself, and has bestowed on men those good things which were announced beforehand, which things the angels desired to look into.<sup>1693</sup>

2. But the servants would then have been proved false, and not sent by the Lord, if Christ on His advent, by being found exactly such as He was previously announced, had not fulfilled their words. Wherefore He said, “Think not that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Until heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law and the prophets till all come to pass.”<sup>1694</sup> For by His advent He Himself fulfilled all things, and does still fulfil in the Church the new covenant foretold by the law, onwards to the consummation [of all things]. To this effect also Paul, His apostle, says in the Epistle to the Romans, “But now,<sup>1695</sup> without the law, has the righteousness of God been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; for the just shall live by faith.”<sup>1696</sup> But this fact, that the just shall live by faith, had been previously announced<sup>1697</sup> by the prophets.

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1693 [1 Pet. i. 12.](#)

1694 [Rom. iii. 21.](#)

1695 [Matt. v. 17, 18.](#)

1696 [Rom. i. 17.](#)

1697 [Hab. ii. 4.](#)

3. But whence could the prophets have had power to predict the advent of the King, and to preach beforehand that liberty which was bestowed by Him, and previously to announce all things which were done by Christ, His words, His works, and His sufferings, and to predict the new covenant, if they had received prophetic inspiration from another God [than He who is revealed in the Gospel], they being ignorant, as ye allege, of the ineffable Father, of His kingdom, and His dispensations, which the Son of God fulfilled when He came upon earth in these last times? Neither are ye in a position to say that these things came to pass by a certain kind of chance, as if they were spoken by the prophets in regard to some other person, while like events happened to the Lord. For all the prophets prophesied these same things, but they never came to pass in the case of any one of the ancients. For if these things had happened to any man among them of old time, those [prophets] who lived subsequently would certainly not have prophesied that these events should come to pass in the last times. Moreover, there is in fact none among the fathers, nor the prophets, nor the ancient kings, in whose case any one of these things properly and specifically took place. For all indeed prophesied as to the sufferings of Christ, but they themselves were far from enduring sufferings similar to what was predicted. And the points connected with the passion of the Lord, which were foretold, were realized in no other case. For neither did it happen at the death of any man among the ancients that the sun set at mid-day, nor was the veil of the temple rent, nor did the earth quake, nor were the rocks rent, nor did the dead rise up, nor was any one of these men [of old] raised up on the third day, nor received into heaven, nor at his assumption were the heavens opened, nor did the nations believe in the name of any other; nor did any from among them, having been dead and rising again, lay open the new covenant of liberty. Therefore the prophets spake not of any one else but of the Lord, in whom all these aforesaid tokens concurred.

4. If any one, however, advocating the cause of the Jews, do maintain that this new covenant consisted in the rearing of that temple which was built under Zerubbabel after the emigration to Babylon, and in the departure of the people from thence after the lapse of seventy years, let him know that the temple constructed of stones was indeed then rebuilt (for as yet that law was observed which had been made upon tables of stone), yet no new covenant was given, but they used the Mosaic law until the coming of the Lord; but from the Lord's advent, the new covenant which brings back peace, and the law which gives life, has gone forth over the whole earth, as the prophets said: "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and He shall rebuke many people; and they shall break down their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and they shall no longer learn to fight."<sup>1698</sup> If therefore another law and word, going forth from Jerusalem, brought in such a [reign of] peace among the Gentiles which received it (the

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<sup>1698</sup> Isa. ii. 3, 4; Mic. iv. 2, 3.



word), and convinced, through them, many a nation of its folly, then [only] it appears that the prophets spake of some other person. But if the law of liberty, that is, the word of God, preached by the apostles (who went forth from Jerusalem) throughout all the earth, caused such a change in the state of things, that these [nations] did form the swords and war-lances into ploughshares, and changed them into pruning-hooks for reaping the corn, [that is], into instruments used for peaceful purposes, and that they are now unaccustomed to fighting, but when smitten, offer also the other cheek,<sup>1699</sup> then the prophets have not spoken these things of any other person, but of Him who effected them. This person is our Lord, and in Him is that declaration borne out; since it is He Himself who has made the plough, and introduced the pruning-hook, that is, the first semination of man, which was the creation exhibited in Adam,<sup>1700</sup> and the gathering in of the produce in the last times by the Word; and, for this reason, since He joined the beginning to the end, and is the Lord of both, He has finally displayed the plough, in that the wood has been joined on to the iron, and has thus cleansed His land; because the Word, having been firmly united to flesh, and in its mechanism fixed with pins,<sup>1701</sup> has reclaimed the savage earth. In the beginning, He figured forth the pruning-hook by means of Abel, pointing out that there should be a gathering in of a righteous race of men. He says, “For behold how the just man perishes, and no man considers it; and righteous men are taken away, and no man layeth it to heart.”<sup>1702</sup> These things were acted beforehand in Abel, were also previously declared by the prophets, but were accomplished in the Lord’s person; and the same [is still true] with regard to us, the body following the example of the Head.

5. Such are the arguments proper<sup>1703</sup> [to be used] in opposition to those who maintain that the prophets [were inspired] by a different God, and that our Lord [came] from another Father, if perchance [these heretics] may at length desist from such extreme folly. This is my earnest object in adducing these Scriptural proofs, that confuting them, as far as in me lies, by these very passages, I may restrain them from such great blasphemy, and from insanely fabricating a multitude of gods.

1699 [Matt. v. 39.](#)

1700 Book i. p. 327, this volume.

1701 This is following Harvey’s conjectural emendation of the text, viz., “talis” for “talīs.” He considers the *pins* here as symbolical of the *nails* by which our Lord was fastened to the cross. The whole passage is almost hopelessly obscure, though the general meaning may be guessed.

1702 [Isa. lvii. 1.](#)

1703 [If it be remembered that we know Irenæus here, only through a most obscure Latin rendering, we shall be slow to censure this conclusion.]

**Chapter XXXV.—A refutation of those who allege that the prophets uttered some predictions under the inspiration of the highest, others from the Demiurge. Disagreements of the Valentinians among themselves with regard to these same predictions.**

1. Then again, in opposition to the Valentinians, and the other Gnostics, falsely so called, who maintain that some parts of Scripture were spoken at one time from the Pleroma (*a summitate*) through means of the seed [derived] from that place, but at another time from the intermediate abode through means of the audacious mother Prunica, but that many are due to the Creator of the world, from whom also the prophets had their mission, we say that it is altogether irrational to bring down the Father of the universe to such straits, as that He should not be possessed of His own proper instruments, by which the things in the Pleroma might be perfectly proclaimed. For of whom was He afraid, so that He should not reveal His will after His own way and independently, freely, and without being involved with that spirit which came into being in a state of degeneracy and ignorance? Was it that He feared that very many would be saved, when more should have listened to the unadulterated truth? Or, on the other hand, was He incapable of preparing for Himself those who should announce the Saviour's advent?

2. But if, when the Saviour came to this earth, He sent His apostles into the world to proclaim with accuracy His advent, and to teach the Father's will, having nothing in common with the doctrine of the Gentiles or of the Jews, much more, while yet existing in the Pleroma, would He have appointed His own heralds to proclaim His future advent into this world, and having nothing in common with those prophecies originating from the Demiurge. But if, when within the Pleroma, He availed Himself of those prophets who were under the law, and declared His own matters through their instrumentality; much more would He, upon His arrival hither, have made use of these same teachers, and have preached the Gospel to us by their means. Therefore let them not any longer assert that Peter and Paul and the other apostles proclaimed the truth, but that it was the scribes and Pharisees, and the others, through whom the law was propounded. But if, at His advent, He sent forth His own apostles in the spirit of truth, and not in that of error, He did the very same also in the case of the prophets; for the Word of God was always the self-same: and if the Spirit from the Pleroma was, according to these men's system, the Spirit of light, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of perfection, and the Spirit of knowledge, while that from the Demiurge was the spirit of ignorance, degeneracy, and error, and the offspring of obscurity; how can it be, that in one and the same being there exists perfection and defect, knowledge and ignorance, error and truth, light and darkness? But if it was impossible that such should happen in the case of the prophets, for they preached the word of the Lord from one God, and proclaimed the advent of His Son, much more would the Lord Himself never have uttered words, on one occasion from above, but on another from degeneracy below, thus becoming the teacher at

once of knowledge and of ignorance; nor would He have ever glorified as Father at one time the Founder of the world, and at another Him who is above this one, as He does Himself declare: “No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old one, nor do they put new wine into old bottles.”<sup>1704</sup> Let these men, therefore, either have nothing whatever to do with the prophets, as with those that are ancients, and allege no longer that these men, being sent beforehand by the Demiurge, spake certain things under that new influence which pertains to the Pleroma; or, on the other hand, let them be convinced by our Lord, when He declares that new wine cannot be put into old bottles.

3. But from what source could the offspring of their mother derive his knowledge of the mysteries within the Pleroma, and power to discourse regarding them? Suppose that the mother, while beyond the Pleroma, did bring forth this very offspring; but what is beyond the Pleroma they represent as being beyond the pale of knowledge, that is, ignorance. How, then, could that seed, which was conceived in ignorance, possess the power of declaring knowledge? Or how did the mother herself, a shapeless and undefined being, one cast out of doors as an abortion, obtain knowledge of the mysteries within the Pleroma, she who was organized outside it and given a form there, and prohibited by Horos from entering within, and who remains outside the Pleroma till the consummation [of all things], that is, beyond the pale of knowledge? Then, again, when they say that the Lord’s passion is a type of the extension of the Christ above, which he effected through Horos, and so imparted a form to their mother, they are refuted in the other particulars [of the Lord’s passion], for they have no semblance of a type to show with regard to them. For when did the Christ above have vinegar and gall given him to drink? Or when was his raiment parted? Or when was he pierced, and blood and water came forth? Or when did he sweat great drops of blood? And [the same may be demanded] as to the other particulars which happened to the Lord, of which the prophets have spoken. From whence, then, did the mother or her offspring divine the things which had not yet taken place, but which should occur afterwards?

4. They affirm that certain things still, besides these, were spoken from the Pleroma, but are confuted by those which are referred to in the Scriptures as bearing on the advent of Christ. But what these are [that are spoken from the Pleroma] they are not agreed, but give different answers regarding them. For if any one, wishing to test them, do question one by one with regard to any passage those who are their leading men, he shall find one of them referring the passage in question to the Propator—that is, to Bythus; another attributing it to Arche—that is, to the Only-begotten; another to the Father of all—that is, to the Word; while another, again, will say that it was spoken of that one Æon who was [formed from the joint contributions] of the Æons in the Pleroma;<sup>1705</sup> others [will regard the passage] as re-

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1704 [Luke v. 36, 37.](#)

1705 Book i. p. 334, this volume.

ferring to Christ, while another [will refer it] to the Saviour. One, again, more skilled than these,<sup>1706</sup> after a long protracted silence, declares that it was spoken of Horos; another that it signifies the Sophia which is within the Pleroma; another that it announces the mother outside the Pleroma; while another will mention the God who made the world (the Demiurge). Such are the variations existing among them with regard to one [passage], holding discordant opinions as to the same Scriptures; and when the same identical passage is read out, they all begin to purse up their eyebrows, and to shake their heads, and they say that they might indeed utter a discourse transcendently lofty, but that all cannot comprehend the greatness of that thought which is implied in it; and that, therefore, among the wise the chief thing is silence. For that Sige (*silence*) which is above must be typified by that silence which they preserve. Thus do they, as many as they are, all depart [from each other], holding so many opinions as to one thing, and bearing about their clever notions in secret within themselves. When, therefore, they shall have agreed among themselves as to the things predicted in the Scriptures, then also shall they be confuted by us. For, though holding wrong opinions, they do in the meanwhile, however, convict themselves, since they are not of one mind with regard to the same words. But as we follow for our teacher the one and only true God, and possess His words as the rule of truth, we do all speak alike with regard to the same things, knowing but one God, the Creator of this universe, who sent the prophets, who led forth the people from the land of Egypt, who in these last times manifested His own Son, that He might put the unbelievers to confusion, and search out the fruit of righteousness.

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1706 Illorum; following the Greek form of the comparative degree.

## Chapter XXXVI.—The prophets were sent from one and the same Father from whom the Son was sent.

1. Which [God] the Lord does not reject, nor does He say that the prophets [spake] from another god than His Father; nor from any other essence, but from one and the same Father; nor that any other being made the things in the world, except His own Father, when He speaks as follows in His teaching: “There was a certain householder, and he planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged in it a winepress, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants unto the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants: they cut one to pieces, stoned another, and killed another. Again he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his only son, saying, Perchance they will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and we shall possess his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When, therefore, the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do unto these husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy these wicked men, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their season.”<sup>1707</sup> Again does the Lord say: “Have ye never read, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore I say unto you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”<sup>1708</sup> By these words He clearly points out to His disciples one and the same Householder—that is, one God the Father, who made all things by Himself; while [He shows] that there are various husbandmen, some obstinate, and proud, and worthless, and slayers of the Lord, but others who render Him, with all obedience, the fruits in their seasons; and that it is the same Householder who sends at one time His servants, at another His Son. From that Father, therefore, from whom the Son was sent to those husbandmen who slew Him, from Him also were the servants [sent]. But the Son, as coming from the Father with supreme authority (*principali auctoritate*), used to express Himself thus: “But I say unto you.”<sup>1709</sup> The servants, again, [who came] as from their Lord, spake after the manner of servants, [delivering a message]; and they therefore used to say, “Thus saith the Lord.”

2. Whom these men did therefore preach to the unbelievers as Lord, Him did Christ teach to those who obey Him; and the God who had called those of the former dispensation, is the same as He who has received those of the latter. In other words, He who at first used

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1707 [Matt. xxi. 33–41.](#)

1708 [Matt. xxi. 42–44.](#)

1709 [Matt. v. 22.](#)

that law which entails bondage, is also He who did in after times [call His people] by means of adoption. For God planted the vineyard of the human race when at the first He formed Adam and chose the fathers; then He let it out to husbandmen when He established the Mosaic dispensation: He hedged it round about, that is, He gave particular instructions with regard to their worship: He built a tower, [that is], He chose Jerusalem: He digged a winepress, that is, He prepared a receptacle of the prophetic Spirit. And thus did He send prophets prior to the transmigration to Babylon, and after that event others again in greater number than the former, to seek the fruits, saying thus to them (the Jews): “Thus saith the Lord, Cleanse your ways and your doings, execute just judgment, and look each one with pity and compassion on his brother: oppress not the widow nor the orphan, the proselyte nor the poor, and let none of you treasure up evil against his brother in your hearts, and love not false swearing. Wash you, make you clean, put away evil from your hearts, learn to do well, seek judgment, protect the oppressed, judge the fatherless (*pupillo*), plead for the widow; and come, let us reason together, saith the Lord.”<sup>1710</sup> And again: “Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile; depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.”<sup>1711</sup> In preaching these things, the prophets sought the fruits of righteousness. But last of all He sent to those unbelievers His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, whom the wicked husbandmen cast out of the vineyard when they had slain Him. Wherefore the Lord God did even give it up (no longer hedged around, but thrown open throughout all the world) to other husbandmen, who render the fruits in their seasons,—the beautiful elect tower being also raised everywhere. For the illustrious Church is [now] everywhere, and everywhere is the winepress digged: because those who do receive the Spirit are everywhere. For inasmuch as the former have rejected the Son of God, and cast Him out of the vineyard when they slew Him, God has justly rejected them, and given to the Gentiles outside the vineyard the fruits of its cultivation. This is in accordance with what Jeremiah says, “The Lord hath rejected and cast off the nation which does these things; for the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the Lord.”<sup>1712</sup> And again in like manner does Jeremiah speak: “I set watchmen over you; hearken to the sound of the trumpet; and they said, We will not hearken. Therefore have the Gentiles heard, and they who feed the flocks in them.”<sup>1713</sup> It is therefore one and the same Father who planted the vineyard, who led forth the people, who sent the prophets, who sent His own Son, and who gave the vineyard to those other husbandmen that render the fruits in their season.

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1710 Jer. vii. 3; Zech. vii. 9, 10, Zech. viii. 17; Isa. i. 17–19.

1711 Ps. xxxiv. 13, 14.

1712 Jer. vii. 29, 30.

1713 Jer. vi. 17, 18.

3. And therefore did the Lord say to His disciples, to make us become good workmen: "Take heed to yourselves, and watch continually upon every occasion, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day shall come upon you unawares; for as a snare shall it come upon all dwelling upon the face of the earth."<sup>1714</sup> "Let your loins, therefore, be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye like to men who wait for their lord, when he shall return from the wedding."<sup>1715</sup> "For as it was in the days of Noe, they did eat and drink, they bought and sold, they married and were given in marriage, and they knew not, until Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all; as also it was in the days of Lot, they did eat and drink, they bought and sold, they planted and builded, until the time that Lot went out of Sodom; it rained fire from heaven, and destroyed them all: so shall it also be at the coming of the Son of man."<sup>1716</sup> "Watch ye therefore, for ye know not in what day your Lord shall come."<sup>1717</sup> [In these passages] He declares one and the same Lord, who in the times of Noah brought the deluge because of man's disobedience, and who also in the days of Lot rained fire from heaven because of the multitude of sinners among the Sodomites, and who, on account of this same disobedience and similar sins, will bring on the day of judgment at the end of time (*in novissimo*); on which day He declares that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for that city and house which shall not receive the word of His apostles. "And thou, Capernaum," He said, "is it that thou shalt be exalted to heaven?"<sup>1718</sup> Thou shalt go down to hell. For if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. Verily I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."<sup>1719</sup>

4. Since the Son of God is always one and the same, He gives to those who believe on Him a well of water<sup>1720</sup> [springing up] to eternal life, but He causes the unfruitful fig-tree immediately to dry up; and in the days of Noah He justly brought on the deluge for the purpose of extinguishing that most infamous race of men then existent, who could not bring forth fruit to God, since the angels that sinned had commingled with them, and [acted as He did] in order that He might put a check upon the sins of these men, but [that at the same

1714 [Luke xxi. 34, 35.](#)

1715 [Luke xii. 35, 36.](#)

1716 [Luke xvii. 26, etc.](#)

1717 [Matt. xxiv. 42.](#)

1718 No other of the Greek Fathers quotes this text as above; from which fact Grabe infers that old Latin translator, or his transcribers, altered the words of Irenæus [N.B.—From one example infer the rest] to suit the Latin versions.

1719 [Matt. xi. 23, 24.](#)

1720 [John iv. 14.](#)

time] He might preserve the archetype,<sup>1721</sup> the formation of Adam. And it was He who rained fire and brimstone from heaven, in the days of Lot, upon Sodom and Gomorrah, “an example of the righteous judgment of God,”<sup>1722</sup> that all may know, “that every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire.”<sup>1723</sup> And it is He who uses [the words], that it will be more tolerable for Sodom in the general judgment than for those who beheld His wonders, and did not believe on Him, nor receive His doctrine.<sup>1724</sup> For as He gave by His advent a greater privilege to those who believed on Him, and who do His will, so also did He point out that those who did not believe on Him should have a more severe punishment in the judgment; thus extending equal justice to all, and being to exact more from those to whom He gives the more; the more, however, not because He reveals the knowledge of another Father, as I have shown so fully and so repeatedly, but because He has, by means of His advent, poured upon the human race the greater gift of paternal grace.

5. If, however, what I have stated be insufficient to convince any one that the prophets were sent from one and the same Father, from whom also our Lord was sent, let such a one, opening the mouth of his heart, and calling upon the Master, Christ Jesus the Lord, listen to Him when He says, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a king who made a marriage for his son, and he sent forth his servants to call them who were bidden to the marriage.” And when they would not obey, He goes on to say, “Again he sent other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, Come ye, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and all the fatlings are killed, and everything is ready; come unto the wedding. But they made light of it, and went their way, some to their farm, and others to their merchandize; but the remnant took his servants, and some they treated despitefully, while others they slew. But when the king heard this, he was wroth, and sent his armies and destroyed these murderers, and burned up their city, and said to his servants, The wedding is indeed ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go out therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, gather in to the marriage. So the servants went out, and collected together as many as they found, bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man not having on a wedding garment; and he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was

1721 This is Massuet’s conjectural emendation of the text, viz., *archetypum* for *arcætypum*. Grabe would insert *per* before *arcæ*, and he thinks the passage to have a reference to 1 Pet. iii. 20. Irenæus, in common with the other ancient Fathers, believed that the fallen angels were the “sons of God” who commingled with “the daughters of men,” and thus produced a race of spurious men. [Gen. vi. 1, 2, 3, and Josephus.]

1722 Jude 7. [And note “strange flesh” (Gr. *σαρκὸς ἑτέρας*) as to the angels. Gen. xix. 4, 5.]

1723 Matt. iii. 10.

1724 Matt. xi. 24; Luke x. 12.



speechless. Then said the king to his servants, Take him away, hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.”<sup>1725</sup> Now, by these words of His, does the Lord clearly show all [these points, viz.,] that there is one King and Lord, the Father of all, of whom He had previously said, “Neither shalt thou swear by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King;”<sup>1726</sup> and that He had from the beginning prepared the marriage for His Son, and used, with the utmost kindness, to call, by the instrumentality of His servants, the men of the former dispensation to the wedding feast; and when they would not obey, He still invited them by sending out other servants, yet that even then they did not obey Him, but even stoned and slew those who brought them the message of invitation. He accordingly sent forth His armies and destroyed them, and burned down their city; but He called together from all the highways, that is, from all nations, [guests] to the marriage feast of His Son, as also He says by Jeremiah: “I have sent also unto you my servants the prophets to say, Return ye now, every man, from his very evil way, and amend your doings.”<sup>1727</sup> And again He says by the same prophet: “I have also sent unto you my servants the prophets throughout the day and before the light; yet they did not obey me, nor incline their ears unto me. And thou shall speak this word to them: This is a people that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord, nor receiveth correction; faith has perished from their mouth.”<sup>1728</sup> The Lord, therefore, who has called us everywhere by the apostles, is He who called those of old by the prophets, as appears by the words of the Lord; and although they preached to various nations, the prophets were not from one God, and the apostles from another; but, [proceeding] from one and the same, some of them announced the Lord, others preached the Father, and others again foretold the advent of the Son of God, while yet others declared Him as already present to those who then were afar off.

6. Still further did He also make it manifest, that we ought, after our calling, to be also adorned with works of righteousness, so that the Spirit of God may rest upon us; for this is the wedding garment, of which also the apostle speaks, “Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up by immortality.”<sup>1729</sup> But those who have indeed been called to God’s supper, yet have not received the Holy Spirit, because of their wicked conduct “shall be,” He declares, “cast into outer darkness.”<sup>1730</sup> He thus clearly

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1725 [Matt. xxii. 1](#), etc.

1726 [Matt. v. 35](#). Instead of placing a period here, as the editors do, it seems to us preferable to carry on the construction.

1727 [Jer. xxxv. 15](#).

1728 [Jer. vii. 25](#), etc.

1729 [2 Cor. v. 4](#).

1730 [Matt. xxii. 13](#).

shows that the very same King who gathered from all quarters the faithful to the marriage of His Son, and who grants them the incorruptible banquet, [also] orders that man to be cast into outer darkness who has not on a wedding garment, that is, one who despises it. For as in the former covenant, “with many of them was He not well pleased;”<sup>1731</sup> so also is it the case here, that “many are called, but few chosen.”<sup>1732</sup> It is not, then, one God who judges, and another Father who calls us together to salvation; nor one, forsooth, who confers eternal light, but another who orders those who have not on the wedding garment to be sent into outer darkness. But it is one and the same God, the Father of our Lord, from whom also the prophets had their mission, who does indeed, through His infinite kindness, call the unworthy; but He examines those who are called, [to ascertain] if they have on the garment fit and proper for the marriage of His Son, because nothing unbecoming or evil pleases Him. This is in accordance with what the Lord said to the man who had been healed: “Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”<sup>1733</sup> For he who is good, and righteous, and pure, and spotless, will endure nothing evil, nor unjust, nor detestable in His wedding chamber. This is the Father of our Lord, by whose providence all things consist, and all are administered by His command; and He confers His free gifts upon those who should [receive them]; but the most righteous Retributor metes out [punishment] according to their deserts, most deservedly, to the ungrateful and to those that are insensible of His kindness; and therefore does He say, “He sent His armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.”<sup>1734</sup> He says here, “His armies,” because all men are the property of God. For “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and all that dwell therein.”<sup>1735</sup> Wherefore also the Apostle Paul says in the Epistle to the Romans, “For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive unto themselves condemnation. For rulers are not for a terror to a good work, but to an evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, the avenger for wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.”<sup>1736</sup> Both the Lord, then, and the apostles announce as

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1731 [1 Cor. x. 5.](#)

1732 [Matt. xxii. 14.](#)

1733 [John v. 14.](#)

1734 [Matt. xxii. 7.](#)

1735 [Ps. xxiv. 1.](#)

1736 [Rom. xiii. 1–7.](#)

the one only God the Father, Him who gave the law, who sent the prophets, who made all things; and therefore does He say, “He sent His armies,” because every man, inasmuch as he is a man, is His workmanship, although he may be ignorant of his God. For He gives existence to all; He, “who maketh His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust.”<sup>1737</sup>

7. And not alone by what has been stated, but also by the parable of the two sons, the younger of whom consumed his substance by living luxuriously with harlots, did the Lord teach one and the same Father, who did not even allow a kid to his elder son; but for him who had been lost, [namely] his younger son, he ordered the fatted calf to be killed, and he gave him the best robe.<sup>1738</sup> Also by the parable of the workmen who were sent into the vineyard at different periods of the day, one and the same God is declared<sup>1739</sup> as having called some in the beginning, when the world was first created; but others afterwards, and others during the intermediate period, others after a long lapse of time, and others again in the end of time; so that there are many workmen in their generations, but only one householder who calls them together. For there is but one vineyard, since there is also but one righteousness, and one dispensator, for there is one Spirit of God who arranges all things; and in like manner is there one hire, for they all received a penny each man, having [stamped upon it] the royal image and superscription, the knowledge of the Son of God, which is immortality. And therefore He began by giving the hire to those [who were engaged] last, because in the last times, when the Lord was revealed He presented Himself to all [as their reward].

8. Then, in the case of the publican, who excelled the Pharisee in prayer, [we find] that it was not because he worshipped another Father that he received testimony from the Lord that he was justified rather [than the other]; but because with great humility, apart from all boasting and pride, he made confession to the same God.<sup>1740</sup> The parable of the two sons also: those who are sent into the vineyard, of whom one indeed opposed his father, but afterwards repented, when repentance profited him nothing; the other, however, promised to go, at once assuring his father, but he did not go (for “every man is a liar;”<sup>1741</sup> “to will is present with him, but he finds not means to perform”<sup>1742</sup>),—[this parable, I say], points out one and the same Father. Then, again, this truth was clearly shown forth by the parable of the fig-tree, of which the Lord says, “Behold, now these three years I come seeking fruit

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1737 [Matt. v. 45.](#)

1738 [Luke xv. 11.](#)

1739 [Matt. xx. 1,](#) etc.

1740 [Luke xviii. 10.](#)

1741 [Ps. cxvi. 2.](#)

1742 [Rom. vii. 18.](#)

on this fig-tree, but I find none”<sup>1743</sup> (pointing onwards, by the prophets, to His advent, by whom He came from time to time, seeking the fruit of righteousness from them, which he did not find), and also by the circumstance that, for the reason already mentioned, the fig-tree should be hewn down. And, without using a parable, the Lord said to Jerusalem, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest those that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house shall be left unto you desolate.”<sup>1744</sup> For that which had been said in the parable, “Behold, for three years I come seeking fruit,” and in clear terms, again, [where He says], “How often would I have gathered thy children together,” shall be [found] a falsehood, if we do not understand His advent, which is [announced] by the prophets—if, in fact, He came to them but once, and then for the first time. But since He who chose the patriarchs and those [who lived under the first covenant], is the same Word of God who did both visit them through the prophetic Spirit, and us also who have been called together from all quarters by His advent; in addition to what has been already said, He truly declared, “Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall go into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”<sup>1745</sup> If, then, those who do believe in Him through the preaching of His apostles throughout the east and west shall recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, partaking with them of the [heavenly] banquet, one and the same God is set forth as He who did indeed choose the patriarchs, visited also the people, and called the Gentiles.

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1743 [Luke xiii. 6.](#)

1744 [Luke xiii. 34; Matt. xxiii. 37.](#)

1745 [Matt. viii. 11, 12.](#)

**Chapter XXXVII.—Men are possessed of free will, and endowed with the faculty of making a choice. It is not true, therefore, that some are by nature good, and others bad.**

1. This expression [of our Lord], “How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not,”<sup>1746</sup> set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (*ad utendum sententia*) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God. For there is no coercion with God, but a good will [towards us] is present with Him continually. And therefore does He give good counsel to all. And in man, as well as in angels, He has placed the power of choice (for angels are rational beings), so that those who had yielded obedience might justly possess what is good, given indeed by God, but preserved by themselves. On the other hand, they who have not obeyed shall, with justice, be not found in possession of the good, and shall receive condign punishment: for God did kindly bestow on them what was good; but they themselves did not diligently keep it, nor deem it something precious, but poured contempt upon His super-eminent goodness. Rejecting therefore the good, and as it were spuing it out, they shall all deservedly incur the just judgment of God, which also the Apostle Paul testifies in his Epistle to the Romans, where he says, “But dost thou despise the riches of His goodness, and patience, and long-suffering, being ignorant that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” “But glory and honour,” he says, “to every one that doeth good.”<sup>1747</sup> God therefore has given that which is good, as the apostle tells us in this Epistle, and they who work it shall receive glory and honour, because they have done that which is good when they had it in their power not to do it; but those who do it not shall receive the just judgment of God, because they did not work good when they had it in their power so to do.

2. But if some had been made by nature bad, and others good, these latter would not be deserving of praise for being good, for such were they created; nor would the former be reprehensible, for thus they were made [originally]. But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein; but the others are blamed, and receive a just condemnation, because of their rejection of what is fair and good. And therefore the prophets used to exhort men to what was good, to act justly and to work

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1746 [Matt. xxiii. 37.](#)

1747 [Rom. ii. 4, 5, 7.](#)

righteousness, as I have so largely demonstrated, because it is in our power so to do, and because by excessive negligence we might become forgetful, and thus stand in need of that good counsel which the good God has given us to know by means of the prophets.

3. For this reason the Lord also said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”<sup>1748</sup> And, “Take heed to yourselves, lest perchance your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and worldly cares.”<sup>1749</sup> And, “Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He returns from the wedding, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open to Him. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing.”<sup>1750</sup> And again, “The servant who knows his Lord’s will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.”<sup>1751</sup> And, “Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”<sup>1752</sup> And again, “But if the servant say in his heart, The Lord delayeth, and begin to beat his fellow-servants, and to eat, and drink, and to be drunken, his Lord will come in a day on which he does not expect Him, and shall cut him in sunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites.”<sup>1753</sup> All such passages demonstrate the independent will<sup>1754</sup> of man, and at the same time the counsel which God conveys to him, by which He exhorts us to submit ourselves to Him, and seeks to turn us away from [the sin of] unbelief against Him, without, however, in any way coercing us.

4. No doubt, if any one is unwilling to follow the Gospel itself, it is in his power [to reject it], but it is not expedient. For it is in man’s power to disobey God, and to forfeit what is good; but [such conduct] brings no small amount of injury and mischief. And on this account Paul says, “All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient;”<sup>1755</sup> referring both to the liberty of man, in which respect “all things are lawful,” God exercising no compulsion in regard to him; and [by the expression] “not expedient” pointing out that we “should not use our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness,”<sup>1756</sup> for this is not expedient. And again he says, “Speak ye every man truth with his neighbour.”<sup>1757</sup> And, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor scurrility, which are

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1748 [Matt. v. 16.](#)

1749 [Luke xxi. 34.](#)

1750 [Luke xii. 35, 36.](#)

1751 [Luke xii. 47.](#)

1752 [Luke vi. 46.](#)

1753 [Luke xii. 45, 46; Matt. xxiv. 48–51.](#)

1754 τὸ αὐτεξούσιον.

1755 [1 Cor. vi. 12.](#)

1756 [1 Pet. ii. 16.](#)

1757 [Eph. iv. 25.](#)

not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.”<sup>1758</sup> And, “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk honestly as children of the light, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in anger and jealousy. And such were some of you; but ye have been washed, but ye have been sanctified in the name of our Lord.”<sup>1759</sup> If then it were not in our power to do or not to do these things, what reason had the apostle, and much more the Lord Himself, to give us counsel to do some things, and to abstain from others? But because man is possessed of free will from the beginning, and God is possessed of free will, in whose likeness man was created, advice is always given to him to keep fast the good, which thing is done by means of obedience to God.

5. And not merely in works, but also in faith, has God preserved the will of man free and under his own control, saying, “According to thy faith be it unto thee;”<sup>1760</sup> thus showing that there is a faith specially belonging to man, since he has an opinion specially his own. And again, “All things are possible to him that believeth;”<sup>1761</sup> and, “Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.”<sup>1762</sup> Now all such expressions demonstrate that man is in his own power with respect to faith. And for this reason, “he that believeth in Him has eternal life while he who believeth not the Son hath not eternal life, but the wrath of God shall remain upon him.”<sup>1763</sup> In the same manner therefore the Lord, both showing His own goodness, and indicating that man is in his own free will and his own power, said to Jerusalem, “How often have I wished to gather thy children together, as a hen [gathereth] her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Wherefore your house shall be left unto you desolate.”<sup>1764</sup>

6. Those, again, who maintain the opposite to these [conclusions], do themselves present the Lord as destitute of power, as if, forsooth, He were unable to accomplish what He willed; or, on the other hand, as being ignorant that they were by nature “material,” as these men express it, and such as cannot receive His immortality. “But He should not,” say they, “have created angels of such a nature that they were capable of transgression, nor men who immediately proved ungrateful towards Him; for they were made rational beings, endowed with the power of examining and judging, and were not [formed] as things irrational or of a [merely] animal nature, which can do nothing of their own will, but are drawn by necessity and compulsion to what is good, in which things there is one mind and one usage, working

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1758 Eph. iv. 29.

1759 1 Cor. vi. 11.

1760 Matt. ix. 29.

1761 Mark ix. 23.

1762 Matt. viii. 13.

1763 John iii. 36.

1764 Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.

mechanically in one groove (*inflexibiles et sine iudicio*), who are incapable of being anything else except just what they had been created.” But upon this supposition, neither would what is good be grateful to them, nor communion with God be precious, nor would the good be very much to be sought after, which would present itself without their own proper endeavour, care, or study, but would be implanted of its own accord and without their concern. Thus it would come to pass, that their being good would be of no consequence, because they were so by nature rather than by will, and are possessors of good spontaneously, not by choice; and for this reason they would not understand this fact, that good is a comely thing, nor would they take pleasure in it. For how can those who are ignorant of good enjoy it? Or what credit is it to those who have not aimed at it? And what crown is it to those who have not followed in pursuit of it, like those victorious in the contest?

7. On this account, too, did the Lord assert that the kingdom of heaven was the portion of “the violent;” and He says, “The violent take it by force;”<sup>1765</sup> that is, those who by strength and earnest striving are on the watch to snatch it away on the moment. On this account also Paul the Apostle says to the Corinthians, “Know ye not, that they who run in a racecourse, do all indeed run, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. Every one also who engages in the contest is temperate in all things: now these men [do it] that they may obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. But I so run, not as uncertainty; I fight, not as one beating the air; but I make my body livid, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when preaching to others, I may myself be rendered a castaway.”<sup>1766</sup> This able wrestler, therefore, exhorts us to the struggle for immortality, that we may be crowned, and may deem the crown precious, namely, that which is acquired by our struggle, but which does not encircle us of its own accord (*sed non ultro coalitam*). And the harder we strive, so much is it the more valuable; while so much the more valuable it is, so much the more should we esteem it. And indeed those things are not esteemed so highly which come spontaneously, as those which are reached by much anxious care. Since, then, this power has been conferred upon us, both the Lord has taught and the apostle has enjoined us the more to love God, that we may reach this [prize] for ourselves by striving after it. For otherwise, no doubt, this our good would be [virtually] irrational, because not the result of trial. Moreover, the faculty of seeing would not appear to be so desirable, unless we had known what a loss it were to be devoid of sight; and health, too, is rendered all the more estimable by an acquaintance with disease; light, also, by contrasting it with darkness; and life with death. Just in the same way is the heavenly kingdom honourable to those who have known the earthly one. But in proportion as it is more honourable, so much the more do we prize it; and if we have prized it more, we shall be the more glorious in the presence of God. The

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1765 Matt. xi. 12.

1766 1 Cor. ix. 24–27.



Lord has therefore endured all these things on our behalf, in order that we, having been instructed by means of them all, may be in all respects circumspect for the time to come, and that, having been rationally taught to love God, we may continue in His perfect love: for God has displayed long-suffering in the case of man's apostasy; while man has been instructed by means of it, as also the prophet says, "Thine own apostasy shall heal thee;"<sup>1767</sup> God thus determining all things beforehand for the bringing of man to perfection, for his edification, and for the revelation of His dispensations, that goodness may both be made apparent, and righteousness perfected, and that the Church may be fashioned after the image of His Son, and that man may finally be brought to maturity at some future time, becoming ripe through such privileges to see and comprehend God.<sup>1768</sup>

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<sup>1767</sup> [Jer. ii. 19.](#)

<sup>1768</sup> [If we but had the original, this would doubtless be found in all respects a noble specimen of primitive theology.]

**Chapter XXXVIII.—Why man was not made perfect from the beginning.**

1. If, however, any one say, “What then? Could not God have exhibited man as perfect from beginning?” let him know that, inasmuch as God is indeed always the same and unbegotten as respects Himself, all things are possible to Him. But created things must be inferior to Him who created them, from the very fact of their later origin; for it was not possible for things recently created to have been uncreated. But inasmuch as they are not uncreated, for this very reason do they come short of the perfect. Because, as these things are of later date, so are they infantile; so are they unaccustomed to, and unexercised in, perfect discipline. For as it certainly is in the power of a mother to give strong food to her infant, [but she does not do so], as the child is not yet able to receive more substantial nourishment; so also it was possible for God Himself to have made man perfect from the first, but man could not receive this [perfection], being as yet an infant. And for this cause our Lord in these last times, when He had summed up all things into Himself, came to us, not as He might have come, but as we were capable of beholding Him. He might easily have come to us in His immortal glory, but in that case we could never have endured the greatness of the glory; and therefore it was that He, who was the perfect bread of the Father, offered Himself to us as milk, [because we were] as infants. He did this when He appeared as a man, that we, being nourished, as it were, from the breast of His flesh, and having, by such a course of milk nourishment, become accustomed to eat and drink the Word of God, may be able also to contain in ourselves the Bread of immortality, which is the Spirit of the Father.

2. And on this account does Paul declare to the Corinthians, “I have fed you with milk, not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it.”<sup>1769</sup> That is, ye have indeed learned the advent of our Lord as a man; nevertheless, because of your infirmity, the Spirit of the Father has not as yet rested upon you. “For when envying and strife,” he says, “and dissensions are among you, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”<sup>1770</sup> That is, that the Spirit of the Father was not yet with them, on account of their imperfection and shortcomings of their walk in life. As, therefore, the apostle had the power to give them strong meat—for those upon whom the apostles laid hands received the Holy Spirit, who is the food of life [eternal]—but they were not capable of receiving it, because they had the sentient faculties of the soul still feeble and undisciplined in the practice of things pertaining to God; so, in like manner, God had power at the beginning to grant perfection to man; but as the latter was only recently created, he could not possibly have received it, or even if he had received it, could he have contained it, or containing it, could he have retained it. It was for this reason that the Son of God, although He was perfect, passed through the state of infancy in common with the rest of mankind, partaking of it thus not for His own benefit, but for that of the

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1769 1 Cor. iii. 2.

1770 1 Cor. iii. 3.

infantile stage of man's existence, in order that man might be able to receive Him. There was nothing, therefore, impossible to and deficient in God, [implied in the fact] that man was not an uncreated being; but this merely applied to him who was lately created, [namely] man.

3. With God there are simultaneously exhibited power, wisdom, and goodness. His power and goodness [appear] in this, that of His own will He called into being and fashioned things having no previous existence; His wisdom [is shown] in His having made created things parts of one harmonious and consistent whole; and those things which, through His super-eminent kindness, receive growth and a long period of existence, do reflect the glory of the uncreated One, of that God who bestows what is good ungrudgingly. For from the very fact of these things having been created, [it follows] that they are not uncreated; but by their continuing in being throughout a long course of ages, they shall receive a faculty of the Uncreated, through the gratuitous bestowal of eternal existence upon them by God. And thus in all things God has the pre-eminence, who alone is uncreated, the first of all things, and the primary cause of the existence of all, while all other things remain under God's subjection. But being in subjection to God is continuance in immortality, and immortality is the glory of the uncreated One. By this arrangement, therefore, and these harmonies, and a sequence of this nature, man, a created and organized being, is rendered after the image and likeness of the uncreated God,—the Father planning everything well and giving His commands, the Son carrying these into execution and performing the work of creating, and the Spirit nourishing and increasing [what is made], but man making progress day by day, and ascending towards the perfect, that is, approximating to the uncreated One. For the Uncreated is perfect, that is, God. Now it was necessary that man should in the first instance be created; and having been created, should receive growth; and having received growth, should be strengthened; and having been strengthened, should abound; and having abounded, should recover [from the disease of sin]; and having recovered, should be glorified; and being glorified, should see his Lord. For God is He who is yet to be seen, and the beholding of God is productive of immortality, but immortality renders one nigh unto God.

4. Irrational, therefore, in every respect, are they who await not the time of increase, but ascribe to God the infirmity of their nature. Such persons know neither God nor themselves, being insatiable and ungrateful, unwilling to be at the outset what they have also been created—men subject to passions; but go beyond the law of the human race, and before that they become men, they wish to be even now like God their Creator, and they who are more destitute of reason than dumb animals [insist] that there is no distinction between the uncreated God and man, a creature of to-day. For these, [the dumb animals], bring no charge against God for not having made them men; but each one, just as he has been created, gives thanks that he has been created. For we cast blame upon Him, because we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then at length gods; although God

has adopted this course out of His pure benevolence, that no one may impute to Him invidiousness or grudgingness. He declares, “I have said, Ye are gods; and ye are all sons of the Highest.”<sup>1771</sup> But since we could not sustain the power of divinity, He adds, “But ye shall die like men,” setting forth both truths—the kindness of His free gift, and our weakness, and also that we were possessed of power over ourselves. For after His great kindness He graciously conferred good [upon us], and made men like to Himself, [that is] in their own power; while at the same time by His prescience He knew the infirmity of human beings, and the consequences which would flow from it; but through [His] love and [His] power, He shall overcome the substance of created nature.<sup>1772</sup> For it was necessary, at first, that nature should be exhibited; then, after that, that what was mortal should be conquered and swallowed up by immortality, and the corruptible by incorruptibility, and that man should be made after the image and likeness of God, having received the knowledge of good and evil.

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1771 Ps. lxxxii. 6, 7.

1772 That is, that man’s human nature should not prevent him from becoming a partaker of the divine.

**Chapter XXXIX.—Man is endowed with the faculty of distinguishing good and evil; so that, without compulsion, he has the power, by his own will and choice, to perform God's commandments, by doing which he avoids the evils prepared for the rebellious.**

1. Man has received the knowledge of good and evil. It is good to obey God, and to believe in Him, and to keep His commandment, and this is the life of man; as not to obey God is evil, and this is his death. Since God, therefore, gave [to man] such mental power (*magnanimitatem*) man knew both the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience, that the eye of the mind, receiving experience of both, may with judgment make choice of the better things; and that he may never become indolent or neglectful of God's command; and learning by experience that it is an evil thing which deprives him of life, that is, disobedience to God, may never attempt it at all, but that, knowing that what preserves his life, namely, obedience to God, is good, he may diligently keep it with all earnestness. Wherefore he has also had a twofold experience, possessing knowledge of both kinds, that with discipline he may make choice of the better things. But how, if he had no knowledge of the contrary, could he have had instruction in that which is good? For there is thus a surer and an undoubted comprehension of matters submitted to us than the mere surmise arising from an opinion regarding them. For just as the tongue receives experience of sweet and bitter by means of tasting, and the eye discriminates between black and white by means of vision, and the ear recognises the distinctions of sounds by hearing; so also does the mind, receiving through the experience of both the knowledge of what is good, become more tenacious of its preservation, by acting in obedience to God: in the first place, casting away, by means of repentance, disobedience, as being something disagreeable and nauseous; and afterwards coming to understand what it really is, that it is contrary to goodness and sweetness, so that the mind may never even attempt to taste disobedience to God. But if any one do shun the knowledge of both these kinds of things, and the twofold perception of knowledge, he unawares divests himself of the character of a human being.

2. How, then, shall he be a God, who has not as yet been made a man? Or how can he be perfect who was but lately created? How, again, can he be immortal, who in his mortal nature did not obey his Maker? For it must be that thou, at the outset, shouldest hold the rank of a man, and then afterwards partake of the glory of God. For thou dost not make God, but God thee. If, then, thou art God's workmanship, await the hand of thy Maker which creates everything in due time; in due time as far as thou art concerned, whose creation is being carried out.<sup>1773</sup> Offer to Him thy heart in a soft and tractable state, and preserve the form in which the Creator has fashioned thee, having moisture in thyself, lest, by becoming hardened, thou lose the impressions of His fingers. But by preserving the framework

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1773 Efficeris.

thou shalt ascend to that which is perfect, for the moist clay which is in thee is hidden [there] by the workmanship of God. His hand fashioned thy substance; He will cover thee over [too] within and without with pure gold and silver, and He will adorn thee to such a degree, that even “the King Himself shall have pleasure in thy beauty.”<sup>1774</sup> But if thou, being obstinately hardened, dost reject the operation of His skill, and show thyself ungrateful towards Him, because thou wert created a [mere] man, by becoming thus ungrateful to God, thou hast at once lost both His workmanship and life. For creation is an attribute of the goodness of God but to be created is that of human nature. If then, thou shalt deliver up to Him what is thine, that is, faith towards Him and subjection, thou shalt receive His handiwork, and shall be a perfect work of God.

3. If, however, thou wilt not believe in Him, and wilt flee from His hands, the cause of imperfection shall be in thee who didst not obey, but not in Him who called [thee]. For He commissioned [messengers] to call people to the marriage, but they who did not obey Him deprived themselves of the royal supper.<sup>1775</sup> The skill of God, therefore, is not defective, for He has power of the stones to raise up children to Abraham;<sup>1776</sup> but the man who does not obtain it is the cause to himself of his own imperfection. Nor, [in like manner], does the light fail because of those who have blinded themselves; but while it remains the same as ever, those who are [thus] blinded are involved in darkness through their own fault. The light does never enslave any one by necessity; nor, again, does God exercise compulsion upon any one unwilling to accept the exercise of His skill. Those persons, therefore, who have apostatized from the light given by the Father, and transgressed the law of liberty, have done so through their own fault, since they have been created free agents, and possessed of power over themselves.

4. But God, foreknowing all things, prepared fit habitations for both, kindly conferring that light which they desire on those who seek after the light of incorruption, and resort to it; but for the despisers and mockers who avoid and turn themselves away from this light, and who do, as it were, blind themselves, He has prepared darkness suitable to persons who oppose the light, and He has inflicted an appropriate punishment upon those who try to avoid being subject to Him. Submission to God is eternal rest, so that they who shun the light have a place worthy of their flight; and those who fly from eternal rest, have a habitation in accordance with their fleeing. Now, since all good things are with God, they who by their own determination fly from God, do defraud themselves of all good things; and having been [thus] defrauded of all good things with respect to God, they shall consequently fall under the just judgment of God. For those persons who shun rest shall justly incur punishment,

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1774 [Ps. xlv. 11.](#)

1775 [Matt. xxii. 3,](#) etc.

1776 [Matt. iii. 9.](#)

and those who avoid the light shall justly dwell in darkness. For as in the case of this temporal light, those who shun it do deliver themselves over to darkness, so that they do themselves become the cause to themselves that they are destitute of light, and do inhabit darkness; and, as I have already observed, the light is not the cause of such an [unhappy] condition of existence to them; so those who fly from the eternal light of God, which contains in itself all good things, are themselves the cause to themselves of their inhabiting eternal darkness, destitute of all good things, having become to themselves the cause of [their consignment to] an abode of that nature.

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**Chapter XL.—One and the same God the Father inflicts punishment on the reprobate, and bestows rewards on the elect.**

1. It is therefore one and the same God the Father who has prepared good things with Himself for those who desire His fellowship, and who remain in subjection to Him; and who has the eternal fire for the ringleader of the apostasy, the devil, and those who revolted with him, into which [fire] the Lord<sup>1777</sup> has declared those men shall be sent who have been set apart by themselves on His left hand. And this is what has been spoken by the prophet, “I am a jealous God, making peace, and creating evil things;”<sup>1778</sup> thus making peace and friendship with those who repent and turn to Him, and bringing [them to] unity, but preparing for the impenitent, those who shun the light, eternal fire and outer darkness, which are evils indeed to those persons who fall into them.

2. If, however, it were truly one Father who confers rest, and another God who has prepared the fire, their sons would have been equally different [one from the other]; one, indeed, sending [men] into the Father’s kingdom, but the other into eternal fire. But inasmuch as one and the same Lord has pointed out that the whole human race shall be divided at the judgment, “as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats,”<sup>1779</sup> and that to some He will say, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you,”<sup>1780</sup> but to others, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which My Father has prepared for the devil and his angels,”<sup>1781</sup> one and the same Father is manifestly declared [in this passage], “making peace and creating evil things,” preparing fit things for both; as also there is one Judge sending both into a fit place, as the Lord sets forth in the parable of the tares and the wheat, where He says, “As therefore the tares are gathered together, and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather from His kingdom everything that offendeth, and those who work iniquity, and shall send them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”<sup>1782</sup> The Father, therefore, who has prepared the kingdom for the righteous, into which the Son has received those worthy of it, is He who has also prepared the furnace of fire, into which these angels commissioned by the Son of man shall send those persons who deserve it, according to God’s command.

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1777 [Matt. xxv. 41.](#)

1778 [Isa. xlv. 7.](#)

1779 [Matt. xxv. 32.](#)

1780 [Matt. xxv. 34.](#)

1781 [Matt. xxv. 41.](#)

1782 [Matt. xiii. 40–43.](#)



3. The Lord, indeed, sowed good seed in His own field;<sup>1783</sup> and He says, “The field is the world.” But while men slept, the enemy came, and “sowed tares in the midst of the wheat, and went his way.”<sup>1784</sup> Hence we learn that this was the apostate angel and the enemy, because he was envious of God’s workmanship, and took in hand to render this [workmanship] an enmity with God. For this cause also God has banished from His presence him who did of his own accord stealthily sow the tares, that is, him who brought about the transgression;<sup>1785</sup> but He took compassion upon man, who, through want of care no doubt, but still wickedly [on the part of another], became involved in disobedience; and He turned the enmity by which [the devil] had designed to make [man] the enemy of God, against the author of it, by removing His own anger from man, turning it in another direction, and sending it instead upon the serpent. As also the Scripture tells us that God said to the serpent, “And I will place enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. He<sup>1786</sup> shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel.”<sup>1787</sup> And the Lord summed up in Himself this enmity, when He was made man from a woman, and trod upon his [the serpent’s] head, as I have pointed out in the preceding book.

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1783 [Matt. xiii. 34.](#) [Applicable to the origin of heresies.]

1784 [Matt. xiii. 28.](#)

1785 The old Latin translator varies from this (the Greek of which was recovered by Grabe from two ancient *Catenæ Patrum*), making the clause run thus, *that is, the transgression which he had himself introduced*, making the explanatory words to refer to the *tares*, and not, as in the Greek, to the *sower of the tares*.

1786 Following the reading of the LXX. αὐτός σου τηρήσει κεφαλὴν.

1787 [Gen. iii. 15.](#)

**Chapter XLI.—Those persons who do not believe in God, but who are disobedient, are angels and sons of the devil, not indeed by nature, but by imitation. Close of this book, and scope of the succeeding one.**

1. Inasmuch as the Lord has said that there are certain angels, [viz. those] of the devil, for whom eternal fire is prepared; and as, again, He declares with regard to the tares, “The tares are the children of the wicked one,”<sup>1788</sup> it must be affirmed that He has ascribed all who are of the apostasy to him who is the ringleader of this transgression. But He made neither angels nor men so by nature. For we do not find that the devil created anything whatsoever, since indeed he is himself a creature of God, like the other angels. For God made all things, as also David says with regard to all things of the kind: “For He spake the word, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created.”<sup>1789</sup>

2. Since, therefore, all things were made by God, and since the devil has become the cause of apostasy to himself and others, justly does the Scripture always term those who remain in a state of apostasy “sons of the devil” and “angels of the wicked one” (*maligni*). For [the word] “son,” as one before me has observed, has a twofold meaning: one [is a son] in the order of nature, because he was born a son; the other, in that he was made so, is reputed a son, although there be a difference between being born so and being made so. For the first is indeed born from the person referred to; but the second is made so by him, whether as respects his creation or by the teaching of his doctrine. For when any person has been taught from the mouth of another, he is termed the son of him who instructs him, and the latter [is called] his father. According to nature, then—that is, according to creation, so to speak—we are all sons of God, because we have all been created by God. But with respect to obedience and doctrine we are not all the sons of God: those only are so who believe in Him and do His will. And those who do not believe, and do not obey His will, are sons and angels of the devil, because they do the works of the devil. And that such is the case He has declared in Isaiah: “I have begotten and brought up children, but they have rebelled against Me.”<sup>1790</sup> And again, where He says that these children are aliens: “Strange children have lied unto Me.”<sup>1791</sup> According to nature, then, they are [His] children, because they have been so created; but with regard to their works, they are not His children.

3. For as, among men, those sons who disobey their fathers, being disinherited, are still their sons in the course of nature, but by law are disinherited, for they do not become the heirs of their natural parents; so in the same way is it with God,—those who do not obey Him being disinherited by Him, have ceased to be His sons. Wherefore they cannot receive

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1788 Matt. xiii. 38.

1789 Ps. cxlix. 5.

1790 Isa. i. 2.

1791 Ps. xviii. 45.

His inheritance: as David says, “Sinners are alienated from the womb; their anger is after the likeness of a serpent.”<sup>1792</sup> And therefore did the Lord term those whom He knew to be the offspring of men “a generation of vipers;”<sup>1793</sup> because after the manner of these animals they go about in subtilty, and injure others. For He said, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.”<sup>1794</sup> Speaking of Herod, too, He says, “Go ye and tell that fox,”<sup>1795</sup> aiming at his wicked cunning and deceit. Wherefore the prophet David says, “Man, being placed in honour, is made like unto cattle.”<sup>1796</sup> And again Jeremiah says, “They are become like horses, furious about females; each one neighed after his neighbour’s wife.”<sup>1797</sup> And Isaiah, when preaching in Judea, and reasoning with Israel, termed them “rulers of Sodom” and “people of Gomorrah;”<sup>1798</sup> intimating that they were like the Sodomites in wickedness, and that the same description of sins was rife among them, calling them by the same name, because of the similarity of their conduct. And inasmuch as they were not by nature so created by God, but had power also to act rightly, the same person said to them, giving them good counsel, “Wash ye, make you clean; take away iniquity from your souls before mine eyes; cease from your iniquities.”<sup>1799</sup> Thus, no doubt, since they had transgressed and sinned in the same manner, so did they receive the same reproof as did the Sodomites. But when they should be converted and come to repentance, and cease from evil, they should have power to become the sons of God, and to receive the inheritance of immortality which is given by Him. For this reason, therefore, He has termed those “angels of the devil,” and “children of the wicked one,”<sup>1800</sup> who give heed to the devil, and do his works. But these are, at the same time, all created by the one and the same God. When, however, they believe and are subject to God, and go on and keep His doctrine, they are the sons of God; but when they have apostatized and fallen into transgression, they are ascribed to their chief, the devil—to him who first became the cause of apostasy to himself, and afterwards to others.

4. Inasmuch as the words of the Lord are numerous, while they all proclaim one and the same Father, the Creator of this world, it was incumbent also upon me, for their own sake, to refute by many [arguments] those who are involved in many errors, if by any means, when they are confuted by many [proofs], they may be converted to the truth and saved.

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1792 [Ps. lviii. 3, 4.](#)

1793 [Matt. xxiii. 33.](#)

1794 [Matt. xvi. 6.](#)

1795 [Luke xiii. 32.](#)

1796 [Ps. xlix. 21.](#)

1797 [Jer. v. 8.](#)

1798 [Isa. i. 10.](#)

1799 [Isa. i. 16.](#)

1800 [Matt. xxv. 41,](#) [Matt. xiii. 38.](#)

But it is necessary to subjoin to this composition, in what follows, also the doctrine of Paul after the words of the Lord, to examine the opinion of this man, and expound the apostle, and to explain whatsoever [passages] have received other interpretations from the heretics, who have altogether misunderstood what Paul has spoken, and to point out the folly of their mad opinions; and to demonstrate from that same Paul, from whose [writings] they press questions upon us, that they are indeed utterers of falsehood, but that the apostle was a preacher of the truth, and that he taught all things agreeable to the preaching of the truth; [to the effect that] it was one God the Father who spake with Abraham, who gave the law, who sent the prophets beforehand, who in the last times sent His Son, and conferred salvation upon His own handiwork—that is, the substance of flesh. Arranging, then, in another book, the rest of the words of the Lord, which He taught concerning the Father not by parables, but by expressions taken in their obvious meaning (*sed simpliciter ipsis dictionibus*), and the exposition of the Epistles of the blessed apostle, I shall, with God's aid, furnish thee with the complete work of the exposure and refutation of knowledge, falsely so called; thus practising myself and thee in [these] five books for presenting opposition to all heretics.