Constitutions of the Holy Apostles Book 5

Apostolic Constitutions (c. AD 380)

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Sec. I.-Concerning the Martyrs. — That It is Reasonable for the Faithful to Supply the Wants of Those Who are Afflicted for the Sake of Christ by the Unbelievers, According to the Constitution of the Lord.

I. If any Christian, on account of the name of Christ, and love and faith towards God, be condemned by the ungodly to the games, to the beasts, or to the mines, do not ye overlook him; but send to him from your labour and your very sweat for his sustenance, and for a reward to the soldiers, that he may be eased and be taken care of; that, as far as lies in your power, your blessed brother may not be afflicted: for he that is condemned for the name of the Lord God is an holy martyr, a brother of the Lord, the son of the Highest, a receptacle of the Holy Spirit, by whom every one of the faithful has received the illumination of the glory of the holy Gospel, by being vouchsafed the incorruptible crown, and the testimony of Christ's sufferings, and the fellowship of His blood, to be made conformable to the death of Christ for the adoption of children. For this cause do you, all ye of the faithful, by your bishop, minister to the saints of your substance and of your labour. But if any one has not, let him fast a day, and set apart that, and order it for the saints. But if any one has superfluities, let him minister more to them according to the proportion of his ability. But if he can possibly sell all his livelihood, and redeem them out of prison, he will be blessed, and a friend of Christ.

For if he that gives his goods to the poor be perfect, supposing his knowledge of divine things, much more is he so that does it on account of the martyrs. For such a one is worthy of God, and will fulfil His will by supplying those who have confessed Him before nations and kings, and the children of Israel; concerning whom our Lord declared, saying: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father. And if these be such as to be attested to by Christ before His Father, you ought not to be ashamed to go to them in the prisons. For if you do this, it will be esteemed to you for a testimony, because the real trial was to them a testimony; and your readiness will be so to you, as being partakers of their combat: for the Lord speaks somewhere to such as these, saying: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and

ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer, and say, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee naked, and clothed Thee? or sick, and visited Thee?

When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or in prison, and came unto Thee? And He will answer and say unto them, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. And these shall go away into life everlasting. Then shall He say unto them on His left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer and say, Lord when saw we Thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have not done it unto one of the least of these, neither have ye done it unto me. And these shall go away unto everlasting punishment."

That We are to Avoid Intercourse with False Brethren When They Continue in Their Wickedness.

II. But if any one who calls himself a brother is seduced by the evil one, and acts wickedness, and is convicted and condemned to death as an adulterer, or a murderer, depart from him, that ye may be secure, and none of you may be suspected as a partner in such an abominable practice; and that no evil report may be spread abroad, as if all Christians took a pleasure in unlawful actions. Wherefore keep far from them. But do you assist with all diligence those that for the sake of Christ are abused by the ungodly and shut up in prison, or who are given over to death, or bonds, or banishment, in order to deliver your fellow-members from wicked hands. And if any one who accompanies with them is caught, and falls into misfortune, he is blessed, because he is partaker with the martyr, and is one that imitates the sufferings of Christ; for we ourselves also, when we oftentimes received stripes from Caiaphas, and Alexander, and Annas, for Christ's sake, "went out rejoicing that we were counted worthy to suffer such things for our Saviour." Do you also rejoice when ye suffer such things, for ye shall be blessed in that day.

That We Ought to Afford an Helping Hand to Such as are Spoiled for the Sake of Christ, Although We Should Incur Danger Ourselves.

III. Receive also those that are persecuted on account of the faith, and who "fly from city to city" on account of the Lord's commandment; and assist them as martyrs, rejoicing that ye are made partakers of their persecution, as knowing that they are esteemed blessed by the Lord; for Himself says: "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, because your reward is great in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before us." And again: "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." And afterwards: "If they persecute you in this city, flee ye to another. For in the world ye have

tribulation: for they shall deliver you into the synagogues; and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, and for a testimony to them." And, "He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved." For he that is persecuted for the sake of the faith, and bears witness in regard to Him, Christ, and endures, is truly a man of God.

That It is an Horrible and Destructive Thing to Deny Christ.

IV. But he that denies himself to be a Christian, that he may not be hated of men, and so loves his own life more than he does the Lord, in whose hand his breath is, is wretched and miserable, as being detestable and abominable, who desires to be the friend of men, but is the enemy of God, having no longer his portion with the saints, but with those that are accursed; choosing instead of the kingdom of the blessed, that eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: not being any longer hated by men, but rejected by God, and cast out from His presence. For of such a one our Lord declared, saying: "Whosoever shall deny me before men, and shall be ashamed of my name, I also will deny and be ashamed of him before my Father which is in heaven." And again He speaks thus to us ourselves, His disciples: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life, shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own souL? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? " And afterwards: "Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

That We Ought to Imitate Christ in Suffering, and with Zeal to Follow His Patience.

V. Every one therefore who learns any art, when he sees his master by his diligence and skill perfecting his art, does himself earnestly endeavour to make what he takes in hand like to it. If he is not able, he is not perfected in his work. We therefore who have a Master, our Lord Jesus Christ, why do we not follow His doctrine?-since He renounced repose, pleasure, glory, riches, pride, the power of revenge, His mother and brethren, nay, and moreover His own life, on account of His piety towards His Father, and His love to us the race of mankind; and suffered not only persecution and stripes, reproach and mockery, but also crucifixion, that He might save the penitent, both Jews and Gentiles. If therefore He for our sakes renounced His repose, was not ashamed of the cross, and did not esteem death inglorious, why do not we imitate His sufferings, and renounce on His account even our own life, with that patience which He gives us? For He did all for our sakes, but we do it for our own sakes: for He does not stand in need of us, but we stand in need of His mercy. He only requires the sincerity and readiness of our faith, as the Scripture says: "If thou beest righteous, what doest thou give to Him? or what will He receive at thy hand? Thy wickedness is to a man like thyself, and thy righteousness to a son of man."

That a Believer Ought Neither Rashly to Run into Danger Through Security, Nor to Be Over-Timorous Through Pusillanimity, But to Fly Away for Fear; Yet that If He Does Fall

into the Enemy's Hand, to Strive Earnestly, Upon Account of the Crown that is Laid Up for Him.

VI. Let us therefore renounce our parents, and kinsmen, and friends, and wife, and children, and possessions, and all the enjoyments of life, when any of these things become an impediment to piety. For we ought to pray that we may not enter into temptation; but if we be called to martyrdom, with constancy to confess His precious name, and if on this account we be punished, let us rejoice, as hastening to immortality. When we are persecuted, let us not think it strange; let us not love the present world, nor the praises which come from men, nor the glory and honour of rulers, according as some of the Jews wondered at the mighty works of our Lord, yet did not believe on Him, for fear of the high priests and the rest of the rulers: "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. But now, by confessing a good confession, we not only save ourselves, but we confirm those who are newly illuminated, and strengthen the faith of the catechumens. But if we remit any part of our confession, and deny godliness by the faintness of our persuasion, and the fear of a very short punishment, we not only deprive ourselves of everlasting glory, but we shall also become the causes of the perdition of others; and shall suffer double punishment, as affording suspicion, by our denial that that truth which we gloried in so much before is an erroneous doctrine.

Wherefore neither let us be rash and hasty to thrust ourselves into dangers, for the Lord says: "Pray that ye fall not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Nor let us, when we do fall into dangers, be fearful or ashamed of our profession. For if a person, by the denial of his own hope, which is Jesus the Son of God, should be delivered from a temporary death, and the next day should fall dangerously sick upon his bed, with a distemper in his bowels, his stomach, or his head, or any of the incurable diseases, as a consumption, or gangrene, or looseness, or iliac passion, or dropsy, or colic, and has a sudden catastrophe, and departs this life; is not he deprived of the things present, and loses those eternal? Or rather, he is within the verge of eternal punishment, "and goes into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. But let him who is vouchsafed the honour of martyrdom rejoice with joy in the Lord, as obtaining thereby so great a crown, and departing out of this life by his confession. Nay, though he be trot a catechumen, let him depart without trouble; for his suffering for Christ will be to him a more genuine baptism, because he does really die with Christ, but the rest only in a figure. Let him therefore rejoice in the imitation of his Master, since is it thus ordained: "Let every one be perfect, as his Master is.

Now his and our Master, Jesus the Lord, was smitten for our sake: He underwent reproaches and revilings with long-suffering. He was spit upon, He was smitten on the face, He was buffeted; and when He had been scourged, He was nailed to the cross. He had vinegar and gall to drink; and when He had fulfilled all things that were written, He said to His God and Father, "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit. Wherefore let him that desires to be His disciple earnestly follow His conflicts: let him imitate His patience, knowing that,

although he be burned in the fire by men, he will suffer nothing, like the three children; or if he does suffer anything, he shall receive a reward from the Lord, believing in the one and the only true God and Father, through Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, and Redeemer of our souls, and rewarder of our sufferings. To whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Several Demonstrations Concerning the Resurrection, Concerning the Sibyl, and What the Stoics Say Concerning the Bird Called the Phoenix.

VII. For the Almighty God Himself will raise us up through our Lord Jesus Christ, according to His infallible promise, and grant us a resurrection with all those that have slept from the beginning of the world; and we shall then be such as we now are in our present form, without any defect or corruption. For we shall rise incorruptible: whether we die at sea, or are scattered on the earth, or are torn to pieces by wild beasts and birds, He will raise us by His own power; for the whole world is held together by the hand of God. Now He says: "An hair of your head shall not perish. Wherefore He exhorts us, saying: "In your patience possess ye your souls. But as concerning the resurrection of the dead, and the recompense of reward for the martyrs, Gabriel speaks to Daniel: "And many of them that sleep shall arise out of the dust of the earth, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that understand shall shine as the sun, and as the firmament, and as the stars. Therefore the most holy Gabriel foretold that the saints should shine like the stars: for His sacred name did witness to them, that they might understand the truth. Nor is a resurrection only declared for the martyrs, but for all men, righteous and unrighteous, godly and ungodly, that every one may receive according to his desert.

For God, says the Scripture, "will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil. This resurrection was not believed by the Jews, when of old they said, "Our bones are withered, and we are gone. To whom God answered, and said: "Behold, I open your graves, and will bring you out of them; and I will put my Spirit into you, and ye shall live: and ye shall know that I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it. And He says by Isaiah: "The dead shall rise, and those that are in the graves shall be raised up. And those that rest in the earth shall rejoice, for the dew which is from Thee shall be healing to them. There are indeed many and various things said concerning the resurrection, and concerning the continuance of the righteous in glory, and concerning the punishment of the ungodly, their fall, rejection, condemnation, shame, "eternal fire, and endless worm. Now that, if it had pleased Him that all men should be immortal, it was in His power, He showed in the examples of Enoch and Elijah, while He did not suffer them to have any experience of death. Or if it had pleased Him in every generation to raise those that died, that this also He was able to do He hath made manifest both by Himself and by others; as when He raised the widow's son by Elijah, and the Shunammite's son by Elisha.

But we are persuaded that death is not a retribution of punishment, because even the saints have undergone it; nay, even the Lord of the saints, Jesus Christ, the life of them that believe, and the resurrection of the dead. Upon this account, therefore, according to the ancient practice, for those who live in the great city, after the combats He brings a dissolution for

a while, that, when He raises up every one, He may either reject him or crown him. For He that made the body of Adam out of the earth will raise up the bodies of the rest, and that of the first man, after their dissolution, (to pay what is owing to the rational nature of man; we mean the continuance in being through all ages. He, therefore, who brings on the dissolution, will Himself procure the resurrection. And He that said, "The Lord took dust from the ground, and formed man, and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul," added after the disobedience, "Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return; " the same promised us a resurrection afterwards.) For says He: "All that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. Besides these arguments, we believe there is to be a resurrection also from the resurrection of our Lord. For it is He that raised Lazarus, when he had been in the grave four days, and Jairus' daughter, and the widow's son.

It is He that raised Himself by the command of the Father in the space of three days, who is the pledge of our resurrection. For says He: "I am the resurrection and the life. Now He that brought Jonas in the space of three days, alive and unhurt, out of the belly of the whale, and the three children out of the furnace of Babylon, and Daniel out of the mouth of the lions, does not want power to raise us up also. But if the Gentiles laugh at us, and disbelieve our Scriptures, let at least their own prophetess Sibylla oblige them to believe, who says thus to them in express words:-

"But when all things shall be reduced to dust and ashes, And the immortal God who kindled the fire shall have quenched it, God shall form those bones and that ashes into a man again, And shall place mortal men again as they were before. And then shall be the judgment, wherein God will do justice, And judge the world again. But as many mortals as have sinned through impiety Shall again be covered under the earth; But so many as have been pious shall live again in the world. When God puts His Spirit into them, and gives those at once that are godly both life and favour, Then shall all see themselves."

If, therefore, this prophetess confesses the resurrection, and does not deny the restoration of all things, and distinguishes the godly from the ungodly, it is in vain for them to deny our doctrine. Nay, indeed, they say they can show a resemblance of the resurrection, while they do not themselves believe the things they declare: for they say that there is a bird single in its kind which affords a copious demonstration of the resurrection, which they say is without a mate, and the only one in the creation. They call it a phoenix, and relate that every five hundred years it comes into Egypt, to that which is called the altar of the sun, and brings with it a great quantity of cinnamon, and cassia, and balsam-wood, and standing towards the east, as they say, and praying to the sun, of its own accord is burnt, and becomes dust; but that a worm arises again out of those ashes, and that when the same is warmed it is formed into a new-born phoenix; and when it is able to fly, it goes to Arabia, which is beyond the Egyptian countries. If, therefore, as even themselves say, a resurrection is exhibited by the means of an irrational bird, wherefore do they vainly disparage our accounts, when we

profess that He who by His power brings that into being which was not in being before, is able to restore this body, and raise it up again after its dissolution?

For on account of this full assurance of hope we undergo stripes, and persecutions, and deaths. Otherwise we should to no purpose undergo such things if we had not a full assurance of these promises, whereof we profess ourselves to be the preachers. As, therefore, we believe Moses when he says, "In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth; " and we know that He did not want matter, but by His will alone brought those things into being which Christ was commanded to make; we mean the heaven, the earth, the sea, the light, the night, the day, the luminaries, the stars, the fowls, the fishes, and four-footed beasts, the creeping things, the plants, and the herbs; so also will He raise all men up by His will, as not wanting any assistance. For it is the work of the same power to create the world and to raise the dead. And then He made man, who was not a man before, of different parts, giving to him a soul made out of nothing. But now He will restore the bodies, which have been dissolved, to the souls that are still in being: for the rising again belongs to things laid down, not to things which have no being. He therefore that made the original bodies out of nothing, and fashioned various forms of them, will also again revive and raise up those that are dead.

For He that formed man in the womb out of a little seed, and created in him a soul which was not in being before,-as He Himself somewhere speaks to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the womb I knew thee; " and elsewhere, "I am the Lord who established the heaven, and laid the foundations of the earth, and formed the spirit of man in him," -will also raise up all men, as being His workmanship; as also the divine Scripture testifies that God said to Christ, His only-begotten, "Let us make man after our image, and after our likeness. And God made man: after the image of God made He him; male and female made He them. And the most divine and patient Job, of whom the Scripture says that it is written, that "he was to rise again with those whom the Lord raises up," speaks to God thus: "Hast not Thou milked me like milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. Having these things within me, I know that Thou canst do all things, and that nothing is impossible with Thee. Wherefore also our Saviour and Master Jesus Christ says, that "what is impossible with men is possible with God. And David, the beloved of God, says: "Thine hands have made me, and fashioned me. And again: "Thou knowest my frame. And afterward:

"Thou hast fashioned me, and laid Thine hand upon me. The knowledge of Thee is declared to be too wonderful for me; it is very great, I cannot attain unto it. "Thine eyes did see my substance, being yet imperfect; and all men shall be written in Thy book. Nay, and Isaiah says in his prayer to Him: "We are the clay, and Thou art the framer of us. If, therefore, man be His workmanship, made by Christ, by Him most certainly will he after he is dead be raised again, with intention either of being crowned for his good actions or punished for his transgressions. But if He, being the legislator, judges with righteousness; as He punishes

the ungodly, so does He do good to and saves the faithful. And those saints who for His sake have been slain by men, "some of them He will make light as the stars, and make others bright as the luminaries," as Gabriel said to Daniel. All we of the faithful, therefore, who are the disciples of Christ, believe His promises. For He that has promised it cannot lie; as says the blessed prophet David: "The Lord is faithful in all His words, and holy in all His works. For He that framed for Himself a body out of a virgin, is also the Former of other men. And He that raised Himself from the dead, will also raise again all that are laid down.

He who raises wheat out of the ground with many stalks from one grain, He who makes the tree that is cut down send forth fresh branches, He that made Aaron's dry rod put forth buds, will raise us up in glory; He that raised Him up that had the palsy whole, and healed him that had the withered hand, He that supplied a defective part to him that was born blind from clay and spittle, will raise us up; He that satisfied five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, and caused a remainder of twelve baskets, and out of water made wine, and sent a piece of money out of a fish's mouth by me Peter to those that demanded tribute, will raise the dead. For we testify all these things concerning Him, and the prophets testify the other.

We who have eaten and drunk with Him, and have been spectators of His wonder fill works, and of His life, and of His conduct, and of His words, and of His sufferings, and of His death, and of His resurrection from the dead, and who associated with Him forty days after His resurrection, and who received a command from Him to preach the Gospel to all the world, and to make disciples of all nations, and to baptize them into His death by the authority of the God of the universe, who is His Father, and by the testimony of the Spirit, who is His Comforter,-we teach you all these things which He appointed us by His constitutions, before "He was received up in our sight into heaven," to Him that sent Him. And if you will believe, you shall be happy; but if you will not believe, we shall be found innocent, and clear from your incredulity.

Concerning James the Brother of the Lord, and Stephen the First Martyr.

VIII. Now concerning the martyrs, we say to you that they are to be had in all honour with you, as we honour the blessed James the bishop, and the holy Stephen our fellow-servant. For these are reckoned blessed by God, and are honoured by holy men, who were pure from all transgressions, immoveable when tempted to sin, or persuaded from good works, without dispute deserving encomiums: of whom also David speaks, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His holy ones; " and Solomon says, "The memory of the just is with encomiums: " of whom also the prophet speaks, "Righteous men are taken away."

Concerning False Martyrs.

IX. These things we have said concerning those that in truth have been martyrs for Christ, but not concerning false martyrs, concerning whom the oracle speaks, "The name of the ungodly is extinguished." For "a faithful witness will not lie, but an unjust witness inflames lies." For he that departs this life in his testimony without lying, for the sake of the truth,

is a faithful martyr, worthy to be believed in such things wherein he strove for the word of piety by his own blood.

Sec. II.-All Association with Idols is to Be Avoided. — A Moral Admonition, that We are to Abstain from Vain Talking, Obscene Talking, Jesting, Drunkenness, Lasciviousness, and Luxury.

X. Now we exhort you, brethren and fellow-servants, to avoid vain talk and obscene discourses, and jestings, drunkenness, lasciviousness, luxury, unbounded passions, with foolish discourses, since we do not permit you so much as on the Lord's days, which are days of joy, to speak or act anything unseemly; for the Scripture somewhere says: "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling." Even your very rejoicings therefore ought to be done with fear and trembling: for a Christian who is faithful ought neither to repeat an heathen hymn nor an obscene song, because he will be obliged by that hymn to make mention of the idolatrous names of demons; and instead of the Holy Spirit, the wicked one will enter into him.

An Admonition Instructing Men to Avoid the Abominable Sin of Idolatry.

XI. You are also forbidden to swear by them, or to utter their abominable names through your mouth, and to worship them, or fear them as gods; for they are not gods, but either wicked demons or the ridiculous contrivances of men. For somewhere God says concerning the Israelites: "They have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods." And afterwards: "I will take away the names of your idols out of their mouth." And elsewhere: "They have provoked me to jealousy with them that are no gods; they have provoked me to anger with their idols." And in all the Scriptures these things are forbidden by the Lord God.

That We Ought Not to Sing an Heathen or an Obscene Song, Nor to Swear by an Idol Because It is an Impious Thing, and Contrary to the Knowledge of God.

XII. Nor do the legislators give us only prohibitions concerning idols, but also warn us concerning the luminaries, not to swear by them, nor to serve them. For they say: "Lest, when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, thou shouldest be seduced to worship them. And elsewhere: "Do not ye learn to walk after the ways of the heathen, and be not afraid of the signs of heaven. For the stars and the luminaries were given to men to shine upon them, but not for worship; although the Israelites, by the perverseness of their temper, "worshipped the creature instead of the Creator," and acted insultingly to their Maker, and admired the creature more than is fit. And sometimes they made a calf, as in the wilderness; sometimes they worshipped Baalpeor; another time Baal, and Thamuz, and Astarte of Sidon; and again Moloch and Chamos; another time the sun, as it is written in Ezekiel; nay, and besides, brute creatures, as among the Egyptians Apis, and the Mendesian goat, and gods of silver and gold, as in Judea. On account of all which things He threatened them, and said by the prophet: "Is it a small thing to the house of Judah to do these abominations which they have done? For they have filled the land with their wickedness, to provoke me to anger: and, behold, they arc as those that mock. And I will act with anger. Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have mercy;

and they shall cry in mine ears with a great voice, and I will not hearken unto them. Consider, beloved, how many things the Lord declares against idolaters, and the worshippers of the sun and moon. Wherefore it is the duty of a man of God, as he is a Christian, not to swear by the sun, or by the moon, or by the stars; nor by the heaven, nor by the earth, by any of the elements, whether small or great. For if our Master charged us not to swear by the true God, that our word might be firmer than an oath, nor by heaven itself, for that is a piece of heathen wickedness, nor by Jerusalem, nor by the sanctuary of God, nor the altar, nor the gift, nor the gilding of the altar, nor one's own head, for this custom is a piece of Judaic corruption, and on that account was forbidden; and if He exhorts the faithful that their yea be yea, and their nay, nay, and says that "what is more than these is of the evil one," how much more blameable are those who appeal to deities falsely so called as the objects of an oath, and who glorify imaginary beings instead of those that are real, whom God for their perverseness "delivered over to foolishness, to do those things that are not convenient!"

Sec. III.-On Feast Days and Fast Days. — A Catalogue of the Feasts of the Lord Which are to Be Kept, and When Each of Them Ought to Be Observed.

XIII. Brethren, observe the festival days; and first of all the birthday which you are to celebrate on the twenty-fifth of the ninth month; after which let the Epiphany be to you the most honoured, in which the Lord made to you a display of His own Godhead, and let it take place on the sixth of the tenth month; after which the fast of Lent is to be observed by you as containing a memorial of our Lord's mode of life and legislation. But let this solemnity be observed before the fast of the passover, beginning from the second day of the week, and ending at the day of the preparation. After which solemnities, breaking off your fast, begin the holy week of the passover, fasting in the same all of you with fear and trembling, praying in them for those that are about to perish.

Concerning the Passion of Our Lord, and What Was Done on Each Day of His Sufferings; And Concerning Judas, and that Judas Was Not Present When the Lord Delivered the Mysteries to His Disciples.

XIV. For they began to hold a council against the Lord on the second day of the week, in the first month, which is Xanthicus; and the deliberation continued on the third day of the week; but on the fourth day they determined to take away His life by crucifixion. And Judas knowing this, who for a long time had been perverted, but was then smitten by the devil himself with the love of money, although he had been long entrusted with the purse. and used to steal what was set apart for the needy, yet was he not cast off by the Lord, through much long-suffering; nay, and when we were once feasting with Him, being willing both to reduce him to his duty and instruct us in His own foreknowledge, He said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you will betray me; "and every one of us saying, "Is it I? " And the Lord being silent, I, who was one of the twelve, and more beloved by Him than the rest, arose up from lying in His bosom. and besought Him to tell who it should be that should betray Him. Yet neither then did our good Lord declare His name, but gave two signs of the betrayer: one by saying, "he that dippeth with me in the dish; "a second, "to whom I shall

give the sop when I have dipped it. Nay, although he himself said, ”Master, is it I? ”the Lord did not say Yes, but, ”Thou hast said.

And being willing to affright him in the matter, He said: ”Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for him if he had never been born. Who, when he had heard that, went his way, and said to the priests, What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they bargained with him for thirty pieces of silver. And the scripture was fulfilled, which said, ”And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the house of the potter. And on the fifth day of the week, when we had eaten the passover with Him, and when Judas had dipped his hand into the dish, and received the sop, and was gone out by night, the Lord said to us: ”The hour is come that ye shall be dispersed, and shall leave me alone; ” and every one vehemently affirming that they would not forsake Him, I Peter adding this promise, that I would even die with Him, He said, ”Verily I say unto thee, Before the cock crows, thou shall thrice deny that thou knowest me. And when He had delivered to us the representative mysteries of His precious body and blood, Judas not being present with us, He went out to the Mount of Olives, near the brook Cedron, where there was a garden; and we were with Him, and sang an hymn according to the custom.

And being separated not far from us, He prayed to His Father, saying: ”Father, remove this cup away from me; yet not my will, but Thine be done. And when He had done this thrice, while we out of despondency of mind were fallen asleep, He came and said: ”The hour is come, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. And behold Judas, and with him a multitude of ungodly men,” to whom he shows the signal by which he was to betray Him-a deceitful kiss. But they, when they had received the signal agreed on, took hold of the Lord; and having bound Him, they led Him to the house of Caiaphas the high priest, wherein were assembled many, not the people, but a great rout, not an holy council, but an assembly of the wicked and council of the ungodly, who did many things against Him, and left no kind of injury untried, spitting upon Him, cavilling at Him, beating Him, smiting Him on the face, reviling Him, tempting Him, seeking vain divination instead of true prophecies from Him, calling Him a deceiver, a blasphemer, a transgressor of Moses, a destroyer of the temple, a taker away of sacrifices, an enemy to the Romans, an adversary to Caesar. And these reproaches did these bulls and dogs in their madness cast upon Him, till it was very early in the morning, and then they lead Him away to Annas, who was father-in-law to Caiaphas;

and when they had done the like things to Him there, it being the day of the preparation, they delivered Him to Pilate the Roman governor, accusing Him of many and great things, none of which they could prove. Whereupon the governor, as out of patience with them, said: ”I find no cause against Him. But they bringing two lying witnesses, wished to accuse the Lord falsely; but they being found to disagree, and so their testimony not conspiring together, they altered the accusation to that of treason, saying, ”This fellow says that He is a king, and forbids to give tribute to Caesar. And themselves became accusers, and witnesses, and

judges, and authors of the sentence, saying, ”Crucify Him, crucify Him; ” that it might be fulfilled which is written by the prophets concerning Him, ”Unjust witnesses were gathered together against me, and injustice lied to itself; ” and again, ”Many dogs compassed me about, the assembly of the wicked laid siege against me; ” and elsewhere, ”My inheritance became to me as a lion in a wood, and has sent forth her voice against me. Pilate therefore, disgracing his authority by his pusillanimity, convicts himself of wickedness by regarding the multitude more than this just person, and bearing witness to Him that He was innocent, yet as guilty delivering Him up to the punishment of the cross, although the Romans had made laws that no man unconvicted should be put to death.

But the executioners took the Lord of glory and nailed Him to the cross, crucifying Him indeed at the sixth hour, but having received the sentence of His condemnation at the third hour. After this they gave to Him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall. Then they divided His garments by lot. Then they crucified two malefactors with Him, on each side one, that it might be fulfilled which was written: ”They gave me gall to eat, and when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink. And again: ”They divided my garment among themselves, and upon my vesture have they cast lots. And in another place: ”And I was reckoned with the transgressors. Then there was darkness for three hours, from the sixth to the ninth, and again light in the evening; as it is written: ”It shall not be day nor night, and at the evening there shall be light. All which things, when those malefactors saw that were crucified with Him the one of them reproached Him as though He was weak and unable to deliver Himself; but the other rebuked the ignorance of his fellow and turning to the Lord, as being enlightened by Him, and acknowledging who He was that suffered, he prayed that He would remember him in His kingdom hereafter. He then presently granted him the forgiveness of his former sins, and brought him into paradise to enjoy the mystical good things; who also cried out about the ninth hour, and said to His Father: ”My God! my God!

why hast Thou forsaken me? ” And a little afterward, when He had cried with a loud voice, ”Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” and had added, ”Into Thy hands I commit my spirit,” He gave up the ghost, and was buried before sunset in a new sepulchre. But when the first day of the week dawned He arose from the dead, and fulfilled those things which before His passion He foretold to us, saying: ”The Son of man must continue in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. And when He was risen from the dead, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, then to Cleopas in the way, and after that to us His disciples, who had fled away for fear of the Jews, but privately were very inquisitive about Him. But these things are also written in the Gospel.

Of the Great Week, and on What Account They Enjoin Us to Fast on Wednesday and Friday.

XV. He therefore charged us Himself to fast these six days on account of the impiety and transgression of the Jews, commanding us withal to bewail over them, and lament for their perdition. For even He Himself ”wept over them, because they knew not the time of their visitation. But He commanded us to fast on the fourth and sixth days of the week; the

former on account of His being betrayed, and the latter on account of His passion. But He appointed us to break our fast on the seventh day at the cock-crowing, but to fast on the Sabbath-day. Not that the Sabbath-day is a day of fasting, being the rest from the creation, but because we ought to fast on this one Sabbath only, while on this day the Creator was under the earth. For on their very feast-day they apprehended the Lord, thai that oracle might be fulfilled which says: "They placed their signs in the middle of their feast, and knew them not. Ye ought therefore to bewail over them, because when the Lord came they did not believe on Him, but rejected His doctrine, judging themselves unworthy of salvation. You therefore are happy who once were not a people, but are now an holy nation, delivered from the deceit of idols, from ignorance, from impiety, who once had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy through your hearty obedience: for to you, the converted Gentiles, is opened the gate of life, who formerly were not beloved, but are now beloved;

a people ordained for the possession of God, to show forth His virtues, concerning whom our Saviour said, "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest to them that asked not after me. I said, Behold me, to a nation which did not call upon my name. For when ye did not seek after Him, then were ye sought for by Him; and you who have believed in Him have hearkened to His call, and have left the madness of polytheism, and have fled to the true monarchy, to Almighty God, through Christ Jesus, and are become the completion of the number of the saved-"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; " as it is written in David, "A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand; " and again, "The chariots of God are by tens of thousands, and thousands of the prosperous. But unto unbelieving Israel He says: "All the day long have I stretched out mine hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people, which go in a way that is not good, but after their own sins, a people provoking me before my face."

An Enumeration of the Prophetical Predictions Which Declare Christ, Whose Completion Though the Jews Saw, Yet Out of the Evil Temper of Their Mind They Did Not Believe He Was the Christ of God, and Condemned the Lord of Glory to the Cross.

XVI. See how the people provoked the Lord by not believing in Him! Therefore He says: "They provoked the Holy Spirit, and He was turned to be their enemy. For blindness is cast upon them, by reason of the wickedness of their mind, because when they saw Jesus they did not believe Him to be the Christ of God, who was before all ages begotten of Him, His only-begotten Son, God the Word, whom they did not own through their unbelief, neither on account of His mighty works, nor yet on account of the prophecies which were written concerning Him. For that He was to be born of a virgin, they read this prophecy: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emanuel. "For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, whose government is upon His shoulders; and His name is called the Angel of His Great Council, the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Potentate, the Prince of Peace, the Father of the Future Age. Now, that because of their exceeding great wickedness they would not believe in Him, the Lord shows in these words: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

" And afterward: "Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross.

Wherefore knowledge was taken from them, because seeing they overlooked, and hearing they heard not. But to you, the converted of the Gentiles, is the kingdom given, because you, who knew not God, have believed by preaching, and "have known Him, or rather are known of Him," through Jesus, the Saviour and Redeemer of those that hope in Him. For ye are translated from your former vain and tedious mode of life and have contemned the lifeless idols, and despised the demons, which are in darkness, and have run to the "true light," and by it have "known the one and only true God and Father," and so are owned to be heirs of His kingdom. For since ye have "been baptized into the Lord's death," and into His resurrection, as "new-born babes," ye ought to be wholly free from all sinful actions; "for you are not your own, but His that bought you" with His own blood. For concerning the former Israel the Lord speaks thus, on account of their unbelief: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof; " that is to say, that having given the kingdom to you, who were once far estranged from Him, He expects the fruits of your gratitude and probity. For ye are those that were once sent into the vineyard, and did not obey, but these they that did obey; but you have repented of your denial, and you work therein now.

But they, being uneasy on account of their own covenants, have not only left the vineyard uncultivated, but have also killed the stewards of the Lord of the vineyard, -one with stones, another with the sword; one they sawed asunder, another they slew in the holy place, "between the temple and the altar; " nay, at last they "cast the Heir Himself out of the vineyard, and slew Him. And by them He was rejected as an unprofitable stone, but by you was received as the corner-stone. Wherefore He says concerning you: "A people whom I knew not have served me, and at the hearing of the ear have they obeyed me."

How the Passover Ought to Be Celebrated.

XVII. It is therefore your duty, brethren, who are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, to observe the days of the passover exactly, with all care, after the vernal equinox, lest ye be obliged to keep the memorial of the one passion twice in a year. Keep it once only in a year for Him that died but once. Do not you yourselves compute, but keep it when your brethren of the circumcision do so: keep it together with them; and if they err in their computation, be not you concerned. Keep your nights of watching in the middle of the days of unleavened bread. And when the Jews are feasting, do you fast and wail over them, because an the day of their feast they crucified Christ; and while they are lamenting and eating unleavened bread in bitterness, do you feast. But no longer be careful to keep the feast with the Jews, for we have now no communion with them; for they have been led astray in regard to the calculation itself, which they think they accomplish perfectly, that they may be led astray on every hand, and be fenced off from the truth. But do you observe carefully the vernal equinox, which occurs on the twenty-second of the twelfth month, which is Dystros (March), observing carefully until the twenty-first of the moon, test the fourteenth of the moon shall

fall on another week, and an error being committed, you should through ignorance celebrate the passover twice in the year, or celebrate the day of the resurrection of our Lord on any other day than a Sunday.

A Constitution Concerning the Great Passover Week.

XVIII. Do you therefore fast on the days of the passover, beginning from the second day of the week until the preparation, and the Sabbath, six days, making use of only bread, and salt, and herbs, and water for your drink; but do you abstain on these days from wine and flesh, for they are days of lamentation and not of feasting. Do ye who are able fast the day of the preparation and the Sabbath-day entirely, tasting nothing till the cock-crowing of the night; but if any one is not able to join them both together, at least let him observe the Sabbath-day; for the Lord says somewhere, speaking of Himself: "When the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, in those days shall they fast." In these days, therefore, He was taken from us by the Jews, falsely so named, and fastened to the cross, and "was numbered among the transgressors."

Concerning the Watching All the Night of the Great Sabbath, and Concerning the Day of the Resurrection.

XIX. Wherefore we exhort you to fast on those days, as we also fasted till the evening, when He was taken away from us; but on the rest of the days, before the day of the preparation, let every one eat at the ninth hour, or at the evening, or as every one is able. But from the even of the fifth day till cock-crowing break your fast when it is daybreak of the first day of the week, which is the Lord's day. From the even till cock-crowing keep awake, and assemble together in the church, watch and pray, and entreat God; reading, when you sit up all night, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, until cock-crowing, and baptizing your catechumens, and reading the Gospel with fear and trembling, and speaking to the people such things as tend to their salvation: put an end to your sorrow, and beseech God that Israel may be converted, and that He will allow them place of repentance, and the remission of their impiety; for the judge, who was a stranger, "washed his hands, and said, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. But Israel cried out, His blood be on us, and on our children. And when Pilate said, "Shall I crucify your king? they cried out, We have no king but Caesar: crucify Him, crucify Him; for every, one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. And, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend.

And Pilate the governor and Herod the king commanded Him to be crucified; and that oracle was fulfilled which says, "Why did the Gentiles rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ; " and, "They cast away the Beloved, as a dead man, who is abominable. And since He was crucified on the day of the Preparation, and rose again at break of day on the Lord's day, the scripture was fulfilled which saith, "Arise, O God; judge the earth: for Thou shalt have an inheritance in all the nations; " and again, "I will arise, saith the Lord; I will put Him in safety, I will wax bold through Him; " and," But Thou, Lord, have mercy upon me, and raise me up again, and I shall requite them. For this reason do you

also, now the Lord is risen, offer your sacrifice, concerning which He made a constitution by us, saying, "Do this for a remembrance of me; " and thenceforward leave off your fasting, and rejoice, and keep a festival, because Jesus Christ, the pledge of our resurrection, is risen from the dead. And let this be an everlasting ordinance till the consummation of the world, until the Lord come. For to Jews the Lord is still dead, but to Christians He is risen: to the former, by their unbelief; to the latter, by their full assurance of faith.

For the hope in Him is immortal and eternal life. After eight days let there be another feast observed with honour, the eighth day itself, on which He gave me Thomas, who was hard of belief, full assurance, by showing me the print of the nails, and the wound made in His side by the spear. And again, from the first Lord's day count forty days, from the Lord's day till the fifth day of the week, and celebrate the feast of the ascension of the Lord, whereon He finished all His dispensation and constitution, and returned to that God and Father that sent Him, and sat down at the right hand of power, and remains there until His enemies are put under His feet; who also will come at the consummation of the world with power and great glory, to judge the quick and the dead, and to recompense to every one according to his works. And then shall they see the beloved Son of God whom they pierced; and when they know Him, they shall mourn for themselves, tribe by tribe, and their wives apart.

A Prophetic Prediction Concerning Christ Jesus.

XX. For even now, on the tenth day of the month Gorpiaeus, when they assemble together, they read the Lamentations of Jeremiah, in which it is said, "The Spirit before our face, Christ the Lord was taken in their destructions; " and Baruch, in whom it is written, "This is our God; no other shall be esteemed with Him. He found out every way of knowledge, and showed it to Jacob His son, and Israel His beloved. Afterwards He was seen upon earth, and conversed with men. And when they read them, they lament and bewail, as themselves suppose, that desolation which happened by Nebuchadnezzar; but, as the truth shows, they unwillingly make a prelude to that lamentation which will overtake them. But after ten days from the ascension, which from the first Lord's day is the fiftieth day, do ye keep a great festival: for on that day, at the third hour, the Lord Jesus sent on us the gift of the Holy Ghost, and we were filled with His energy, and we "spake with new tongues, as that Spirit did suggest to us; " and we preached both to Jews and Gentiles, that He is the Christ of God, who is "determined by Him to be the Judge, of quick and dead. To Him did Moses bear witness, and said: "The Lord received fire from the Lord, and rained it down. Him did Jacob see as a man, and said: "I have seen God face to face, and my soul is preserved.

Him did Abraham entertain, and acknowledge to be the Judge, and his Lord. Him did Moses see in the bush; concerning Him did he speak in Deuteronomy: "A Prophet will the Lord your God raise up unto you out of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever He shall say unto you. And it shall be, that every soul that will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among his people. Him did Joshua the son of Nun see, as the captain of the Lord's host, in armour, for their assistance against Jericho; to whom he fell down, and worshipped, as a servant does to his master. Him Samuel knew

as the "Anointed of God," and thence named the priests and the kings the anointed. Him David knew, and sung an hymn concerning Him, "A song concerning the Beloved; " and adds in his person, and says, "Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Thou who art mighty in Thy beauty and renown: go on, and prosper, and reign, for the sake of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall guide Thee after a wonderful manner. Thy darts are sharpened, O Thou that art mighty; the people shall fall under Thee in the heart of the king's enemies. Wherefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. Concerning Him also spake Solomon, as in His person: "The Lord created me the beginning of His ways, for His works:

before the world He founded me, in the beginning before He made the earth, before the fountains of waters came, before the mountains were fastened; He begat me before all the hills. And again: "Wisdom built herself an house. Concerning Him also Isaiah said: "A Branch shall come out of the root of Jesse, and a Flower shall spring out of his root. And, "There shall be a root of Jesse; and He that is to rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles trust. And Zechariah says: " Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, just, and having salvation; meek, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. Him Daniel describes as "the Son of man coming to the Father," and receiving all judgment and honour from Him; and as "the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and becoming a great mountain, and filling the whole earth," dashing to pieces the many governments of the smaller countries, and the polytheism of gods, but preaching the one God, and ordaining the monarchy of the Romans. Concerning Him also did Jeremiah prophesy, saying: "The Spirit before His face, Christ the Lord, was taken in their snares: of whom we said, Under His shadow we shall live among the Gentiles. Ezekiel also, and the following prophets, affirm everywhere that He is the Christ, the Lord, the King, the Judge, the Lawgiver, the Angel of the Father, the only-begotten God.

Him therefore do we also preach to you, and declare Him to be God the Word, who ministered to His God and Father for the creation of the universe. By believing in Him you shall live, but by disbelieving you shall be punished. For "he that is disobedient to the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. Therefore, after you have kept the festival of Pentecost, keep one week more festival, and after that fast; for it is reasonable to rejoice for the gift of God, and to fast after that relaxation: for both Moses and Elijah fasted forty days, and Daniel for "three weeks of days did not eat desirable bread, and flesh and wine did not enter into his mouth. And blessed Hannah, when she asked for Samuel, said: "I have not drunk wine nor strong drink, and I pour out my soul before the Lord. And the Ninevites, when they fasted three days and three nights, escaped the execution of wrath. And Esther, and Mordecai, and Judith, by fasting, escaped the insurrection of the ungodly Holofernes and Haman. And David says: "My knees are weak through fasting, and my flesh faileth for want of oil. Do you therefore fast, and ask your petitions of God. We enjoin you to fast every fourth day of the week, and every day of the preparation, and the surplusage of your fast bestow upon the needy; every Sabbath-day excepting one, and every Lord's day, hold your solemn assemblies, and rejoice:

for he will be guilty of sin who fasts on the Lord's day, being the day of the resurrection, or during the time of Pentecost, or, in general, who is sad on a festival day to the Lord. For on them we ought to rejoice, and not to mourn.

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.