Commentary on Romans (part 1 of 2)

Origen of Alexandria (c. AD 185–253)

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PREFACE OF RUFINUS (to Heraclius, on Origen's Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans)

While I was minded, borne along in a small boat, to hug the shore of a calm coastline and to gather little fishes out of the pools of the Greeks, you compel me, brother Heraclius, to loose sail for the deep; and, laying aside the work I had in hand of translating the Homilies of the aged Adamantius, you urge that we should unfold in our own tongue those fifteen volumes of his in which he discussed Paul's Epistle to the Romans — in which, while he pursues the Apostle's meaning, he is carried off into so deep a sea that there is great fear for one who follows him thither, lest by the vastness of the thoughts he be overwhelmed as by the monstrous swell of the waves. And then you fail to see this also, that my breath is too slight to fill so magnificent a trumpet of speech as his. But beyond all the difficulties is this, that the books themselves have been tampered with. For in nearly everyone's libraries a certain number of volumes are missing from the body of the work itself (by what mischance is quite uncertain); and to supply these, and to give an unbroken sequence to the work in Latin, is not within my powers, but rather — as you believe, who make this demand — a matter perhaps of a divine gift.

You add moreover, that nothing may be wanting to my labors, that I should abridge this whole body of fifteen volumes, which in Greek ran out to some forty thousand lines or more, and compress it, if it can be done, to half its extent. Hard commands enough, and laid upon me as though by one who has no wish to know the weight of this work. Yet I shall set my hand to it, if perchance by the breath of your prayers what seem to me, as a man, impossible may be made possible. But now, if you think fit, let us hear Origen himself, and how he directs the preface of the work he has undertaken to his Lord.

PREFACE OF ORIGEN

That this Epistle written to the Romans is thought more difficult to understand than the other Epistles of the apostle Paul seems to me to happen for two reasons. One, that he sometimes uses expressions that are confused and less than explicit; the other, that he raises very many questions in it, and especially those upon which heretics are accustomed to lean in order to build up the claim that the cause of each person's deeds ought not to be referred to purpose but to a difference of nature; and from a few phrases of this Epistle they attempt to overturn the meaning of the whole of Scripture, which teaches that freedom of choice has been granted by God to man. On which account, first praying to God, who teaches man knowledge, and who gives through the Spirit the word of wisdom, and who enlightens every man coming into this world, that he may deign to make us worthy to understand parables, and obscure sayings, and the words of the wise and their riddles, we shall then at last take up the beginning of an exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, prefacing these things which are usually observed by the studious: that the Apostle appears in this Epistle to have been more perfect than in the others. For indeed, when he wrote the first to the Corinthians, he was in truth in great advances; yet he says something about himself as though wavering, when he says:

But I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become reprobate. But also, writing to the Philippians, he shows that there was still something less in himself of that perfection which he afterwards attained, when he says that he is being conformed to the death of Christ, if by any means he may attain to the resurrection which is from the dead. For he would not say "if by any means," if the matter then already seemed to him beyond doubt. But also in what follows in the same Epistle he shows these same things, when he says: Not that I have already obtained, or am already perfect; but I follow after, that I may lay hold of that in which I also have been laid hold of by Christ. Brethren, I do not reckon myself to have apprehended. But if anyone thinks this was said out of humility, let him see in what follows how great things he recalls concerning his own advances, when he says: But one thing, forgetting indeed those things which are behind, and stretching myself forward to those things which are ahead, according to my purpose I follow after, to the prize of the heavenly calling of God in Christ Jesus; and after this he says: Whoever therefore of us are perfect, let us be of this mind. In which he shows that perfection is twofold:

one, which lies in the fulfilling of the virtues, according to which he says that he is not perfect; and another, when a person so advances that he cannot fall away, nor look backward, according to which he was saying: Whoever therefore of us are perfect, let us be of this mind. How then will it be shown that he wrote the second to the Corinthians as one already more perfect than the first? From those things, without doubt, which are recorded as written in it, when he says: We suffer tribulation, but we are not straitened; we are perplexed (aporoumetha), but we

are not utterly at a loss (exaporoumetha); we suffer persecution, but we are not forsaken; we are cast down, but we do not perish; always carrying about the death of Jesus in our body, that the life of Jesus also may be made manifest in our body. He therefore who always carried about the death of Jesus in his body — in him assuredly the flesh never lusted against the spirit, but was subject to it, inasmuch as it had been mortified after the likeness of the death of Christ.

But if someone should say to us that these things do not seem probable, because there was not much time between the first Epistle and the second, one can also know it more evidently from this, that in the first Epistle he casts out the man who had been polluted by the crime of incest, and hands him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord, whereas in the second he now calls him back and associates him with the members of the Church. Which assuredly he would not do, unless with the passage of time he had perceived in him worthy fruits of repentance, and that his flesh had already undergone the destruction which the Apostle had appointed — dead, that is, to sin and to vices, so that at last he might live to God. Since therefore there was so great a span of time in which the incestuous sinner recovered the salvation of his spirit by a praiseworthy destruction of the flesh, how is it not to be thought that the Apostle by a far swifter course attained what is perfect? But let that have been his advance in those Epistles: how much more sublime and eminent he is when writing to the Romans, let us gather from the words of the Epistle itself, in which he says: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?

As it is written: For thy sake we are put to death all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. But in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am certain that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit. Does he seem to have spoken with the same sublimity of mind when he said: I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become reprobate, as when here he says: that in all these things we are more than conquerors; and: For I am certain that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, and the rest which he listed, shall be able to separate us from the love of God? These things, then, having been grasped by us, so far as we could, concerning his understanding, which is already more perfect in this Epistle, we shall also not absurdly give this further reminder, that he appears to write this Epistle from Corinth — both by many other indications, but more evidently from the fact that he says:

And I commend to you Phoebe our sister, a minister of the Church which is at Cenchreae. For Cenchreae is the name of a place near Corinth, indeed the port of Corinth itself. And from this, therefore, it appears to have been written from Corinth, and from the fact that he says: Gaius my host greets you: concerning which Gaius he makes mention when writing to the Corinthians, saying: I thank my God that I baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius. A similar indication is then given where he says: Erastus the treasurer of the city greets you: concerning which Erastus, when writing the second Epistle to Timothy, he said: Erastus remained at Corinth. From all of which there seem to be gathered most certain indications that it was written from Corinth. This indeed contributes not a little to the difficulty of understanding, that many things about the Law of Moses are woven together in this same Epistle: about the calling of the Gentiles, about Israel according to the flesh, and about the Israel which is not according to the flesh, about the circumcision of the flesh and of the heart, about the spiritual law and the law of the letter, about the law of the flesh and the law of the members, about the law of the mind and the law of sin, about the inner and the outer man — of which it may suffice to have mentioned each one in advance; for in these the contents of the Epistle seem to be held.

Now then, as far as the Lord deigns to open the way for us, let us hasten as quickly as we can to the exposition of it. The first question seems to arise for us concerning the name of Paul himself: why he who is called Saul in the Acts of the Apostles is now called Paul. We find in the divine Scriptures that the names of certain of the ancients were changed, so that from Abram he was called Abraham, from Sarai Sarah, and from Jacob Israel. In the Gospels too, from Simon came Peter, and the sons of Zebedee were named sons of thunder. But we read that these things were done at God’s command; nowhere, however, do we find that any such thing was done in Paul’s case. On which matter it has seemed to some that the Apostle took to himself the name of the proconsul Paulus, whom he had subjected to the faith of Christ in Cyprus, so that, just as kings are accustomed to be named — for example, ”Parthicus” from the Parthians they have conquered, and ”Gothicus” from the Goths — so also the Apostle, having subdued Paulus, was called Paul. Which we for our part do not think should be altogether dismissed. Nevertheless, because no such custom is detected in the divine Scriptures, let us rather seek a solution from those things which are in our own examples. We find, therefore, in the Scriptures that some used two names, and others even three: as Solomon, who was also Jedidiah;

Zedekiah, who was also Joachim; Uzziah, who was also Azariah; and very many others in the books of Kings or of Judges you will find called by two names. But neither indeed do the Gospels reject this same custom. For Matthew himself relates concerning himself that, when Jesus was passing by, he found a certain man sitting at the tax-booth, Matthew by name. But Luke says concerning the same man that, when Jesus was passing by, he saw a certain publican named Levi, and said to

him: Follow me. But the same Matthew also, in the catalogue of the apostles, says after many others: Matthew the publican, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, and Simon the Canaanite. But Mark relates thus: Matthew the publican, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus. This same man, whom Matthew set down as Lebbaeus, Mark set down as Thaddaeus. But Luke set it down thus: Matthew, Thomas, James, and Jude the son of James. Therefore the same man whom Matthew called Lebbaeus, and Mark Thaddaeus, Luke wrote of as Jude the son of James. And it is certain that the evangelists did not err in the names of the apostles; but because it was the custom of the Hebrews to use two or three names, each one set down different appellations of one and the same man. According to this custom, therefore, it seems to us that Paul too used a double name;

and that so long as he ministered properly to his own nation, he was called Saul, which also seemed more native to the designation of his homeland; but that he was called Paul when he writes laws and precepts for the Greeks and the Gentiles. For this very thing which Scripture says: But Saul, who is also Paul, evidently does not show that the name of Paul was then first imposed upon him, but indicates that it belonged to his older appellation. These things, omitted by the author of the work himself, we have, I think, not inappropriately set down in advance, since the beginning of the discussion seemed to demand it. The rest we shall now pursue from the body of the expositions, with such brevity as we can.

BOOK ONE

[§1] Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ. We have already spoken concerning Paul. Let us now inquire why he is called a servant, who elsewhere writes: For you have not received the spirit of servitude again in fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption, in which we cry: Abba, Father; and again: And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying: Abba, Father. And so he is now no longer a servant, but a son. How then, when he says even to those to whom he was preaching that a man is now no longer a servant but a son, does he himself profess to be a servant? Whether we suppose this to be said according to that humility which the Lord taught, saying: Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart, we shall not go astray. For by this the truth of the freedom in Paul is not injured. For he himself also says: For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all. He serves Christ, therefore, not in the spirit of servitude, but in the spirit of adoption, because the servitude of Christ is nobler than all freedom. Or whether he declares it as an imitator of him who had said: Behold, I am in the midst of you, not as one reclining at table, but as one who serves;

and of him who emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, so that, just as to those who are under the law he became himself under the law, and to those who are without the law he became himself without the law, so also he himself, for the sake of those who are still servants and not yet led through the spirit of adoption

into the freedom of sons, might become a servant — this will not appear contrary to reason. To this may also be added the fact that the same Apostle, writing to the Corinthians, and giving precepts concerning marriage or chastity, inserts as it were under another heading certain things about freedom and servitude, saying: Were you called as a servant? Care nothing for it: but even if you can become free, rather make use of it. For he who was called in the Lord as a servant is the Lord's freedman: likewise also he who was called free is the servant of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become the servants of men. These things certainly seem to some to have been inserted contrary to reason. For why, in precepts about marriage or chastity, is a mention of servitude and freedom taken up? But we understand Paul's meaning thus, that he calls a servant the man who is bound by the conjugal condition: because the woman does not have power over her own body, but her husband; and the man does not have power over his own body, but his wife.

On account of which he also says in other places concerning them, that a brother or a sister is not made subject to servitude in such matters — meaning, that is, that in other matters he knew them to be subject to servitude. There is, then, a servant who is called, who, being placed in wedlock, comes to Christ, to whom it is said: Were you called as a servant? Let it not concern you: but even if you can become free, rather make use of it; because among spouses the freedom of continence in the one begets for the other a peril to chastity. For they ought not, except by consent, to be free for prayer for a time, and again they must return to the same, lest Satan tempt them because of their incontinence. He, therefore, who has been called a servant by reason of the bond of marriage, is the Lord's freedman. For a freedman is neither wholly free nor wholly a servant. If in the other virtues he has been free, if he has held to the freedom of faith, of patience, of mercy, of justice, he is called the Lord's freedman, inasmuch as he is free by reason of the virtues of his soul, and a servant by reason of conjugal necessity. But free is he who, without a wife, through the purity of continence, comes to Christ — who nevertheless becomes the servant of Christ, since he wholly serves the virtues. Paul therefore, as some relate, was called along with a wife;

concerning whom he says, writing to the Philippians: I ask you also, true yokefellow, help them: he, since he was made free from her by consent, names himself the servant of Christ. But if, as it seems to others, he was without a wife, nonetheless he who was called free is the servant of Christ. And what is it to be a servant of Christ, except to be a servant of the word of God, of wisdom, of justice, of truth, and of absolutely all the virtues, all of which Christ is? But let us also, if it seems good, add this in this place: that just as the knowledge which is now given to the saints is given through a glass and in an enigma, and prophecy, and the rest of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so also the freedom which is now bestowed upon the saints is not yet full freedom, but as it were through a glass, and in an enigma; and therefore the

saints say that they are servants, in comparison with that freedom which is granted face to face. For who, being placed in the flesh, can attain complete freedom, so that he no longer serves the flesh in anything? Just as neither can anyone placed in the body have the adoption of sons wholly. And would that at least this could be obtained in the life of mortals, that a man might become wholly a servant of Christ:

and not of flesh, not of blood, not of vainglory, not of desire, not of avarice, not of anger, not of envy; but that he might serve Christ alone, that is, all the virtues together. So much concerning that which is written: Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.

[§2] Called an apostle. This name, that is, called, since it pertains to all who believe in Christ, can seem general; but each one, according to that which God foresaw and chose in him, is called either an apostle, or a prophet, or a teacher, or free from a wife, or a servant in a marriage; and according to the diversity of grace there is fulfilled that which is written: Many are called, but few are chosen. Yet it must be known that it is possible for someone to be a called apostle, or a called prophet, or a called teacher, and, if he neglects the grace of his calling, to fall away from it: just as also Judas, who was called an apostle, and, neglecting the grace of his calling, from an apostle became a betrayer. He was indeed a called apostle, but he was not a chosen apostle. Moreover that prophet also who in the third book of Kingdoms is reported to have prophesied concerning Jeroboam was a called prophet; but whether he was also chosen, do you yourself examine, since indeed, having been forbidden to eat bread in Israel, he ate, and was slain by a lion. There are also many called teachers throughout all the Churches of God, and called ministers; but I do not know which among these are chosen teachers and chosen ministers. So too I think that there are some indeed called to suffer for Christ, yet not chosen; that is, called martyrs, but not chosen martyrs:

such as those who, after the contests of tortures and of prisons, did not persevere to the end in the endurance of confession. There is also a called virgin, but not a chosen virgin; namely, one who has not been holy in body and spirit. And there is a called shepherd, but not a chosen shepherd, who indeed presides over the flock, and uses its milk, and is clothed with its wool; but does not seek out the weak, and does not gather the lame, and hems in the strong with labor. So too there is a called abstinent, but not a chosen abstinent, namely one who fasts with a sad face, and disfigures his countenance that he may please men. But through each of the grades of graces likewise you will find many indeed called, but few chosen.

[§3] Set apart for the Gospel of God. In Paul […] not the general calling alone to the apostolate is designated, but also the election immediately following according to God’s foreknowledge, through this that he is said to be set apart for the Gospel of God; just as elsewhere he himself says of himself: But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother’s womb, that he might reveal his Son in me. Which nevertheless the heretics turn into a calumny, saying that he was set apart from

[…] In the third place this must be examined: Set apart for the Gospel of God (Rom. 1, 1): and in the Epistle to the Galatians the Apostle declares these things about himself (Galat. 1, 15): But when it pleased him, who set me apart from my mother's womb, that he might reveal his Son in me. But these words those who do not understand foreknowledge so interpret as though predetermination were the cause why the things foreknown come to pass; and for this reason they introduce certain people as saved by their nature and condition. Some from those words take away from us freedom of choice, and they use also these words of the psalm: Sinners are estranged from the womb (Psal. lvii, 4, 5), by which [they argue that Paul was set apart] together with his mother's womb, for this reason, that the goodness of nature was in him;

just as, on the contrary, concerning those who are of an evil nature it is said in the Psalms that sinners are set apart from the womb. But we say that neither was Paul chosen by chance or by a difference of nature, but that he gave the causes of his election in himself to him who knows all things before they come to pass; nor are the sinners who are separated from the belly separated by the injustice of the judge, and it is permissible to meet [the objection] with a question; for it is written: Sinners are estranged from the womb, they have gone astray from the belly of their mother, they have spoken false things: their fury is according to the likeness of the serpent. And we shall ask of those who take those words as plain, whether the sinners who are estranged from the womb, as soon as they came forth from the maternal womb, went astray, and were led away from the way of salvation by some act of their own. But how did sinners estranged from the womb go astray from their mother's belly, and speak false things? For they will not show that these, as soon as they were born, uttered a true and full voice, bringing forth something false.

But if we look at those things which are said about predetermination in this Epistle which we are expounding, we shall be able — once those things are demolished by which simpler folk are drawn over to the opinion of him who accuses the divine teaching of injustice — to answer concerning him who destines from the mother's womb, and who sets apart Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ, called an apostle, for the Gospel of God. These are the words (Rom. viii, 28, following): We know that to those who love him all things work together for good, to those who are called according to his purpose, because those whom he foreknew, these he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he himself might be the firstborn among many brethren. And those whom he predestined, these he also called: and those whom he called, these he also justified: and those whom he justified, these he also glorified. Let us therefore attend to the sequence of the statements. God justifies those whom he first called: but he did not justify those whom he did not call: and he calls before the calling those predestined, whom he would not have called unless he had predestined them; nor is predestination itself the beginning

of their justification and calling. For if this were the beginning of the things which follow, doubtless those would prevail who introduce the absurd doctrine of nature: but before predestination there is foreknowledge:

For those whom, he says, he foreknew, these he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. God therefore, who looked ahead upon the sequence of things to come, and knew the inclination of our freedom, and the impulse and affection of some toward piety following upon this inclination, and that these would give themselves wholly to virtue, foreknew them: knowing indeed things present, but foreknowing things future; and those whom he thus foreknew as about to be conformed to the image of his Son, he predestined. The Son of God, therefore, is the image of the invisible God, and the image of this one is that which is called the image of the Son of God, which we judge to be that human soul which the Son of God assumed, made an image through the power of the image of God. And to this — which we hold to be the image of the image of the Son of God — God predestined those to become conformed whom through his foreknowledge concerning them he predestined. Therefore God's foreknowledge is not to be reckoned the cause of things to come: but because it was going to be according to the proper impulses and affections of the doer, therefore he foreknew it, who knows all things before their coming to be (Dan. xiii, 42); some he foreknew and predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, others he saw as estranged.

But if to these things someone objects, whether it can happen that those things not be which God foreknew would be such: we shall answer that it cannot happen that they do not come to pass; but not for this reason, because it cannot happen that they do not come to pass, is it necessary that they not come to pass, or that they come to pass. For they happen by no means out of necessity, but it can also happen that they do not happen. But this topic concerning things that are able to happen requires acuteness and clear-sightedness of reason and understanding, so that one who has wiped clean the eye of his mind, having attained the subtlety of the demonstrations, may be able to understand how even in the smallest matters there is no hindrance—

Finally, see at once in what follows what the divine word says about these. For it is written: Sinners are estranged from the womb, they have gone astray from the belly, they have spoken false things (Ps. 57, 4). If we understand how, as soon as they come forth from their mother's belly, sinners have gone astray or have spoken false things, we understand equally that the just are set apart from the belly. Therefore, as to Paul's being called both "separated unto the Gospel" and separated from his mother's womb, he who is not ignorant of the mind saw in him the causes and the merits for which he ought to be separated unto this. For he foresaw that he would labor in the Gospel more abundantly than all the rest; that in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in perils of robbers, perils of rivers,

perils of the sea, he would preach the Gospel of Christ, knowing that woe would be to him if he did not preach the Gospel; and that he would chastise his body and bring it into subjection, lest by chance, when he had preached to others, he himself should become a castaway. Foreseeing therefore these things in him from his mother's womb, and many others like them, Jesus for their sake separated him unto the Gospel.

For if, as the heretics suppose, he had been chosen either by the uncertainty of chance or by the prerogative of a better nature, he would surely never have feared that, if he held the reins of his body more loosely, it might come about that he should be made a castaway, or that woe would be his if he ceased to preach the Gospel. Finally, he himself, discoursing more fully in what follows, says that whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son (Rom. 8, 29), plainly showing that those whom God foreknew would be such as to conform themselves to Christ in his sufferings, these same he also predestinated to be conformable and like to his image and to his glory. Therefore God's foreknowledge goes first, by which are known those who will have labors and virtues in themselves, and so predestination follows; nor again, however, is foreknowledge to be thought the cause of predestination. For that which among men is weighed as merit from each one's past deeds, this among God is judged from things future; and he is exceedingly impious who does not so believe God in this, that what we see in things past, he sees in things to come. Separated, he says, unto the Gospel of God. In other places of Scripture they say it is the Gospel of Christ, as the evangelist Mark also writes: The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Isaias the prophet (Marc. 1, 1-2).

But since Christ is the Word, and in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (Joan. 1, 1), it is one and the same thing to say "the Gospel of God" and "the Gospel of Christ" — or because the Lord himself says that I and the Father are one (Joan. 10, 30); and again he says to the Father: All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them (Joan. 17, 10). Therefore the Gospel of the Father is also the Gospel of the Son. But Paul also says: My Gospel, which I preach among the Gentiles (cf. Rom. 2, 16; Gal. 2, 2); which perhaps he says as a co-heir of Christ, and as one who is a co-heir in the Gospel, since elsewhere too he says that the Gospel belongs to very many, as to the Galatians: But if our Gospel also be veiled (II Cor. 4, 3); ours, that is, of all of us who are co-heirs of Christ. But also according to this, that he himself is its preacher, Paul rightly says the Gospel is his own. Which he had promised before by his prophets in the holy Scriptures.

Whether the Gospel promised by God through the prophetic Scriptures ought to be taken simply, or by way of distinction from that other Gospel which John in the Apocalypse calls eternal (Apoc. 14, 6) — which is then to be revealed when the

shadow has passed away and the truth has come, and when death has been swallowed up and eternity restored — consider you also, you who read. To which eternal Gospel those eternal years too will seem to correspond, of which the Prophet says: And I had the eternal years in mind (Ps. 76, 6). And to it can be joined also that book of life in which the names of the saints are said to be written; and likewise those books which in Daniel, when the judgment sat, were opened (Dan. 7, 10); or those which in the prophet Ezechiel are said to be written within and without (Ezech. 2, 9) — all of which are recorded as written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God (cf. II Cor. 3, 3). Concerning these matters, although it may seem hazardous to commit discourse to paper, nevertheless the sayings of the wise and their riddles are not to be passed over idly, but are to be contemplated with a very fine edge of mind, so far as the subject allows, as though through some mirror:

lest perchance he who, the Word made flesh, appeared to those set in the flesh — as the Apostle says, that he was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, appeared to angels (I Tim. 3, 16) — lest, I say, in this that he appeared to angels, he appeared to them without a Gospel; even as not to us men either, to whom he says he was sent to preach the Gospel to the poor, to release the captives unto remission, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Luc. 4, 18-19). If therefore, when he appeared to us men, he did not appear without a Gospel, the consequence seems to show that neither did he appear to the angelic order without a Gospel — that one, perhaps, which we have shown above to be the eternal Gospel mentioned by John. But whether some such thing was done by him also among the remaining heavenly orders, appearing to them in that form in which each several one exists, and announcing peace, since indeed through the blood of his cross he made peace not only for the things that are on earth, but also for the things that are in heaven (Coloss. 1, 20) — this too do you examine with yourself. Which he promised by his prophets in the holy Scriptures.

What things were foretold by the prophets concerning Christ, these are to be understood as foretold concerning the Gospel also, although the evangelist Mark seems to make a distinction between Christ and the Gospel, when he says: Whosoever shall leave father and mother, etc., for my sake, or for the Gospel's sake (Marc. 10, 29). And even if the promises of the Gospel are to be sought properly, you will find them abundantly in the prophets, as is that saying: The Lord shall give the word to them that preach the Gospel with great power (Ps. 67, 12); and: How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of good things (Isa. 52, 7; Rom. 10, 15). To this also looks the saying: Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world (Ps. 18, 5); and: His word runneth swiftly (Ps. 147, 15); and also: Behold, I send many shepherds, and many hunters, and they shall take them upon every mountain and upon every hill (Jer. 16, 16). Through Jeremias there is promised concerning the Gospel that which Paul

now says, namely that God promised through his prophets in the holy Scriptures concerning his Son.

[§5] Who is the Son, according to the flesh indeed, from the seed of David. He was made, without doubt, according to the flesh that which before he was not. But according to the Spirit he was before, and there was not a time when he was not. For it must be observed that he does not say: Who was predestined the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of sanctification; but, Who was destined the Son of God. And let no one think that we are examining this expression more curiously than the matter allows. For although in the Latin copies ”predestined” is customarily found, nevertheless according to what the truth of the interpretation holds, ”destined” is written, not ”predestined. For he who is is destined, but he who is not yet is predestined, as are those of whom the Apostle says: But whom he foreknew, them he also predestined. Therefore those who are not yet can be foreknown and predestined; but he who is, and always is, is not predestined, but destined. Let these things be said by us on account of those who speak impiety against the only-begotten Son of God, and, being ignorant of the difference between ”destined” and ”predestined,” suppose that he is to be numbered among those who, since they did not exist before, were predestined that they should exist — he who was never predestined to be the Son, but always was and is, just as the Father also is.

He therefore who always is, is destined, as we have said, not predestined; but he who is predestined was not yet at the time when he was being predestined, but began from time. The Apostle therefore uses a necessary distinction, saying that he who is from the seed of David according to the flesh was made; but him whom he names the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of sanctification, destined. And indeed, when he had said ”Son of God,” he added not superfluously, ”in power,” indicating by this that he is Son in substance according to the Spirit of sanctification. For Christ is called the power of God and the wisdom of God, who is also called the breath of the power of God, and the purest emanation of the glory of the Almighty, and the brightness of eternal light, and the image of the goodness of God. But the question is raised: if that which is born of the seed of David is according to the flesh, but that which is destined in power according to the Spirit of sanctification is the Son of God and is in the substance of God, how is it to be understood concerning the soul of Jesus, which here is by no means named along with the flesh and the Spirit of sanctification or the substance of the divine power — the soul concerning which the Savior himself says elsewhere that my soul is sorrowful even unto death; and: Now is my soul troubled;

the soul which he also laid down of himself, indeed which descended even to hell, concerning which it is also said: You will not abandon my soul in hell. For it is certain that this was not begotten from the seed of David. For he says that what was made from the seed of David is according to the flesh. Since therefore it seems

to be reckoned neither in that which is according to the flesh, nor in that wherein the Son of God is destined in power according to the Spirit of sanctification, I think that the Apostle employs his customary usage in this place also, knowing that the soul is always midway between the spirit and the flesh, and either joins itself to the flesh and becomes one with the flesh, or associates itself with the spirit and is one with the spirit — from which, if indeed it be with the flesh, men become carnal; but if with the spirit, spiritual. And for that reason he does not name it separately, but only the flesh, or the spirit; for he knows that the soul necessarily cleaves to one of these, as also in those to whom he says: But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit; and: He who joins himself to a harlot is one body (here calling the flesh or the body a harlot), but he who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit.

So therefore also now, knowing concerning the soul of Jesus that, being associated with the Lord and cleaving to him, it has been made one Spirit of sanctification with him, he did not name it separately, lest he should dissolve Jesus: For what God has joined together, let not man separate. But he is called the Spirit of sanctification according to this, that he furnishes holiness to all, as also is written elsewhere concerning him: Who was made for us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. But certain persons meet us, raising most bitter questions: how Christ can be seen to descend from the seed of David, since it is agreed that he was not born from Joseph, into whom the line of the generation descending from David is brought down. Although it is troublesome to meet these objections according to the reasoning of the letter, nevertheless it is answered by our people that Mary, who, having been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit, was without doubt joined according to the law to a man of her own tribe and kindred.

And although it is said to her by the angel that Elizabeth also, your kinswoman, will herself likewise bear a son in her old age (and Elizabeth is said to be of the daughters of Aaron), nevertheless it is affirmed by our people that the name of kinship can suitably be applied not only to those of the same tribe, but also to all who are of the race of Israel, in relation to one another, as also the same Apostle says of all together: Who are my kinsmen according to the flesh. These things indeed, and others like them, are answered; but how valid they are against the assertions of those who press us from the testimonies of the Scriptures, do you who read judge for yourself. To us, however, these things seem rather to be understood according to the spiritual or allegorical reasoning, according to which it is no obstacle even that Joseph is called the father of Christ, though he is in no way his father; because in the generations also it is reported by Matthew that Josaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Ozias; but in the fourth book of Kings it is written that Joram begot Ochozias, and Ochozias begot Joas, and Joas begot Amasias, and Amasias begot Azarias — the very one who is sometimes named Ozias; and Azarias begot Joatham.

This Ozias therefore, who is also Azarias, although in the fourth book of Kings he is said to be the son of Amasias, is written by Matthew as the son of Joram, three generations in between being passed over. The discussion of this matter, it is certain, rests not upon the history, but upon the spiritual understanding; which is not now to be knocked at by us in passing, for it will be touched upon in its own place. Meanwhile it suffices for us to answer those who oppose us, that just as Jesus is said to be the son of Joseph, from whom he was not begotten, and Ozias begotten from Joram, from whom he was not begotten, so also Christ can be understood as from the seed of David according to the flesh, so that whatever reasoning or assertion they have brought forward regarding Joram and regarding Joseph, this we say must be accepted regarding David also.

[§6] From the resurrection of the dead of Jesus Christ our Lord. In what way indeed he who is said according to the flesh to have been made of the seed of David is Son of God from the resurrection of the dead, it is not difficult to perceive for one who has read that which is written: For it was fitting that he through whom are all things, and in whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, should perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. Now the end of Christ's sufferings is the resurrection; and because after the resurrection he dies no more, death shall no longer have dominion over him; and again it is said that, even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him so no longer, and therefore all that is in Christ is now already Son of God. But in what way this too is to be referred to him who was destined Son of God in power — this constrains our understanding, save that through the indissoluble unity of the Word and the flesh all things that belong to the flesh are ascribed also to the Word, just as the things that belong to the Word are also predicated of the flesh. But "Jesus" and "Christ" and "Lord" we find often referred to both natures alike, as in that passage: One Lord of ours, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things; and:

For if they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of majesty. Christ, then, is called the first-fruits, or the firstborn, from the dead. But we must inquire whether he alone is firstborn or first-fruits from the dead, and has none who share with him also in that primacy of first-fruits — those concerning whom the Apostle says that he raised us up together with Christ, and made us sit together in the heavenly places. Perhaps, then, these also whom he says were raised up with Christ, and sit with him in the heavenly places, are themselves firstborn, or first-fruits from the dead, just as those also were who are said to have risen with him, when the tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints appeared and entered into the city of the saints. And of such as these perhaps the Apostle says that there is that Church of the first-fruits which he records as enrolled in the heavens.

[§7] Through whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all the nations for his name. He says that through Christ he received

grace and apostleship, inasmuch as Christ is the mediator of God and men. Grace and apostleship: grace is to be referred to endurance in labors; apostleship to the authority of preaching, since Christ himself is called an apostle, that is, one sent by the Father, seeing that he says he was sent to preach the gospel to the poor. Because, therefore, what is his own he gives also to his disciples. Grace is said to be poured out upon his lips. He gives to his apostles also grace, laboring with which they may say: I have labored more abundantly than all of them: yet not I, but the grace of God with me. And because it was said of him: Having therefore Christ, the High Priest and Apostle of our confession, he grants to his disciples the dignity of apostleship, so that they too are made apostles of God. For the nations, which were strangers to the covenant of God and to the manner of life of Israel, could not have believed the Gospel except through the grace which had been given to the apostles, through which, as the apostles preach, the nations are said to obey unto faith; and into all the earth the sound of their grace concerning the name of Christ is recorded to have gone forth, so that it reached even those who are at Rome, to whom the Apostle says: Among whom are you also, the called of Jesus Christ. Paul is called an apostle by calling, and the Romans are indeed called, yet not apostles, but called saints, unto the obedience of faith. But concerning the diversity of those who are called we have already spoken above.

[§8] To all who are at Rome, beloved of God, grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. This blessing of peace and grace, which the apostle Paul gives to the beloved of God to whom he writes, I think is not less than was the blessing of Noah upon Shem and upon Japheth, which was fulfilled through the Spirit toward those who were blessed; and likewise that in which Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek, and Jacob by his father Isaac, and the twelve patriarchs who are blessed by their father Israel; or the blessing of Moses, with which he blessed the twelve tribes of Israel. I do not, then, judge this blessing of the Apostle, with which he blessed the Churches of Christ, inferior to all these. For he too says of himself: For I think that I also have the Spirit of God. In the Spirit of God, therefore, the Apostle writes, and in the Spirit he blesses. Through that same Spirit, then, those who are blessed by the Apostle receive the blessings — if, that is, they are found worthy for his blessing to come upon them. Otherwise that will happen which is written: If there be there a son of peace, your peace shall come upon him; but if not, your peace shall return to you. What is written, therefore, concerning peace will hold also for grace, since he joins grace together with peace.

Yet it must be known that this custom of writing is not preserved by the Apostle toward all the Churches. For to the Corinthians indeed, in the first and second epistles, and to the Galatians, and to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians, he writes in like manner. But to the Colossians he says, Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and does not add, and our Lord Jesus Christ. To the Thessalonians the first epistle has thus: Grace to you and peace, and nothing further. But in

the second: Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. To Timothy, the first and the second: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord. But to Titus: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Savior. And although an observation of this kind may seem overly curious, nevertheless one who believes that nothing in the divine Scriptures is idle will judge that even these differences and diversities are not empty.

[§9] First indeed I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is announced in the whole world. Since, when writing to certain people, the Apostle says that he gives thanks for them all, as also now to the Romans; but when writing to others he does indeed give thanks, yet does not add, for all — if you observe carefully you will find that where he says that he gives thanks for all, he does not press upon them any grave faults or reproaches; but where he censures or convicts certain persons, he does not add to the thanksgiving that he gives thanks for all, as in the letters to the Corinthians or to the Colossians. To the Galatians, however, he does not set down any thanksgiving at all, since he marvels that they are so quickly transferred from him who called them to another Gospel. The first utterance, therefore, begins from thanksgiving. And to give thanks to God is to offer the sacrifice of praise; and for this reason he adds, Through Jesus Christ, as through the great High Priest. For he who wishes to offer a sacrifice to God must know that he ought to offer it through the hands of the high priest. But this too, that he said, To my God, is not to be taken idly. For this utterance can belong to none but the saints, whose God he is called, as the God of Abraham, or of Isaac, or of Jacob.

He cannot call the Lord his God whose God is the belly, or whose God is avarice, or whose God is the glory of the age and the pomp of the world, or the power of perishable things. For whatever anyone worships above all else, that is his God. But let us see for what the Apostle gives thanks to his God. Because, he says, your faith is announced in the whole world. If we take ”in the whole world” simply, this seems to designate that in many places of the world — that is, of this earth — the faith and religion of those who are at Rome is proclaimed. But if, as in some passages, in this place too ”world” designates that which consists of heaven and earth and all things that are in them, then this also can be understood: that the powers, of whom it is said that they have joy over one sinner doing penance, much more rejoice also over the conversion and faith of the Romans, since those angels announce it to them who ascend and descend to the Son of man. For they too marvel at the conversion of the Gentiles, and that the sound of the apostles of Christ Jesus has gone out into all the earth. Finally, beholding also their contests in this world, they rejoice, as the Apostle says: For we are made a spectacle to this world, and to angels, and to men. Yet it can also be understood thus:

that this faith which the Romans have is the very same, and not another, than that which is announced and believed in the whole world, by which it is preached not only on earth but also in the heavens: because Jesus made peace through his blood not only for the things which are on earth, but also for those which are in heaven; and at his name bend the knee not only things earthly, but also heavenly and infernal. And this is for faith to be preached in the whole world, through which the whole world may be made subject to God. It must certainly be observed that to this which he said, first indeed, he did not render, for instance, so as to say: But secondly; but it is as we said before concerning less finished forms of expression — unless perhaps it seems to be rendered where he says: But I would not have you ignorant, brethren.

[§10] For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit, in the Gospel of his Son. God is a witness to his saints, because they too are witnesses of God, according to what the prophet says: You shall be my witnesses, and I am a witness, says the Lord. But the Savior also says to the disciples: You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Samaria, and in all the ends of the earth, according to that which is written: He who shall confess in me, I also will confess in him before my Father. But let us see what it is that he says, whom I serve in my spirit. To serve in the spirit seems to me to be like — indeed, something even greater than — to worship in the spirit, as the Lord himself said to the Samaritan woman: The hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. But Paul not only worships in the spirit, but also devotedly serves in the spirit. For one can worship even without affection; but devoted service belongs to him whom affection binds fast. The Apostle therefore devotedly serves God, not in the body, nor in the soul, but in the better part of himself, that is, in the spirit. For he indicates that these three are in man when writing to the Thessalonians, when he says: That your whole body, and soul, and spirit may be preserved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And Daniel says: Praise the Lord, you spirits and souls of the just. The Apostle therefore everywhere prefers the spirit, and rejects the flesh or the things which are of the flesh. Finally he praises the spirit of the law itself; but the letter he spurns as though it were flesh, when he says: The letter kills, but the spirit gives life. And also when he says: For in that wherein the law was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh — by the flesh of the law he means, without doubt, the letter of the law. For through the letter the law was made weak, so that it could not be fulfilled. For who could fulfill even what is written concerning the Sabbath: You shall not move from your place on the day of the Sabbath (for how could it come about that anyone should not move at all from his place on the day of the Sabbath?), or the laws concerning leprosy arising in the warp, or in a wall, or in a skin, and a thousand other things in which, according to the letter as according to the flesh, the law was made weak? For this reason

therefore the Apostle says that the law is spiritual. He, then, who understands the law to be spiritual, this man serves God in the spirit. Whence he says elsewhere: For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die — that is, according to the letter which kills;

but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live. It must indeed be asked whether the ancient fathers also, the patriarchs or the prophets, who were themselves also perfect, are to be believed to have served God in the spirit; for Abraham too desired to see the day of the Lord, and saw it, and rejoiced; and Moses and Elijah appeared in glory speaking with Jesus on the mountain. In which it is shown that the Law and the Prophets are in harmony with the Gospels, and shine forth in the same glory of spiritual sight and understanding. 11. How without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, beseeching that if by any means at length at some time I may have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come to you. In that he says that without ceasing he prays for those to whom he writes, mindful of his own command he fulfills in deed what he enjoins in word. But since he says that he beseeches that if by any means at length at some time he may have a prosperous journey, so that by the will of God he may come to the Romans, it must be considered that the apostle of God, setting out for a holy work, that is, the work of the Gospel, waits until by his entreaties he may obtain not only that his journey be made prosperous, but that it be made prosperous by the will of God.

Whence much more must prosperity of journey be sought from God by us, who have not so great a consciousness either of the work or of merit, when we plan to do anything. Yet I think that the Apostle wished this too to be understood: that prosperity of a journey is not always accomplished by the will of God. Finally, Balaam too had a prosperous journey in going to Balak, that he might curse the people of Israel; but that prosperity was not from the divine will. And many in the affairs of the age enjoy prosperous successes, and exult in their prosperities; but such prosperity is not from the will of God, unless the work of our journey be such as the Apostle here designates.

[§12] For I long, he says, to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you — that is, to be comforted together in you by that faith which is mutually ours, both yours and mine. First of all we ought to learn that it is an apostolic work to long for the brethren, yet for no other cause than either that we may confer upon them something of a spiritual gift if we are able, or, if we are not able, that we ourselves may receive from them. For without this, the desire of going about among the brethren is not commendable. But in that he says, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, he seems to indicate that there is something which is indeed a gift, yet not spiritual. For the gift of faith is without doubt spiritual, and the gift of wisdom, and of knowledge, and of virginity likewise. But where he says,

speaking of marriage and virginity: But each one has his own gift from God, one after this manner, another after that; he calls marriage indeed a gift, since, as it is written, a wife is fitted to her husband by God; yet this gift is not spiritual. Many other things too may be called gifts of God, such as riches and bodily strength, such as comeliness of form, such as an earthly kingdom. For these also are given by God, as Daniel too says: For it is he who makes kings and changes them; but these are not spiritual gifts. Blessed therefore are those to whom the Apostle wishes to impart spiritual grace for the confirming of their faith, that they may no longer be little ones, nor be carried about with every wind of doctrine. And when this is done by Paul, he himself also receives consolation, seeing his own work firm and stable; and those are consoled who are made partakers of the apostolic grace.

[§13] But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that I have often purposed to come to you (and have been hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among the other nations, Greeks and barbarians, wise and unwise I am a debtor: so, as much as in me lies, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you also who are at Rome. There is indeed a hyperbaton in this passage; there is also a defect of expression. But the hyperbaton we may render in this way: But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that I have often purposed to come to you, that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among the other nations, Greeks and barbarians, wise and unwise, and have been hindered until now. The defect of expression, however, will be supplied in this manner. In the place where he says: And among the other nations, Greeks and barbarians, wise and unwise, there seems to be lacking ”to whom,” so that what follows may be read thus, to whom I am a debtor; and the sequence would be of this kind: Just as I have fruit among the other nations, Greeks and barbarians, wise and unwise, to whom I am a debtor, so, as much as in me lies, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you also who are at Rome.

For never among any nation have I been ashamed to preach the Gospel, because the power of God is in it unto salvation to everyone that believes, to the Jew first, and to the Greek; because in the Gospel the righteousness of God is revealed, which before lay hidden and veiled in the Law. And it is revealed in those who come from the faith of the Old Testament to the new faith of the Gospel, as it is also said in the prophet, that the righteous man, even if he is still under the Law, believing God and his servant Moses, lives by faith; and when he comes to the Gospel, he is directed from the faith of the Law into the faith of Christ, and thus he advances from faith to faith. Let these things be said so far as pertains to the sequence of the Apostle’s own words. But now let us inquire into what belongs to the understanding. In saying, that I have often purposed to come to you, he shows the charity which he had toward the Romans. But in that he added, and have been hindered until now, if indeed he be thought to have been hindered by God, it is shown by this that even this is a care to God, whither each of the apostles ought or ought not to go, and

that by a certain dispensation he permits the word of God to be preached to some and forbids it to others, as he also says elsewhere:

And when we attempted to go into Bithynia, the Spirit of Jesus forbade us; and in the Gospels it is said by the Savior: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not hear. But if the words, I have been hindered until now, be referred to him of whom he himself says elsewhere, that Satan hindered us, he fittingly shows that he strives without ceasing in his prayers, that, the hindrances of Satan being overcome, his journey may be made prosperous in the will of God to see those who are at Rome. For he longs, and does not cease to beseech in his prayers, that he may gain some fruit from them, as from the other nations. Whence Paul, as one desirous of great riches, longs to gather in revenues from many rational possessions. He gathers fruits from the Greeks, he gathers from the barbarians, he gathers from the wise, he collects something even from the unwise, while to some, as to the perfect, he speaks wisdom, and to others, as to the unwise, he says that he knows nothing else save Christ Jesus, and him crucified; while some he teaches from the Law and the Prophets, and others he persuades by signs and mighty works.

But Paul brings forth all these fruits because, as a good branch, he abides in the true vine, which is Christ, whom the Father the husbandman more frequently prunes, and therefore he brings forth much fruit. And he prunes him in labors, in tribulations, in persecutions. For there are other branches which indeed abide in the vine, but bear no fruit, and are dry. Of these are they who in name indeed abide in Christ, but in works and deeds are found unfruitful and dry; who are said to be cut off by the Father, and cast into the fire. For as the first man Adam was a kind of vine, and the root of the human race, which brought forth some fruitful branches indeed, such as Seth, Enos, Enoch, and the rest down to Noah; but others unfruitful and useless, such as Cain, and all the stock which was begotten from him: so also in Christ, who is the last Adam, there are certain fruitful branches, bearing fruit as in the true vine; but certain dry ones, to be cut off by the Father the husbandman. But this also is to be observed, that the Apostle names the fruit of good things in the singular number, as also elsewhere: But the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace; whereas the works of the flesh which he reproaches he sets forth in the plural.

But if anyone should object what is written in the Psalm, You shall eat the labors of your fruits, spoken both in a good sense and in the plural; it must be known that, just as he who was trading in many pearls, finding one precious one, sold all and bought that one; so a man, beginning from many fruits, ought to press on toward the one fruit of perfection. Now we must inquire how the Apostle is a debtor to Greeks and barbarians, to the wise and the unwise. For what had he received from

them, whereby he should become their debtor? I think that he was made a debtor to the various nations for this reason, that he received through the grace of the Holy Spirit to speak in the tongues of all nations, as he himself also says: I speak with tongues more than you all. Since therefore one receives the knowledge of tongues not for himself, but for those to whom he must preach, he is made a debtor to all those whose language he has received the knowledge of from God. And to the wise he is made a debtor through this, that he received the wisdom hidden in a mystery, which he might speak to the perfect and the wise. But how also to the unwise? In that he received the grace of patience and of long-suffering. For it belongs to the highest patience to bear the impulses of the unwise. And most gracefully he added in what follows:

So, as much as in me lies, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you also. He testifies that he is ready, who also says elsewhere: If I do this willingly, I have a reward. For one is ready to speak to the prudent. But concerning the unwise, we must understand that which he says: But if unwillingly, a dispensation is entrusted to me; and: Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.

[§14] For I am not ashamed of the Gospel. For it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. Many reproaches indeed arose against the Gospel at the beginning of its preaching; but Paul had learned patience from the prophets, who say: Do not be overcome by their reproaches, and do not give way before their revilings; and he knew that he preached the Gospel not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the power of the Spirit. Therefore, defining what the Gospel is, he declares: For it is, he says, the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and to the Greek. In saying, it is the power of God unto salvation, he seems to show that there is, as it were, some power of God which is not unto salvation but unto destruction. For he knows that it is written also in the prophet: And the caterpillar, my great power; and again in the Psalms he says: In your power destroy them; and therefore here he says: the power of God unto salvation. We must therefore consider whether perhaps on account of these differences in the powers of God a right hand and a left hand are spoken of in God, so that the power unto salvation is called his right hand, and the power by which he destroys is called his left.

But this too must be noted, whether perhaps, since Christ is called the power of God, and the Gospel is the power of God, Christ ought to be understood also as the Gospel, just as he is understood as many other things as well; and perhaps what is called the eternal Gospel should be taken as spoken of him. To everyone, he says, who believes, to the Jew first and to the Greek. The Greeks originally reckoned the whole race of men under two designations, that is, calling each man either a Greek or a barbarian; and their distinction was such that everyone who was not a Greek was held to be a barbarian. But Paul employs a far truer distinction, naming the

Jews first, and afterwards the Greeks, and last of all the barbarians. For since the Greeks, because they themselves made use of laws, called all the rest barbarians as living without laws, the Jews are deservedly preferred by the Apostle even to the Greeks themselves, because they both began to live by laws before them, and their laws were promulgated by God and not by men.

[§15] For the justice of God is revealed from faith unto faith. The justice of God is revealed in the Gospel through the fact that no one is excluded from salvation, whether he come as Jew, or Greek, or barbarian. For the Savior says equally to all: Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened. But concerning from faith unto faith we have already said above that the former people also was in faith, because it had believed God and Moses his servant, and from that faith it has now passed over to the faith of the Gospel. But as to what he says from the testimony of the prophet Habakkuk, that the just man lives by my faith: either he is understood who is under the Law, that he should believe the Gospels also, or he who is in the Gospels, that he should believe the Law also and the Prophets. For the one without the other does not possess the integrity of life.

[§16] For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and iniquity of men, who hold back the truth in iniquity: because what is known of God is manifest in them. For God has manifested it to them. Concerning the wrath of God we have spoken more fully in other places; nevertheless a few things will be said in the present passage as well. Now then, the wrath of God is said to be revealed not against some part, but against all ungodliness and iniquity; and yet not against all men, but against those alone who hold back the truth of God in iniquity: they do hold it, indeed, but they hold it in injustice. To these he also says that what is known of God is manifest, showing that there is something of God which is known, and something of him which is unknown. He says, then, that the wrath of God is revealed to those who hold back the truth in iniquity. Things that are revealed are brought forth from what is obscure and hidden into knowledge. Since therefore here too the wrath of God is said to be revealed from heaven not to those ignorant of the truth, but to those holding it, though holding it badly, it seems that he says the reason and knowledge of the wrath of God is made manifest to those to whom the truth is known, although they hold it back in iniquity.

And this indeed, as is made clear from what follows, is understood to be said of the wise of this world, and the learned, or the philosophers, who, when they had come to know the truth and justice of God, did not glorify him as God or give thanks, but became vain in their thoughts, turning to idols; and saying that they were wise, they became fools, because they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of the image of man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of serpents. In these men the Apostle also shows this, that whatever came to the wise of this age concerning the knowledge of the truth came by God’s revealing it; but

while they either pursue empty glory, or flatter ancient errors, or are held in check by fear of rulers, they become the judges of their own condemnation; by them the truth which they had known through God's revelation is either covered over because freedom is shut out, or denied through the iniquity of their deeds. Thus, then, the wrath of God sometimes seems to be called that very power by which he presides over the ministers of punishments, and which inflicts torments upon sinners; as I think is signified in what is recounted, that the wrath of God had moved David to order Joab to number the people. But his ministers and associates are also signified, in that it is said: He sent upon them the wrath of his fury, tribulation, and wrath through evil angels.

Sometimes, too, the goads of our own conscience, which avenge and punish us when we transgress, are called wrath, as the same Apostle says: You store up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath; and elsewhere: Their thoughts among themselves accusing or even defending them, in the day when God shall judge the hidden things of men. But the affliction of tribulation or of temptation is likewise named the wrath of God, as Job also says: But the wrath of the Lord is in my body. Yet why is the wrath now said to be revealed from heaven? Perhaps to distinguish it from another wrath which is not from heaven, such as that: The fury of dragons is their wine, and the fury of serpents is incurable. Or perhaps because those very men against whom the discourse is directed are said to sin not in ignorance but in knowledge of the truth, and therefore the punishment is directed against them from heaven: for it is from there that the minister of punishments receives his authority. Or certainly, because the spiritual forces of wickedness against which our contest is are said to be in the heavenly places, it follows that the wrath of God is said to be hurled from heaven against those who are overcome by them: as if we should say that fiery darts are brandished against them from there, and that from there they receive the wounds by which they run into sins.

But those who are wholly without any share in the truth, as having nothing in common with heaven and light, endure the wrath either of their own vices and passions, or of the demons to whom they have willingly subjected themselves. Against all ungodliness and iniquity of men, who hold back the truth in iniquity. Ungodliness is to sin against God; iniquity, against men. Therefore those who hold back the truth in iniquity sin both against God and against men. And men are to be believed to have recognized this truth by natural reasonings implanted in the soul by God; to which so much prudence has been granted that they might recognize what is known of God — that is, what can be known about God by inference from creation — recognizing his invisible things from those which can be seen. On this understanding the judgment of God will be just even toward those who, before the coming of Christ, when they could have known God, turned aside from his worship and diverted themselves to the adoration of images of men and of animals. For, to speak briefly and with the whole definition gathered into one, to adore anyone

other than the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is the crime of ungodliness. Because what is known of God is manifest in them; for God has manifested it to them.

We have already said above that what is known of God is that which they can attain from the order and reasons of this world, as the Apostle himself indicates from what follows, saying that his invisible things are contemplated through the things that have been made. But what is unknown of God is to be understood as the account of his substance or nature; and what its proper character is, I think lies hidden not only from us men, but from every creature: or if at some time there shall be so great an advance of rational nature that it can arrive at this knowledge also, it belongs to God to know. For something of this sort seems to me to be hoped for from those things which are said by the Savior, that no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal him. For he would not have added, And to whom the Son wills to reveal him, unless he knew that there are some to whom he wills to reveal him.

[§17] For his invisible things, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, and also his eternal power and divinity; so that they are inexcusable, because when they had known God, they did not magnify him as God, nor give thanks; but they became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. For saying that they were wise, they became fools, and they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of serpents. Almost every one of these points has already been discussed above. For we said that these things, although they pertain to all human beings in whom there is natural reason, nevertheless look chiefly to the wise men of this world and to those who are named philosophers, whose particular discipline it is to examine the creatures of the world and all the things that have been made in it, and through the things that are seen to gather by reasoning the things that are not seen. Yet it must be known that the invisible things which he here names, he speaks of concerning created things; about which the same Apostle also writes in another place: that all things were made through him, that is, through Jesus Christ, whether the things that are in heaven or the things that are on earth, visible and invisible. And therefore, besides those things which he called invisible, he adds:

And his eternal power and divinity. Therefore the power of God, which is eternal, and the divinity, which is no less eternal, is recognized from inferences drawn from the creature. Power is that by which he governs all things; divinity that by which he fills the universe. From this, then, they are made inexcusable: because, although they came to know God when God made himself manifest, they did not worship him as is worthy, nor give thanks; but through the vanity of their own thoughts, while they sought forms and images in God, they lost the image of God within

themselves, and those who seemed to boast of themselves in the light of wisdom were rolled down into the deep darkness of folly. For what is so foul, so obscure, and so shrouded in darkness, as to turn the glory of God into a bodily and corruptible likeness of the human form — as is the custom of those who venerate idols — and to make the eminence of the divine majesty equal with birds and four-footed beasts and serpents?

[§18] For which causes God most justly indeed delivered them up, in the desires of their heart, to uncleanness, so that they might dishonor their own bodies among themselves: who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Although each of these points seems to be explained consistently according to the faith of the Church — namely, that for the foregoing causes of their faults, those who hold down in iniquity the truth which they know by God's revealing are by right and desert abandoned by God, and that through this abandonment they are handed over to the desires of their own heart, whose heart's desires were these, that they should afflict their own bodies with uncleanness and dishonor among themselves; and that with whatever judgment they used toward the veneration of the divinity, while they drag down the glory of the incorruptible God to base and unworthy forms of men or of animals, with such a turn also they should be dealt with toward themselves, so that men endowed with reason live after the manner of irrational beasts — nevertheless let us ask those who deny that the good God is also a just judge, what they answer concerning the things the Apostle says, that God handed them over, in the desires of their heart, to uncleanness, so that they should dishonor their own bodies.

For in this it will seem that not only their reasoning, which is utterly excluded, but our own reply as well is hemmed in. For how will it be just that one who is handed over — even though he be handed over on account of sins — should nevertheless be handed over to lusts, and handed over for this purpose, that he should afflict his own body with uncleannesses and lusts? For just as it cannot be imputed to a man who, for example's sake, is delivered to darkness for punishment, that he is in obscurity; and one who is delivered to fire cannot be blamed for the very fact that he burns; so to those who are handed over to desires and uncleannesses that they may dishonor their own bodies, it will not seem worthily imputed if, being placed among desires and uncleannesses, they stain their bodies with dishonor. Marcion, therefore, and all who have sprouted from his school like the brood of serpents, will not dare to touch the solutions of these matters even with the tip of a finger: seeing that on account of questions of this kind they cast away the Old Instrument, wherever perchance they had read anything of the sort in it. But what did it profit them, when they are none the less choked by similar questions in the New Instrument?

We, however, who confess one God, good and just, of the Law and the Prophets and the Gospels, the Father of Christ, use the same explanations both in the New and in the Old Testament, calling upon him who placed in Sion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, that he himself may open to us, through his Holy Spirit, the stumbling and offense of the apostolic reading, by which doubting minds seem to be made to stumble. Frequently we find in the Scriptures, and it has often been discussed by us, that man is said to be spirit and body and soul. But when it is said that the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, without doubt the soul is set in the middle, which either acquiesces in the desires of the spirit or is inclined to the concupiscences of the flesh: and if indeed it joins itself to the flesh, it is made one body with it in its lust and concupiscences; but if it associates itself with the spirit, it will be one spirit with it. And so at length, concerning those whose souls had joined themselves wholly with the flesh, the Lord says in the Scriptures: My spirit shall not remain in these men, because they are flesh; but concerning those whose soul had been allied to the spirit, the Apostle says: But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit.

There are besides (as we find in many places of Scripture) certain angels who are also the promoters and helpers of either side, or of either way. For the devil favors the flesh lusting against the spirit, and his angels, and all the spiritual wickednesses in the heavenly places, and all those against whom men have their wrestling, the principalities, and powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world. But on the contrary, the spirit contending against the flesh, and striving to call back to itself the human soul which is in the middle, is favored and helped by the good angels, all those of whom the Lord says, that their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven; and of whom the Apostle says to the Hebrews: Are they not all ministering spirits, sent for ministry on account of those who receive the inheritance of salvation? The Lord himself also favors it, seeing that he even lays down his own life for his sheep. But on either side of this favor the rule of discipline is preserved. For the matter is not conducted by force, nor is the soul bent to one side or the other by necessity; otherwise neither fault nor virtue could be ascribed to it, nor would the choice of good deserve a reward, nor the turning away from evil deserve punishment: rather, the freedom of its own choice is preserved for it in all things, so that it may itself incline to whichever it wills, as it is written:

Behold, I have set before your face life and death, fire and water. Life, therefore, is Christ, and death is the last enemy, who is the devil. The soul therefore has it in its own choice, if it wills, to choose life, Christ, or to turn aside into death, the devil. But if the soul, recognizing God, has not embraced Christ its life, nor magnified him as God, nor given thanks, but has become vain in its thoughts, and has changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of serpents, and in all these things has turned aside to the flesh and to those who favor the desires

of the flesh: it will without doubt be left behind and abandoned by those who by their favor were inspiring it to be joined to the spirit; and they will yield it up, or hand it over, to the desires of its own heart, by which it is allied to the flesh and clings to it. For they will not call it back, while it resists and struggles against them, to those things which it shuns and rejects. If the image of this matter still seems obscure, we shall render it clearer and plainer by some such illustration as this. Let us suppose that there is a certain dwelling, in which the soul lives together with the body and the spirit as with two counselors;

and that before the doors of this dwelling there stands piety, and with it all the virtues; and on the other side impiety, and all the forms of luxuries and lusts, and that they await the soul's nod as to which of the two choirs waiting before the doors it desires to have brought in to itself, and which to have driven away. Will it not be the case that, if obeying the spirit and using the better counselor it calls to itself the choir of piety and chastity, that other one will depart, scorned and rejected? But if, using the counsels of the flesh, it brings in to itself the troop of impiety and lust, that whole company of holiness and piety, to which the soul preferred the council of evils, will withdraw with just indignation, leaving it to the desires of its own heart, so that it may afflict its own body with ignominy and dishonor within itself — it who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and, bringing in to itself the prince of impiety and unbelief, worships and serves the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. But for what causes the human soul undergoes so precarious a condition of so great a hazard, it is not the place of the present passage to discuss. It belongs, then, to those who are enslaved to idols to dishonor their own bodies; and it belongs to those who have forsaken the Creator to worship the creature.

But we, who worship and adore no creature, but the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit — as we do not err in worship, so let us not sin even in our acts and manner of life; nor let us imitate those who dishonor their own bodies among themselves: but looking to what the Apostle says: Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? and again: That your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit — let us keep our bodies, as members of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, in all holiness and purity, so that they may become worthy not only of the entrances of angels, but also of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and of the abiding of the Father and the Son, who says of him who remains in his commandments: I and the Father will come, and will make our abode with him.

[§19] "Therefore God handed them over to passions of dishonor. For even their women exchanged the natural use for that use which is outside nature. And in like manner the males also, having abandoned the natural use of the woman, were inflamed in their desire for one another, males working shamefulness with males, and receiving in themselves the wage which was due for their error. And as they

did not approve of holding God in their knowledge, God handed them over to a reprobate mind, so that they do those things which are not fitting, being filled with all iniquity, malice, fornication, wickedness, avarice; full of envy, murders, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, detractors, hateful to God, insolent, proud, puffed up, inventors of evils, disobedient to parents, senseless, disorderly; without natural affection, without covenant, without mercy. And these, though they had come to know the justice of God, did not understand that those who do such things are worthy of death; and not only those who do them, but also those who consent to those who do them. Therefore you are inexcusable, O every man who judges; for in that wherein you judge another, you condemn yourself. For you do the same things which you judge. This is the third time that we find set down by the Apostle: ”God handed them over. And for the first handing-over he gave the causes, namely, ”Because, when they had known God, they did not glorify him as God, nor give thanks;

but they became empty in their thoughts, and their senseless heart was darkened. For saying that they were wise, they became fools, and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of the image of corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of serpents. ”Therefore,” he says, ”God handed them over, in the desires of their heart, to uncleanness, so that they should treat their own bodies with dishonor among themselves. The cause of the second handing-over he seems to put forward when he says that ”they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator. ”Therefore,” he says, ”God handed them over to passions of dishonor. Yet this second handing-over seems to be liable to graver outrages. ”For their women,” he says, ”exchanged the natural use for that use which is outside nature. In like manner the males also, having abandoned the natural use of the woman, were inflamed in their desire for one another, males working shamefulness with males, and receiving in themselves the wage which was due for their error. He seems also to give the causes of the third handing-over when he says: ”And as they did not approve of holding God in their knowledge, God handed them over to a reprobate mind, so that they do those things which are not fitting, being filled with all iniquity, malice,” and the rest of the crimes which he goes on to enumerate.

But these distinctions among the causes do not seem to me to correspond sufficiently to the offenses which are subjoined to each one of them. For how is he who serves the creature handed over to fouler outrages more than he who exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of the image of corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of serpents? Or how are those who did not approve of holding God in their knowledge handed over, beyond both of these, to what is as it were a whole swarm of evils? Hence it seems to me rather that all these causes, which are set before the several handings-over, are to be heaped together into one, and again the kinds of handing-over into one, so that (for the sake

of argument) we should speak thus: Since indeed men exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of the image of corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of serpents; and since they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, nor did they approve of holding God in their knowledge: on account of all these things God handed them over, in the desires of their heart, to uncleanness, so that they should treat their bodies with dishonor; and he handed them over to passions of dishonor, so that their women exchanged the natural use for that which is outside nature;

and in like manner the males also, having abandoned the natural use of the woman, were inflamed in their desire for one another, males working shamefulness with males. But he also handed them over to a reprobate mind, so that they do those things which are not fitting, because they were filled with all iniquity, malice, wickedness and avarice, and were full of envy, murders, strife, deceit, and the other evils which are written; and because, when they had come to know the justice of God, they did not understand that this is what it is — that those who do such things are worthy of death, not only those who do them, but also those who consent to those who do them. And therefore, for all these evils they will be inexcusable, so long as they both judge and condemn others for the very crimes which they themselves commit. For a man pronounces sentence upon himself when he punishes another for the things which he himself commits. But I think that what was said above concerning the manner of the handing-over is sufficient — how God is said to hand over those whose deeds and whose mind, turning aside from him and indulging in vices, he abhors and abandons; and I consider it superfluous to repeat the same things. There are, however, two things which I judge to be indicated in this passage, of which the one seems to be signified by means of the other.

For it is certain that, if God has handed anyone over either to the desires of his own heart, or to passions of dishonor, or to a reprobate mind, at once, as in the worst and reprobate soil, that whole harvest of crimes springs up in him who is handed over. And again, if anyone, though he has known God, does not glorify him as God nor give thanks, but is such a man as the apostolic discourse has described point by point, there is no doubt that a soul of this kind has been abandoned by God and handed over. For it is not possible that God should have his dwelling together with these evils, or that these evils should proceed from the place where God dwells. But since in these three the Apostle seems to have enumerated all the kinds of impiety — both of those who worship idols, and of those who serve the creature rather than the Creator, and also of those who did not approve of holding God in their knowledge — and since under the first of these headings the pagans generally are designated, and under the second their wise men and philosophers: I think that under this third are indicated the heretics, who either deny God the Creator, or utter various blasphemies against the Most High.

Therefore, if each one of those whom we have said above to err in the worship of the Godhead is designated by such titles of evils, let us who seem to be in the Church and to hold the right faith examine ourselves, and weigh with all circumspection whether perhaps, separated from these men only by the name of the true worship, we may be associated with them in the very same deeds and acts. For it is certain that he who (for example) is filled with iniquity, malice, wickedness, avarice, has not approved of holding God in his knowledge, and is of the number of those whom God handed over to a reprobate mind. And again, those whose women, or whose males, having abandoned the natural use, are inflamed toward that use which is against nature — it is certain that they are of the number of those who serve the creature rather than the Creator, and whom God handed over to passions of dishonor. And likewise, if any treat their bodies with dishonor in uncleanness, they are of those who exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of the image of man; except that he who is already a believer defiles the temple of God by a graver sacrilege than the man still profane defiles the temple of idols.

Nor indeed should this apostolic saying be passed over, in which, when he says that ”they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of the image of man,” he is to be understood not only as reproving those who worship idols, but also as refuting the Anthropomorphites, who, though placed within the Church, say that the bodily image of man is the image of God — being ignorant of what is written in Genesis, that man was made to the image of God: and what is to be thought concerning that man is expounded by the Apostle when he says: ”Putting off the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, who is created according to God. Do you hear that he calls the new man the one created according to God? And this same new man he elsewhere calls the interior man; but this corruptible one, whose image he here rejects, he names the exterior, when he says: ”For even if our man who is without is corrupted, yet he who is within is renewed. And that those who go astray concerning the image of God may know his meaning still more plainly, let them hear whom the Apostle says to be the man who is created to the image of God, when he writes to the Colossians in this manner: ”Do not lie,” he says, ”stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of him who created him.

From which he evidently shows that the interior man, who is renewed through knowledge, is himself created to the image of God. But those who say that the exterior man, that is, the bodily and corruptible one, is to the image of God, are associated by the Apostle with those ”who exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of the image of corruptible man. Truly it was fitting that not even these things should be omitted in the explanation of the apostolic discourse, so that in this chapter of the Apostle, as also in very many others, the Anthropomorphites — that is, those who say that the bodily image of man is the image of

God — might recognize themselves to have been convicted and refuted. But let us now conclude with these things the contents of the first volume.

Commentary on Romans — Book 2

Latin source: J.-P. Migne (ed.), Patrologia Graeca 14 (Rufinus's Latin version of Origen's Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos). This English translation is in the public domain.

BOOK TWO

[§1] "But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who do such things. That the judgment of God is according to truth, not only against those who do the things enumerated above, but also against all who in any manner whatever have done anything good or evil, is to be expected and believed. But this is what seems to be shown in this passage: that judgment according to truth belongs to God alone. For there are certain things that are committed with an evil deed, but not with an evil intention: as if someone, for example, should commit a homicide unwillingly. And other things are done with a good deed, but not with a good intention: as if someone should perform an act of mercy, not on account of God's commandment, but that he may be praised by men. But there are other things in which, whether in good or in evil, the intention agrees with the deed. And because to know the hearts of men belongs to God alone, and to discern the secrets of the mind, therefore he alone is the one who can hold judgment according to truth. But it is asked whether, toward those whose iniquities have been forgiven through the grace of baptism, or whose sins have been covered through repentance, or to whom sin is not to be imputed through the glory of martyrdom, God may be seen to preserve judgment according to truth.

For the truth of judgment demands this, that the evil man receive evil things, and the good man good things: and although the gifts and bounty of God by no means admit the curiosity of one who scrutinizes them, nevertheless let us show even in this how great is the truth of his judgment. It is a common profession that the good ought not to be punished, nor the evil to obtain good things. If therefore there be someone, for example, who has at some time done evil things, it is certain that he was evil then, when he was doing evil things. But if he, repenting of things past,

should correct his mind toward good things, and act well, speak well, think well, will well — he who does these things, does he not seem to you good, and deservedly to receive good things? Likewise also if someone should be turned from good to evil, he will no longer be judged good, which he was and is not, but evil, which he is. For acts, whether good or evil, pass away, but according to their own quality they stamp and shape the mind of the one acting, and leave it either good or evil, to be destined either for punishment or for rewards. It will therefore be unjust either that a good mind be punished for evil deeds, or that an evil one be rewarded for good acts. But that what we are saying may become still plainer, we shall add these things also:

let us suppose there is a soul in which impiety, injustice, folly, and wantonness dwell, and the whole multitude of evils, to which, that is, it has subjected itself as their servant and handmaid. But if, returning into itself, this soul should open the door of its mind again to piety and to the virtues, will not piety, having entered, immediately drive out impiety? Likewise also justice will thrust out injustice, and wisdom folly, and sobriety will put wantonness to flight; and thus, the barbarian inhabitants having been driven out from itself, it will offer to the virtues a civil and lawful lodging. How then will it be just to accuse a soul now full of virtues concerning those things which it did when it was not yet a friend of the virtues, and to condemn one that is pious for impiety, one that is just for injustice, one that is sober for wantonness? In this manner, therefore, even in those whose iniquities have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered, God is to be believed to preserve judgment according to truth.

[§2] ”But do you suppose this, O man, every one of you who judges those who do such things, and does them yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? If all the things which the Law speaks, it speaks to those who are under the Law, then the things which the Gospel, or the Apostle, now speaks, it speaks not to the princes of this age, nor to the kings of the world, but to the rulers and leaders of the Churches, namely to those who judge those who are within, that is, to bishops, or presbyters and deacons. To these, therefore, he says that they should not suppose they will escape the judgment of God, if they themselves commit those things concerning which they judge and condemn others. And therefore each one ought first to judge concerning his own conscience, and then to examine the deeds of him whom he judges. And if this were done, all ambition for approaching ecclesiastical honor would be utterly cut off, if those who wish to preside over peoples were to consider that they are rather to be judged than to judge. Let no one therefore suppose that he can escape the judgment of God, as the Prophet also says: ”Whither shall I go from your spirit, and whither shall I flee from your face? And because these things are said especially to those who preside over the judgments of peoples, therefore he says elsewhere also that ”judgment begins at the house of God. And again elsewhere the Lord says:

”In those who draw near to me I will be sanctified; as was done in the case of Nadab and Abihu, when they offered strange fire, that is, not sacred fire, upon the divine altars. Judgment therefore begins first from the sons. For ”God scourges every one whom he receives into the number of sons. But, as I reckon, not even if one could, ought he to wish to escape the judgment of God. For not to come to the judgment of God is to come neither to correction, nor to health, nor to remedy.

[§3] ”Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and patience? Do you not know that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? That man can recognize the riches of God’s goodness who considers how many evils men commit daily upon the earth, and how nearly all have turned aside and together become unprofitable, and walk the broad and spacious road of perdition, neglecting the narrow way of life — and yet, for all these, God daily brings forth his sun and supplies the rains; and he who considers how many blaspheme God daily, and stretch out their tongues against heaven. And what shall I say now of frauds, of violence, of crime, of sacrileges and of deeds requiring expiation? Yet among all these, in this passage, those seem to be given precedence in wickedness who, while judging others, themselves commit the very things they punish in the rest. If, therefore, anyone despises this goodness of God, and his forbearance, and his patience, he does not know that through these he is being summoned to repentance. But forbearance seems to differ from patience in this, that those who sin more from weakness than from deliberate purpose are said to be borne with; whereas those who with obstinate mind, as it were, exult in their offenses must be said to be endured patiently.

But just as God made all things in measure and weight and number, so also there is a fixed measure of his patience — a measure which we must believe was filled up either by those who perished in the flood, or by those who were destroyed in Sodom by fire from heaven. Whence it is also said concerning the Amorites: ”For the sins of the Amorites are not yet filled up until now. God therefore bears patiently, and awaits the repentance of each one. But let this not make us lax and slow to conversion, since there is again a fixed measure of his patience and forbearance.

[§4] ”But according to your hardness and impenitent heart, you treasure up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath, and of the revelation of the just judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his works. A heart is said in the Scriptures to be hard when the human mind, bound fast as wax by the cold of iniquity, does not receive the impress of the divine image. This same thing is elsewhere called a thick heart, as when it is said: ”The heart of this people has grown thick. But the opposite of hard is soft, which in the Scriptures is named a heart of flesh; and the opposite of thick is fine, or thin, which the Apostle calls the spiritual man — he who examines all things. Therefore, when someone knows what things are good, and does not do the good, he must be believed to hold contempt for all good things

through hardness of heart. But thickness of heart is where the perception of subtle and spiritual understanding is not received; and thus a heart made impenitent treasures up for itself wrath in the day of wrath and of the revelation of the just judgment of God, since the good work is not done because of hardness, while good understanding is shut out through the thickness of the heart. Concerning the wrath of God, both above — so far as the subject allowed — and in other places, it has often been discussed.

But what he says, ”You treasure up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath,” must be considered. That is called a treasury in which wealth and riches of various kinds are gathered together. Of this we read a threefold signification in the Scriptures. For in the Gospel there is said to be a certain treasure on earth, in which the Lord forbids treasure to be laid up; and another treasure in heaven, in which he bids all the faithful to store away their wealth; and here now the Apostle speaks of treasures of wrath. All men, therefore, through the things they do in this world, gather treasures in some one of these three. For either a man is unbelieving and unjust, and through hardness of heart and an impenitent heart stores up his deeds in the treasury of wrath. Or he is earthly, and is wise concerning the earth, and speaks of the earth, and when his field has brought him abundant fruits, he pulls down his barns and builds greater ones, and treasures up on earth. And the former indeed is called hard, but this one foolish. For it is said to him: ”Fool, this night they will demand your soul from you, and the things you have prepared, whose shall they be? Or he is wise, and rich toward God, and while walking on earth has his conversation in heaven, and all that he does is worthy of the kingdom of heaven: and such a one lays up the treasures of his riches in heaven.

Thus, then, the possessor and founder of each treasury may be called, the one a carnal man, another a natural (animal) man, and another a spiritual man. Now let us see what is the day of wrath which the Apostle here names — which, however, will more easily be recognized if we inquire what the rest of the Scriptures also indicate about it. Therefore we shall fit to the matter such examples as can come to hand at present, and from these it will be shown what the day of wrath is. It is written in the prophet Amos: ”Woe to those who desire the day of the Lord. To what end is the day of the Lord for you? And it is darkness, and not light. As if a man should flee from the face of a lion, and a bear should meet him, and he should enter into his house, and stretch out his hands to the wall, and a serpent should bite him. Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light, and gloom that has no brightness? But Joel also says to the priests and to those who serve at the altar: ”Cry to the Lord without ceasing: Alas for me, alas for me for that day, for the day of the Lord is near, and it will come like misery out of misery! And a little after:

”Sound the trumpet in Zion, proclaim on my holy mountain, and let all who dwell upon the earth be confounded, for the day of the Lord is at hand, for the day of

darkness and gloom is near, a day of cloud and mist. Like the morning there shall be poured out over the mountains a people many and strong. There has been none like it from the beginning of the age, and after it there shall be none unto the years of ages of ages. Before it a consuming fire, and after it a kindled flame. Like a paradise of delights shall the land be before its face, and behind its back a field of desolation, and there is none that escapes it. As the appearance of horses is their appearance; and as horsemen, so shall they follow. Like the sound of chariots they shall leap upon the tops of the mountains. And he writes all that follows about the same day, up to that place where he says: ”And the Lord will utter his voice before the face of his host, for the multitude of his camps is exceedingly great, and mighty are the works of his words. Wherefore great is the day of the Lord, great and exceedingly notable: and who shall be fit for it? But Zephaniah speaks thus: ”Stand in awe before the face of the Lord God, for the day of the Lord is near, and the Lord has prepared his victim, he has sanctified those whom he has called. And a little after:

”Near is the great day of the Lord, it is near and exceedingly swift. The voice of the day of the Lord is bitter, and it is set as harsh and mighty. A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and constraint, a day of bitterness and destruction, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and mist, a day of the trumpet and of the war-cry over the fortified cities and over the lofty walls. And I will afflict men, and they will walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and I will pour out their blood like dust, and their flesh like dung. Their gold and their silver shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord. In the fire of his jealousy the whole earth shall be consumed, for he will make an end, and that speedily, of all who dwell upon the earth. Isaiah likewise records: ”For behold, the day of the Lord will come, of incurable fury and wrath, to make the world a desert, and to destroy sinners out of it. And a little after: ”For heaven shall be kindled with fury, and the earth shall be shaken from its foundations, because of the fury of the wrath of the Lord of Sabaoth, in the day in which his fury shall come upon it. Having gathered together so many and such testimonies concerning the day of wrath, I think that this passage needs no further exposition.

For plainly in all of these the day of wrath is designated as the day of vengeance and of judgment. And so finally to ”the day of wrath” the Apostle adds, ”and of the revelation. For thus he says: ”In the day of wrath and of the revelation of the just judgment of God. For that all things must be revealed is indicated also in the Gospel, when it is said: ”Nothing is hidden that shall not be made manifest; nor covered, that shall not be revealed. But the Apostle too, in what follows in this Epistle, says: ”Their thoughts accusing, or even defending them, in the day when God shall judge the hidden things of men. In which he certainly shows that the hidden things of men are not to be revealed except in the day when God is to judge, just as he says still more plainly to the Corinthians: ”Do not,” he says, ”judge

before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both illuminate the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of hearts. All of which things are certainly understood to be said of this same day, in which darkness and mourning and sadness are said to be in store, on account of those who, pierced through with many wounds of sins, will stand in need of the remedies of fire.

At which time it will be said to the saints: ”Go, my people, enter into your storechambers, shut your door, hide yourself for a little while, until the fury of my wrath passes by. How great the riches of God’s goodness are hidden away in these words, on account of those who despise his patience and goodness, there is no need to make manifest. It is indeed asked by some why this day, concerning which we above set in motion the prophetic libraries, has been appointed at the end of the world, so that all who have died from the beginning of the age up to its end are reserved to be judged on this last day. It is certain that the inner causes of this matter are covered over by more secret mysteries. But ”it is good to hide the mystery of a king. Nevertheless, for the sake of explanation we shall speak, insofar as it is possible to commit the words to pages. There are many who, departing from this life, have left behind them certain seeds either of goods or of evils, from which the people who survive receive occasions either of salvation or of destruction: for example, I might say, such as are all those who founded among the philosophers depraved sects estranged from God; or those who devised magical sacrileges, or the errors of the stars and their decrees; or certainly those who among us have arisen as authors of heretics and of depraved doctrines by publishing books;

or also those who have worked schisms in the Churches, and scandals and dissensions. But on the contrary there is the work of the apostolic writings, and the progress of the universal Church through them, and the conversion to God, and the correction of the whole world. The causes of all these things will not be closed off except with the end of the world itself: and therefore the judgment of God would not be just, so long as either the advances or the hindrances from each of these were still hanging in the balance. This too the Apostle seems to signify, when he says: ”The sins of some men are manifest, going before them to judgment; but those of some follow after them. Now indeed, if even those placed outside the body — whether the saints, who are with Christ, do anything and labor on our behalf, after the likeness of the angels who administer the services of our salvation; or again if sinners also, themselves placed outside the body, do anything according to the purpose of their mind, after the likeness nonetheless of the angels on the left hand, with whom they are said by Christ to be sent also into the eternal fire — let this too be held among the hidden things of God, and mysteries not to be committed to paper. Let these things suffice concerning the day of wrath and revelation. Now let us inquire concerning the just judgment of God, in which he will render to each one according to his works.

And first indeed let the heretics be excluded, who speak of good or evil natures of souls; and let them hear that God will render to each one not according to nature, but according to his works. In the second place let the faithful be built up, lest they suppose that this alone can suffice for them, that they believe; but let them know that the just judgment of God renders to each one according to his works. Certainly, since he says that the just judgment of God consists in this, that he render to each one according to his works, it will seem that the Gentiles can by no means be excluded by this saying, if perhaps they too do good works and act more uprightly. But that also which is written in Ezekiel seems to be opposed to this opinion. For he says: ”When the just man turns himself away from his justice, and commits iniquity according to all the iniquities which the unjust man has done, all his acts of justice which he has done shall not be remembered in his lapse by which he has lapsed; but in his sins which he has sinned, in these he shall die. For indeed, if nothing of the just man’s justice will be remembered when he has lapsed, how will God render to each one according to his works? But let us see whether perhaps the divine word may find its own resolution within itself, if we observe how it is written when it says:

”When the just man has been turned away from his justice,” and it was not enough for him to say: ”When he has been turned away from his justice,” but he added: ”And has committed iniquity according to all the iniquities which the unjust man has done. In this he seems to have secretly inserted an understanding of this sort, so that if perhaps the just man has not acted according to all the iniquities which the unjust man has done, not all his acts of justice are taken away from memory; but if he has committed all the iniquities which the unjust man does, then at last all his acts of justice are withdrawn from memory in his lapse. Although the Holy Spirit has hidden these things in the Scriptures on account of those who despise the riches of his goodness and patience, nevertheless he has not utterly taken them away; because the treasure hidden in a field is indeed not found by all, lest it be easily plundered and perish: yet it is found by the prudent, who are able to go and sell all that they have, and buy that field. And so these things also, although they are hidden in the Scriptures, as it is written:

”How great is the multitude of your sweetness, O Lord, which you have hidden for those who fear you!” — are nevertheless found by those who defend, from the things that are concealed in the mystery of the Scriptures, that the God of the law and the prophets is not only just, but also good. Of these things necessity has demanded that we disclose a few, for the sake of expounding the apostolic saying in which he says: ”Of the just judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his works.”

[§5] ”To those indeed who, according to the patience of good work, seek glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life; but to those who are of contention, and who

indeed disbelieve the truth but obey iniquity, wrath and indignation: and tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that works evil, of the Jew first, and of the Greek; but glory and honor and peace to everyone that works good, to the Jew first, and to the Greek. For there is no respect of persons with God. To those who seek glory and honor and incorruption, he says, eternal life will be given in return for the patience of good work — not only to the Jews, to whom the oracles of God seem to have been entrusted, but also to the Greeks, because the judgment of God is just, and he is not the God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. But to those who through contention of mind and depravity of soul do not believe the truth but follow iniquity, wrath and indignation are repaid, tribulation and anguish — not only to the Gentile, but also to the Jew, because there is no respect of persons with God. These things, indeed, so far as regards the order of the words. But now let us inquire into what pertains to the inner meaning. ”To those,” he says, ”who through the patience of good work.

In saying ”the patience of good work,” he shows that a certain labor and struggles are imminent for those who wish to do good work. For ”our wrestling is,” as the same Apostle also says, ”not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, and powers, and the rulers of this world”; all of which are opposed to good work. And therefore patience is necessary, because it is written: ”In your patience you shall possess your souls. But let us see what he calls good work. The Lord in the Gospel says of that woman who poured out the alabaster jar of precious ointment upon his head that ”she has worked a good work upon me,” indicating that he who pours ointment over the word of God — that is, who joins works to the word — works a good work. For the discourse becomes fragrant, filled with all the sweetness of ointments, when it has been adorned with work and deeds. Now let us inquire what it is to seek glory and incorruption. In many places of holy Scripture they write concerning glory. For in Exodus it is said of Moses that when he came down from the mountain his face was glorified. Recounting this, the Apostle says to the Corinthians: ”But if the ministry of death, engraved in letters upon stones, was made in glory, so that the children of Israel could not look upon the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which is done away;

how much more shall the ministry of the Spirit be in glory! For if there is glory in the ministry of condemnation, how much more shall the ministry of justice abound in glory? And a little after he adds: ”But we all, with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. There is therefore, according to the Apostle, a certain glory which is not glorified — such as that which was on the face of Moses, which is said to have been destroyed, and which can be understood as the letter of the Law, having indeed a certain glory of precepts, but one which cannot be glorified. And there is another glory, which remains and is glorified in Christ. For when he had gone up into the mountain with Peter and James and John, he is written to

have been transformed into glory. ”And then there appeared,” he says, ”Moses and Elias talking with him. By which it is shown that the glory of the Law and of the prophets then appeared when Christ had been transformed in glory, so that prophecy and law, illuminated by his glory, with the veil of the letter removed, might be understood in the spirit. But since in Exodus also it is said that the glory of God filled the tabernacle of testimony;

and again, at the dedication of the temple, that the glory of God nonetheless descended and filled the house with smoke, darkness, and cloud — in which assuredly the very presence of God is indicated to be there — that glory must be thought to be spoken of in these passages of which the Apostle, writing to the Hebrews, says concerning the Son, that he is ”the splendor of glory, and the express image of his substance. By which this is declared: that the Father himself is called the fount of glory, from whom the Son, the splendor of glory, is begotten, by participation in whom all creatures are said to have glory — as it is written of those who are of the resurrection: ”One glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, another glory of the stars. Star differs from star in glory. Those, therefore, who seek this glory which is of the resurrection, and honor, and incorruption, will without doubt find that which is written: ”The body is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory; it is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. And therefore the seeker of this glory and honor and incorruption obtains eternal life through the patience of good work. But since we have discussed glory as far as we could, let us see what honor also indicates, since those who hasten to eternal life seek not only glory but also honor. It is written that ”man, when he was in honor, did not understand;

he was compared to the senseless beasts, and was made like unto them. He seeks, therefore, that honor which he had before he was compared to the senseless beasts — that is, the one he had in paradise before he sinned, the honor by which he was worthy to hear the voice of God, the honor by which he enjoyed the fruits of paradise and the tree of life. But that also which the Apostle says — ”Render to all their dues; to whom honor, honor” — seems to me to look toward this. For I so understand that the honor due is rendered to God if what is owed to justice is rendered, and nothing on its side is conceded to injustice; and likewise to truth, if what belongs to it is so rendered that nothing on its part is left to falsehood; and to wisdom too, and to innocence and goodness, if we so render what is theirs that we permit nothing of their goods either to folly, or to craftiness, or to malice. For when, for example, in judging you have either shown partiality to the person of a powerful man, or for the favor of a friend have suppressed what is true, you have not rendered the honor due to justice nor to truth, but you have dishonored justice and done outrage to truth;

and since Christ is justice and sanctification and truth, you will be like those who struck Christ with blows, and who spat in his face, and who, beating his head with

a reed, placed a crown of thorns upon his head. But what honor is owed by man to all these virtues, we are taught in the Gospels, the Lord saying: ”That all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He therefore honors the Father and the Son who renders worthy honor and zeal to wisdom, and to justice, and to truth, and to all those things which Christ is said to be. In this manner, then, those who hasten to eternal life seek glory and honor and incorruption. But what incorruption indicates we shall quickly know, if we examine what is contrary to it. Incorruption has corruption as its contrary. Corruption is said to happen in two ways: bodily and spiritually. It happens bodily when that comes to pass which is written: ”If any man shall corrupt the temple of God, God shall destroy him. But spiritually, when that happens which the Apostle likewise says: ”But I fear lest, as the serpent seduced Eve by his cunning, so your senses may be corrupted from the simplicity of the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

If anyone, therefore, has remained uncorrupted in body and spirit from those things we have spoken of above, he is said to seek incorruption — namely, that through this incorruption of observance he may be worthy to obtain that incorruption which is of the resurrection. But let us see what is given to those who seek these things. ”Eternal life,” he says: that of which the Savior teaches when he says: ”But this is eternal life, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. By which he shows that the substance of eternal life abides in the knowledge of God and of Christ Jesus. But how the knowledge of God may be had, we are taught in the Psalms, when it is said: ”Be still, and know that I am God.”

[§6] ”But to those who are contentious, and who indeed disbelieve the truth but obey iniquity, wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish. Whoever takes these words simply believes it enough for understanding that, according to what was said above, God renders to each one according to his works: that is, just as to those who by patience in good work seek glory and incorruption he renders eternal life, so also to these who out of contentiousness disbelieve the truth but obey iniquity he renders wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish. But whoever believes that in the apostolic writings, through which Christ speaks, not one iota or one tittle is idle, will affirm that it was not by mistake that the Apostle came to use such a manner of speech, saying: ”Who will render to those indeed who by patience in good work seek glory and honor, eternal life. But of those who out of contentiousness obey iniquity, he did not say ”wrath and indignation,” so that this too should be referred to the ”he will render” which he had said above; rather he says: ”Wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish. Hence he who is spiritual, and understands what the Spirit speaks in Paul, says that the Apostle wrote these things not through unskillfulness but through divine skill: namely, that by them he might show that those things which are to be rendered to such as seek glory and incorruption according to patience in good work are rendered by God — that is, eternal life;

but that those things which follow upon such as through contentiousness disbelieve the truth and obey iniquity are not given by God, whose gifts are surely lasting and worthy of himself, but that out of the consequence of their own deeds there will be, for those who work evil, wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, according to what they have treasured up for themselves. For surely, just as there he had put ”eternal life” in the accusative case, so here too he would have put wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish in the accusative case, had he wished to refer it to the person of the God who renders. And this is understood to be indicated in like manner in other places of Scripture as well, as in the first book of Kings, where the Lord says: ”Those who glorify me I will glorify; those who despise me shall be despised. In which it is plainly shown that the Lord says of those who are to be glorified that they are to be glorified by himself; but of those who are to be despised, that he did not refer it to himself, but said absolutely that they shall be despised. For if God bestowed evils through himself just as he furnishes goods through himself, it would follow that, in the same way as he said, ”Those who glorify me I will glorify,” so he would say: Those who despise me I will despise.

But in another place too something similar seems to be shown through the prophet, in that those who go into the fire find it kindled not by God but by themselves, as Isaiah says: ”Walk in the light of your fire, and in the flame which you have kindled. And that the discussion of these things may become still plainer, let this also be added: If someone, against the physician’s precept, has taken the juices of bad foods and, the body’s balance being disturbed, has fallen into fevers or any diseases of this kind, it is certain that he has received the plague of his sickness not through the physician but through his own intemperance; but if, keeping the physician’s precepts, he continues in soundness, he will surely be said to have the grace of health through the physician. In this way, then, it will consistently be seen that God himself through himself renders to each one according to his works, those which are good; but evils will be understood to come not from God, but from the worst juices of intemperance and the raw depravity of one’s deeds. But let us not leave undiscussed this very thing which he said: ”Who out of contentiousness indeed disbelieve the truth, but obey iniquity. For in these several expressions certain sicknesses of the soul are designated by the Apostle, whose remedy no one will find unless he has first come to know the causes of the diseases.

And therefore in the divine Scriptures the ailments of the soul are enumerated and the remedies described, so that those who have submitted themselves to apostolic instruction may, having recognized their own sicknesses from what is written, be healed and able to say: ”Praise the Lord, O my soul, who heals all your sicknesses. One sickness of the soul, then, among the rest — and indeed the worst — is to be understood to be contentiousness, through which every depraved work is carried out. Through this heresies are born, through this schisms, and all scandals are generated in the Churches, while those who are prudent in their own eyes and wise

in their own sight defend whatever pleases them as though it were law; and thence it comes about that the truth is disbelieved, while iniquity is obeyed. Moreover ”to disbelieve” is customarily found in the holy Scriptures for ”not to believe” or ”not to obey,” as also in this place; which perhaps the Latin translator would have rendered more aptly had he said: Who do not obey the truth, but obey iniquity. Everyone, therefore, who enters upon a road foreign to the truth, and does not follow him who said, ”I am the truth,” disbelieves the truth and is disobedient to it. So too those who err not only in acts but also in perceptions and in faith; which happens most of all out of contentiousness.

But those also who set themselves against wisdom, and against righteousness and sanctification, disbelieve Christ, who as he is truth, so also is wisdom, so also is sanctification. But not to obey Christ, who is righteousness, this is to obey iniquity, and those acts which are without doubt followed by the things that are written: ”wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish. Concerning wrath we have often already said that sometimes the very torment which is inflicted upon the soul from the consciousness of sin is called wrath; but by indignation is signified a certain swelling of that same wrath, and its agitation in each particular: as if, for example, we should set down some very bad wound as the wrath, while the swelling and distension of it should be called the indignation of the wound. But the tribulation which anguish follows is not to be thought like that tribulation of which the Apostle says that ”tribulation works patience. For that sort of tribulation does not have anguish following upon it, as the Apostle himself also says: ”We suffer tribulation, but we are not in anguish. Indeed, that tribulation of the saints not only has no anguish, but has breadth. Finally the just man speaks thus: ”In tribulation you have enlarged me. Of this breadth the Apostle also, conscious of it in himself, writes to the Corinthians: ”You are not straitened in me, but you are straitened in your own inward parts. And he added: ”Be you also enlarged.

Therefore God says of his saints, whom he knows to be enlarged and to have within the dwelling of their heart spaces spread far and wide: ”I will dwell in them, and I will walk about in them. This gift also Solomon received from God among the other gifts of wisdom, as it is written: ”And the Lord gave,” he says, ”to Solomon very great prudence, and breadth of heart. In this breadth, then, of the heart of the saints God not only dwells but also walks about. But in the hearts of sinners, where there are narrow straits, because they have given place to the devil to enter in, the devil indeed enters, yet not to dwell nor to walk about — for they are narrow — but to lie hidden as in a cave; for he is a serpent. So then within itself the unhappy soul which this most evil snake has besieged, stiffening with serpentine cold, is drawn together and constricted, and is forced into every narrowness; whereas that soul which obeys the truth is enlarged after the likeness of heaven, and is spread abroad, and is illumined by the rays of the sun of righteousness, and becomes the hall of wisdom and of truth.

[§7] Yet why wrath and indignation to the Jew first, and to the Greek? Because glory and honor also belong to them first. For to them first were entrusted the oracles of God, and they themselves say: ”Blessed are we, O Israel, for the things that please God are known to us. And therefore, according to the sentence of the Gospel, ”the servant who knew his lord’s will and did it not shall deservedly be beaten with many stripes” — this is the Jew; ”but he who did not know it,” the Greek, that is, the Gentile, ”shall be beaten with few. For there is a difference between having known God and having known the will of God, since God could be known ”from the creation of the world through the things that were made” even by the Gentiles, and ”his eternal power and divinity”; but his will is known only from the Law and the prophets. But since the Apostle puts the Jews first and the Greeks after, both for punishment and for reward, we must inquire whom he wishes to be understood here as Greeks and whom as Jews. If he calls those Jews who are still under the Law and do not come to Christ, and calls Christians Greeks — that is, those who believe from among the nations — he seems to go against the sense of the whole mystery. For how shall those be called first of whom it was said: ”Behold, the first shall be last”; and to whom again he says:

”Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate”? And again, when the Savior had come to the fig tree on which he found no fruit, he said that ”never let fruit be born from you. And two peoples were signified in the womb of Rebecca, of whom it is said that ”the elder shall serve the younger,” and the younger received the blessing of the birthright. But you will find countless other things of this sort in the Scriptures. If, however, he calls us Jews — that is, Christians, and those who have believed out of every race, whom he himself calls Jews in secret — it remains that he calls those Gentiles Greeks who have not yet believed. But how does the Apostle set so great a hope before Gentiles who have not yet believed, when the ecclesiastical rule seems to stand in the way, which lays down that ”unless one be born again of water and the Holy Spirit,” he cannot ”enter into the kingdom of heaven”; and again Peter in the Acts of the Apostles declares concerning Christ, saying: ”For neither is there any other name under heaven whereby we must be saved”? How then does he here make the nations partakers of glory and honor and peace in the second place after the Jews? But let us see whether perhaps that goodness and sweetness of God which is wont to be hidden in the holy Scriptures may here too be contriving something secret.

In this passage the Apostle seems to me to have made three orders. For first he speaks of those ”who by patience in good work seek glory and honor and incorruption,” that God renders to them ”eternal life. But it is certain that patience in good work is found in those who endure the contests and struggles of piety — which we expounded above to be said plainly of Christians, among whom martyrs are made. This is proved also by what the Lord says to the apostles, that ”you shall have tribulation in this world, and the world shall rejoice, but you shall mourn”; and he added

a little later: ”In your patience you shall gain your souls. It belongs, then, to Christians to suffer oppression in this age and to mourn, and theirs is eternal life. And do you wish to know that eternal life belongs to no one except him who believes in Christ? Hear the voice of the Savior himself plainly declaring it in the Gospels: ”But this is eternal life, that they may know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. Everyone therefore who has not acknowledged the Father, the only true God, and his Son, Jesus Christ, is a stranger to the eternity of life. For this very acknowledgment and faith is designated as eternal life.

This, then, is the first place, that of Christians, to whom, as they seek glory and honor and incorruption through patience in good work, eternal life will be rendered — that life, without doubt, which says: ”I am the way, the truth, and the life. And in Christ, who is eternal life, is the fullness of all good things. In the second place are set those ”who are of contention, and who indeed disbelieve the truth but obey iniquity”; over whom hang ”wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish” — that is, upon every soul that works evil, of the Jew first, and of the Greek. But to these same, in the third place, a recompense of good things is also promised with an equal distinction, when he says: ”But glory and honor and peace to everyone who works good, to the Jew first and to the Greek. Which, so far as I can grasp it, he says of Jews and of Gentiles, both being as yet unbelievers.

For it can happen that even among those who are in the Law, if someone by reason of the common persuasion does not believe in Christ, yet works what is good, holds to justice, loves mercy, preserves chastity and continence, guards modesty and gentleness, and performs every good work — this man, even though he does not have eternal life, because believing in the only true God he has not also believed in his Son Jesus Christ whom he sent, nevertheless the glory of his works, and peace, and honor will be able not to perish. But the Greek also, that is, the Gentile, if, though he has not the Law, he is a law to himself, showing the work of the law in his heart, and moved by natural reason — as we see some among the nations — either holds to justice, or preserves chastity, or guards prudence, temperance, and modesty: this man, although he seems a stranger to eternal life because he does not believe in Christ, and cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven because he has not been born again of water and the Spirit, nevertheless it seems, from these things which are said by the Apostle, that he cannot utterly lose the glory and honor and peace of good works.

For if, according to what we have discussed above, the Apostle seems to condemn the Gentiles on the ground that, having known God by natural understanding, they did not magnify him as God, why do we not think that he can and ought also to praise them, if any among them, knowing God, magnify him as God? I do not think, therefore, that it can be doubted that the one who would have deserved to be condemned for an evil work would likewise, if he had done a good work, be

held worthy of the reward of the good work. For you see the Apostle saying that ”we must all stand before the tribunal of Christ, that each one may carry back the proper things of the body, according as he has done, whether good or evil. From this, finally, comes what he adds in this passage: ”For there is no respect of persons with God. But if this still seems doubtful to you, hear also what Peter declares in the Acts of the Apostles, when he had entered in to the Gentile Cornelius: ”I find,” he says, ”that God is not a respecter of persons, but in every place and in every nation, he who does his will is accepted by him. But it can be objected against us what the Lord says in the Gospel: ”Everyone who believes in me shall not be judged. But he who does not believe is already judged, because he does not believe in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

But let us see how we who believe in Christ are not judged, that we may know how he too who does not believe is already judged. Do we suppose, perhaps, that one who has believed in Christ and after this has committed murder or adultery, or has borne false witness, or has done something of this kind — things we sometimes see even the faithful commit — that for these he who has believed in Christ will now not be judged? It is certain that all these come to judgment; and therefore the Lord’s word which he says, ”He who believes in me shall not be judged,” is to be understood thus: that according to the fact that he has believed he shall not be judged as an unbeliever and faithless man; but concerning his own acts he shall without doubt be judged. So then he too who does not believe is already judged according to the fact that he has not believed; and just as for the believer, if he has committed anything of sin outside, his faith being safe, judgment remains: so also for the unbeliever, if he has done any good work, apart from his unbelief, the reward will not perish. Unless perhaps someone should wish to object something harsh and intolerable, so as to say that he who sins is not to be counted among believers; because if a man believes, he does not sin; but if he sins, by this very fact he is convicted of not believing.

But I think it is doubtful to no one how hard this opinion is. For how few will be found on earth who so balance their life as to fail in nothing whatever? But John the Apostle too in his Epistle plainly marks an opinion of this sort, when he says: ”If anyone says that he has no sin, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if we confess our sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus the just, who entreats for our sins. These things, then, have been discussed by us in this passage as far as we could, considering also what the Apostle says: ”Or is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also”; so that through these things the explanation may become clearer of how Jews are placed first, and then Greeks, by the Apostle. But nevertheless let it be in the judgment of the reader to test what has been said. We, however, have brought many things into the treatment, lest we should seem to leave anything of the Apostle’s meaning undiscussed.

[§8] ”For whoever have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law, and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. Since the Apostle says that those who have sinned without the law will perish without the law, the question arises whether this is to be understood of the law of Moses alone, or also of the law of Christ, or even of any human law whatsoever under which it happens that each mortal lives, so that whoever sins under it may be judged according to it; or whether he who is outside the law of Moses alone, even if he lives under some law, perishes when he has sinned as one placed outside the law. For the apostle Paul himself, when he says that to those who are without the law he became as one without the law, adds: ”though I was not without the law, but was in the law of Christ,” and thereby shows that he was indeed not in the law of Moses, yet was under a law. But consider too whether human laws, as we have said, ought to be reckoned for this same purpose. As for the natural law, however, which is present in all men alike, it must be considered whether it makes nearly all men sin within a law, as he says in what follows:

”For when the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things that belong to the law, these, not having the law, are a law unto themselves, and they show the work of the law written in their hearts. Unless perhaps we should say that those are placed outside the law who obey neither written laws, nor conscience, nor their own thoughts rebuking and accusing them. But how does he say, ”As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law”? Surely he who is in the law of Christ shall be judged by the law of Christ, and he who is in the law of Moses shall be judged by the law of Moses; nor is he who is under the law of Christ — although he may also seem to be subject to the law of Moses — to be thought judged according to it as to why he is not circumcised, or why he does not keep the Sabbath. And even if he is to be thought judged according to the law of Moses, he will be judged according to that respect in which the law is spiritual. For this is what it means that not the hearer of the law but the doer is justified.

But as to the fact that he who has sinned without the law seems to be struck with the heavier sentence, since he is pronounced destined to perish — whereas surely he might seem worthy of some pity, having had no help from the law — let us see whether here again, as we have shown in other places, some divine goodness lies hidden, which He always hides for those who fear Him. For perhaps it is on this account that the Lord Himself shows in the Gospel that He has a more eager care for those who perish, when He says that ”the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which had perished. And again He says: ”I was not sent except to the sheep that have perished of the house of Israel. And David says: ”I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant. Moreover, in the Gospel the drachma which had been lost is found by the woman when the house has been cleaned; and the father rejoices over the younger son who repents, who ”was dead, and is alive again; had

perished, and is found," more than over the one who had not perished nor been found. Which younger son, as I judge, had already fled even from the natural law itself: for this seems to be indicated in his consuming, by living luxuriously, the portion of his father's substance that fell to him.

Moreover, in the prophet Ezekiel it is charged against the shepherds that they did not bind up the weak, and did not seek what had perished; and a little later the Lord Himself says: "And what has perished," He says, "I will seek out. Yet it must be observed that in all these passages God is nowhere said to have destroyed anyone, but each one suffers of himself this perishing, as he says in this very place: "They shall also perish without the law"; and, "The Son of Man came to seek that which had perished," not that which He had destroyed; and "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," not those which He had destroyed. And when the Lord Himself says, "All," He says, "whom Thou hast given Me, I have kept, and none of them has perished," He did not say: I have destroyed none of them. Indeed, wherever God is said to destroy, you will find it said rather in the sense of "reject," as when He says: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will reject the understanding of the prudent.

But as to His saying that "as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law," consider whether perhaps, according to those penalties which are written in the Law, by which judgments were carried out — where men are commanded to be stoned, or handed over to the fire, or to go to the city of refuge, or to suffer other such things — the future judgment may also be of this sort: since indeed those who are under the law are said to serve a pattern and shadow of heavenly things; lest perhaps by some similar reasoning the future judgment also be conducted against those who have transgressed the law. Since therefore it has become clear that different laws are spoken of in the Scriptures, if anyone has so far fled from all of these that even the natural law itself, which is lacking to almost no one, seems in him to be blotted out and abolished, whether through hardness or through grossness of heart, of such a one it may seem to be said that he perishes without the law; whereas he is said to be judged by the law who lives under the law, since the Apostle also testifies that everyone who has himself circumcised is a debtor to keep the whole law.

[§9] "For when the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things that are of the law, these, not having the law, are a law unto themselves: who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to them, and their thoughts among themselves accusing or even defending one another, in the day when God shall judge the hidden things of men, according to my Gospel, through Jesus Christ. It is certain that the Gentiles, who do not have the law, are not said to do by nature the things that are of the law with regard to Sabbaths or New Moons, or the sacrifices which are written in the law. For this law is not

written in the hearts of the Gentiles; but this is what they can perceive by nature: for example, that they should not commit murder, not commit adultery, not steal, not bear false witness; that they should honor father and mother, and things like these. Perhaps too the fact that God is the one creator of all things is written in the hearts of the Gentiles. Nevertheless, these things which are said to be written in the heart seem to me to accord rather with the laws of the Gospel, where all things are referred back to natural equity. For what is so close to natural perceptions as that men should not do to others what they do not wish to be done to themselves?

But the natural law can agree with the law of Moses according to the spirit, not according to the letter. For what natural understanding will there be in this, for instance, that one should circumcise an infant on the eighth day, or that wool should not be woven together with linen, or that no one should eat anything leavened on the day of the New Things? And when we had several times put these objections to the Jews, and demanded that they show what usefulness there might be in them, we know that they were accustomed to reply only this: that so it seemed good to the lawgiver. But we who hold that all these things are to be understood spiritually, for that reason also believe that not the hearers but the doers of the law are to be justified — not of the law according to the letter, which certainly, on account of its impossibility, cannot have a doer, but according to the spirit, through which alone the law can be fulfilled. This, then, is the work of the law which the Apostle says even the Gentiles can fulfill by nature. For when they do the things that are of the law, the law seems to be ”written” in their hearts by God, ”not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. But as for his saying ”in the hearts,” it must not be supposed that the law is said to be written in that member of the body which is called the heart.

For how could flesh either put forth such perceptions of prudence, or contain such great storehouses of memory? But it must be understood that the rational power of the soul is customarily called the heart. And the Apostle says that those who hold the law inscribed in their hearts make use of the testimony of a sound conscience. Hence it seems necessary to examine what this is that the Apostle calls conscience: whether it is some substance other than the heart or the soul. For this conscience is spoken of elsewhere too, in that it rebukes and is not rebuked, and judges the man and is not itself judged, as John says: ”If our conscience,” he says, ”does not rebuke us, we have confidence toward God. And again Paul himself says elsewhere that ”this is our glorying, the testimony of our conscience. Since therefore I see so great a freedom in it, which in good deeds indeed always rejoices and exults, but in evil ones is not itself accused, but rebukes and accuses the very soul to which it clings, I judge that it is that spirit which is said by the Apostle to be with the soul, according to what we have taught above — joined to it as a kind of tutor and guide, so that it may admonish it concerning better things, or chastise and accuse it for

its faults; concerning which the Apostle also says that ”no man knows the things of a man, except the spirit of the man which is in him”;

and that this is the spirit of conscience, of which he says: ”The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit. And perhaps this is that very spirit which clings to the souls of the just, which have been obedient to it in all things; and therefore it is written: ”Praise the Lord, you spirits and souls of the just. But if the soul has been disobedient and defiant toward it, it will be divided from it after death, and separated. And on this account I think it was said in the Gospel concerning the wicked steward, that ”the Lord will divide him, and will set his portion with the unbelievers. Perhaps this is the spirit of which it is written, that ”the spirit in men is incorruptible. And according to what we said above, that it is divided and separated from the sinful soul, so that the soul may receive its portion with the unbelievers, that saying too can likewise be applied to these matters: ”There shall be two in the field, one shall be taken and one shall be left; and two at the mill, one shall be taken and one shall be left. So much concerning what is written: ”Their conscience bearing witness.”

[§10] Now let us see what follows: ”And their thoughts among themselves accusing one another, or even defending them, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel, through Jesus Christ.” Who would doubt that the judgment of God is right, where accusers and defenders and witnesses are employed? And indeed from this just judgment of God let us men take an example, and let us never suppose that a judgment can be held just without an accuser, and a defender, and witnesses. Next we must see how, on that day when God shall judge the secrets of men, the thoughts will either accuse the soul or defend it — not, surely, those thoughts which shall then exist, but these which are now in us. For when we think either good things or evil, just as upon wax tablets, so in our heart there are left behind certain marks and impressions of both good and evil thoughts, which, now placed in the hidden part of the breast, are said to be revealed on that day by no other than him who alone can know the secrets of men; and our own conscience too will bear witness that the causes of those signs, or of those marks, are not hidden from God. Yet this judgment, according to Paul’s Gospel (that is, the one which Paul announces), will take place through Jesus Christ, ”for the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son.” Marcion, however, and all who by their various fabrications introduce diverse natures of souls, are most plainly refuted from this passage, since Paul says that God judges the secrets of men through Jesus Christ: and it is shown that each one is to be judged not by the privilege of nature, but accused or excused by his own thoughts, by the testimony of his own conscience.

[§11] ”But if you are called a Jew, and rest in the law, and glory in God, and know his will, and approve the more useful things, being instructed by the law, and are

confident that you are a guide of the blind, a light of those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, having the form of knowledge and of truth in the law. You then who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abominate idols, do you commit sacrilege? You who glory in the law, by transgression of the law do you dishonor God. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. Just as we have observed in the prophetic Scriptures that not only is the person of the speaker secretly and suddenly changed, but also that of those to whom the discourse is addressed, or concerning whom it is made — for example, that some things are said now in the person of the Father, now of the Son, or of the Holy Spirit, now also in the person of the prophet, or of any others whatever;

and that now indeed the discourse is directed to the people of Israel, now to foreign nations, or to kings, and to a thousand others — so it seems to me that this Epistle also was written to the Romans in such a way that at times the person of the speaker is changed, and sometimes indeed the spiritual Paul speaks, as in many places of the Epistle; but sometimes the carnal Paul, as, for example, when he says: ”But I am carnal, sold under sin,” as will be shown when, with the Lord’s guidance, we come to that very passage. And at times there occurs also a change of the persons to whom the discourse is addressed, so that now it is said to the whole Church of the Romans: ”I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is announced in the whole world”; but in other places not to the whole Church, but to everyone who judges another and himself does those things which he condemns in others, and is inexcusable. But now this discourse is made neither to the Church nor to him who judges, in which he says: ”But if you are called a Jew, and rest in the law, and glory in God, and know his will,” and the rest, as far as that passage: ”And the uncircumcision which is by nature, fulfilling the law, shall judge you, who by the letter and circumcision are a transgressor of the law.

Just as in the prophetic Scriptures he who wishes to grasp the understanding of what is written must attend vigilantly to the persons — whether of those speaking, or of those to whom, or of those about whom the discourse is made — so now, it seems to me, must we proceed in the Epistle to the Romans. But let us now see what those things are which the Apostle says to him who is called a Jew. For first this must be observed, that he did not say of him: ”But if you” are a Jew; but, ”you are called a Jew”: because to be a Jew and to be called a Jew are not the same thing. For Paul himself teaches in what follows that he is truly a Jew who is circumcised ”in secret” with the circumcision of the heart, who keeps the law ”in the spirit, not the letter,” ”whose praise is not from men, but from God. But he who is circumcised ”openly, in the flesh,” observing the law for this purpose, that he may be seen by men — he is not truly a Jew, but is called one. For concerning these the

Apostle himself also says: ”Behold the circumcision: for we are the circumcision, who serve God in the spirit. But John too in the Apocalypse speaks thus of certain ones: ”Who say that they are Jews, and are not”: whom he also declares to be ”of the synagogue of Satan.

Yet it must be known that he who is ”in secret” and truly a Jew draws his name from that Judah of whom it is written: ”Judah, your brothers shall praise you: your hands shall be upon the back of your enemies. Judah is a lion’s whelp,” and the rest, which were prophesied concerning the Lord and Savior. Therefore, if it has become clear about the distinctions of persons, and who is truly a Jew, but who is called so by name alone, let us see what the apostolic discourse says to this man who boasts that he is a Jew, and is not. You, he says, who are called a Jew, and place all your rest in the letter of the law, and glory in God as one who is his portion, and to whom it has been granted to know the will of God, and as one skilled in testing boast that you can know and discern what things are more useful, and their differences, so that you not only know what things are good, but also discern what are better and more useful, you are also confident that you can be a guide of the blind: doubtless you are of those guides of whom the Lord said: ”They are blind guides of the blind. But if a blind man leads a blind man, both fall into the pit. He is confident, then, that he is a guide of the blind, and a light also of those who are in darkness.

But to these too the Lord nonetheless says: ”But if the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness itself! Yet they are confident that they are instructors of the foolish, and teachers of infants, as those who have received from the letter of the law the form of knowledge and of truth. And because they indeed profess these things, yet do not truly hold them, the Apostle says to them: ”You therefore who teach another, do you not teach yourself? And you who preach that a man should not steal,” you steal the coming and presence of Christ, which has shone forth upon the whole world; ”you who say that one should not commit adultery,” you commit adultery against the synagogue of the people of God, bringing upon it a depraved and adulterous word of doctrine; and you unite it with the letter of the law which is outside, though you read what is written of her, that ”all the glory of the king’s daughter is within”; and to whom you read it likewise said through the prophet: ”Unless you hear in secret, your soul shall weep. You therefore who deny that one should commit adultery, commit so grave an adultery as to introduce an adulterous meaning to her of whom you read it said by God: ”I will betroth you to myself in faithfulness and mercy. You who abominate idols, commit sacrilege, violating the true temple of God, which is Christ Jesus.

For you destroy the temple of God which was raised up in three days for those who believe. But he too who steals and conceals the word from the law and the prophets which proclaims Christ, lest the people hear and believe, commits sacrilege, and truly violates the temple of God. Likewise also this man who is called a Jew, and

glories in the letter of the Law of Moses, is convicted as a transgressor of the Law when he does not believe Christ. For if he believed Moses, he would surely believe him of whom Moses wrote. Because of such men, therefore, who are called Jews and are not, the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, not only for their most wicked works, but also because of the low and debased understanding which they have in the law and the prophets.

For they become ridiculous even to the Gentiles themselves when, following the letter of the Law, they say: ”Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle: all of which things are unto corruption according to the commandments and doctrines of men. But these things the Apostle indeed says to him who is a Jew in name, not in deed; yet they can pertain also to every man in whom there is only the name of religion and piety, while works, and knowledge, and faith are lacking.

And therefore we ought to examine these matters with greater care in ourselves than in those who do not come to faith in Christ, lest any of us who through faith in Christ and through the circumcision given in baptism has been made a true Jew, and rests in the law of Christ, and boasts also that, having driven off the error of idols, he has come to know God and that His will has become known to him (for he knows how to prove what is good, and well-pleasing, and perfect, and has advanced so far that he is even a leader and teacher of the Church for enlightening those who are blind in knowledge, and for instructing the little ones in Christ) — lest, I say, such a man be willing indeed to teach others quite strictly, and to demand from those whom he instructs the highest discipline of chastity, while he himself is driven by the vice of intemperance and of covetousness, and sometimes even burns with the flames of hidden lust. To a man of this sort, then, this apostolic word is fittingly applied, saying to him: ”You who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say that a man should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?

But if also, as sometimes is wont to happen, he has turned to his own gains the offerings taken up for God, and the alms given for the use of the poor, it is rightly said to him: ”You who abhor idols, do you commit sacrilege? But if he even runs into open disgrace, and by his avarice, and unjust judgments, and drunkenness he already bears a public mark of infamy, God is dishonored in his deeds; and when a teacher of the Church has become known to the peoples as being such, ”the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles. For it is certain that disciples are like their master. Yet these same things can, in a third place, be applied also to heretics. For they too are called Christians, and some of them have even held to the Law, and, instructed by it, profess themselves to be guides of the blind and teachers of infants, approving as more useful the things which they say lie hidden from the men of the Church. But since these men steal the words of God, and by a perverse exposition filch away their meaning, and bring an adulterous understanding of the

faith into the royal bridal chambers, to the Church, the Bride of Christ, it is rightly said to them: ”You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?

You who say that a man should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?” — and those who ”abhor idols” commit ”sacrilege,” stealing the precious vessels from the temple of God, that is, the pearls of the true faith from the holy Scriptures: through whom also ”the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles,” while they stain the chaste and honorable teachings of the Church with the corrupt and shameful errors of heretical depravity. For from them have arisen, to the discredit of the holy religion, the reproaches of infanticide and incest and of other like crimes. It must be known, however, that the Apostle says these things to the Jews by way of irony. For he who truly rests in the Law, and boasts in God, and approves the more useful things, is not to be believed to do the things that have been enumerated. Now the testimony which he set down, that is, ”For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” is taken from Isaiah.

[§12] ”Circumcision indeed profits, if you keep the law; but if you are a transgressor of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. If therefore the uncircumcision keep the righteous requirements of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned as circumcision? And shall not that which by nature is uncircumcision, fulfilling the law, judge you, who by the letter and circumcision are a transgressor of the law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men, but from God. What that circumcision may be which the Apostle says profits, or what law it is that profits if it be kept, seems to require a rather careful inquiry, so that when we have understood these things we too may be able to be circumcised. For indeed, if circumcision profits, according to the word of the Apostle saying that ”circumcision profits, if you keep the law,” the Apostle himself in what follows teaches that it is not ”that circumcision which is outward in the flesh,” but ”the circumcision of the heart,” made through the spirit, not through the letter, that has praise not from men but from God. And elsewhere he says: ”Behold the circumcision: for we are the circumcision, who serve God in the spirit, and put no confidence in the flesh.

This, as I think, is the circumcision which the Apostle says profits, if you keep the law: not the law of the letter, whose circumcision in the flesh you certainly do not receive, but the law of the spirit, according to which you are circumcised in heart. ”For the letter kills, but the spirit gives life,” since the law of God also is reported to be ”written not with ink,” but with the finger of God, which is His Spirit, ”and not on tablets of stone, but on the tablets of the heart. But it can be objected to us that, if the Apostle says that circumcision profits — which surely is understood to be nothing else than the purging of the soul and the casting off of vices — how does he still add that a circumcision of this kind profits only then if you keep the

law, when this very circumcision seems to come about from nothing else than the observance of the law? But consider whether perhaps to cut away vices and to cease from evils signifies circumcision, while to do the things that are good and to accomplish the things that are perfect is to keep the law. For perfection does not consist in this, that one cease from evils, but in this, that one do good things, as we are more plainly taught in the Psalm, when it says: ”Turn away from evil” — and it did not stop there, but added: ”and do good.

Similarly, therefore, the Apostle also, as one steeped in these things, says that circumcision and the casting off of evils profits only then, if you keep the law of good things. For no one can be perfect if he has done nothing evil, but only if he has done something good. Whence that very circumcision also which was performed in the flesh will be signified not apart from the image of this understanding which we are now expounding. Indeed, it was given to little ones on the eighth day, who assuredly had as yet done no work at all. But if anyone should bring forward to us that passage which is set down at the beginning of the book of Job concerning his praise, where it is said: ”And Job was a man truthful, blameless, just, a worshipper of God, abstaining from every evil thing” — as to why, when the praise of good work comes first, abstinence from evil is reckoned last: I think indeed that this indicates what often is wont to happen, namely that very many men do indeed the things that are good, yet mix in also something of evil work; but few are such as Job, who are so truthful and irreproachable, so just and worshippers of God, that while doing all these things they abstain from every evil thing.

”If therefore,” he says, ”you are a transgressor of the law” — as we expounded above, by not doing the things that are good — ”your circumcision has become uncircumcision,” since even this, that you have seemed to abstain from evil, is reckoned to you, who do not do the works of faith and of righteousness, unto unbelief. For it is not possible for anyone’s fleshly circumcision to be turned back again into uncircumcision, since assuredly the flesh of the foreskin once cut off cannot return again. More worthily, therefore, and more plainly is it understood that abstinence from evil work, which is signified by circumcision, is reckoned unto uncleanness if it does not have the works of faith. But also in the Church, he who is circumcised through the grace of baptism, if after this he is a transgressor of the law of Christ, the circumcision of baptism will be reckoned to him as the uncircumcision of unbelief: since ”faith without works” is said to be ”dead,” and the portion of the wicked steward is placed with the unbelievers.

[§13] ”But if the uncircumcision keeps the righteous requirements of the law, shall not that which is by nature uncircumcision, fulfilling the law, judge you, who by the letter and circumcision are a transgressor of the law? We said above that the Apostle is discussing two Jews and two circumcisions, and that he mentions now the carnal, now the spiritual. In the present passage, therefore, he seems to call

”uncircumcision” the Gentiles, who came to faith in Christ while in the uncircumcision of the flesh: these, as keepers of the spiritual law, he sets alongside and compares with the Jews, who by the letter and the circumcision of the flesh are transgressors of the law, and whom he says are to be judged by those in whom there is not circumcision of the flesh but observance of the law. And from this comparison we can also admonish our own people in the Church; for example, if we were to say that catechumens, or even the heathen, are still in uncircumcision, and that the faithful have been circumcised through the grace of baptism. If, then, a catechumen who has not yet been circumcised through the grace of the laver keeps the law of Christ, and guards its righteous requirements and commandments, does he not by this comparison judge the man who is called faithful and does not keep the precepts, but despises the law of Christ and his commandments? Indeed, the Lord himself said:

”The queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and shall condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Let this much, then, be said by us for the instruction of the Church. But consider whether that other understanding also can be admitted in this passage: that it may be said that even after the coming of Christ the circumcision of the flesh, which is observed from the law, is of some profit to those who keep the law — according to the fact that in the beginning of our faith it was still observed by believers, as is taught in the Acts of the Apostles that Peter did in the distinguishing of foods, or Paul in the sacrifices of purification; whether perhaps here too the Apostle may seem to have set forth a circumcision of this sort, which he says profits only if the law is also kept; and if not, this circumcision is to be turned into uncircumcision, that is, it will profit nothing — indeed, that he even incurs the greater judgment who by circumcision of the flesh appears to profess observance of the law, and by transgressing the law is judged by him who has not indeed received the circumcision of the flesh, yet has kept the righteous requirements of the law.

If, then, this sense too ought to be accepted, do you also who read observe that, since the Apostle himself professes that to the Jews he becomes a Jew, and to those who are without the law as one without the law, and becomes all things to all, that he may gain all — whether perhaps for this reason he seems here to concede to the Jews what, writing to the Galatians, he does not concede to those who had believed from among the Gentiles. For he says: ”Because if you are circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. Circumcision, then, profited nothing to those who supposed that something of justification was received from it; but it did profit those who thought that they must not come to Christ if they were forbidden to circumcise their sons. For there were some in the beginnings who kept circumcision with excessive love, as it were the native badge of their nation; and they seemed to be hindered from the faith if that were forbidden them which they could not do

without. Therefore the Apostle seems to speak to men of this sort, lest he shut the door of faith against them, saying: ”Circumcision profits, if you keep the law; but if you are a transgressor of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. On the contrary, however, if believers from among the Gentiles were compelled to circumcision, injury would seem to be done to the faith of Christ and to the preaching of the word.

But this too must be observed, that when he had said, ”Circumcision indeed profits, if you keep the law,” he did not add, ”But if you do not keep it,” as seemed to follow, but said, ”But if you are a transgressor of the law. In which he shows that it is one thing not to keep the law, and another to transgress the law. For even Paul himself does not always keep the law, yet he is never a transgressor of the law. Therefore in what follows he says: ”But if the uncircumcision keeps the righteousness of the law, shall not that which is by nature uncircumcision, fulfilling the law, judge you, who by the letter and circumcision are a transgressor of the law? He keeps the law, then, who observes it according to the letter; and he transgresses it who does not hold its spiritual meaning. But the righteousness of the law is its moral part. For ”law” is a general term, whereas righteousness is a part of the law. For the law contains righteous requirements, and judgments, and commandments, and justifications, and very many other kinds. If, then, uncircumcision — he does not say the law itself, but if it keeps the righteous requirements of the law — is so far preferred to the circumcision that transgresses the law that it even judges it. And he well added, ”fulfilling the law. For he who lives according to the letter is said to keep the law; but he who lives according to the spirit, to fulfill it:

and the fulfillment of the law is in Christ, who said: ”I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. And to fulfill the law is to bring the law to perfection. The carnal Jew, therefore, keeps the law, but the spiritual Jew fulfills it — he who is a Jew in secret. In which the one becomes a transgressor of the law, but the other becomes the judge of the transgressor. And the carnal Jew becomes a transgressor because the law itself was weakened through the flesh. For unless it had been weakened according to the flesh, it would surely not be said: ”For what was impossible for the law, in that it was weak through the flesh. But you will never find it written that the law is weakened through the spirit, and therefore ”those who are in the flesh cannot please God”; but those who through the spirit have mortified the deeds of the flesh shall not only live, but shall be judges not only of men but also of angels: because the praise of the one is from men, but of the other from God. Let this much, then, be said by us toward the explanation of the apostolic discourse which we set out to expound. Yet it will not seem out of place also to examine the general rationale of circumcision itself, since the passage itself has prompted us concerning it.

Let us therefore go back and bring forward into the open whatever is contained about it in the law or in the rest of the Scriptures. We find in Genesis the first

commandment written concerning circumcision, when the responses were given to Abraham in this manner: ”And God said to Abraham: But you shall keep my covenant, and all your seed after you in their generations. And this is the covenant which I have appointed between me and you, and between me and the midst of your seed after you in their generations: every male of you shall be circumcised, and you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be for a sign of the covenant between me and you: and the child among you shall be circumcised on the eighth day, every male in your generations: the homeborn, and the one bought with money from all the sons of strangers, who is not of your seed — with circumcision shall be circumcised the homeborn of your house and he who was purchased by you with money: and my covenant shall be upon your flesh an everlasting covenant: and the uncircumcised male who shall not have been circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin on the eighth day, that soul shall be exterminated from his kindred, because he has broken my covenant. Yet it ought not to escape us that in other copies the phrase ”on the eighth day” is not found placed there — in this passage at least.

Likewise it is written in Leviticus: ”And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, and you shall say to them: Whatever woman shall have received seed and shall have borne a male, she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of her purification she shall be unclean, and on the eighth day he shall circumcise the flesh of his foreskin, and for thirty-three days she shall sit in her blood, unclean. These testimonies indeed we have set down from the law of Moses. But the Savior in the Gospel says that a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, and the law of Moses is not broken; and he says that it is from the fathers, and was given before Moses. Moved by the authority of this saying, and at the same time by the weight of the legal precept, certain persons even after the coming of Jesus were persuaded to be circumcised, though they were of the Gentiles. But others, shuddering at the burden of the precept, fled away utterly even from those very laws in which these things appeared to be written, so that they supposed these were not the commandments of the good God, nor of him whom our Lord and Savior had come to proclaim. And therefore it seems to me that in such passages a more diligent examination must be brought to bear: whether there is anything of usefulness in a commandment of this kind even according to the letter;

and if there are those for whom it is useful, or toward what end its usefulness tends; or whether something more useful is indicated figuratively. Therefore, taking up again those testimonies which we have brought forward from the law, let us examine more attentively whether a commandment of this sort seems to press upon the Jewish people alone, or whether it binds by equal lot all those also who have believed from among the Gentiles. Let us look, then, at that oracle which is delivered to Abraham, by which he is commanded to keep the covenants of circumcision. ”You,” he says, ”shall keep my covenant, and all your seed after you throughout

their generations. And this is the covenant which I have appointed between me, and you, and them: that every male of them be circumcised, and that they circumcise the flesh of their foreskin, that it may be for a sign of the covenant between me and them; and every male shall be circumcised on the eighth day. And which persons even from among the foreigners — that is, those who are by no means said to be of the stock of Abraham — he wishes to be circumcised, he plainly declares. For he says: ”Your home-born slave, and the one bought with money from all the sons of foreigners, who is not of your seed, shall be circumcised with circumcision. Nowhere did he make mention of the proselyte, that is, the newcomer;

but he commands the home-born slave — surely one of that nation, born in the house — or even one purchased at a price, to be circumcised; he does not bind the free man, nor the guest, nor the newcomer. Let us now also search out the law of Leviticus, how God likewise commands Moses: ”Speak,” he says, ”to the children of Israel, and you shall say to them: If a woman shall have received seed and shall have borne a male. And after a little: ”On the eighth day,” he says, ”he shall circumcise the flesh of his foreskin. Observe here too how concerning the law of circumcision Moses is commanded to speak only to the children of Israel, and no mention is made of foreigners. For if we believe that the things which are brought into the law were written through the divine Spirit, surely it must not be thought that anything is either added or passed over in silence to no purpose; and therefore, since in certain commandments it is said, ”Speak to the children of Israel, and you shall say to them,” while in certain others it is added that he should speak not only to the children of Israel but also to the proselytes, that is, to newcomers, the distinction must necessarily be observed.

For just as in those places where it is said, ”Speak to Aaron,” and elsewhere, ”Speak to the sons of Aaron,” and elsewhere, ”Speak to the Levites, and you shall say to them,” it is certain that the rest of the children of Israel are not subject to those laws which were promulgated either to the sons of Aaron, or to the Levites, or to Aaron himself: so also, in those things which are commanded to the children of Israel, where no mention at all is made of the foreigner, it must not be thought that the commandment in these matters is common, or that a common law is made, where there is an exception in the designation. Let us nevertheless bring forward, out of many, a few testimonies for the proof of these things, by which we may establish that the addition or exception of names of this kind is necessary. In the first parts of Leviticus a law of this sort is delivered to the children of Israel alone: ”Speak,” says the Lord, ”to the children of Israel, and you shall say to them: If a man from among you offer gifts to God from the cattle,” and the rest; and again: ”And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel: If a soul shall have sinned not willingly,” and the rest. Who would doubt that these things, and things of this kind, are commanded to the children of Israel alone?

But others are commanded not to them, but to Aaron, or to his sons, as he says in what follows: ”And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Command Aaron and his sons, saying: This is the law of the holocausts,” etc.; and again: ”The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying: This is the law of sin: In the place where they shall have slain the holocaust, there shall they slay the sin offering in the sight of the Lord”; and again to Aaron: ”Wine,” he says, ”and strong drink you shall not drink, you and your sons with you, when you enter into the tabernacle of testimony. But other things are commanded neither to Aaron nor to the children of Israel, but to the elders of Israel, in this manner: ”Speak,” he says, ”to the elders of Israel, saying: Take a he-goat from the goats for sin,” etc. Is it doubted at all that this law is prescribed to the elders of the children of Israel alone? Moreover, concerning clean and unclean animals, a special law is nonetheless seen to be given to the children of Israel. For thus it is written: ”And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, saying to them: These are the animals which you shall eat,” and the rest.

So therefore also concerning circumcision, whether in those things which were answered to Abraham, or in those which are contained in Leviticus, no one else is bound by the law of circumcision, unless he either draws his origin from Abraham, or is their home-born slave, or one bought at a price. But do you wish to see that, wherever he wishes foreigners also to be bound by one and the same law, he shows it expressly? Hear what is written: ”And the Lord spoke,” he says, ”to Moses, saying: Speak to Aaron, and to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and you shall say to them: A man of the children of Israel, or of the newcomers who shall be among you, whoever shall eat any blood, I will set my soul against that soul which shall have eaten blood, and I will destroy it from among its people; for the soul of all flesh is its blood; and I have given it to you, that from it propitiation may be made upon the altar for your souls, because the blood shall make expiation for the soul. Therefore I said to the children of Israel: Every soul among you shall not eat blood, and whatever newcomer shall be among you shall not eat blood. You see, then, that this law concerning the observance of blood, which was given in common both to the children of Israel and to the newcomers, is observed also by us who from among the Gentiles believe in God through Jesus Christ.

For Scripture is accustomed to call us proselytes and sojourners, when it says: ”The sojourner who is among you shall ascend above you upward; but you shall descend downward. He shall be your head, and you shall be his tail. For this reason, then, the Church gathered from the Gentiles has also received the law concerning the observance of blood in common with the sons of Israel. For it was understanding in this way the things written in the law that the blessed council of the apostles then made its decree, writing ordinances and decisions for the Gentiles, that they should abstain not only from the things sacrificed to idols and from fornication, but also from blood and from what is strangled. But perhaps you will inquire whether,

just as the matter has become clear concerning the observance of blood, so also concerning what is strangled it may be shown that the law was given in common to the sons of Israel together with the sojourners, since the apostles' decrees ordain that the Gentiles observe this too. Hear how carefully provision has been made in the laws of God on this point as well: "A man, a man," it says, "of the sons of Israel, and of the sojourners who are among you, whoever hunts a wild beast or a bird that may be eaten, let him pour out its blood, and let the earth cover it, because the soul of all flesh is its blood.

See, then, how carefully the lawgiver, where he wishes the commandment to be common, joins the sojourners to the sons of Israel; but where he gives special precepts, he has distinguished by whom he wishes them to be observed. But since among those things which we quoted above from Leviticus this too is set down in writing: "A man, a man of the sons of Israel, or of the sojourners who are among them, whoever offers a whole burnt offering or a sacrifice, and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of witness to make it to the Lord, that man shall be cut off from his people" — and through this it seems that the matter of sacrifices is enjoined upon the sojourner also, and that the Church gathered from the Gentiles becomes liable to the offering of whole burnt offerings — here too the words, and, so to speak, the syllables of the law must be observed more diligently. For it says, if he "offers a whole burnt offering or a sacrifice," that he should bring it "to the door of the tabernacle of witness. The law does not command that he offer, but if perchance he does offer, it teaches how he ought to do so. For it is certain, and it cannot be doubted, that while the temple stood at Jerusalem and the religion handed down from the fathers flourished, very many even of the Gentiles used to come to worship and to offer sacrifices.

But since this was commanded to be done in one place only — concerning which he also here enjoins that the victim be brought to the door of the tabernacle to be slaughtered — it could lawfully be done only so long as the standing of that place remained unimpaired. Indeed, the Savior too said to those ten lepers whom he had cleansed: "Go and show yourselves to the priest, and offer for yourselves the sacrifices which Moses commanded"; and when one of them had returned to the Savior giving thanks, the Lord said: "Were not ten cleansed? Where are those nine? None was found to return and give thanks to God except this foreigner. So then, while the standing of the temple endured, it was the custom for foreigners also to offer sacrifices; but now, why is that demanded of the sojourners which not even its own worshippers are permitted to perform? Now all these things have been said by us in order that we might show how great a distinction of commandments there is in the law, and especially that we might teach concerning the precept of circumcision that it was enjoined upon none other than those who trace their descent from Abraham, and upon their home-born slaves, or those purchased with

a price; but that those who through Christ believe in God from among the Gentiles are free from laws of this kind.

These matters, however, we have for the present discussed without the addition of any allegory, lest, as commonly happens, there should remain to those who are of the circumcision any occasion for clamoring against the truth. But they may still be able to raise a strong weapon against us, maintaining that proselytes too are made subject to circumcision by the law, on the basis of what is written in Exodus in this manner: ”But if any proselyte comes to you and keeps the Passover to the Lord, you shall circumcise every male of his, and then he shall come near to keep it, and he shall be as one native-born. No uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law for the native-born and for the sojourner who has come to you. Although this objection may seem shrewd, nevertheless the admirable caution of the lawgiver everywhere comes to our aid. For consider that here too he did not say that the sojourner who comes to you should keep the Passover to the Lord and be circumcised; rather, with the most careful restraint he decrees, saying: ”If he comes to you and keeps the Passover. For it cannot be doubted that if anyone keeps the Jewish Passover with the Jews, he ought also to be circumcised; and the lawgiver’s caution has, for the present, made provision for this one point, by which the gainsayers may be blunted. There is, besides, that against which they will not be able to mutter a word.

The Passover which the law commands to be kept, it commands to be kept in that place which the Lord God has chosen, that is, at Jerusalem. For it is decreed that sacrifices be offered in that temple only. Let them therefore first recover the standing of the temple, and then let them contend about circumcision; but if, according to the Savior’s sentence, there has not remained there one stone upon another that has not been thrown down, the pleading about circumcision is superfluous. And circumcision is so far the native mark of that people itself, and of no other nation, that nowhere in the histories of the ancients is any other reported to have been punished on account of it, save the son of Moses, whose mother Zipporah restrained by circumcision the violence of the angel that threatened her son’s death. From all these things, then, it is shown that Israel, which is according to the flesh, is alone subject to the circumcision of the flesh; but the proselyte people that comes to it is free and a stranger from it — the people that has ascended and been set on high, while the other has descended and been set below; and through the mercy of Christ this people has been made the head, and that one the tail. For ”the last have become first, and the first last”; and on this account the uncircumcision which is by nature, fulfilling the law, judges those who through the letter and circumcision are transgressors of the law.

For it is not this circumcision which is performed openly in the flesh that purifies the soul; rather, that circumcision of the heart which is in secret — that is what pu-

rifies the mind and cuts away the stains of the vices. Thus far let what we have said about fleshly circumcision suffice, according to our strength. Come now, following him who said ”that the law is spiritual,” and who says of the things related in the law that they were spoken by way of allegory, let us see also what is to be thought about circumcision according to the allegorical laws. I know that many have delivered sayings or writings on this subject; but we too shall add what the Lord may grant to those things which seem to have been fittingly composed by others. To circumcise is to cut away some part from the generative member, through which the succession of the human race and the propagation of the flesh is administered. By this, therefore, I think it is figuratively indicated that there must be cut away from the soul any impurity that has clung to it from its association with the flesh, if any sense of ill-persuading lust has covered it over.

Therefore this cutting is inflicted not upon other members but upon the genital members, so that it may be made clear that vices of this kind come to the soul not from its own substance, but from the innate motion and incitement of the flesh. But as to the circumcision being given on the eighth day, I judge that this is signified: that to the present age the week of seven days has been assigned, while the eighth day holds the mystery of the age to come. Theirs, then, is the spiritual circumcision who serve as soldiers of the age to come, in which ”they shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be as the angels of God”; and theirs ”who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of God,” and whose ”conversation is in heaven” though they walk upon earth, and who look not at the things ”which are seen, but at the things which are not seen,” and who know that ”the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. But, as we mentioned above, it has also been said by others that spiritual circumcision is to cut away and cast off from the heart every unclean thought and impure perception. Yet against explanations of this sort there stands what is reported as written in Ezekiel, where the Lord says:

”Every son of a stranger, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, shall not enter into my sanctuary, among all the sons of strangers who are in the midst of the house of Israel. For plainly the prophetic word in this place points to two circumcisions when it says: ”Uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh. Hence we are compelled, according to the laws of allegory, to assign the forms and kinds of each circumcision — although this same objection might also be brought against us in the interpretations we set forth above. But for the present let us pursue what figure of the two circumcisions may be maintained according to allegory; and let us see whether perhaps it may be referred to two general classes of sin, in which it is not expedient to be uncircumcised, that is, in faith and in works: so that he is uncircumcised in heart who does not have faith, and uncircumcised in flesh who does not have works. For the one without the other is rejected, since faith without works is said to be dead, and from works without faith no one is justified

before God. Thus then, as I judge, the prophetic saying will be fittingly applied to the people of the faithful, to whom it is said: ”Every stranger who is among you in the midst of the house of Israel, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, shall not enter into my sanctuary” — which is doubtless the same thing that the Lord also says in the Gospel:

”He who believes in me keeps my commandments”; and again: ”He who hears these my words, and does them”; and again: ”But why do you say to me, Lord, Lord, and do not do the things I say? You see, then, that everywhere faith is joined with works, and works are associated with faith. And so it is circumcision of the heart to think nothing sordid, nothing unworthy concerning the faith. Circumcision of the flesh is to commit nothing unclean, nothing defiled in deed and action. For whoever is uncircumcised and unclean in either one of these is by the words of God forbidden to enter into the sanctuary. Yet even the stranger enters into the sanctuary, into which, according to the letter of the law, none but the priests alone were permitted to enter. But now it is granted even to strangers that they should enter, provided they have been purified by the circumcision of faith and of deeds. But if anyone should strive to call us back to the earlier questions, and should again lay before us what is written concerning the stranger — that from him who wishes to enter into the sanctuary not only circumcision of the heart but also of the flesh is required — to such a one, persisting so troublesomely, we for our part set over against him that which the prophet Jeremiah says: ”Behold, your ears are uncircumcised. Let this exactor of a fleshly circumcision show us a circumcision of the ears that is perceptible and bodily, if he can:

but it is certain that he can in no way do so. He will therefore be driven by necessity back to allegories, and will say that the ears are circumcised when, according to Solomon’s admonitions, they do not receive an empty report, and when they are stopped up so as not to hear the judgment of blood, and when they are hedged about with thorns so as not to receive detraction, but so that they lie open to the word of God alone, and to those things which are spoken for edification. Let that circumcision of the heart, then, be of the same sort as this circumcision of the ears, which is seen to be expounded in the common way. And in this manner one is also said to be uncircumcised in lips who has not circumcised blasphemy, scurrility, and filthy speech from his mouth, who has not set a guard upon his mouth and a door of restraint about his lips, who has not circumcised his mouth even from an idle word. Finally, where Moses says to the Lord: ”Provide, Lord, another whom you may send, for I am slow of tongue and of feeble voice” — they say that in the Hebrew copies they themselves have: ”But I am uncircumcised in lips.

And if in the manner we have described above one can be seen to be uncircumcised in ears and uncircumcised in lips, why should not one likewise be said to be uncircumcised in the foreskin of his flesh who pours himself out too immoderately and

intemperately toward the natural motion of intercourse — while he is held to be circumcised who in a matter of this kind employs only such acts as are lawful and as suffice for posterity? But since we are treating of the meaning of circumcision, it does not seem out of place to add to these things also that Jesus the son of Nave is recorded, at the Lord's command, to have circumcised the children of Israel a second time with knives of stone: which, so far as the letter is concerned, seems to have been an impossible thing to do. For once they had been circumcised in the flesh of the foreskin, what could a second circumcision find to take away? But our Jesus, who truly after Moses leads the children of Israel into the holy land flowing with milk and honey, into the land of promise, plainly circumcises the believing people not once but a second time. For his first circumcision is that by which he cut away from them either the worship of idols or the fabrications of philosophical persuasion. But he applies a second circumcision when he cuts away from them the habit of the old man, and the passions and vices of the flesh:

and then is fulfilled what is written in Jesus son of Nave: "This day I have taken away from you the reproaches of Egypt. For a man carries the reproaches of Egypt about with him if, though placed within the Church and serving as a soldier under Jesus his captain, he keeps Egyptian manners and barbarous motions of the mind. Marcion indeed, who is pleased to have nothing understood by way of allegory, will find no way at all to explain what the Apostle says, that circumcision profits. But neither will he be able in any degree to give an account of the several things that follow. To oppose, and with a certain mockery to brand, the God of the law who gave circumcision, is the custom not of him alone, but of all the heretics who repudiate the Old Testament, together with the pagans, who all heap up such things against the God of the law as though in a confederacy of disparagement. The Stoics say: Granted that circumcision indicates something mystical and holds an allegorical figure; was it then fitting that the kinds of figures and the riddles of the law should be established with the punishment and peril of little children, with tortures inflicted on tender and still innocent infancy? Had the lawgiver no place to put his mystical forms except in the dishonoring of the parts of shame; and could the law of Almighty God, the seal of the eternal covenant, be placed nowhere but in the obscene parts of the members?

Is that God good, then, who commanded a newborn human being to be wounded at once, in the very first auspices of the new light? And if, as it seems to you, he himself is the creator both of the soul and of the body, then either he brands himself as having formed superfluously that part of the body which he afterwards orders to be cut away — so that through the torments of wretched people he might correct his own mistake — or else he wrongly commands to be taken away what he made of necessity and to good purpose. And then besides, if God is concerned that very many be brought to the worship of his religion, the greatest obstacle arises from circumcision. For both because every man shrinks from pain, and also because he

flees the derision attaching to what is shameful, this ought to be reckoned rather an impediment to religion than a badge of it. These things and many like them the Gentiles clamor against the lawgiver, or the heretics do; and I think it necessary to answer them, but first the Gentiles. No wise man censures in others what he holds honorable and great in his own house; for circumcision among you, O Gentiles, is held to be so great a thing that it is not entrusted indiscriminately to the ignoble crowd, but only to priests, and to those among them who have been devoted to the more select studies.

For among the Egyptians, who are reckoned in your superstitions both the most ancient and the most learned, and from whom nearly all the rest have borrowed the rite of their sacred things and their ceremonies — among these, I say, no one used to study geometry or astronomy, which among them are held to be the foremost disciplines; certainly no one searched out the secrets of astrology and of the casting of nativities, than which they think nothing more divine, unless he had first received circumcision. Among them the priest, the diviner, or the minister of any sacred rites whatever, or, as they call him, every prophet, is circumcised. The priestly letters, too, of the ancient Egyptians, which they call hieroglyphic, no one learned unless he were circumcised. Every hierophant, every seer, every initiate and knower of heaven and, as they suppose, of the underworld, is not believed among them to be such unless he has been circumcised. Do you then judge that shameful and obscene among us which among you is held so honorable and great that you believe the secrets of things heavenly and infernal cannot be declared to you except through marks of this kind?

But if among you, for the sake of so many and such great secrets of yours which are performed with circumcision as their handmaid, it will be necessary that a reason be sought — and such a reason as ought not to be despised, lest along with it all your ceremonies alike be undermined — why do you not expect that this same thing can hold among us as well? Indeed, if you unroll your own histories, you will find that not only the priests and hierophants of the Egyptians made use of circumcision, but also the Arabs and the Ethiopians and the Phoenicians, and others among whom zeal for superstitions of this kind flourished more nobly. Let this suffice as said against the Gentiles, to whom it was not fitting to speak more openly about the mysteries of our Law. Now let our discourse be directed to those who do indeed believe in Christ, but do not receive the Law and the Prophets. You confess without doubt that what is written in the Epistle of Peter is true: that ”we have been redeemed not with the corruptible price of silver and gold, but with the precious blood” of the Only-begotten. If therefore we have been ”bought with a price,” as Paul also confirms, we have without doubt been bought from someone whose slaves we were, who also demanded the price he wished in order to release from his power those whom he held. Now the devil held us, to whom we had been sold off by our sins.

He demanded, then, as our price the blood of Christ. But until the blood of Jesus should be given, which was so precious that it alone sufficed for the redemption of all, it was necessary that those who were being trained under the Law should each one for himself, as it were in a certain imitation of the redemption to come, give his own blood; and therefore we, for whom the price of Christ's blood has been paid in full, have no need to pay a price for ourselves, that is, the blood of circumcision. But if it seems blameworthy to you that the God of the Law commands wounds to be inflicted on infants and blood to be shed, then you also blame what was done in Christ, who both was circumcised on the eighth day and received the wounds of the passion and poured out his blood in the punishment of the cross. And as to your view that, because of the horror of circumcision, access to religion seems difficult, far more difficult does the entrance to the Gospel appear, where one is bidden to lay down not a tiny part of the body, but the soul itself. But, according to you, the examples of the martyrs will keep people from coming to the faith. Or is a religion rather believed to be firm precisely because it promises nothing lax, nothing dainty or soft?

And even if circumcision held figuratively no other sacred meaning, what would be absurd in it, if for distinction from the other nations the people that was being trained under the law of God should bear some badge of its own? And if the amputation of some part seemed necessary, what was so fitting as to find that part which seemed shameful, and to take away those things whose diminution would in no way hinder the body's function? But as to what they say — that if that part of the member was not necessary, it ought not to have been made by the Creator, and if it was made of necessity, it ought not to be taken away — let us too question them, whether they call the procreation of children necessary. Without doubt they will answer that it is necessary. Blameworthy, then, will be those who, under the pretext of continence and virginity, do not serve the necessary functions of nature; and all will have to be compelled to marriage who, according to the laws of the Gospel, "have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of God," having as the author of this example both many others of the saints and also the Lord Jesus himself.

But in sum it must be said that, just as many baptisms were necessary before the baptism of Christ, and many purifications before purification through the Holy Spirit came about, and many victims before Christ, the one victim, the spotless Lamb, offered himself as a victim to the Father — so also there was need of many circumcisions, until the one circumcision in Christ should be handed down to all; and the shedding of the blood of many went before, until through the blood of one the redemption of all should be accomplished. These things indeed are what could occur to us at present concerning the rationale of circumcision; yet let them be said by us under this rule, that if anyone shall have spoken better and more reasonably,

his views rather than these of ours should be held. But after a digression perhaps more ample than is fair, let us return to the conclusion of the Apostle's chapter.

Since, therefore, this treatment is frequent with the Apostle, whereby he indicates that in each single person there are two men — of whom he is accustomed to name the one outer, the other inner, and says that the one is according to the flesh, the other according to the spirit (instructed, I suppose, from those things which are written in Genesis, where one is reported to have been made to the image of God, the other formed from the mud of the earth) — and these same he now calls the one a Jew in the open, the other a Jew in secret: it must be known that each of these two makes use of practices that are in some respects discordant, but in some cases shared. For there are certain things which take their beginning from the inner man and reach as far as the outer; while others, begun from the outer man, reach as far as the inner. What I mean is this. If chastity takes its beginning from the inner man, it reaches without doubt as far as the outer. For it cannot happen that a man who does not first commit adultery in his heart should be able to commit adultery in his body. But it does not follow at once that if someone begins from the chastity of the outer man, he also arrives at inner continence, so that if he does not commit adultery in the body, he does not commit adultery in the heart either.

According to these things, then, let the circumcision of the inner and of the outer man be understood by allegorical rules, when that inner man no longer lusts in the heart, and this outer one no longer serves lust in the body: so that he is said to be circumcised in the flesh whom the Apostle declares to be no longer in the flesh, but in the spirit, and who mortifies the deeds of the flesh through the spirit. But since he who is circumcised has given up some flesh to destruction and preserved some unharmed, in that which he gave up to destruction I think that flesh is signified of which it is written: "All flesh is grass, and all its glory as the flower of grass. But the flesh which is preserved and remains unharmed, I think, holds the form of that flesh of which it is said that "all flesh shall see the salvation of God. But there is need of ears able to hear what that flesh is which perishes, and what that flesh is which shall see the salvation of God — which after the laying aside of the flesh of the foreskin remains safe, when the other has fallen away like the flower of grass.

And whoever understands this will find that the forms of immense mysteries have been set forth beforehand in the rationale of circumcision, and will find that he who is a Jew in secret, and who is circumcised in the inner man, so far surpasses and is more eminent than him who is a Jew according to the flesh, as that Judah surpasses and is eminent — whom his brothers praise together, and who slept as a lion and was raised up as a lion's whelp — over that Judah who was born from the loins of Jacob according to the flesh.

[§14] "What then is the advantage of the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way. First indeed, because the oracles of God were entrusted

to them. For what if some of them did not believe? Shall their unbelief make void the faith of God? God forbid! But let God be true, and every man a liar: as it is written: That thou mayest be justified in thy words, and mayest overcome when thou art judged. In this Epistle Paul, sitting as a kind of arbiter between the Jews and the Greeks — that is, those who believe from among the Gentiles — so summons and invites both to faith in Christ that he neither gives offense to the Jews by utterly destroying the Jewish rites, nor casts the Gentiles into despair by confirming the observance of the law and the letter; and whether he makes mention of the promises or of the punishments, he divides his word to each people. As, for example, when he says: ”But to those who are of contention, and who indeed distrust the truth, but believe iniquity, wrath and indignation: tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and of the Greek. This concerns the punishments. But concerning the promises he adds: ”But glory, and honor, and peace to everyone that worketh good, to the Jew first, and to the Greek. Again he seems to speak of the Gentiles: ”For whosoever have sinned without the law, shall perish without the law.

And again of the circumcised: ”And as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law. But again, lifting up the Gentiles, he says: ”For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law, these, not having the law, are a law unto themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts,” and so forth. And again he turns his discourse to the Jews, saying: ”But if thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law,” and the rest, up to that place where he says: ”For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. And lest he should seem to be excessive in his rebukes of the Jews, he says: ”Circumcision indeed profiteth, if thou keep the law. But again, lest he should exalt those who place too much glory in circumcision, he added: ”But if thou art a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. And in order to lift up a little also the spirits of those who believe from among the Gentiles, he adds: ”But if the uncircumcision keep the just ordinances of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? And that he might more strongly raise up the spirits of the Gentiles, and that they might know that they can, if they observe the law more perfectly, even become better than the Jews, he says:

”And that which by nature is uncircumcision, fulfilling the law, shall judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision art a transgressor of the law. But since he knew that there are many promises in the Law and the Prophets which seem to be made to the Jews, lest the Gentiles should be able to despair as though they had no fellowship in the promises there recorded, he teaches them that according to the mystical reckoning they too are Jews, and have circumcision. Therefore he says: ”For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outwardly in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. But since in

all these things he had in a certain way made the cause of the Gentiles superior, again, as though meeting the complaints of those who are of the circumcision, he sets before himself the things which are contained in the present chapter, saying: ”What then is the advantage of the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way. If therefore, he says, he ”who is a Jew outwardly, and that which is circumcision outwardly in the flesh,” is not reckoned as such, ”but he who is a Jew inwardly, and circumcision of the heart,” which is made ”in the spirit,” is itself the true circumcision, you will say to me:

What is the advantage in those Jews who are reckoned by this appellation? or what profit is held in bodily circumcision? To these things, lest he should seem to have sat as a less than just arbiter between the two peoples, he declares what advantage the Jew has, and that circumcision which is in the flesh, and says that they have much advantage in every way. And what that great advantage is he adds: ”First,” he says, ”because the oracles of God were entrusted to them. For although the oracles of God are now entrusted to the Gentiles also, yet to them, he says, they were entrusted first. Yet I inquire what it means when it is said that to them first the oracles of God were entrusted: whether he says this of the letters and books, or of the sense and understanding of the law. For we see very many of the Jews always learning from infancy even to old age, and never arriving at the knowledge of the truth: and how will that seem to be true which is said, that they have something more in this, that to them first the oracles of God were entrusted, in which they understand ”neither the things which they say, nor the things concerning which they affirm”? But if, according to Solomon, he is called wise who ”understands the things that are from his own mouth, and” who ”carries understanding upon his lips”:

these things must be understood as said of Moses and the prophets, and the rest like them, to whom the oracles of God were entrusted, since it cannot be doubted that they too were Jews and had circumcision: but also, if there was among them any wise man, and understanding hearer, and wonderful counselor, whom the Lord is said to take away from Jerusalem, being offended at the impieties of the people. For thus says Isaiah: ”Behold the sovereign Lord of Sabaoth shall take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the strong and the mighty”; and after a little: ”And the prophet,” he says, ”and the diviner, and the elder, and the captain of fifty, and the wonderful counselor, and the wise architect, and the prudent hearer. To such as these, then, it must be judged that the divine oracles were first entrusted, and in these it must be confessed that there was much advantage in every way; but also if there were any others like these, as the Apostle recalls what is written in the books of Kingdoms: ”I have left me seven thousand men, who have not bowed their knees before Baal. But the apostles of Christ themselves also, and Paul himself, the vessel of election, coming from the Jews and from the circumcision, had an advantage in every way over those whom he taught from among the Gentiles. For the oracles of

God were entrusted to them. But this very thing also which he says, ”Because the oracles of God were entrusted to them,” must be considered:

that he did not say that the letters were entrusted, but ”the oracles of God. Whence a way is given us of understanding that to those who read and do not understand, and who read and do not believe, the letter alone has been entrusted, that letter of which the Apostle says that ”the letter killeth”: but the oracles of God have been entrusted to those who, understanding and believing the things which Moses wrote, believe also in Christ, as the Lord also says: ”But if you had believed Moses himself, you would surely have believed me also: for he wrote of me. But be it so: let the Jew have an advantage in the letters, let him have something also in the oracles of God: have those who come from among the Gentiles to Christ been utterly abandoned? or is there also for them a place where they have something more?

Hear the Lord saying to the centurion, a believer from among the Gentiles: ”Amen I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. See therefore how much more the Gentiles have when it comes to faith; concerning whom the Lord says in another place: ”For they shall come from the east and the west, and from the four winds of the earth, and shall recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness. Where, then, it is a question of laws and letters, the Jews have more, ”much in every way”; but where it is a question of faith, so that I may speak by way of comparison, the Gentiles have more, ”much in every way. It must indeed be asked whether it is also to be said of the Samaritans that to them first the oracles of God were entrusted, since indeed even among them the law of Moses appears to be kept. But of them I would say that not even that letter itself which is said to kill was entrusted to them. For the prophet says of them: ”Woe to those who despise Mount Zion, and who trust in the mountain of Samaria”; for they indeed make themselves strangers to ”the writings of God,” repudiating the prophets.

But neither of the heretics, who speak iniquity against the Most High, and who by their impiety divide the unity of the Godhead, and who separate the law from the Gospels, would I say that the oracles of God have been entrusted to them, merely on the ground that the divine volumes appear to be read among them; but since they perceive nothing spiritual in them, nothing worthy of God, I would say that among them only that letter which kills has a place. But if perchance the Jews are unwilling to accept the judgment of our Apostle, which says that ”the letter” of the law ”kills,” and think that an injury is done to the law if it seems to be despised according to the letter, let us return to Moses himself, and let us see how great he himself made the letter of the law; who, when he had received the stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God, paid such honor to the letter of the law that he cast the tablets from his hands, and shattered tablets written indeed by the finger of

God, and yet was not on this account charged with the fault of impiety. You see, therefore, that not Paul alone despises the letter of the law, but long before him Moses both despised, and cast away, and ground to pieces the letters of the law, doubtless signifying even then this, that the honor and the power of the law lay not in the letters, but in the spirit.

But also the Lord in the Gospel, when he says, speaking to the Jews: ”The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation producing its fruit”—I think that he called the meaning of the law the kingdom of God, which was taken away from the Jews, only the letters of the law remaining with them, and was given to the Gentiles, who are able through faith to produce the fruit of the spirit. Since these things are so, why are we so cowardly and slothful that we do not at last, having cast off all malice, hasten with simplicity and purity of heart to receive the oracles of God, and to grasp from them the mind of Christ, seeing that we hear that in them is the kingdom of God? Certainly let each one, according to his strength, take in what oracles of God he can; and if he is fit for solid food, let him receive those oracles of God which are the wisdom that the Apostle speaks among the perfect. But he who is not yet fit for this, let him receive the oracles of God in which he recognizes nothing more than Christ Jesus, and him crucified. He who cannot do even this, let him receive the oracles of God in such a way that he uses milk and not strong food. But if he is still weak in faith, let him take the oracles of God in vegetables.

Only let us all alike know that ”the oracles of God” are ”chaste oracles,” and ”silver tried by fire, proved of the earth, purified sevenfold”: that is, that in chastity and in holiness of heart and body we may keep the divine oracles. The oracles of God, therefore, were entrusted to those first ones of whom we spoke above; but some, as he says, did not believe, whether God or the oracles of God. You see that those who do not believe are themselves according to the flesh, of whom he says also elsewhere: ”The natural man does not perceive the things which are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him. But their unbelief does not make void the faith of God. By ”the faith of God” we understand either that faith which God has toward those to whom he entrusts his own oracles, or that faith by which those believe God who receive the divine oracles from him. We are admonished, therefore, that when the unfaithfulness of those who either do not come to faith, or fall away from it, perchance mocks us as we perform the works of faith—whether when we fast, or when we do deeds of mercy, or when we devote ourselves to study and to the law of God, or even when we endure torments for the martyrdom of Christ—we should always remember that their unfaithfulness does not make void the faith of God which is in us.

After these things, what follows seems indeed to have been joined on with less orderly arrangement; for he says: ”But let God be true, and every man a liar, as

it is written: That you may be justified in your words, and may overcome when you are judged. Nevertheless, by a certain turn of thought we shall attempt to fit this to what precedes. Although, he says, some of the Jews have not believed, yet concerning their unfaithfulness this must be said, that God alone is true, but every man is a liar: because even if someone is just, it is nevertheless necessary that in some point he fall away from the truth, which it is well-nigh impossible for human nature to preserve in all things. Since, therefore, every man is a liar, on this account certain of the Jews, as lying men, did not believe. For since every man is a liar, necessarily on that day, when the Lord shall come to judgment with men, he alone will be justified in his words. For his words are true in all things, because they are the words of truth. But that the Lord comes to judgment with men, the prophet says: ”Come, and let us be judged together, says the Lord”; and: ”The Lord himself will come to judgment with the elders of the people”; and again: ”Remember thou, and let us be judged, says the Lord. These things the Apostle introduced with an eye to that objection which he sets before himself in another place, where he says:

”But if our injustice commends the justice of God. Concerning which we shall inquire when we come to its place. Now, therefore, let us see what it is that he says: ”But let God become true, and every man a liar. For thus it stands in the Greek copies. For the Latins read ”let him be” (sit) instead of ”let him become” (fiat). First, then, this is to be known, that what he said, ”let it become,” he does not say in the imperative mood. For it is foolish if it be thought that God must be commanded to become true. But just as we say: ”Thy will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth”; or, as again we say: ”Let peace be made in thy strength”—not commanding, but wishing, nay rather declaring, and so forth, since peace cannot be made except in the power of God—so also here the saying is to be taken as that of one declaring: ”But let God become true, and every man a liar. But this too is to be known, that this saying, that is, ”Every man is a liar,” is taken from the one hundred and fifteenth psalm, where it says: ”I said in my ecstasy: Every man is a liar. But here, for the more evident illumination of the Apostle’s meaning, let it not seem burdensome to readers if we briefly expound the content of the psalm itself, from which he takes his testimony.

It seems to me, then, that the Prophet is announcing some such meaning as this. Although there are, he says, many doctrines among men, and many philosophize about the search for truth, and although in all these questions the Son of God ought to come first: others indeed, who sought without first believing, did not find; but I, because I believed before I sought, therefore found what I was seeking, and not only found it, but also spoke, and announced to the peoples the truth I had found. Nor yet, having found the truth, was I lifted up in wisdom, nor puffed up in my knowledge; but I was all the more humbled, when I recognized and understood that it is the Lord who teaches all knowledge. Then, considering what things and

how many the men — whether among the philosophers or among the rest of the barbarians — have said about truth, and that, though saying much with great labor, they found nothing, because they did not believe before they sought: considering all their sayings or writings, and being placed in an ecstasy of mind, that is, struck with astonishment of heart, because all those volumes of the philosophers, which seemed composed in splendid and dazzling speech, stood far off from the truth, being placed in ecstasy and in astonishment of mind I said: ”Every man is a liar.

But I, to whom God had shown these things, was not ungrateful, but I pondered and inquired within myself what gift I might render to the Lord in return for this, that the Lord had granted me the knowledge of the truth: yet I understood that that eternal nature, mistress of all things, has need of nothing. Therefore I found one thing only which I ought to offer to God, namely, that I should believe concerning him that he can never receive anything from man, but always give; and therefore I said: ”I will take the cup of salvation”; as if I were answering him who says, ”Can you drink the cup which I am about to drink? and I should say: I can, Lord. So then I say: I will willingly and with my whole will take up the cup of your passion; and that I may preserve to the very end the grace of your cup, that is, of your passion, I will not act by my own strength, but ”I will call upon the name of the Lord. For precious in your sight is the death which is undertaken for piety and for truth. According to this, therefore, the words ”Every man is a liar” are also to be taken in the apostolic sayings, whether of him who trusts in the letter of the law without faith, or of him who glories in doctrines and writings of any kind whatever. But it is objected against us:

If every man is a liar, then Paul himself, since he is a man, will be a liar. And David too, who said these things, since he was a man — if every man is a liar, he himself will also be a liar, and this very thing false which he says, ”Every man is a liar,” since he necessarily pronounces himself a liar along with the rest of men; and if he is a liar, surely what is said by a liar will not be true, namely that ”every man is a liar. His statement, then, seems to have fallen into the syllogism which is called aporos, that is, ”insubstantive” (without substance), which is also called false. But if we return to the inner understanding of Scripture, we shall find that all the prophets or apostles are among those to whom the word of God comes, as it is written: ”And the word of the Lord came” to this or that prophet. These, then, to whom the word of God comes, the Lord in the Gospel declares to be not men, but gods. For he says thus: ”But if he calls them gods to whom the word of God comes, and the Scripture cannot be broken. Since therefore the word of God came both to David as a prophet and to Paul as an apostle, without doubt they were not men, but gods, to whom the word of God came.

Therefore, since they were not men but gods, what he pronounces about the rest of men, to whom the word of God did not come, is true, namely that ”every man

is a liar. But what follows is likewise taken from the fiftieth psalm, that is: ”That you may be justified in your words, and may overcome when you are judged. Now the complete sense in the psalm is set down in this way: ”Against you only have I sinned, and done evil before you, that you may be justified in your words, and may overcome when you are judged. And since it is a great digression for us to go back to the beginning of the psalm, for the sake of brevity let us examine only this saying which we have set in the middle; in which at the very outset this explanation seems difficult. For if we follow the history which is written in the title of the psalm, it is there reported that, Uriah the Hittite having been killed, David took his wife. How then does he say, ”Against you only have I sinned,” when surely he sinned also against Uriah himself, and against his kinsmen, and also against Bathsheba herself and her whole house, upon which he seems to have brought the stain of adultery? But it must be known that the content of a psalm does not always follow the history of its title, as anyone who observes will find in a great many psalms.

And to speak by way of example, the title of the seventeenth psalm is: ”Unto the end,” it says, ”for David the servant of the Lord, who spoke the words of this song in the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul, and he said. But the content of the psalm contains something far other than the title. For what foundations of the mountains were shaken? Or how was the earth made to tremble, when David was fighting against his enemies? Or where is it recorded that there was darkness under the feet of the Lord? Or where is it indicated that he ascended upon the cherubim and flew, or upon the wings of the winds, and nearly all the rest of the things which in every way disagree with the history of the title? In this manner, then, in the fiftieth psalm also there are things which do not fit according to the history. We must consider whether perhaps mention of the woman was made in the title figuratively, so that under this designation some such woman may be understood as either that valiant woman who is described as having made double cloaks for her husband, or certainly one contrary to her, such as those women who are said to have turned aside the heart of Solomon, so that he built altars to the nations, and idols.

And these, when taken allegorically, are not from the divine wisdom, but from those things which are contrary to it, that is, sects alien from God. Such, then, can this wife of Uriah the Hittite also be understood to be — of a man alien from Israel — whom David, stationed on the upper places, beheld washing her uncleannesses in the waters and wishing to wash away her filth, and desired her and took her. But because it was not the will of the Lord that sects alien from the truth of God should be brought into the house of David, her first offspring and first fruit is extinguished, so that by a second progeny a wise king might be born of the foreign woman. But it is a long task to pursue the figures and riddles of these things. Yet that which pertains to the matter we shall briefly pursue. Since, he says, there is much subtlety in the variety of the sects, and since it belongs to no one to know or to judge

which meaning is according to God and which is alien from God in the treatises and disputations of the wise, save to God alone, who alone can catch the wise in their own craftiness: therefore ”against you only have I sinned, and done evil before you,” because all the rest, being as they are natural men, cannot pass judgment on me, who am spiritual, even if I have erred: for ”the spiritual man judges all things, but he himself is judged by no one.

But since Paul adds ”spiritual,” and says: ”But he who judges me is the Lord” — David too, knowing this, that the Lord alone is the one who judges the spiritual man or the prophet, therefore says: ”Against you only have I sinned,” by whom alone I can be judged. For man’s day cannot judge the spiritual man. And what follows also looks to this sense: ”That you may be justified in your words, and may overcome when you are judged. For God is judged in the disputations of the wise, while some think of God in this way, others in another, and each one differently. But he overcomes those who pass judgment on him, when, while all go astray, he himself reveals his own verdict concerning himself, how and in what manner he is to be believed and venerated. But let it suffice that the extent of the second volume has been drawn out thus far. For somehow or other, while it goes against us to omit anything that presents itself as necessary to the exposition, we are carried away from brevity — which, if the matter allowed, we should greatly desire to preserve, out of regard for the reader’s weariness.

Commentary on Romans — Book 3

Latin source: J.-P. Migne (ed.), Patrologia Graeca 14 (Rufinus's Latin version of Origen's Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos). This English translation is in the public domain.

BOOK 3

[§1] "But if our iniquity commends the justice of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust, who inflicts wrath? I speak according to man. God forbid. Otherwise, how shall God judge this world? For if the truth of God has abounded through my lie unto his glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? and not (as we are blasphemed, and as some affirm that we say) let us do evil that good may come? whose condemnation is just. Perhaps the order of speaking arranged by the apostle Paul through nearly the whole text of this Epistle will seem highly inconsequent, since his discourse is now directed against the Gentiles, now moderated on behalf of the Gentiles, and again is set against the Jews, and again concerning the Jews, or even on behalf of the Jews; and of these same people he calls some worthy of praise and censures others. And this variety of meanings will again be thought to have led him outside the lines of the subject he had proposed — as when he employs that exclamation in which he says: "But let God be true, and every man a liar"; or even that which he consequently adds when he says: "But if our iniquity commends the justice of God," and the rest, so that by this he may seem to have slipped from one digression into another.

But we who believe him when he says that "he has made us fit ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit," find his meaning far loftier than the method of human art is believed to possess. For through the whole text of this Epistle he wishes to trace what salvation there was even before the coming of Christ for those living according to the law; or how, through the coming of the Savior, salvation is in turn conferred upon the Gentiles out of the unbelief of Israel; and again, that neither do the Gentiles come to salvation in their entirety, but only those who have believed; nor is Israel cast off in its entirety, but "the remnant"

of believers ”shall be saved. And for this reason the order of speaking seems, as I said, confused, while he pursues the diversities of believers and unbelievers on both sides. In these matters he necessarily turns his discourse also to God, so that amid all these differences of acceptances and rejections he may teach that the judgments of God are indeed true and just, but that much falsehood abounds among men; and therefore he says: ”But let God be true, and every man a liar; as it is written: That thou mayest be justified in thy words, and mayest overcome when thou art judged” — concerning which we have spoken above as far as we were able.

Seeing then that a plausible objection could be raised against him from the contrary side — namely, that if it is necessary for every man to be a liar in order that God may be true, and if the justice of God is commended through the injustice of men, then God will seem unjust who inflicts wrath upon men, since he sees his own justice approved through the injustice of men: for if our injustice, that is, the injustice of men, commends the justice of God, then surely those men will not seem worthy of punishment through whom the justice of God is held to be more provable and more manifest — But God forbid, he says, that we should accept it thus, that God should seem unjust who brings wrath against men. For how shall he be thought unjust who judges the world, since by the very name of judge it is shown that he does nothing without judgment? And where there is judgment, it is agreed that there is justice; for justice is named both judge and judgment. If then, as unjust men, he says, happen to assert of us, ”the truth of God has abounded through my lie,” then it is superfluous that ”I am judged as a sinner. But rather that will be seen wherein they blaspheme us, he says, as though we were seen to say this:

if the truth of God is more displayed in the lie of men, and his justice is proved through the injustice of men, then let us ”do evil, that” out of evils ”good may come”; and let us lie, so that from our lie the truth of God may shine forth. But these things indeed they invent about us who blaspheme us, as though these things seemed to be said, or to follow, from the logic of our own assertion. But the reasoning of our teaching in no way admits this, since we understand God to be a just and true judge. It should surely be known that in certain Greek copies it is found thus: ”Is God unjust, who inflicts wrath against men? And according to this sense the things we have said will seem to fit better. But according to what we find in the Latin copies, and in some of the Greek: ”Is God unjust, who inflicts wrath? I speak according to man. God forbid” — it seems it must be understood in this way. This statement that ”God is unjust who inflicts wrath,” on the ground that ”our injustice commends the justice of God,” is not said according to God, nor according to the wisdom of God, but ”according to man,” and according to that which is said, ”every man is a liar.

Now these things we have said while still treating the very order of the discourses and the sequence of the statements, so that the division itself of the words might make the way of understanding more open to us. But now let us inquire what sense is to be held in these discourses according to apostolic worth. Every discipline consists of favorable things and of adverse or contrary ones. For example: medicine professes the knowledge not only of health but also of sickness; and although it pursues the study of health, it nevertheless cannot be ignorant of what belongs to sickness. Similarly prudence too consists in the knowledge of good and evil; and temperance knows what things are to be chosen and what are to be avoided; and fortitude is not ignorant of what pertains to fear. So also justice. If we wish to know what justice is, it is necessary for us to know what injustice is; and when we have grasped the full knowledge of injustice, from that very thing we shall come to know what justice also is; for when it has become clear what is unjust, consequently what is just also will appear.

And since justice is in God, whose nature is inaccessible to human perception, but injustice is found in us men, or even in every rational creature, it is from this injustice of ours, which is known to us, that that justice of God which is, as it were, inaccessible and incomprehensible to us is known and commended, and as it were the contrary is disclosed from its contrary. The apostle Paul therefore marks the ignorance of those who raise an inconsequent question, thinking that God is unjust who brings wrath upon men, on the ground that his justice is commended from our injustice; not knowing, however, that it comes about not by the benefit of our sins but by the very nature of reason, that contraries are proved from contraries. Therefore the Apostle speaks thus: ”But if our injustice commends the justice of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust, who inflicts wrath? I speak according to man. God forbid. Otherwise, how shall God judge the world? God is therefore not proved unjust in this, if the method of instruction proves contraries from contraries, and commends justice from injustice; but rather, with full consistency, justice is worthily and deservedly hostile to injustice and opposed to it, just as life is hostile and opposed to death, and light to darkness.

And therefore God, in whom righteousness resides, is said to bring wrath upon those men in whom unrighteousness dwells. For these two are by nature opposed to one another. And how, even on this very account, will God appear unrighteous, who opposes unrighteousness? And for this reason perhaps the Apostle did not say that we unrighteous men commend the righteousness of God; but he says: ”If our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God” — so as to show that it is not God who is contrary to men, but righteousness that is contrary to unrighteousness; and that wrath is brought upon men because they have given a place to unrighteousness within themselves. God therefore, who is righteousness, will not appear unrighteous when He is angry against unrighteousness, toward which it is not fitting that He should be favorable; but this wrath reaches even to those men

who have offered themselves as ministers of the unrighteousness at which God is angry. For in no one can unrighteousness and righteousness both subsist; but just as righteousness is the effect of a righteous and upright work, which is found first in God, and then also in those who imitate Him, so too unrighteousness is the effect of an unrighteous and crooked work, which is detected first in the devil, and then also in those who are willing to imitate him. And therefore wrath is deservedly said to be brought upon them, even though out of their unrighteousness, as by way of contrast, the righteousness of God seems to have shone forth.

For they might, just as they received into themselves the disposition of an unrighteous and crooked work, much more have received that of a righteous and upright one. Justly, therefore, is wrath said to be brought by God upon all men. For those in whom wrath has no place are already to be called not men, but above men. And for this reason perhaps the same apostle Paul makes his pronouncement concerning all men, saying that ”we were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. For he did not say, ”We were children of wrath,” but he added: ”We were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. For all men have been made by nature children of wrath, from the fact that they were gods and sons of the Most High, and through this were called men. For attend more diligently to how he says: ”I said: You are gods, and sons of the Most High”; and he added, ”all of you. This addition signifies the whole human race bound together at once under this title. Finally, in what follows he says: ”But you shall die like men. Hence also that which is written: ”And God reflected that He had made man upon the earth; and it repented Him in His heart, and God said:

I will blot out man whom I have made from the face of the earth” — this I think was said not only with reference to the destruction of the flood, but that something was also foretold by it, under a mystery, concerning things to come: so that what is said, ”I will blot out man,” may be understood in the same way as when God says through the prophet: ”For behold, I blot out your iniquities like a cloud”; that He may be seen to blot him out according to that which is man, so as afterwards to make him god, at that time when ”God will be all in all. And to this sense may also be applied what is said in Genesis: ”The time of every man has come before my sight” — so that it may be thought to have been said not only about that time of the flood then, but also about the mystery of baptism; just as the apostle Peter says that, as Noah was then saved from the flood, so now also in like manner believers are saved through baptism. And thus what he says, that ”the time of every man” has come, can be understood with reference to salvation, so that believers are understood, through the grace of baptism, to be destined to be changed from men into a higher order, when the day of resurrection shall have come, where all the saints ”shall be as the angels of God.

Let this be what has been said, so far as it could occur to us, concerning that which was stated: ”Is God unrighteous who brings wrath,” or ”against men,” as we said is read in certain copies, or, as we have it, ”I speak after the manner of man. God forbid. But as to what he says: ”Otherwise how shall God judge the world,” in this passage by ”world” he means the men who are in this world, just as we read elsewhere, ”that the whole world lies in the evil one”; which surely shows that the men who dwell in this world are set in wickedness. After this let us now see how it was said: ”For if the truth of God has abounded in my lie unto His glory. There are in this world many kinds of religions, many sects of philosophers, many teachings handed down with false assertions and composed with lying arguments, whose authors — though under a false title of wisdom — are nevertheless held to be men of no slight or contemptible authority; and it is from their prestige that false things have been received as true, so that they have taken possession of almost the entire world with lying opinions about religion, so that even the elect, if it can be said, were being led into error.

Since therefore the truth of God, and His wisdom, and His Word, coming into the world, reproved and refuted every lie, and cut away all the assertions of false teachings by the faith of the truth, through each single lie which had previously been asserted by men the truth of God abounded, by exposing the surreptitious plausibilities and by handing down, in each and every teaching, the simple truth of the faith: and in this way the Apostle says that the truth of God abounded in the lie of men. But, that what we are saying may become still clearer, let us bring forward some things by way of example. There was among men a teaching which declared that the highest good is pleasure; and in this it is consequently asserted also that there is no Providence, since one must live not by laws but by pleasure: and these things are set out through innumerable volumes with such abundant and ornate speech and with the most forceful arguments. But observe now how he who defends the truth of God, and who is a philosopher according to Christ, who is the truth of God and the wisdom of God, teaches men that the highest good is eternal life; and that this is eternal life, that men should know the one only true God, and His Son Jesus Christ: and how with all confidence he asserts the providence of God, saying: ”Are not two sparrows sold for a penny, and not one of them falls to the ground without the Father’s will?

and that He Himself ”commands His sun to rise upon the good and the evil, and rains upon the just and the unjust. Now through each of these things, while those teachings of a false knowledge are refuted, the truth of God abounds in the lie of men. There are likewise others who say that there are three kinds of good: one pertaining to the soul, another pertaining to bodies, a third external. Since each of these is held to be advantageous, they affirm that the highest good consists of them. These men too, cutting back the providence of God, contend that it extends only as far as the sphere of the moon, but that below that, that is, to men, it by

no means descends. There are likewise others who say that nothing invisible or incorporeal exists, but assign all things that are to bodies, whence they have also said that God, the Father of all, is a body. But because the consistency of their own reasoning pressed them — by which it stands that every body is corruptible, so that if they assert that God too is a body, they must without doubt confess Him to be corruptible as well — they turned a trick of words, and said that He is indeed of a corruptible nature, yet is not corrupted, because there is nothing superior to Him by which He could be corrupted or dissolved. There are also innumerable other fabrications of men, put together with dialectical subtleties and the deceit of sophisms.

And when the truth of God, through churchmen instructed in divine wisdom, convicts each of these, and refutes the snares of their arguments, the truth of God is said to abound in the lie of men — and not only to abound, but to abound unto His glory. Which I think is to be understood in this way: if a teacher of the Church instructs hearers who are simple and not yet taken up with false teachings, and opens to them the account of the divine truth concerning each several matter, in teaching of this kind the truth of God will be seen to abound. But if the discourse is addressed to those who resist the truth, who contradict the words of sound doctrine, and the contradictors are refuted and convicted, so that, forsaking the darkness of their errors, they come to the light of truth; then the truth of God will not only abound, but will abound also unto His glory. For God is glorified through him who, snatched from the error of the lie, has beheld the light of truth. He therefore who has understood in this way will certainly not say what is put forward in what follows as a foolish objection: ”Why am I still also judged as a sinner? but he perceives that he is deservedly to be judged, if he remains in the lie of men:

and he who, according to what we have expounded above, being convicted by the truth of God perceives that he has erred, turning from his error glorifies the true God when the truth is recognized, and no longer blasphemes those who preach the truth, as though they said: ”Let us do evil that good may come,” knowing that in such a saying the condemnation of the blasphemer is just. It must also be observed that of those who preach the truth he said not so much that they are spoken ill of, which pertains to men, but that they are blasphemed, which pertains to God.

[§2] ”What then do we hold further? For we have charged that Jews and Greeks are all under sin, as it is written: That there is none righteous, none that understands, none that seeks after God. All have turned aside, they have together become unprofitable; there is none that does goodness, there is not so much as one. Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they dealt deceitfully, the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and unhappiness are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. We

have already said beforehand that in this Epistle Paul, like a kind of arbiter between those who have believed from the circumcision and those from the Gentiles, always tempers and balances his speech, so that now these, now those he seems to reprove in certain matters, and again he encourages each party with the sure hope of the promise. Since therefore he had seemed in the earlier passages to say that if the uncircumcision keeps the righteous requirements of the law, it shall judge him who in circumcision is a transgressor of the law: again, in order to lift up those whom he had humbled, he added: ”What then is the advantage of the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way. First indeed, because to them were entrusted the oracles of God.

After these things, when he had gone on consequently with certain matters connected with these, he now adds and says: ”What then do we hold further? For we have charged that Jews and Greeks are all under sin. But if all are under sin, then there will be no cause of boasting for the one against the other, since each comes to salvation not out of his own righteousness, but out of God’s mercy. He proved therefore that the Greeks, that is, the Gentiles, are under sin, when he says: ”For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools: and they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of serpents: wherefore God gave them over to a reprobate mind,” and the rest: and the Jews, when he says: ”But if you are called a Jew, and rest in the law,” and the rest. To which he added: ”You therefore who teach another, do you not teach yourself? you who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? and so forth. After these things therefore he says that ”we have charged that Jews and Greeks are all under sin. But after this, as is his custom, he wishes to confirm from the holy Scriptures what he had said;

and at the same time he offers an example to the teachers of the Church, that the things they speak to the people they should bring forward not presumed from their own opinions, but fortified by divine testimonies. For if he himself, so great and such an Apostle, does not believe that the authority of his own words can suffice unless he shows that what he says is written in the Law and the Prophets, ”how much more ought we, the least, to observe this, that when we teach we bring forward not our own opinions, but those of the Holy Spirit? This too we consider must necessarily be pointed out, that in some Latin copies the testimonies which follow are found placed consecutively and in full in the thirteenth psalm; but in almost all the Greek copies there is no more in the thirteenth psalm than up to that verse where it is written: ”There is none that does good, there is not so much as one. But also what the Apostle said: ”As it is written: That there is none righteous: none that understands, none that seeks after God,” is not found in the same words in the psalm, but some are changed, some are taken up, some are left out. And if this be observed rather carefully by any diligent students, I think that apostolic authority

is given in this matter, so that when we must use the testimonies of Scripture, we should grasp the sense from it rather than the words.

For you will find this frequently done also in the Gospels. In the thirteenth psalm, then, it is thus written: ”The Lord looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there is one that understands, or that seeks after God. But in the fifty-second psalm it says thus: ”God looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there is one that understands, or that seeks after God. And the same sense seems to be preserved also in that which the Apostle set down: ”There is none that understands, none that seeks after God. And as for what he said: ”There is none righteous,” I think that he took it from what is written: ”There is none that does goodness, there is not so much as one”: in which, even if the wording seems to be altered, nevertheless one and the same sense is preserved. But that which is said in what follows: ”Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they dealt deceitfully,” you will find in the fifth psalm. After this: ”The poison of asps is under their lips,” which I think was itself also taken from some psalm, the wording being changed, as we said above. But what follows: ”Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness,” seems to be received from the ninth psalm. Then next: ”Their feet are swift to shed blood,” you will find either in Isaiah or in Proverbs.

But also, ”Destruction and unhappiness are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known,” I do not indeed fully recall where it is written: I suspect, however, that it can be found in one of the prophets. And in the Psalms it is written: ”There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now he seems to have wished to gather all these testimonies for this reason, that he might show that when he charges that ”Jews and Greeks are all under sin,” he pronounces not so much his own opinion as that of holy Scripture. But let us inquire what this very thing is, to be under sin: for his statement seems to involve all without exception, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. But there meets us another statement of his own, in which he says: ”But where there is no law, neither is there transgression. Among the Jews indeed it is manifest that there is the law of Moses: but among the Gentiles he affirms that there is the law of nature, which convicts the offender by the testimony of conscience. Where then do we seek a man in whom there is no law, and who through this may seem not to be in the transgression of sin, since Paul himself also says of himself: ”But I was alive without the law once. When did Paul live without the law, who again says of himself: ”Circumcised the eighth day, a Hebrew of the Hebrews”?

How then will it be true that he once lived without the law, who on the eighth day of his birth received the sign of circumcision according to the law? Whence it is established that a man then comes to be under the law when he has arrived at that age at which he can choose, and discern what the law is: nor does he take upon himself the yoke of that outward law before he begins to have the firmness of the inward and natural law.

Finally, in that passage where he said: “But I was alive without the law once,” he added: “But when the commandment came, sin revived. In this he shows indeed that in childhood, before one has discernment of good and evil, a person is said to be without law; since even if he sins, because the law is not in him, sin is not imputed to him. But when he has received discernment of good and evil, the law is said to have come to him and to have given him commandments. Now where the force of the commandment is present — that is, a conscience that convicts — sin, which before was dead in him, is said to have revived. From this time on, therefore, if anyone subjects himself to the law of Moses so as to observe it according to the letter, he becomes a Jew outwardly; but if he follows it according to the spirit, he becomes a Jew inwardly. These things are said with respect to what was written: “For we have charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin. That is, let “all” be understood as spoken of those who, it is agreed, are taught not to sin either by the natural law or by the written law. For concerning the Gentiles too, who are placed under sin, we understand it in the same way we said above:

when they have begun to do naturally the things of the law and to be a law to themselves, then they are convicted by conscience in those things which they are seen to do against the law. For this reason those men also seem to me to have judged rightly who call the law of nature the law of God, and call the law of Moses the written law. For if Paul were speaking of the written law, that is, of the law of Moses, when he says: “But sin is not imputed when there is no law,” it will seem that sin was not reckoned to Cain, nor to those who perished in the flood, nor to those whom fire consumed in Sodom. But since we see that not only were sins reckoned to them, but vengeance also was inflicted upon them, it is shown from these things that Paul is speaking of the natural law, which — apart from the first age of childhood — is present in all human beings; and through this he says most rightly: “For we have charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin.

Hence it does not seem to me that a certain one of the wise men defined the matter contrary to reason when he said that in the whole race of mortals, when a person has come to that age at which he receives the discernment of right and wrong by the entrance of the natural law, first of all malice is stirred up, and after this, by teachings, training, and admonitions, it is little by little driven out, and a passage is made to virtue. For Paul too seems to me to have thought in harmony with these things in what he says: “But when the commandment came, sin revived. And the Savior also, when he says in the Gospels: “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin,” will be seen to have spoken according to this same reasoning: that by that power with which he is said to fill the world, he comes to each individual person and speaks in his heart and teaches the judgment of good and evil. For this reason, then, Paul says it is written: “Because there is none righteous; there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God: all have turned aside, together they have become

unprofitable"; just as elsewhere the Prophet says: "For in your sight shall no living person be justified.

And this may perhaps seem contrary to other Scriptures, which bear witness to some as though they were righteous — so much so that it is even said to Jerusalem concerning Sodom that "Sodom has been justified more than you. But consider more carefully the caution of divine Scripture, how it did not say, "Sodom has been justified," but rather says: Since you commit many crimes, and the things you do are such that you surpass all in the greatness of your sins, by comparison with your crimes Sodom is now justified. And here too, then, when it says, "In your sight shall no living person be justified," it did not mean this to be understood, that no living person shall be justified, but that "in your sight" — that is, God's — he shall not be justified. For however righteous a person may be, however holy, not only among human beings but even among the higher and more eminent creatures, it is certain that by comparison with God he cannot be justified. Finally, in the Apocalypse of John also, where the sealed book is offered in the sight of the Ancient of Days, and search is made among every tribe, tongue, and people for one who might be able to open it, no one was found except the Lamb alone from the tribe of Judah, who was justified in the sight of God; and he alone was worthy to open the book, who alone is the one "who opens, and no one shuts; who shuts, and no one opens.

Therefore our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ alone is justified in the sight of the Father, because "whatever things the Father does, these the Son likewise does. But every creature is justified by comparison with those beneath it. As, for example, if we should say: by comparison with the rest of the people, Miriam the sister of Moses was righteous; and again, by comparison with Miriam, Aaron was righteous; and again, by comparison with Aaron, Moses was righteous. Yet blessed is the one who is called righteous by comparison with better people, and not by comparison with the worst, as Sodom, which is recorded as justified by comparison with Jerusalem. Hence I too fear that, because of us who seem to be in the Church of God and to devote our efforts to his law and to serve the evangelical precepts, some of the unbelievers may be found who are to be justified. To speak by way of example: if we are slaves to lust and unchastity, while a pagan who is a stranger to the faith of Christ keeps chastity, that pagan is justified over against us. Likewise, if we are entangled in avarice, rapacity, pride, and other evils of this kind, while a pagan abstains from all these — those who do not know the law of God will be justified over against us, and we shall be condemned by comparison with them.

Rather, let us take pains that, just as we go before the Gentiles in faith, so we may excel them in deeds and works, lest our evils become another's goods, and their self-restraint convict our lack of restraint. What he said — "There is none righteous" — or what he says — "In your sight shall no living person be justified" — can still be explained in yet another way: that as long as anyone lives in the body,

he cannot be justified nor be pronounced righteous, but only when he has gone out of the body and departed from the contest of this life, as Scripture also says: “Call no one blessed before his death, for you do not know what his last things will be”; and again Ecclesiastes says: “And I praised the dead who are already dead, more than the living who are still alive; but better than both is he who has not yet been born. You have still another saying of Scripture as well, which says that whoever is least in the kingdom of God is greater than one who is in the body, even if it be that John, than whom there was none greater among those born of women. Therefore “there is none righteous. And he added: “There is none that understands. And indeed, since the Apostle himself says that he knows in part and understands in part, who will there be that may be called understanding?

For however much a person may understand, he will be seen to understand in a mirror and in an enigma; because it is only after the laying aside of the earthly body that one is said to understand face to face. But now, as Scripture says: “The corruptible body weighs down the soul, and the earthly dwelling presses down the mind that ponders many things. Hence it comes about that no one is “understanding,” nor “seeking after God. For while we are occupied with the anxieties of the body and seek the things that are of human beings, we cannot seek God nor think upon the things that are of God.

[§5] ”All have turned aside, together they have become useless. It seems to me that he is not said to have turned aside except one who at some time stood on the straight road. From this it appears that that first work of rational nature, which was made by God, was upright, and was set upon the straight road by the gift of the Creator himself. But because it bent its journey away from this road to the left hand of sin, it is now rightly said to have turned aside — as we have an example in the first man, Adam, who from the straight road of paradise turned aside, through the deceit of the evil-counselling serpent, to the crooked and twisting paths of mortal life. Consequently, therefore, all who come into this world by succession from him have turned aside, and together with him have become useless. On this account I think the Lord too gives a command in the Gospels, that when we have done all the precepts, we should nevertheless remember what we are, and say: ”We are useless servants: what we ought to have done, we have done. For so long as anyone does only that which he owes — that is, the things which have been commanded — he is a useless servant. But if you add something to the precepts, then you will no longer be a useless servant, but it will be said to you: ”Well done, good and faithful servant.

And what it is that may be added to the precepts and done beyond what is owed, the apostle Paul states: ”Concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: but I give counsel, as one that has obtained mercy from the Lord. This is a work beyond the precept. Whoever, then, having fulfilled the precepts, adds this also,

that he keep virginity, will no longer be called a useless servant, but a good and faithful servant. And again it is commanded that they who announce the Gospel should live by the Gospel; yet Paul says that ”I have used none of these things”; and therefore he was not a useless servant, but a faithful and prudent one. ”All,” therefore, ”have turned aside, together they have become useless. To which he added: ”There is none that does goodness, there is not so much as one. A weighty statement, and one that can be established only with difficulty. For how does it seem possible that no one at all, not so much as one, whether among the Jews or among the Greeks, could be found who did goodness? Are we so to believe that there was no one who at some time received a stranger, or gave bread to the hungry, or clothed the naked, or snatched an innocent man from the hands of the powerful, or performed some such good work? It does not seem to me that the apostle Paul wished to assert so incredible a statement:

but I think it must be understood in this way — that he denies that anyone has done goodness. For example: as if someone should lay the foundations of a house, and build up one or two walls, and even bring in some material, will he be said to have made a house, although he seems to have worked on the house? Rather he will be said to have made a house who has brought each and every part of the whole building to completion. So I think the Apostle here too says that no one has done goodness — that is, that by no one has it been consummated to perfection and in its entirety. But if we ask who is truly good, and who has done goodness perfectly, we shall find him alone who says: ”I am the good shepherd”; and again: ”The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. After these things, taking from the fifth psalm, as we said above, he says: ”Their throat is an open sepulchre. In these words, as it seems to me, he describes various sins of the human race. Every sepulchre covers over the uncleanness of a dead corpse; whence the Lord also said in the Gospel concerning the Scribes and Pharisees, that they were whitewashed sepulchres, ”which outwardly indeed appear beautiful to men, but within are full of all uncleanness.

But Paul seems in this place to point out something greater of crime in those of whom he speaks, when he calls them a sepulchre not covered nor closed over, but ”open. For those are called closed sepulchres whom some little shame restrains from sinning openly and bringing their crimes out into public. But those are called an open sepulchre who have their uncleannesses and impurities out in the open: from whom constant practice and habit of wickedness — which is the last stage among evils — has taken away even the shame of what they have committed: so that now they do not open their mouth and bring forth the word of God, the living word; but they open their throat and bring forth a dead word, the word of the devil, not from the heart, but from the sepulchre. If, then, you ever see a man flinging out shameless words with a wanton mouth, or, swollen and raging, uttering insults and curses, do not hesitate to say of him that ”his throat is an open sepulchre. For

”out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. To these things is added: ”With their tongues they have acted deceitfully. Deceit is when someone speaks one thing with the tongue and turns over another in the heart. And this fault I do not know whether it leaves even the just and the elect free of it;

but I think that one is more liable, another less, yet no one is perfectly pure of it, save he alone of whom it is written: ”Who did no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. For even if someone be found diligent and cautious, he can perhaps guard himself in the graver matters: but whom will you find who does not fall into these things, either through shame or through negligence? Sometimes even through forgetfulness things that ought to have been attended to are left undone, and, that the fault may not appear, they are excused otherwise than as they were done. Whence Peter also, knowing that these are the varieties of deceit, writes in his Epistle, saying: ”Laying aside therefore all deceit, and dissimulation, and envy, and detraction, as newborn infants, rational and without deceit, desire milk, that in it you may grow unto salvation. ”The venom of asps is under their lips. The bite of a serpent destroys the body with venom: the bite of a venomed word slays the soul by its deceit. This can happen both in the case of those who circumvent men with the contrivances of false accusations, and in the case of those who, through heretical teaching infected with the poison of the devil, deceive the souls of the simple. ”Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Of the venom of asps indeed he did not say that their lips were full.

For in that vice perhaps many may be found, yet not many who put forth that venom’s poison fully and in its entirety. But to have the mouth filled with cursing and bitterness belongs to very many. For who is of so corrected a mouth that the habit of cursing does not tempt him — I will not say against those who are worthy of cursing, but against those whom the Lord has not cursed, that is, just and innocent men? This is a ready and downhill vice of human frailty, especially toward subordinates and inferiors: so that they no longer think this manner of address to be cursing. And therefore their mouth is said to be full, and cursing is said to flow unceasingly as from a full vessel of the mouth. Yet with this bitterness too is joined, because it is drawn out from the gall of wrath. For it is through wrath and fury that the tongue is driven to cursing. And therefore the same Apostle says: ”Bless, and do not curse”; and elsewhere: ”Lest any root of bitterness springing up hinder you. There is added in what follows: ”Their feet are swift to shed blood. Yet this crime will perhaps seem unable to be fitted to most of those of whom he said: ”For we have charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin”;

unless perhaps we understand it thus, that not only is the blood of those shed bodily whose bodies are butchered, but that those also who by any stumbling-block separate a soul from God are called men of blood. For just as he is called a homicide who separates the body from the soul, by which it is given life: so much more truly

must he be called a homicide who separates the soul from the true life, which is God. But understand the feet in this place to be those of which the Prophet says: ”But my feet were almost moved”; that is, the counsel by which we make the journey of life.

[§5] ”Contrition and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace they have not known. Here he speaks of a contrition, not that by which the spirit is broken over sins in repentance, whence it is said in the Psalms: ”A contrite and humbled heart God does not despise; but he speaks of that contrition by which sinners are said to break the yoke of the Lord and to cast it from their necks. Similarly ”misery” also — or, as it is read elsewhere, ”wretchedness” — is to be understood as that by which a man has been made wretched and miserable, who ”though he was in honor, did not understand,” but ”was compared to the senseless beasts, and became like them. And the way of peace they have not known. Christ is our peace. Therefore the way of peace is the way of Christ. But even if we take it that sinners, since they are always pressed by the wars of the vices, do not know the way of peace, we understand rightly. For the prophet says to the Lord: ”Much peace to those who love your name, and there is no stumbling-block for them. Moreover, that people which was led out of Egypt walked by the way of peace, so as to come to the land of promise and dwell in Jerusalem, which is interpreted ”vision of peace,” as the Prophet also says: ”His place has been made in peace, and his habitation in Sion.

But more fully does he know the way of peace who presses on toward the dwelling of the heavenly Jerusalem, so as to ascend to the holy city of the living God. After these things is added: ”There is no fear of God before their eyes. If there be anyone who always thinks upon the fear of God, who inquires what pleases him and what displeases him, of such a one it is said that the fear of God is before his eyes. But he ought to be skilled and diligently instructed from the law of the Lord, lest perhaps he fear there with fear where fear will not be necessary. Therefore the fear of God is always to be set before the eyes: not these eyes of the flesh (for neither is anything visible or bodily sought), but before the eyes of the mind; by which both the understanding and the teaching of the fear of God are discerned, through which, as we said above, it may be understood what is to be feared or what is not to be feared. He who fears God does not fear the powers of the world. And why do I speak of the powers of the world? He fears neither those principalities, and powers, and rulers of this world, nor the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. And that we may confirm this by the authority of Paul himself, hear how he speaks of human powers: ”Do you wish,” he says, ”not to fear the power?

Do what is good, and you will have praise from it. And the Prophet says: ”The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man may do to me. But concerning the adverse powers of the spirits the same Prophet seems to me to have thought, where he says:

”Many who war against me from on high shall fear by day; and again: ”If camps stand against me, my heart shall not fear. It is therefore a great and magnificent work always to have before the eyes of the heart the fear of God: that fear which filled the rod that arose from the root of Jesse, and the flower which arose from his root: concerning which he had said: ”And the spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill him. And the fear of God renders a man perfect to such a degree that nothing is lacking to him, as the Prophet says, because ”nothing is lacking to those who fear him. These things, as far as we were able, we have fitted to each several point which had been taken up by Paul, showing how they would seem to agree with those of whom he says: ”For we have charged that Jews and Greeks are all under sin.

Which things nevertheless I think ought to be understood in this way, not that all these things are proved to have been in individual men, but one thing in one and another in another, yet in such a way that in all of them together this whole range of vices was fulfilled.

[§6] ”But we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are in the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may be made subject to God. Therefore from the works of the law no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God. For through the law is the knowledge of sin. We stated beforehand at the outset that the Apostle in this Epistle would treat of several laws, and that unless their discernment and distinction be maintained in each several passage, it will be able to confound the sense of the reader. Therefore in the present passage also, as to what he says: ”But we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are in the law,” we ought to inquire more diligently what that law is which speaks to those who are in the law, and by the fact that it speaks to them strips them of every excuse, so that they cannot find refuges for their sins: for this is what he says: ”That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be made subject to God. But if we should wish to understand it of that law which is without doubt the law of Moses, which speaks only to those whom it has circumcised from the mother’s womb and taught, how will it seem consistent that through this law, which touches with its ordinances only one nation, every mouth should be stopped, and the whole world through it be held liable to God?

For what is to be believed that all the nations have in common with this law, or what the whole world? And how also is the knowledge of sin said to come about through the law of Moses, when very many are found to have known their sin even before it? Cain, finally, when he had sinned, spoke thus: ”My sin is greater than that it should be forgiven. Moreover the patriarchs, when they had gone down to Joseph in Egypt, and were being pressed by the feigned accusation from him, speak thus to one another: ”We are in sins on account of our brother, because we despised the tribulation of his soul when he entreated us, and we did not hear him: on this

account this tribulation has come upon us. Moreover Job also, who it is established lived before the law, speaks thus: ”Because even if I sinned unwillingly, if I hid my sin, or was confounded by the multitude of the people, so as not to declare my offense. All of whom are evidently shown to have known their sin. From these things, therefore, it is gathered that Paul the apostle does not say these things of the law of Moses, ”That the law speaks to those who are in the law,” but of the natural law which is written in the hearts of men. This law, therefore, whatever it says, it says to those who are in the law.

And those are in the law who are of that age at which they may now grasp the discernment of good and evil. But those are without law to whom the perception of such discernment has not yet come, according to what Paul also says: ”But I was once alive without the law. According to this natural law, therefore, the Apostle will consistently be seen to have said that every mouth is to be stopped, and that the whole world will be liable to the judgment of God. For of this law which is naturally implanted in men, no one is destitute, neither of the Jews nor of the Gentiles: and therefore that also seems consistently said, that God may be justified in his words, and may overcome when he is judged. That we may speak, for example’s sake: if it be inquired what God has bestowed upon man, and what man has done with those things which he has received from God, God will seem to be judged together with men: and God indeed will be found to have given man all the affections, and all the impulses by which he can strive toward virtue and advance; and moreover to have implanted the force of reason, by which he might know what he ought to do and what to avoid. These things, therefore, God is found to have furnished in common to all men.

But if, having received these things, man has neglected to walk the road of virtue, he to whom nothing was lacking from God is himself found to have been lacking to those things which were given him by God. Deservedly, therefore, is it said that in such a judgment God overcomes and is justified in his words. This natural law, therefore, speaks to all who are in the law: from whose precepts infants alone seem to me to become exempt, in whom there is not yet the judgment of right and wrong. But whether to these are also to be joined those who from whatever cause are incapable of mind, do you consider. But apart from these, no one of men seems to me to escape this law. And it is to be considered whether perhaps not only men, but also angels, and every rational creature, whatever it may be, this law binds. For if it has been rightly defined by the wise that law is that which dictates what ought to be done and forbids what ought not to be done, how will such a law not seem implanted also in the higher and heavenly orders; to whom surely there is a discipline both of observing something and of avoiding something? And unless they were held by this law, the divine Scripture would never say of them: ”The angels also, who did not keep their principality, but forsook their own dwelling, God has

reserved bound in eternal chains under darkness in Tartarus unto the judgment of the great day.

Whence it is established that a law is in them; and this not being observed, they suffered these things which Scripture above has testified. Moreover Paul too, when he says, ”Do you not know that we shall judge angels? what else does he mean, except that he knows those to be placed under law whom he declares are to be led to judgment? But if anyone should confront us on the basis of what we said above, that God is to be judged with men, as though we seem to say that he too is under law, hear how great a caution concerning this is found in the Apostle’s Letters, who mentions that Christ is not in the law, but is the fullness of the law; and just as he himself is the righteousness from which all become righteous, and he himself is the truth from which all stand in truth, and he himself is the life from which all live, so also he himself is the law, from which all are in the law. He comes therefore to judgment, not as one who is in the law, but as one who is the law. But I think that those who are already perfect, and joined to the Lord have been made one spirit with him, are not themselves in the law either, but rather they themselves are law, as the same Apostle also says elsewhere: ”Because for the just man the law is not laid down. Thus:

”Whatever the law says, it says to those who are in the law, that every mouth may be stopped,” according to what we said above, ”that all the world may be made subject,” or, as we read elsewhere, ”that all the world may be made liable to God,” which also agrees better with the Greek copies. But let us inquire what he has here called ”all the world. Will it perhaps be thought that by ”all the world” this earthly place is to be understood in such a way that the trees also, and the stones, and the plants, and the seeds, and the chaff which are in it, are equally named? For these several things seem to be parts of the world. I do not think anyone is to be found so foolish as to be able to assert this. It remains, therefore, that by ”all the world” he means every rational living being: and just as everything which is irrational is excepted from this sense, so no rational creature seems to me to be separated from this condition.

The whole world, therefore, becomes accountable to God through the fact that he has implanted the natural law in all: concerning whom he also says in another place, that ”at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth. And if anyone does this, he will be seen to have fulfilled the law; if he does not do it, to be accountable to the law — and consequently, through the law, to God as well. But if to someone it should seem that this was said of human beings alone, both that he said the natural law is present in them and that he takes it as written of them alone, ”That every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may become accountable to God,” such a one will take occasion from the words that follow, where he says: ”Because by the works

of the law no flesh shall be justified. And this will certainly seem to have been said only of those who are placed in the flesh. But those who prefer to hold the former sense will observe more diligently how the Apostle said that no flesh is justified by the works of the law: because the works of the law pertain to those who are in the flesh, whereas to those who are in the spirit — that is, the higher orders of the heavenly ministries — the meaning of the law pertains.

Therefore that ”by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified in his sight,” I think is to be understood in this way: that everyone who is flesh, and lives according to the flesh, cannot be justified by the law of God, just as the same Apostle says elsewhere, that ”those who are in the flesh cannot please God”; and likewise elsewhere: ”Because the wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God, for it is not subject to the law of God: nor indeed can it be”; and the prophet says: ”All flesh is grass”; and in the Gospel it is written: ”It is the Spirit that gives life; but the flesh profits nothing. Of these, then, he says that by the law of God ”no flesh shall be justified before him. But this too, that he added ”before him,” let it not be passed over idly, as we have now rather frequently admonished, because it is one thing to be justified before God, another before men: that is, in comparison with other men, one man who has lived more blamelessly can seem just; but in comparison with God, not only shall a man not be justified, but even, as Job says: ”The stars are not clean in his sight” — those stars which are certainly clean before us, that is, which in comparison with men are held to be clean and holy; but in comparison with God they cannot be clean. ”For through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

Let us see how the knowledge of sin comes through the law. While through the law we learn what is to be done and what avoided, at the same time we also come to know what is sin and what is not. Therefore the law is not — as the heretics accuse the God of the law — an evil root, nor an evil tree, through which the knowledge of sin comes: because he did not say, ”From the law is the knowledge of sin,” but ”through the law,” so that you may know that sin did not arise from it, but was known through it. For example, if we were to say: Through the art of medicine the knowledge of sickness is given, would medicine on that account seem to you to be the cause of the sickness, because through it the character of the sickness is known? But just as it is agreed that the medicine is good which furnishes an understanding of the illness by which weakness may be avoided, so also the law is good through which sin is detected and known. And this kind of exposition preserves, as I think, the consistency also of that explanation which we set forth above concerning what is written: ”For we have charged that Jews and Greeks are all under sin, as it is written: That there is none righteous, there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God.”

[§7] ”But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed to by the law and the prophets. But the righteousness of God

through faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all who believe in him. For there is no distinction. For all have sinned and lack the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. What we established in the earlier discussion, saying that ”Whatever things the law says, it says to those who are in the law” was not said of the law of Moses, someone will suppose to have been asserted not so much truly as forcibly, when he sees that now the name of the law is referred not to nature, but to the law of Moses: and he will say that in the present passage the righteousness of God is declared by the Apostle to be manifested through the law, and not only through the law, but also through the prophets, so that without any ambiguity the things that are written are understood to have been said of the law of Moses: from which law the righteousness of God through faith in Christ Jesus is manifested unto all who believe, whether they come from the Jews or from the Gentiles, who nevertheless are justified not from works, but from the grace of God, since Jesus Christ himself has been made their redeemer.

These things indeed he will say who accuses us of having forcibly bent the Apostle’s meaning in the things we expounded above. But this is what we can steadfastly affirm: that just as those who assert these things suppose that in this saying of the Apostle which we have now set forth nothing can be found by which we may establish that these things were written not of the law of Moses but of the law of nature, so neither will they be able to find anything by which the things said above may seem to look to the law of Moses rather than to the law of nature; and therefore, just as for them the earlier passages will not stand simply because the later ones seem to hold, so neither can the first be thrown into confusion for us, if the second seem not to run along the same track. What then? Shall we say that the Apostle writes things contrary to himself? And this will be the assertion of an excellent expositor! This is what is wont to happen to those who break up the one doctrine of the faith into the divergent meanings of sects, and search out only those testimonies from the divine Scriptures by which they may establish their own doctrine, while as for the resolutions of those statements of divine Scripture which come from the opposite side, they do not touch them even with the tip of the finger, as the Lord says.

But he who faithfully and soundly gathers the meaning of the sacred Volumes ought to show how those things which seem to be contrary are not truly contrary. We shall therefore attempt, in the present passage also, to show how this that follows does not conflict with our earlier exposition. We have often said, and said more plainly in the preface, that the Apostle in this Epistle makes mention of many laws in such a way that, when he passes from one to another, it can scarcely be detected except by a sufficiently attentive reader. He had said in the foregoing, that ”through the law is the knowledge of sin”; and because he perceived that it could be answered: Therefore if from the natural law there is knowledge of sin, there can be from

it also knowledge of righteousness — namely according to that image of the art of medicine which we gave above: that just as through it sickness is known so that health may be found, so also, if through the law of nature knowledge of sin can come about, in like manner knowledge of righteousness can also come about. Since, then, he had seen that this could be objected to him, after he said, ”For through the law is the knowledge of sin,” he adds: ”But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been manifested. Such, then, is what he says: Not as the knowledge of sin comes through the law, so also does the manifestation of God’s righteousness come through the law;

but apart from the law the righteousness of God is manifested. For the law of nature could convict the nature of sin, and display knowledge of it; but the righteousness of God transcends and towers above anything whatsoever that the human mind can probe by natural perceptions alone. For it does not suffice for understanding and considering not just any human righteousness, but the very righteousness of God, and the judgments which descend from it, of which it is said that they are ”a great deep,” and that so profound is the righteousness of God and his judgments that the Apostle says: ”How unsearchable are the judgments of God! But Wisdom too speaks to men as though the righteousness of God cannot be known by the motions of nature alone, but must be sought through the pursuit of teaching; and therefore it says: ”Learn righteousness, you who judge the earth. Wherefore for coming to know the righteousness of God the law of nature will help not at all, even though it seems to perceive something about human righteousness. For that law can perceive what is just among men, namely that what a man does not wish to suffer himself, this he should not do to his neighbor. Can it naturally perceive anything of that righteousness which says: ”See that you do not do your righteousness before men”; and, ”that your left hand may not know what your right hand does”? These and such things the law of nature cannot call just; and therefore the Apostle says:

”But now, apart from the law” — that is, of nature — ”the righteousness of God has been manifested,” having the testimony of the law of Moses and of the prophets, in which the Holy Spirit had written many things about the righteousness of God through figures and riddles. And I would not have you wonder that one word ”law,” placed twice in the same passage, signifies different things. We find this to be the custom of Scripture in other places as well: as there: ”Do you not say that there are yet four months until the harvest comes? Lift up your eyes, and see the regions, for they are white unto harvest. Is not in this place too the harvest, named twice, referred first to the bodily harvest, and second to the spiritual? And again in the Gospel, when the Savior says to the Samaritan woman, ”Give me to drink,” and after her reply says again to her: ”If you knew who it is that says to you: Give me to drink; you surely would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. And again he added to her: ”Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again;

but whoever drinks of the water that I give him shall not thirst forever. Do you see how both ”to drink” and ”water” are taken now indeed bodily, now spiritually, in one and the same passage? There is a similar instance placed there, where the man blind from birth is healed. After this the Savior says:

”For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind. Is not here too both seeing and not seeing understood now bodily, now spiritually? So therefore also in this place, when the Apostle says that the righteousness of God is manifested apart from the law, the law of nature is understood; but when he says: ”Being witnessed to by the law and the prophets,” he designates the law of Moses.

But if what we have said still seems to you insufficiently clear, we shall add these considerations as well: If it appears that the law of which it is said, ”But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law,” is the same as that of which he says, ”attested by the law and the prophets” — then, if indeed it has been manifested apart from the law, it does not receive the testimony of the law; but if it receives testimony from the law, then it has not been manifested apart from the law. Since this difficulty is insoluble and cannot by any reasoning be broken down, it must be said that the righteousness of God is indeed manifested through Christ Jesus, with testimony borne to him not by the law of nature, which is still in every way slight and small, but by the law of Moses — not that law which is according to the letter, but that which is according to the spirit, concerning which the same Apostle says, ”For the law is spiritual. And likewise the prophets bear witness through the Spirit of God who spoke in them. There is besides, in the Apostle’s usage regarding this expression, a remarkable distinction, if anyone observes it more carefully. It is the custom among the Greeks to place before nouns what they call ἄρθρα (arthra), which among us may be termed ”articles. Whenever, therefore, he names the law of Moses, he prefixes to the noun the customary article;

but whenever he wishes the natural law to be understood, he names the law without the article. And so in this place too, where he says, ”Now apart from law the righteousness of God has been manifested,” it has no article; but in what follows, where he says, ”attested by the law and the prophets,” in this second place he has set ”law” with the article. If, then, the difference in the use of the term ”law” has been sufficiently made plain, let us now see what righteousness is manifested apart from the natural law. The same apostle Paul says of Christ that he ”has been made for us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. This righteousness of God, therefore, which is Christ, is manifested apart from the natural law indeed, yet not apart from the law of Moses or the prophets. For the law gives testimony to him, just as he himself says: ”Search the Scriptures; they are the ones that bear witness concerning me. For the natural law can indeed furnish occasions and give understanding, as we have said, either toward those things

which equity demands be done among men, or toward this very thing, that one should perceive that God exists. But who can perceive by nature concerning Christ that he is the Son of God? Therefore it is apart from this law that the righteousness of God, which is Christ, has been manifested, attested by the law of Moses and the prophets.

But before we hasten on to what follows, it does not seem that even this observation should be passed over: that in the case of sin he set down ”recognition,” but in the case of righteousness ”manifestation. For ”everything that is manifested is light”; and if what is manifested is light, then sin, which is not light, is not manifested but recognized. I understand in this way also that saying: ”There is nothing hidden that shall not be manifested, nor covered that shall not be revealed. But let us return to our subject. The law, then, and the prophets are witnesses of the righteousness of God; and this righteousness is manifested through faith in Jesus Christ unto all who believe, among whom there is no distinction, whether they believe from among the Jews or from among the Gentiles. But observe that for the manifesting of God’s righteousness he laid down not one cause only, that of faith, but joined to it also the law and the prophets — because neither does faith alone, without the law and the prophets, manifest the righteousness of God, nor again do the law and the prophets without faith: the one therefore cleaves to the other, so that from both there may be perfection.

There is, he says, no distinction between Jews and Greeks, since it is established that all alike have been made subject to sin, as was shown above, and that now the righteousness of God, supported by the testimonies of the law and the prophets, has been given through faith in Jesus Christ alike to all. From the fact that all had been made subject to sin, they were without doubt made strangers also to the glory of God, since they could neither receive it in any way nor merit it. For how would a sinner dare to give glory to God, to whom the Prophet says: ”But to the sinner God said: Why do you declare my righteous decrees? And again another Scripture says: ”Praise of God is not comely in the mouth of a sinner. Therefore the righteousness of God, coming through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, whether they be Jews or Greeks, justifies them once cleansed of their former crimes, and makes them capable of the glory of God: and this he does not from their merits, nor for their works, but freely bestows glory upon those who believe. ”Through the redemption,” he says, ”which is in Christ Jesus. Let us consider more attentively what is meant by the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. ”Redemption” is the name given to what is handed over to enemies on behalf of those whom they hold in captivity, so that they may restore them to their former liberty.

The captive multitude of the human race, then, was being held among enemies, overcome by sin as though by war: the Son of God came, who ”was made for us” not only ”wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification,” but ”redemption”

as well: and he gave himself as the redemption, that is, he handed himself over to the enemies, and poured out his blood for them as they thirsted for it: and this has become the redemption of believers, just as Peter also writes in his Epistle, saying: ”For you were not redeemed with corruptible silver or gold, but with the precious blood of the only-begotten Son of God. Perhaps Solomon too was indicating this under a mystery when he said: ”The redemption of a man’s soul is his own riches. For if you inquire what the riches of the soul are, you will find that its riches are properly wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification. But all these things the Apostle says are Christ. Christ, then, is the riches of the soul, and therefore he himself is its redemption. For bodily riches are to be believed rather the ruin of the soul than its redemption, unless they be turned to the good work of righteousness and mercy, and be transferred from bodily riches into riches of the soul. ”Whom God set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood, for the showing forth of his righteousness, through the remission of former offenses, in the forbearance of God, for the showing forth of his righteousness at this present time:

that he himself may be just, and the one who justifies him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ. When the holy Apostle had taught us many wondrous things about our Lord Jesus Christ, things which are said of him by way of mystery, in this place he has brought forward something still more eminent, which I think is not easily found in other places of Scripture. For whereas above he had said that he gave himself as a redemption for the whole human race, so that he might redeem those who were held in the captivity of sins, since apart from God he tasted death for all, now he adds something more sublime, and says that ”God set him forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood”: namely, that by the sacrificial offering of his own body he might make God propitious to men, and through this might show forth his righteousness, while he remitted to them their former offenses, which they had contracted by serving the worst of tyrants during that time in which God bore with these things and suffered them to be done.

But he endured this so that afterward, that is, in this present time, he might show his righteousness. For at the consummation of the age, in the last time, God manifested his righteousness, and gave as redemption him whom he made a propitiator: lest perhaps, if he had sent the propitiator earlier, he might not have reconciled to God so great a number of the human race as in these times in which the world now seems filled with people. For God is just, and being just he could not justify the unjust: therefore he willed that there be the intervention of a propitiator, so that through faith in him those might be justified who could not be justified through their own works. Let these things, so far as they pertain to the explanation of the wording itself, be set down first, so that the apostolic reading may become clearer. But now, as is our custom, let us inquire what the inner sense of the apostolic saying contains; and first of all, how it is said: ”Whom God set forth as a propitiatory (or propitiator) through faith in his blood. It is certain that in almost every place

the Apostle's meaning flows from the treasuries of the Law and the Prophets. Let us therefore inquire where he found the term "propitiatory," and from where he took up this name. I recall the Lord speaking to Moses in Exodus and instructing him in what he ought to do:

first indeed to command the ark, and that its poles and rings be made along the sides of the ark; and after this he says: "And you shall make a propitiatory of pure gold, two and a half cubits its length, and one and a half cubits its width. And you shall make two cherubim of beaten gold, and you shall place them upon each side of the propitiatory: one cherub on this side, and the other cherub on the other side of the propitiatory; and you shall make it so that the two cherubim are on its two sides, spreading out their wings and overshadowing the propitiatory; and their faces shall be toward one another over the propitiatory. And you shall make the cherubim, and you shall set the propitiatory upon the ark, and into the ark you shall put the testimonies which I shall give you; and I will make myself known to you from there, and I will speak to you from above the propitiatory, from the midst of the two cherubim which are over the ark of the covenant, according to all that I shall command you for the children of Israel. It plainly appears that the Apostle, having found the name "propitiatory" in these passages, has now placed it in his own Letters, concerning which our discourse is. And it seems that he referred this propitiatory, of which it is written in Exodus, to none other than the Lord Savior, when he says that God set him forth "as a propitiatory through faith.

How indeed that which is described in Exodus as made of the purest gold was the form and figure of this true propitiatory is worth investigating. And first indeed it must be considered in which places the gold that is used in the work is called pure gold, and in which places gold alone is set down without any addition. Observing this in many places, I seem to myself to have discovered that wherever with the addition it is called pure gold, it indicates that holy and pure soul of Jesus, which "committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth"; and that these measurements of the length and breadth of the propitiatory fit that soul — although it is arduous to explain these things, and to fit to that holy soul each single detail that is reported about the propitiatory. First, then, let us see what it says: that the length of the propitiatory had neither two cubits only — a number that is customarily applied to bodies that are joined together and generated — nor three whole cubits, a number that is accustomed to exceed the designation of creature, and to be consecrated to incorporeal nature. Two and a half cubits, then, it calls the length of the propitiatory, and one and a half its breadth. Now if in such matters it is lawful to be bold:

since the same Apostle says of Christ that he "is the mediator of God and of men," it seems to me that this soul is midway between God and man, being indeed inferior to the nature of the Trinity, having something less, and yet, though it is beneath

that, not being mixed with the dual number — which is assigned to those set in a body — apart from the extraordinary and surpassing eminence of its virtues. For this is shown by the fact that its measure is designated as having something above two cubits, though less than three. But also as to its breadth being recorded as having one and a half cubits, by this it is indeed described in terms of its monad and singular standing, yet as not having grown wholly into the dual number, which is sometimes even put for things unclean. For although he took up the flesh of our nature, it was nevertheless assumed from an undefiled Virgin, and formed by the chaste operation of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, therefore, the Apostle too, when discussing the Mediator, marked a plain distinction, saying: ”The mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus”; namely, that he might teach that ”mediator” is to be referred not to the deity of Christ, but to the humanity, which is his soul. Its length, therefore, is set down, and its breadth. The length signifies that which reaches toward God and is joined to the Trinity;

the breadth, that it dwells among men, who are wont to walk the broad and spacious way; and therefore it is rightly called by the name of Mediator, because, as we have said, this holy soul was midway between the divinity of the Trinity and the frailty of humanity. This soul, therefore, can be understood as the propitiatory, according to what we have said above, upon which two cherubim are said to be placed, one on this side and one on the other side. Of what, then, are these two cherubim to be thought to bear the form? For ”cherubim,” translated into our language, signifies ”fullness of knowledge. Where, then, do we speak of a fullness of knowledge, except in him of whom the Apostle says, ”In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”? The Apostle assuredly says these things of the Word of God. But he writes similar things also of the Holy Spirit when he says: ”But God has revealed it to us through his Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. It is signified, therefore, as I think, in that propitiatory — that is, in the soul of Jesus — that the Word of God, who is the only-begotten Son, and his Holy Spirit dwell there always: and this is what the two cherubim placed upon the propitiatory indicate. But observe this also, that he did not say: One cherub on the right side, and the other cherub on the left side; but he says:

”One cherub on this side, and the other cherub on the other side” — that he might show that in that propitiatory, that is, in the soul of Christ, there was nothing left-hand. Moreover, these two cherubim are winged; and not only winged, but also spreading out their wings. If any of the saints has deserved to have the highest testimony from God, it is said that God was with him, as is said of Joshua son of Nun: ”And God was with him, as he was with Moses his servant. But wherever a promise of a greater gift is given by God, God says: ”And I will be in them, and will walk among them. But you will find no soul among men so blessed and so exalted except this one alone, in which the Word of God and the Holy Spirit found so much

breadth, so much capacity, that it is said not only to dwell there, but even to spread out its wings, and by a new rite of the mystery at times even to fly.

Both cherubim are also said to have their faces turned toward one another above this blessed soul, whereby a concordant and harmonious perception of the divinity is poured into it from the Son of God and from the Holy Spirit. But where is this soul set, the soul full of God, in which it pleased all the fullness of the Godhead to dwell? ”Above the ark,” he says, ”of the testament. The ark of the testament can be understood as his holy flesh, in which this blessed soul is placed, having within itself the testimonies of God — by which are understood those sufferings of Christ which he bore in the flesh, foretold long before by the divine testimonies. The heavenly powers too can be understood as the ark of God, since they also are indeed capable of receiving the Word of God and the Holy Spirit; yet the soul of Jesus is set above them, and it is through her, in a certain manner, as mediatrix, that they receive the grace of the divine bounty. After this he says: ”And I will make myself known to you from thence, and I will speak to you from above the propitiatory. Not to Moses only, but to each one of the saints who is a servant of God, God makes himself known from no other place, nor is he known from any other source, save from that propitiatory which we have expounded above, and from the midst of the cherubim. This the prophet Habakkuk also signifies where he says:

”In the midst of two living creatures you shall be known; when the years draw near you shall be known, and when the time is at hand you shall be shown forth. For ”no one knows the Father except the Son, and he to whom the Son shall be pleased to reveal him. But Paul too says that ”God has revealed it to us through his Spirit. For this reason, therefore, he says, ”I will make myself known to you from thence, and I will speak to you from above the propitiatory, between the two cherubim which are over the ark of the testament. And I think it was not out of place that the things we took from Exodus have been expounded, so that the sense might become plain in what way the Apostle in the present passage has taken up the name ”propitiatory,” when he says: ”Whom God set forth as a propitiatory through faith. But this very word which he used, ”set forth” (proposuit), is felt to be said rather of the soul of Jesus than of his deity. For ”set forth” is understood as though ”placed beforehand,” that is, before it existed. For what already is, is placed; what does not yet exist is set forth beforehand. It is not fitting, then, that of him who always was — that is, of the Word of God — it should be said that he was set forth;

but it is said of his soul, which, although it is inseparable from the Word of God, was nevertheless created, and is posterior to the deity of the Only-begotten. Nor will it seem unfitting that it be said of her that before she existed she was set forth and preordained to be a propitiatory. Since, therefore, according to what we have expounded above, ”God set forth” Jesus Christ ”as a propitiatory through

faith in his blood," it seems necessary to inquire from the divine laws what that propitiation is which is made through blood, so that from these things we may be able to gather in what way propitiation has been made through the blood of Jesus also. It is written in Leviticus, after the sacrifice of the high priest: "But if the whole assembly of Israel shall be in ignorance, and the matter be hidden from its eyes, and they shall do one of those things among the Lord's commandments which ought not to be done, and shall offend, and the sin which they have sinned becomes known to them, the assembly shall bring a bull calf from the herd for sin"; and a little later: "And the priest who has been anointed shall bring in of the blood of the calf into the tabernacle of witness"; and again a little later: "And he shall do with the calf," he says, "just as he did with the calf for sin, and the priest shall make propitiation for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

Through blood, then, the priest makes propitiation for the whole assembly, that it may be forgiven them. Let us now examine each of the several names which are written concerning the Savior, and let us contemplate more diligently, in each of the titles, what things they are that are designated. You will find, therefore, since indeed it pleased all the fullness of the divinity to dwell in him bodily, that he himself is both the propitiatory, and the high priest, and the victim "which is offered for the people. And concerning the propitiatory enough has already been said. But concerning the high priest, David in the Psalm writes plainly, and the apostle Paul to the Hebrews. And that he is also the victim, John testifies, saying: "This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. According, therefore, to that whereby he is a victim, propitiation is effected by the pouring out of his blood, in that he gives remission of former offenses; which propitiation, nevertheless, comes to each one of the believers by the way of faith. For unless he were to give remission of former offenses, the propitiation would not be proved to have been effected. But since remission of sins is granted, it is certain that the propitiation has been fulfilled by the outpouring of the sacred blood: for "without the shedding of blood," as the Apostle says, "there is no remission" of sins.

But lest Paul should seem to you to have been the only one to venture upon the name of propitiation in Christ, hear how John too speaks in harmony with this sense when he says: "My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. But if anyone shall have sinned, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world. With one and the same sense, therefore, the apostles name Christ "propitiatory," or "propitiation," or — as is more frequently found in the Latin manuscripts — "Propitiator. But it makes no difference whether "propitiator" or "propitiatory" or "propitiation" or even "entreaty" be written, since among the Greeks it is always expressed by one and the same word. Unless perhaps it should seem to some that "propitiation" is his divine substance itself, while "propitiator" is understood of him when he fulfills the dispensations among men. But that also

which John said, that ”he himself is the entreaty (or ’propitiation’) for our sins; and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world,” seems to have brought us a certain enlargement of the mystery, so as to show that Jesus is the propitiator not only of believers, but of the whole world as well; yet not first of the world, and then ours, but first ours, and only so at last of the whole world.

For although the whole creation awaits the grace of the Redeemer, nevertheless each one will come to salvation in his own order. This I judge to be indicated in Leviticus also, where the victims of propitiation are commanded to be offered through the high priest. Nor yet in these is a confused order of sacrifices set forth; but first he says what the propitiation is, and what kind of victim is to be offered if the priest has sinned. Second, if the whole assembly has offended through ignorance, with what sort of victims God is appeased. Third, if a ruler has sinned, it is written in what order he is to be purified. Fourth, if a single soul has sinned, concerning this too the rite of expiation is set out. These several things, in their mystical understanding, designate by certain fixed orders and modes and causes the future propitiation of Christ, not only for our sins but also for the whole world — provided, however, that one look upon them, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, according to that revelation which is said to have been shown to Moses on the mountain. There comes about, therefore, through the propitiation of the blood of Christ, the remission ”of former offenses, in the forbearance of God, for the showing forth of his justice. The forbearance of God is where the sinner is not punished the moment he sins, but, according to what the Apostle said in that same place, is led by the patience of God to repentance;

and in this God is said to show forth his justice. And he added well, ”at this time”; for in the time of the present age the justice of God lies in forbearance, but in the age to come it lies in retribution. For it seemed just in God’s sight that, since he had appointed the age to come for judgment, he should assign the present one to forbearance and patience. For if he punished the sinner in this time, it would not seem just to call again to judgment one whom he had punished. But if he forbears and is patient in the present age, he will rightly be a just judge in the age to come. He justifies, therefore, him who is of faith, just as it is written also concerning Abraham, that ”Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him unto justice. But if Abraham believed, and was justified out of faith, it will without doubt follow that now too he who believes God is justified through the faith of Jesus Christ together with faithful Abraham,

[§9] ”Where then is your boasting? It has been shut out. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we reckon that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law. Again and yet more often we admonish those who desire to attend more carefully to Paul’s writings to hold more tenaciously to that distinction which we spoke of above — how he pursues now the case of circumcision, now that

of uncircumcision, that is, of the Jews or of the Gentiles, always along a separate track. For if even a little should escape the reader, at once this narrow and slender footpath of understanding will be thrown into confusion. Therefore, when the Apostle had shown above what is the Jew's advantage, or what the usefulness of circumcision, and had taught that to those first ones the oracles of God were entrusted, and by these things had seemed to exalt that vaunting of theirs by which they are wont to raise themselves against the Gentiles; and again, in what follows, had set against these things the objection that the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ is unto all who believe, and that there is no distinction, but that all have sinned, both Jews and Greeks, and lack the glory of God, and are justified through the grace and redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

and that he himself is the propitiatory through faith, and that every one who is of faith is justified by him — now at last, setting down as it were the conclusion of his assertions, he says in this place: "Where then is your boasting? It has been shut out. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we reckon that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law": and he says that the justification of faith alone suffices, so that one who merely believes is justified, even if no work at all has been completed by him. It presses upon us, therefore, who strive to assert that the Apostle's Scripture is whole and entire, and that all of it stands together in its own order, to inquire who has been justified by faith alone without works. So far, then, as concerns an example, I think that thief suffices who, crucified with Christ, cried out to him from the cross: "Lord Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Nor is any other good work of his described in the Gospels, but for this faith alone Jesus says to him: "Truly I say to you: Today you shall be with me in paradise. Let us now, if it seems good, fit the words of the apostle Paul to the case of this thief, and say to the Jew: "Where then is your boasting? Certainly it has been shut out;

and shut out not by the law of works, but by the law of faith. For by faith this thief was justified without the works of the law: because concerning this the Lord did not inquire what he had previously done; nor did he wait to see what work he might complete once he had believed, but, as he was about to enter paradise, he took him as his companion, justified by confession alone. But also that woman of whom it is related in the Gospel according to Luke, that "when she had learned that Jesus reclined at table in the house of the Pharisee, she brought a vessel of ointment, and standing behind at his feet and weeping, she washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed them and anointed them with the ointment. But the Pharisee who had invited him, seeing this, said within himself: If this man were a prophet, he would surely know who and what sort of woman she is who touches his feet, for she is a sinner. But Jesus spoke to him the parable of the five hundred or the fifty denarii; and from no work of the law, but for faith alone, he says to her: "Your sins are forgiven you"; and again: "Your faith

has saved you, go in peace. But also in many places of the Gospel we read that the Savior used this expression, so that he calls the faith of the believer the cause of his salvation.

From all which it is clear that the Apostle rightly reckons that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law. But perhaps someone hearing these things may grow slack and take up a negligence of doing well, since indeed faith alone suffices for justification. To him we shall say that after justification, if anyone acts unjustly, without doubt he has despised the grace of justification. For no one receives pardon of sins for this purpose, that he should think license to sin has again been given him. For indulgence is granted not for future but for past offenses. Therefore, to return to our subject, a man is justified by faith, and the works of the law contribute nothing to him for justification. But where there is not the faith which justifies the believer, even if a man has works from the law, yet because they are not built upon the foundation of faith, although they may seem to be good, nevertheless they cannot justify the one who works them, because faith is lacking to them, which is the seal of those who are justified by God, as we said above, because ”Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him unto righteousness. So much is this so, that he who is justified by the grace of faith says, according to Paul, that ”the grace of God which was given to me was not in vain. Therefore every boasting which comes from the works of the law is shut out.

And that what we say may become still more evident, we shall give an example from those things which are written in the Gospel, where the Pharisee and the Publican went up to the temple of God; ”and the Pharisee,” he says, ”standing in the midst, said: God, I give you thanks, because I am not as the rest of men, robbers, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican: I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess,” and the rest. And these things perhaps he may have said truly, but according to the Lord’s sentence, being corrupted by the disease of vaunting, he did not go down from the temple justified. Such boasting, therefore, as came from the works of the law is shut out, because it does not have the humility of the cross of Christ; and hear what he says who boasts in that cross: ”But far be it from me to boast, save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. You see the Apostle not boasting over his righteousness, nor over his chastity, nor over his wisdom, nor over his other virtues or acts, but most openly declaring and saying: ”He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord. And thus Jewish boasting has been shut out, not by the law of works, but by the law of faith which is in Christ Jesus, in whose cross the Apostle boasts.

For who will rightly boast even over his own chastity, when he reads it written, that ”if anyone looks upon a woman to desire her, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart”? Whence also the prophet says: ”How shall anyone boast that he has a chaste heart? Or who will boast over wisdom, when he sees it written,

that ”the world through wisdom did not know God: and therefore it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe”? And again: ”The foolish things of the world God has chosen, that he may confound the wise”? And who will boast even over his own righteousness, when he hears God saying through the prophet, that ”all your righteousness is as the cloth of a menstruous woman”? The only just boasting, therefore, is in the faith of the cross of Christ, which shuts out all that boasting which comes down from the works of the law. And these things have been said by us because the Apostle spoke as it were in the language of one questioning: ”Where then is your boasting? And to this he himself answered himself: ”It has been shut out. And again, as though he were questioning himself, he says: ”By what law? Of works? And he answered himself: ”No, but by the law of faith. For we reckon that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law. Of these things we have already spoken above.

But as to the fact that in the present place also he makes mention again of two laws, and speaks of the law of works and the law of faith, consider also for yourself, you who read, whether this discourse ought to be inclined toward the law of Moses and the natural law, or toward the law of the letter and the law of the spirit: because the law of the letter kills, and works death; but the law of the spirit of life sets free from the law of sin and death.

[§10] Hence he also fittingly adds in what follows: ”Or is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also. Since indeed there is one God, who justifies the circumcision from faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. For those who would have the God of the Jews to be one and the God of the Gentiles another — that is, one God of the Law and another of the Gospels — the reply on this point will be narrow and confining enough, since the apostle Paul gives his verdict abundantly enough when he not only says that there is one God of Jews and of Gentiles, but also adds that it is one and the same God who justifies the circumcision from faith and the uncircumcision through faith. And if they should wish to take ”circumcision” by way of allegory, so as to say that by this word he called all the holy and spiritual ones, they will at once find a stumbling block in what follows. For if he called the holy ones — or, as they name them, the spiritual ones — ”circumcision,” it follows that by ”uncircumcision” he meant sinners, whom they call ”animal” (of the soul). And how will it be fitting that the good God should justify spiritual and animal alike? For them, then, there will be an inextricable knot in these words of the Apostle.

But according to us, who say that ”circumcision” means those who have believed from among the Jews, and ”uncircumcision” no less means those who have been called from among the Gentiles to the faith, the exposition will be plain and easy. For it is one and the same God who justifies believers from either people, not by the privilege of circumcision or of uncircumcision, but by the regard for faith alone.

There remains also the difference of a single syllable, in which the Apostle seems to have varied his expression. Let it not pass us by idly that he says God justifies the circumcision from faith, and not through faith; but the uncircumcision through faith, and not from faith. For this exchange of prepositions does not seem to me to be held superfluous in his usage, since we find that in other places too they are set down by him not at random but observantly, and that the difference of this distinction is of necessity preserved — as when, speaking of God, he says: ”Since from him, and through himself, and in him are all things. And again elsewhere he says: ”For as the woman is from the man, so also the man is through the woman; but all things are from God. Of the same sort is what he writes to the Corinthians: ”To one indeed through the Spirit is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith in the same Spirit.

And not only does the apostle Paul maintain the observance of these distinctions, but John also, who, though he says of the Word of God that ”all things were made through him,” testifies that life was made not through him but in him, saying: ”That which was made, in him was life. And since it would take much to expound the passages we have now brought forward by way of example, let us gather their sense briefly, so far as our capacity allows. When it is said ”from him,” something primary seems to be shown by the beginning of this preposition. But when ”through him” is said, the understanding of a subsequent cause is designated — that is, of the cause which comes after the primary one. So that, to speak by way of example concerning what he says, ”From him and through him and in him are all things”: by ”from him” he gave the signification of the first creation of all things, and of this very fact, that the things which exist began to be from God; by ”through him,” that those things which had earlier been made are governed and administered through him from whom they draw the beginning of their subsistence; by ”in him,” that those who have now been corrected and amended stand fast in his perfection. Thus, therefore, we are taught that these words maintain distinctions of the fullest reasonableness, so that our subsisting is said to be had ”from God”; that we are administered and governed is designated as coming about ”through him”;

but that we stand in the summit of perfection is declared to be ”in him. In the present passage too a certain such distinction can be observed, so that the circumcision, which is justified as it were in the first place and order, is mentioned as to be justified from faith and not through faith; while the uncircumcision, which is drawn to justification in the second place, is said to be justified not from faith but through faith. And I think that in that difference which we mentioned above — ”For as the woman is from the man, so also the man is through the woman” — these things are more fully designated. For in the first place stands the man, from whom the woman is said to descend, and not through the man. But in the second place the man is through the woman; because the woman seems in a certain way to minister to the man as author, and therefore the man is said to be born through

the woman, and not from the woman. But perhaps someone may meet this exposition of ours concerning the woman and the man, and object what the Apostle said concerning Christ: ”Made from a woman, made under the law”; and he did not say, made through a woman. To him I think the answer must be given in this way.

Of every man indeed it will be fitting to say that he was made through a woman, since indeed, before he was born through a woman, he took his beginning from a man; but Christ, who did not take the origin of his flesh from the seed of a man, is rightly said to have been made ”from a woman. For to her, that is, to the woman, the very primary origin of his flesh is ascribed, and rightly is he mentioned by the Apostle as made not through a woman but ”from a woman. One and the same God, therefore, justifies the circumcision from faith and the uncircumcision through faith. But if anyone should inquire rather curiously by whom those who are justified from faith are justified, and again from whom those who are justified through faith are justified — although perhaps much curiosity may seem to be in this, nevertheless we can suitably say that those who are justified from faith, having taken their beginning from faith, are brought to completion through the fulfillment of good works; and those who are justified through faith, having begun from good works, receive the summit of perfection through faith. Thus each, cleaving to the other, is brought to completion from the other.

[§11] And for this reason I think the Apostle at once added in what follows: ”Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; rather, we establish the law. Since in the foregoing he seemed to refer everything to faith, he himself sets before himself the objection that could be raised by another, and says: If a man is justified through faith and not from the works of the law, and if God justifies circumcision from faith and uncircumcision through faith, do you then, O Paul, destroy the law of Moses through faith? But answering this himself he says: ”God forbid; nay rather, we establish the law,” that is, we confirm it. But it is worth the effort to see how he declares that he confirms the law, when in the foregoing he had said that a man is not justified from the works of the law. The Savior says in the Gospels that ”Moses wrote of me. Therefore he who does not believe in Christ, of whom Moses wrote in the law, destroys the law; but he who believes in Christ, of whom Moses wrote, confirms the law through faith, because he believes in Christ. And by faith we mean a faith in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit that is whole, full, and perfect, one that professes nothing divergent, nothing discordant or alien within the Trinity.

For Marcion, who says that the God of the law is one and the Father of Christ another, does not by his faith establish or confirm the law, but destroys it. This Ebion also does; and so do all who insert some corruption into the catholic faith. I will also fittingly add this, that everyone who, believing in Christ, acts well and keeps himself from every stain of sin, this man confirms the law of God by living

rightly; but he who is driven headlong by the vices of sins, and without any restraint of repentance is defiled by the constancy of his crimes, this man, even if he seems to believe in Christ, does not by his faith establish, but destroys the law. But that objection too seems to me by no means to be passed over, which someone can bring forward, saying that the Apostle appears to write things contrary to himself, since in the present passage he says that the law is not destroyed but confirmed, while in the second Epistle to the Corinthians he writes thus: ”But if the ministry of death, engraved in letters upon stones, was made in glory, so that the children of Israel could not gaze upon the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which is being done away, how shall the ministry of the Spirit not be rather in glory? And a little later: ”For if that which is being done away is through glory, much more is that which remains in glory.

It can therefore be said that the glory of the face of Moses which is being done away, and this which he says, ”For if that which is being done away is through glory,” seems contrary to that statement in which he declares: We do not destroy the law through faith, but we establish and confirm it. But see whether we may resolve in this way the difficulty that is put to us. It is not the same thing to say, ”We destroy the law,” and, the law is destroyed. Paul therefore in the present passage declares this, that he himself does not destroy the law. For even if the law is destroyed by that glory which surpasses it, it is not destroyed by Paul, nor by any other of the saints. Whence the Lord himself also said: ”I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. No one of the saints, therefore, nor the Lord himself, destroys the law; but its temporal and passing glory is destroyed and overcome by the eternal and abiding glory. Whence see how carefully and how keenly the apostolic Writings must be read. He did not say, ”For that which was glorious was not glorified,” and then fall silent — otherwise it would seem false (for how would that which is glorious not be glorified?) — but he added:

”because of the glory that surpasses it,” so as to show that the glory of Moses, that is, of the law, is not destroyed by anyone whatever, but, as we have said, that from the comparison of the greater glory which is in Christ, that glory which is in the law is covered over and darkened; and therefore he says: ”For if that which is being done away is through glory, much more is that which remains in glory. He says that the things of Christ remain, and that the things of Moses are done away: but done away not by a man, but from the comparison, as we have said, of the glory that supervenes; since indeed ”the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ” until ”the fullness of the times” should come; and, just as we say that the work of the schoolmaster is necessary so long as he who is under the schoolmaster is a little child, but that the office of the schoolmaster is done away and is no longer necessary when he who was under the schoolmaster has come to maturity, so we say that the work of the law is now done away ”when the fullness of time arrived,” and the son who once differed nothing from a servant has been made heir of the

father's substance. But that these things which the Apostle calls "to be done away" ought to be understood in this way, learn his usage regarding this word in other places also, where he says:

"We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect shall have come, those things which are in part shall be done away. And in this passage Paul's knowledge or prophecy is said to be done away without any injury to the apostolic grace: namely, so that we may understand that in comparison with things perfect, those things which are imperfect are empty and idle. So therefore in the present discourse Paul indeed does not destroy the law, but confirms it. Yet the glory of Christ, when it has been revealed, by the very comparison of itself which surpasses it, both refutes and convicts that glory which appeared in Moses and by which he had been glorified, and shows that it is not even to be reckoned a glory. Of the same sort is what is said elsewhere: "He must increase, but I must decrease"; and what Paul himself says: "But when I became a man, I did away with the things of a child. This the likeness of the schoolmaster also shows, whose work is done away and ceases when the little child has come to the perfect age. Therefore the Apostle said most cautiously: "Do we then destroy the law through faith? God forbid!" — and he did not say, is the law then destroyed through faith, but, "do we then destroy the law? And again in what follows: "No; rather, we establish the law. For even if the law is destroyed, it is not destroyed through faith, but through the surpassing glory.

But through faith the law is not only not destroyed, but is established and confirmed by the apostles: because the Christ whom the law and the prophets foretold would come, these men proclaim to have come already; and it is assuredly a confirmation of the prophecy or of the law, when the things that had been foretold are shown to have been fulfilled.

Commentary on Romans — Book 4

Latin source: J.-P. Migne (ed.), Patrologia Graeca 14 (Rufinus's Latin version of Origen's Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos). This English translation is in the public domain.

BOOK 4

[§1] "What then shall we say that Abraham our father found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has glory, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him unto righteousness. Now to him who works, the reward is not imputed according to grace, but according to debt. But to him who does not work, yet believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned unto righteousness. Just as David also declares the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord has not imputed sin. Since above he had set forth two laws, one of which he named the law of works and the other the law of faith, and says that by the law of faith the boasting of those who glory in the works of the law is excluded; and since he had pronounced that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law: consequently he now, in order that these things may be established from the Scriptures, brings forward the example of Abraham, and says that "Abraham, if he was justified by works, has glory, but not before God. And this indeed he argues not without dialectical skill.

For if he who is justified by works does not have glory before God, but it is agreed that Abraham does have glory before God, then Abraham was justified not by works but by faith, so that he necessarily has glory before God. For thus the Scripture declares: that "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him unto righteousness. But if God reckoned it to him unto righteousness, without doubt his glory too is before God. For this reason, therefore, the Apostle joins to this testimony which he took from the book of Genesis also a word of his own, and says that "to him who works, the reward is not imputed according to grace, but according to

debt; but to him who does not work, yet believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned unto righteousness. Throughout this whole passage, then, the Apostle seems to show this: that there are two justifications, one of which he calls that from works, the other that from faith. And the one which is from works he says indeed has glory, but in itself, and not before God; whereas the one which is from faith has glory before God, inasmuch as it is before him who inspects the hearts of men and knows who it is that believes in secret and who it is that does not believe. And therefore it rightly has glory before God alone, who sees through the disposition of a person's faith in what is hidden;

but he who hopes for justification from works — it may happen that his works are approved even by men. For whatever is manifest in deed is open and can be seen with the eyes; and if faith is in secret, while works are in the open, it will be fitting to take up here what is written: "The things that are hidden belong to the Lord your God, but the things that are manifest, to you and to your sons. But it will also be fitting to apply to these matters what is written, that "the just shall live by my faith. Fittingly, therefore, we say that those who are circumcised according to the inner man and are Jews in secret, in spirit and not in letter — their praise and glory is not before men, but before God. But those who are justified from works, since their works are open and manifest, their glory can be either before any of the saints and just who receive from God the power of judging concerning visible human works, or even before the angels and the other powers of the heavenly virtues, who certainly are able to glorify him whose works they have approved. But since to know the hidden things of the heart belongs to God alone, he himself sees through whether in each one there dwells some disposition of faith; and therefore he who is justified from faith has glory before God alone, who has knowledge of hidden things and is alone the inspector of faith.

Therefore also "Abraham," he says, "if he was justified by works, has" indeed "glory" coming from works, "but not" that which is "before God" alone; yet it is certain that Abraham has glory before God alone: it follows, then, that he was justified not from works, but from faith. But do not suppose that if anyone has such a faith by which, being justified, he has glory before God, he can at the same time have injustice along with it. For there is no share of faith together with unbelief, no fellowship of righteousness with iniquity, just as there can be no association of light with darkness. For if "he who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," and "he who is born of God does not sin," it is manifest that he who believes in Jesus Christ does not sin; but if he sins, it is certain that he does not believe in him. The mark, therefore, of true faith is where there is no transgression, just as, on the contrary, where there is transgression it is a mark of unbelief. For this reason, then, it is also said of Abraham in another passage of Scripture that he was justified from the works of faith: because it is certain that he who truly believes works the work of faith and of righteousness and of all goodness, and becomes capable

of both glories — both that which is before God in secret, and also that which is in the open and is not before God alone.

These things having thus been explained according to our ability, it also seems by no means to be passed over that he named Abraham ”our father according to the flesh. For Abraham is seen to be the father of the Gentiles according to faith, not according to the flesh. For of the Apostle himself he can indeed be called father even according to the flesh: for being of the race of Israel, he could name Abraham father even according to the flesh; but the other nations will name him father in spirit, not in flesh — unless, in passages so constricted, we turn to the breadth of allegorical understanding, where ”father according to the flesh” can be taken as he who has handed on the first elements of carnal teaching, that is, of the law according to the letter, and has stood forth as a teacher of the first instruction in the divine law. But that teachers too are called fathers, the apostle Paul also says, that ”in Christ Jesus through the Gospel I have begotten you. But you also who read, gather for yourself from the divine Volumes the testimonies bearing on this. There is added in what follows: ”Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him unto righteousness. This saying is taken from the book of Genesis, from that place where not Abraham, but Abram says to the Lord: ”Since you have given me no seed, this house-born servant of mine will be my heir. And the Lord said to him:

This man shall not be your heir, but he who shall come forth from you, he shall be your heir. And he led him,” it says, ”outside, and said to him: Look up to heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to count them.

And he said to him: “So shall your seed be. And he believed God, and it was reckoned to him unto righteousness. We have gone back over these very passages from the book of Genesis at some length, by way of example, so that we might learn what the cause of this justification was. And therefore we must attend the more keenly to this: whether it is on this account alone — that he believed a son was to be given him, and from him an offspring to be propagated to the multitude of the stars — that his faith is said to have been reckoned unto righteousness; or whether it is for this and for all the things he had already believed before. For it must not be supposed that it was without faith that he went out from his own land and from his father’s kindred and came into the land which God had shown him; or that other occasion, when, after Lot had been separated from him, the Lord says to him: “Lift up your eyes and look from this place where you stand, and gaze toward the north and the south and toward the west and the east, for all this land which you see I will give to you and to your seed forever. And who would say that this too was done without faith, that Abraham came and dwelt by the oak of Mamre in Hebron and built there an altar to the Lord?

And how was that also not a work of faith, when Melchizedek blessed Abraham and said: “Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, who created heaven and earth;

and blessed be the most high God, who delivered his enemies into his hands"? From all of which it is gathered that in each of these there was indeed faith in Abraham, but in part; whereas in that place where it is said that his faith was reckoned unto righteousness, a perfect faith is declared. For just as the Apostle says that knowledge and prophecy are in part — and again says that there is a perfect state, when he writes: "We know in part and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect has come, those things which are in part shall be done away" — so also we can understand that faith is sometimes in part and sometimes perfect. But that what we say may be further fortified by other testimonies of holy Scripture, hear the apostles saying to the Lord in the Gospel: "Lord, increase our faith. Do they not plainly show by these words that they indeed have faith, but such faith as needed increase? Moreover the apostle Paul himself, when he says, "If I should have all faith, so that I might remove mountains," by saying "all" teaches that the whole is composed of parts. For a thing cannot be called "all" where there is no diversity either of quality or of quantity.

It seems therefore that in the present passage also, since many acts of faith on Abraham's part had gone before, through each of the several things which we recalled above as being in part, in this present instance the whole of his faith is gathered together, and so was reckoned to him unto righteousness. Now indeed you will consider whether, just as it was said of faith that it was reckoned to him unto righteousness, so it may also be said of the other virtues that, for example, mercy can be reckoned to anyone unto righteousness, or wisdom, or knowledge, or gentleness and humility; or at any rate whether faith is reckoned unto righteousness for every believer. But when I return to the Scriptures, I do not find that faith is reckoned unto righteousness for all believers. For it is written of the sons of Israel that "they believed the Lord and his servant Moses," and yet there is not added what is written of Abraham, that it was reckoned to them unto righteousness. On this account I judge that they did not have, as we have shown in Abraham's case, that perfection heaped up into one out of many parts of faith, which would deserve to be reckoned unto righteousness. But as to what he says: "To him who works, the wage is not imputed according to grace but according to debt;

but to him who believes in him who justifies the ungodly, faith is reckoned unto righteousness" — he seems to show that in faith there is, as it were, the grace of him who justifies, but in work the justice of him who repays. Yet when I consider the force of the phrase by which he says that it is rendered to the worker according to debt, I can scarcely persuade myself that there can be any work which demands God's recompense as a debt, since even this very thing — that we are able to do anything, or to think, or to speak — we do by his own gift and bounty. What then will be owed by him whose loan to us came first? And therefore we must rather see whether perhaps what he said, "But to him who works, the wage shall be reckoned according to debt," is to be understood of the debt of an evil work. For you will

often find sins called debts in the divine volumes, as the Lord himself taught us to say in the prayer: “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors”; and again when the Lord himself says: “A certain householder had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty” — and he himself interpreted this as being said of sins.

Perhaps then in this place too the Apostle has drawn the wage of work which is rendered according to debt toward that sense which we spoke of above, concerning those who work as Cain also worked the earth; and as he says elsewhere: “Depart from me, you workers of iniquity” — to whom assuredly punishment is paid out as a debt, in place of a wage for iniquity. Whence the Apostle also says in another place: “The wages of sin is death”; and he did not add, so as to say correspondingly, But the wages of righteousness is eternal life. Rather he says: “But the grace of God is eternal life” — so that he might teach that wages, which is certainly like a debt and a payment, is the recompense of punishment and of death, while he assigned eternal life to grace alone. According to this sense I think that what is written in the Gospel too, “With what measure you have measured, with the same it shall be measured back to you,” is to be taken of evil works. For God has set no measure to his grace, since it is written: “For God does not give the Spirit by measure. If then these things are thought to have been rightly discussed, consequently the things that hang together with them will surely be seen to be understood thus: that to the one who works the works of iniquity a wage is repaid according to the debt of sin;

but to the one who believes in him who justifies the ungodly, faith is reckoned unto righteousness — provided we well remember what was said above, in which we showed that faith can be reckoned unto righteousness not for him who believes in part, but for him who believes entirely and perfectly; which faith is so great that it justifies even one who has been ungodly, so that he is no longer ungodly — not like that thief who hung on the cross and blasphemed, but like the one who confessed and said: “Lord Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. After these things, as if for the confirmation of his statement which he had made — “But to him who does not work, yet believes in him who justifies the ungodly, faith is reckoned unto righteousness” — he takes up a testimony from the Psalms and says: “As David also declares the blessedness of the man to whom God accounts righteousness without works: Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord has not imputed sin. You see that through these words it can consistently be proved that righteousness is reckoned to a man without works.

Hence it seems to me that the Apostle understood this: that it is impossible for a person in whom, by reason of age, the understanding that discerns between good and evil is already present, to have neither injustice nor justice in him. And if this is so, the soul cannot be found without one of these two; and it is certain that if

it has ceased from evils, it is henceforth found among good things. But that soul is not among evils ”whose iniquities are forgiven,” and ”whose sins are covered,” and ”to whom the Lord has not imputed sin”; it is fitting, therefore, that it be among good things. Suitably, then, in connection with the remission of iniquities and the covering over of sins, and with the fact that the Lord does not impute sin, the Apostle says that justice is reckoned to a person, although he has not yet performed works of justice, but solely because he believed in him who justifies the ungodly. For the beginning of being justified by God is the faith that believes in the one who justifies. And this faith, when it has been justified, clings like a root that has taken in rain within the soil of the soul, so that when it has begun to be cultivated by the law of God, branches rise up in it that bear the fruit of works.

Therefore the root of justice does not come from works, but from the root of justice the fruit of works grows — namely from that root of justice by which God credits justice apart from works. Whence I think that David too, in the thirty-first psalm, which he entitled ”Of the understanding of David,” gave this beginning, admonishing by the very superscription that a deeper understanding must be sought in the things he was about to say, namely that ”blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven”: concerning which we have spoken, as far as we were able, when we dictated on the Psalms in order. But the difference of the very order prompts us, in that he said first, ”Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven”; second, ”Whose sins are covered”; third, ”To whom the Lord has not imputed sin. And consider whether perhaps this order can be understood as taking place in one and the same soul: so that, because the beginning of the soul’s conversion is to abandon evils, for this it may deserve to receive the remission of iniquities; but when it has begun to do good things, covering over, as it were, each single evil that had gone before with fresh good deeds, and bringing in a more abundant number of goods than there had previously been of evils, it is said to cover its sins;

but when it has now come to perfection, so that every root of malice is utterly cut away from it, to the point that no trace of wickedness can be found in it, then at last the summit of perfect blessedness is promised, when the Lord can impute no sin. Iniquity, indeed, has this difference from sin, that iniquity is spoken of in those matters which are committed against the law; whence the Greek term calls iniquity anomian (lawlessness), that is, what is committed without law; but that too can be called sin, if the offense is committed against what nature teaches and conscience reproves.

[§2] ”Is this blessedness then upon the circumcision, or also upon the uncircumcision? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham unto justice. How then was it reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or when he was in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the justice of the faith which is in uncircumcision: that he might be the

father of all who believe through uncircumcision, so that it might be reckoned to them also unto justice, and that he might be the father of circumcision, not only to those who are of the circumcision, but also to those who follow the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham, which he had in uncircumcision. Having said above that ”Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him unto justice,” and having shown from the things written in the thirty-first psalm what blessedness a faith of this kind possesses — namely that to one who so believes the Lord would not reckon sin — he now puts forward a question, from the answer to which he may teach, and from the very reckoning of the times, that the blessedness of Abraham’s justification was given not in circumcision, but while he was still placed in uncircumcision.

But if Abraham, while he was still in uncircumcision, was justified by faith, then everyone also who believes God can be justified through faith, even if he be in uncircumcision, and this blessedness of which it is said, ”Blessed is he to whom the Lord has not imputed sin,” can pertain to him also. He shows, therefore, that the Lord does not refrain from imputing sin to just anyone, but that to him who has believed he does not reckon sins on account of his faith. For just as faith was reckoned to Abraham unto justice, so also to every believer to whom faith is reckoned unto justice, sins are assuredly not imputed. For he does not say of the just that faith is reckoned to them unto justice. And if it were so supposed, what grace would there appear to be in reckoning it to a just man? Justice unto justice? But surely he says that faith was reckoned unto justice to him who, before he had this faith, did not have justice; and this is assuredly the blessed man, to whom God credits justice apart from works, and to whom sin is not imputed, to whom also iniquities are forgiven, and covered over are whatever sins there previously were. And at the same time he also teaches us to attend more diligently to the reading, since he expounds so vigilantly the things written concerning Abraham, that ”faith was reckoned to him unto justice.

He wants us to consider also when it was reckoned, so that from what is written the reckoning of the time may also be gathered, whether he was still in uncircumcision when these things were said, or whether he had already passed over to circumcision; and he says: ”How then was his faith reckoned unto justice? When he was in circumcision, or when he was in uncircumcision? For if at that time he had been in circumcision, uncircumcision would certainly have seemed to be excluded from the grace of this faith. But as it is, he shows that faith was reckoned unto justice while he was still placed in uncircumcision, and therefore he declares that, since Abraham was justified through faith while placed in uncircumcision, he is without doubt rightly called the chief and father of all who believe through uncircumcision. But as to the fact that after the faith which he had in uncircumcision he received circumcision, he consequently sets forth the reason for which circumcision was given him. It was, he says, that it might be the seal of that faith which he had while

placed in uncircumcision, so that through this ”he might be the father of all who believe through uncircumcision, that it might be reckoned to them unto justice, and that he might be the father of circumcision, not only to those who are of the circumcision, but also to those who follow the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham, which he had in uncircumcision.

But if Abraham, while he was still in uncircumcision, was justified by faith, he can become also the father of those who are born in circumcision, provided that they belong to that faith which justified him while placed in uncircumcision. And since it justified Abraham while placed in uncircumcision, he is therefore made the father of both kinds: of those who are in uncircumcision through faith, and of those who are in circumcision through the flesh; and after circumcision he begets first Isaac, and from him takes the beginning of the ogdoad, that is, in him the first mysteries of the eighth day are consecrated, and from that point the posterity of Abraham begins to run by a twofold sacrament. For just as faith is understood by its own nature to be one thing, and the justice which was reckoned to him through faith another; so also his posterity in uncircumcision is one thing, and his posterity in circumcision another. For those who are uncircumcised, these I think are the stones of which God is said to be able to raise up sons of Abraham, in whom that also is fulfilled which is written: that ”in you shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed. But let us take up again what he says: ”And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the justice of the faith which is in uncircumcision,” and let us contemplate Paul’s profound wisdom in these words.

For perhaps to some he may seem to say the same word twice, that is, ”sign” and ”seal. But to me the two words seem to have much difference between them. For a thing is called a sign when through what is seen something else is indicated: as when, for example, the Lord says in the Gospel: ”This generation seeks a sign, and a sign shall not be given it, except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so must the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. This, then, is a sign, where Jonah was seen and Christ was understood. Similarly it is said of the Lord himself in the Gospel: ”Behold, this one is set for the fall and the rising of many, and for a sign that shall be contradicted. For the sign in which Christ had come was contradicted, because one thing was seen in him and another understood. Flesh was discerned, and God was believed. So then Abraham also received a sign; and what the sign was he states in what follows: ”Circumcision,” he says — which circumcision was ”the seal of the justice of the faith” which he had before he was circumcised. Rightly then did he call circumcision a sign in Abraham, because in it too one thing was seen and another understood;

and he shows that even then that fleshly circumcision was a sign of the spiritual circumcision, ”which is not received in the flesh, but in the heart. But as to his

saying ”seal,” I think it is to be understood thus. A seal is spoken of when a guard is imposed for a time upon something to be kept safe, which no one else but the very one who impressed it ought to unseal. Through this seal, then, as the Apostle expounds, there is indicated the justice of the faith which Abraham, placed in uncircumcision, deserved to receive, and that he is the father of many nations: which we believe will then be unsealed when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, and all Israel shall be saved. For then shall come about what the Apostle says, that Abraham is the father not only of the Gentiles, but also of the circumcision through faith.

And let us discuss the sign and the seal still more plainly. Since a sign, as we have said, is where something is indicated by that which is seen, whereas a seal is where something is enclosed for a time and does not lie open, it can also be understood in this way: that the mysteries which were foreshadowed in the law and in the patriarchs were of such a kind that they had both to be indicated by signs and to be kept guarded by seals. Therefore, inasmuch as they were to be indicated by signs among those who would believe from the Gentiles, Abraham is said to have received a sign; but inasmuch as, for those in the circumcision who were not going to believe, they had to be kept guarded and covered over, he is said to have received a seal. And that seal will assuredly be unsealed at that time when, in the last days — after the fullness of the Gentiles, as we have said, has come in — all Israel shall be saved. And this, finally, is why Abraham is first justified in faith while he was still uncircumcised, and afterward is circumcised: so that he might be shown to be first the father of many nations, and afterward of those who were to believe from the circumcision. For those who are born of Abraham according to the flesh are not to be called sons of Abraham unless they have the faith and the works of Abraham.

Hence, finally, the Lord too says in the Gospel to the Jews who were boasting that they were sons of Abraham: ”If you were sons of Abraham, you would surely do the works of Abraham. But do you wish to be fully taught from the Old Scripture as well that a person is called the son not only of him from whose carnal seed he is descended, but also of him whose deeds and works he imitates? Hear what Daniel says to one of those elders whom he convicts of adultery: ”O seed,” he says, ”of Canaan, and not of Judah, beauty has seduced you, and lust has overturned your heart. You see that he who according to the flesh was descended from the race of Judah is denied to be a son of Judah, but is called a son of Canaan — of him, namely, whose deeds and works he was following. So therefore those also who trace their descent from the seed of Abraham according to the flesh are not called sons of Abraham, if they do not have his faith. So too, finally, the prophet says to them: ”Your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite” — to whom assuredly it was not kinship of race that joined them, but likeness of character. ”That he might

be," he says, "the father of all who believe through uncircumcision, that it might be reckoned to them unto righteousness;

and that he might be the father of circumcision, not only to those who are of the circumcision, but also to those who follow the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision. In which he plainly declares, with regard to each people, as we said above, that it is not origin of flesh but distinction of faith that is to be sought. But concerning the sacrament of circumcision we have already spoken more fully in the passages above, and we have also expounded it in several other places as the matter and the occasion seemed to require. Yet the diligent reader, "whom not one iota or one tittle of the law escapes," ought not to be unaware of this either: that as regards what the Apostle said, "His faith was reckoned to Abraham unto righteousness," at that time when it was written of him that he believed God and it was reckoned to him unto righteousness, he was not yet called Abraham, but Abram was his name. For he still remained uncircumcised, as the Apostle explains. On which point it will perhaps seem to some that there is an error in the copies, since "Abraham" could easily have been written for "Abram. But since this supposition is uncertain rather than a firm proof, let us answer more concisely:

that the Apostle, observing the sentence of God who said, "No longer shall Abram, but Abraham shall be your name," now called him not as it is written in the passage of Genesis, but as God pronounced concerning him. For what is divinely established, it is fitting should be observed thereafter. These things, brought forward as best we could in passages so steep and so difficult, anyone will be able to accept if he considers the earnestness of our purpose; but if he wishes to mark the weakness of our understanding, we ask pardon, and we gladly yield to one who may be able to discuss or explain these things better. But we, with however sluggish a step, turn our foot toward what follows.

[§3] "For the promise to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be heir of the world, was not through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. In this place it seems to me that the Apostle is arguing about the law of Moses, and asserting that the promise which was made to Abraham, that he himself or his seed should receive the inheritance of the world — that is, of the whole earth — did not rest upon the law of Moses. For before Moses the lawgiver existed, "the Lord appeared," he says, "to Abraham and said to him: 'Go out from your land, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, and come into the land which I will show you; and I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will magnify your name, and you shall be blessed; and I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you, and in you shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed.'" Therefore what he says, "In you shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed," is to have been made heir of the whole world. And this promise was assuredly made to Abraham before

anything was commanded through Moses about the observance of the law. So then the promise to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be heir of the world, is not from the law, but through the righteousness of faith. What is this righteousness of faith?

It is that of which it is written in the passages above, as we have already often said, that ”Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him unto righteousness. And not without reason: for the observance of the law merely escapes punishment, whereas the merit of faith awaits the hope of the promise; and a precept is laid down for servants, but faith is sought from friends. But even if, according to what we have discussed above, Paul be understood to say these things concerning the natural law, it will not be contrary to the reasons given above. For although the law of nature bears witness concerning good and evil according to the judgment of conscience, nevertheless it cannot be put on a level with the law of faith, by which Abraham believed God, and deserved to be justified and to be called the friend of God.

[§4] ”For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith has been made void, and the promise has been annulled. For the law works wrath. But where there is no law, neither is there transgression. If, he says, the promise was given to Abraham that he should be heir of the world not from the law, but through the faith which was reckoned to him unto righteousness, it will follow without doubt that all who hope that righteousness will be reckoned to them by God should hope for it not through the law, but through faith. And in order to show this more evidently, he added: If, he says, those who are of the law shall themselves be heirs of that promise which Abraham merited through faith, then that fact will be emptied out — that Abraham was justified by faith: since assuredly, if the inheritance were to come from the law, it would have been necessary that Abraham too first fulfill the law, and thus earn the inheritance of righteousness. And in order to show that this could in no way have happened so, he says that the law works wrath. But where there is wrath, there is no inheritance; and he added: ”But where there is no law, neither is there transgression. But let us go back a little, and see concerning which law these things are said.

In the earlier words, indeed, where he says, ”For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith has been made void, and the promise has been annulled,” it can be referred both to the law of Moses and to the natural law. For it is certain that if the inheritance is furnished from the law of Moses, then what is written is annulled — that Abraham merited it by the belief of faith; and again, if the understanding be turned to the natural law, these things can be said: If the natural law could have sufficed for faith, that would seem superfluous which was said to Abraham: ”Go out from your land, and from your kindred, and from your father’s house, and come into the land which I shall show you. For why should he go out from his

own land and from his own house, if the natural law sufficed for him, which surely he could have possessed and kept even while placed in his own land? But now, as though that law were insufficient, he is commanded to follow the law of faith, without which neither he himself nor his seed could be heir of the world, nor could he be called the friend of God. Thus, then, what he says — ”For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith has been made void, and the promise has been annulled” — can be withdrawn from both laws and look to the law of faith alone.

But now, in this place where he says, ”For the law works wrath,” it must be considered more carefully to which law this saying seems to look; and likewise that which follows, ”For where there is no law, neither is there transgression. But before a fuller explanation is required of us, let us reply briefly to those objections which the heretics are accustomed to raise against us from this passage. For they say: ”See how the Apostle says that the law of Moses works wrath, and that where that law has not been, there neither will there be transgression. Let us ask, then, of them: If where the law is, there will also be transgression of the law transgressed, then also where faith is, there will be transgression of faith transgressed. For if he becomes a transgressor who turns aside from the law, without doubt he too is a transgressor who turns aside from faith; and if for that transgression which is in the law the law itself is the cause, then for this transgression which is in faith, faith too is believed to be the cause. But if it is absurd to say that faith is the cause of anyone’s transgressing against faith, and that if he had not come to faith he would not have been a transgressor of faith, so too will it be absurd to take transgression of the law from the fact that someone has undertaken the observance of the law. But let us add this also.

What will they say to us about those who fell into transgression before the law of Moses? For if no one before Moses was a transgressor, no one was condemned, no one punished. What will they say of the Sodomites? What of those who were condemned in the flood? What of Cain? What of Adam himself? What will they answer concerning Eve, of whom the Apostle says: ”But the woman, being seduced, fell into transgression”? If without the law of Moses there is no transgression, on what ground are Adam and Eve named transgressors by the Apostle? But, as we have already often said above, the Apostle introduces various laws in this Epistle: now he speaks of the law of Moses, now he names the law of faith, as when he says: ”Where then is your boasting? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No; but by the law of faith. He brings in besides other laws also, of which he says: ”For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive in the law of sin”; and thus he passes from one law to another, so that unless one’s understanding is watchful and attentive, it can scarcely catch him and follow him. It must be seen, therefore, whether perhaps that law which is in our members,

and leads us captive in the law of sin, is itself the law which the Apostle says works wrath.

For without doubt it works wrath for the one whom it has led captive in the law of sin. But where that law has not been, it is certain that there neither will there be transgression. And those who have been under that law will consequently not be heirs either. But even if someone wishes it to be understood of the law of Moses, and to say that it works wrath, he will perhaps be able to affirm this for this reason alone: that it commands the one who sins against it either to be stoned at once, or to be burned with fire, or whatever other punishment is decreed in the law for sinners — so that the very penalty which is inflicted on the sinner from the law seems now to be named ”wrath” by the Apostle. And similarly concerning transgression: that he does not here establish that every transgression generally is so called, but that of the one who, being placed under the law, has offended — so that the offense of him who sins though forbidden by the law may seem graver than that of him who has been admonished by no law. But this too must be observed, that the Apostle did not say that where the law has been, there is also transgression, but he says: ”But where there is no law, neither is there transgression. In which he shows that transgression indeed cannot exist at all unless there is a law;

yet not that, if there is a law, there will in every case also be transgression. For it can happen that there is a law, and there is no transgression; it cannot, however, happen that there is transgression where there is no law. For even if we posit the law of Moses, it does not immediately follow that all who lived under the law of Moses fell into transgression: otherwise we would seem to involve at the same time both the prophets and all the just — unless perhaps someone should say that all the just and the prophets lived not so much under the law as under faith, while sinners and the unjust were bound by the chains of the law, as the Apostle also says: ”Because the law is not laid down for the just man, but for the unjust and the insubordinate, for the impious and sinners, for the wicked and profane, for parricides and matricides, for murderers, fornicators, for those who lie with males, for kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine. But if the law was laid down for such as these, will not those seem to you much better of whom it is said: ”For when the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do naturally the things of the law, these, not having the law, are a law unto themselves, and they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to them”?

And let us set before our eyes, if it seems good, two men, for example, who have not lain with males as with a woman: one of them restrained by the precept of the law, which had he not feared, he would perhaps have done it; and another who by the judgment of his own mind has not permitted a contagion of this sort to enter even his thoughts. Would you not much prefer the one who, deterred by no threat

of the law, kept himself free from the defilement of the crime? And similarly if an examination be made concerning the other sins as well. And therefore, whether the law of Moses is understood, or also that law which is in our members and works wrath, those who are of it cannot be heirs, but those who are of the law of faith — of that faith, indeed, by which Abraham was justified. But perhaps someone may ask how it is that he who is under the law of Moses is not also seen to be under the law of faith, since it is written in Exodus: ”And the people believed God, and Moses his servant”; and again the Lord says in the Gospel: ”If you believed Moses, you would surely believe me also: for he wrote of me. For it will seem that, just as he said of himself, ”he who believes in me believes also in him who sent me,” so also he says of Moses, that ”if you believed Moses, you would surely believe me also.

To which we shall reply that what was said in the desert, ”The people believed God, and Moses his servant,” is a narrative by which it is shown that through the ministry of Moses, by which he administered signs and wonders, the people believed God. In this saying, where he says, ”If you believed Moses, you would surely believe me also,” he reproves the unbelief of those who, while they do not believe him, show that they do not believe even the writings of Moses, in which the coming of Christ was set forth in prophetic speech. But where he says, ”He who believes in me believes in him who sent me,” he lifts up the hope of believers all the way to God the Father, so that just as one who sees the Son knows that he has seen the Father also, so when he believes the Son, he may know that he has believed the Father also.

[§5] ”Therefore it is of faith, that according to grace the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written: For I have made thee a father of many nations) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which are not as though they were. In what went before he gave the distinction between wages and grace, saying that wages are a matter of debt, but that grace is a matter of no debt at all, but rather the benefit of goodwill. And so in the present passage too, wishing to show that God gives the inheritance of the promises not out of debt but through grace, he says that the inheritance is granted by God to those who believe not as a debt of wages but as the gift of faith. For just as (to speak by way of example) the fact that we exist cannot be understood as though we existed by the wages of our own work, but it is plainly the gift of God that we are, and the grace of the Creator, who willed that we should be: so also, if we receive the inheritance of God’s promises, it belongs to the divine grace, and is not the wage of any debt or work.

But if perchance this very thing which is said, ”of faith,” should seem not to be free — since faith must first be offered by man, and thus grace be earned from

God — hear how the same Apostle teaches this very point elsewhere as well. For where he enumerates the gifts of the Spirit, which he says are given to believers according to the measure of faith, there among the rest he also asserts that the gift of faith is bestowed through the Holy Spirit. For after many things he says this also concerning it: ”To another faith, in the same Spirit,” so as to show that faith too is given through grace. But elsewhere also the same Apostle teaches, saying: ”For unto you it is given by God not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for him. You find this indicated in the Gospels too, where the apostles, understanding that the faith which is from man cannot be perfect unless there be added also that which is from God, say to the Saviour: ”Increase our faith. From all of which what the Apostle here says is most plainly proved: ”Therefore it is of faith, that according to grace the promise might be sure”: because even that very faith by which we seem to believe God is confirmed in us by the gift of grace. And this is the grace which, if a man is blessed, he deserves to find like a great treasure. Noah found it; and therefore it is written of him:

”But Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord God. Moses too had found this grace; and therefore he said to God: ”If I have found grace in thy sight. Yet we find that some of the saints found grace not only in the sight of the Lord God, but also in the sight of men. Thus of blessed Joseph it is written: ”And Joseph found grace in the sight of his master. But that grace which is found in the sight of men is granted by God’s bounty. For thus it is written of the same Joseph: ”And the Lord was with Joseph, and poured out mercy upon him, and gave him grace in the sight of the keeper of the prison. Something still further concerning grace of this kind is recorded in the divine writings about blessed Esther. For it says thus: that ”Esther was finding grace with all who saw her. And a little later the Scripture says: ”Esther found grace above all the other virgins, and the king set upon her the woman’s diadem. These things, I think, we have sought out from the holy Scriptures not unseasonably, for the confirmation of the apostolic saying in which he discusses faith and grace. He says therefore: ”Therefore it is of faith, that according to grace the promise might be sure.

But this too is to be noted, that he says, ”Therefore it is of faith, that according to grace the promise might be sure,” as though wishing to show that if the promise were of the law and not of grace, it would not be sure; but that now it is sure for this reason, that it is not of the law but through grace. In which I think that he wishes something of this sort to be understood: that the things which are of the law are outside us, but the things which are through grace are held within us. For example, the things which are written in the law are written with pen and ink on parchments or on little sheets; but the things which come down from grace are written in our heart by the Spirit of God, as the same Apostle, the minister of this grace, indicates elsewhere, saying: ”Ye are our epistle, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the

heart. Therefore, as it seems to me, he says that the things which are through grace are surer than those which are of the law, because the latter are outside us and the former within us: and the latter consist in fragile material, so that they can easily perish, whereas the former, written by the Spirit of God and impressed in the inmost recesses of the soul, obtain the firmness of perpetuity.

With such letters, then, of the promise is inscribed that soul which has offered its faith to God like wax made ready, so that upon it the grace of God may worthily be inscribed: and therefore such faith is reckoned unto righteousness, since it has shown itself capable of the heavenly grace. And this befalls the seed of Abraham, not that only which is of the law, but that also which is of faith. For Abraham's succession by faith is far nobler than that by the flesh, since he is recorded to have been justified not by flesh but by faith. For if the succession is to be given not by faith but by seed, it will be fitting that the posterity of Ishmael also, and those who descend from Keturah, be brought to the sacred mysteries of the promises. But this assuredly is not admitted; rather, the posterity of the law and of faith alone is brought in. But let us not pass over a certain wavering and ambiguously expressed manner of speech of the Apostle in this place.

For what he said — "That the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of faith" — if it be so understood as though he had spoken of one seed of the law and another of faith, so that the promise of the inheritance ought to be expected from both seeds alike, he is found to say things contrary to what he wrote above, when he said: "For they which are of the law are not heirs"; and again elsewhere: "For we reckon that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law"; and again: "For if they which are of the law are heirs, faith is made void. For indeed, if a man is justified by faith without the works of the law, and if those who are of the law do not become heirs, how will it not seem contrary, what he says in this place, that the promise is sure through grace not to that seed only which is of the law, but to that also which is of faith?

And whereas in the passages above he seems to have rejected those who are of the law, how does he here place them on an equal footing with those whom he says hope for grace from faith? But it seems to me that when he says, "To all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of faith," he here indicates, as we have often already said, the natural law, and asserts this: that the promise is firm not only for those who come by the natural law alone, but also for those who from faith have added to the natural law that faith which our father Abraham had — so that he seems to indicate not two peoples, one from faith and another from the law, but one and the same people, which pleases God not only by the natural law which all men employ, but by the faith of which Abraham stood forth as the author. By this, namely, he shows that if anyone should possess intact all the things which the natural law teaches, and the consciousness of sin reproach him in nothing, yet

he should not also have the grace of faith, he cannot be justified. For it is faith which is reckoned unto righteousness. And this distinction, once grasped, renders the understanding plainer; and those things which are thought contrary are found to be consonant and mutually in accord.

But concerning the diversity of the laws — that in this Epistle especially the Apostle often, even covertly and suddenly, shifts the sequence of his discourse from one law to another — we have frequently shown, and it is superfluous to repeat the same things. And rightly he did not say of Abraham: The father of all, but says, ”The father of us all”; that is, not of us who descend from the law, but of us who from faith come after the law. And because he is the father of all who are of this sort, he has fittingly set down in what follows the sentence of the divine promise, saying: ”As it is written: For I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom he believed, God. If therefore he is promised that he shall be the father of many nations, not undeservedly is he named father both of those who come from the Gentiles and of those who come from the circumcision. And rightly the Apostle added, from his own interpretation: ”Before him whom he believed, God” — that is, he was appointed father of many nations before that very God in whom he believed, whose promises, and from whom he received the seal of faith in circumcision. How then does the circumcision claim Abraham as its father in a special sense, when that very God who gave him circumcision appointed him the father of many nations?

But if anyone should wish to turn this to the posterity of Ishmael or of Keturah, there meets him what is written: that ”in thee shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed. This also John was saying in the Gospel: ”For God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. And he added in what follows: ”Who quickens the dead, and calls those things which are not as those which are. Here we understand the dead according to the sin of the soul, since he says, ”the soul which sins shall die. For just as in bodily death the senses perish, so that a man no longer receives through the body either hearing, or smell, or taste, or touch: so also he who has lost the spiritual senses in the soul, so that he does not see God, nor hear the word of God, nor take in the sweet fragrance of Christ, nor taste the good word of God, nor do his hands handle of the word of life — men of this sort are deservedly called dead. Such the coming of Christ found us, but it made us alive through his grace, as the same Apostle also says elsewhere: ”And we, when we were dead in our offenses and sins, he raised us up together with him. But do you wish it to be proved to you also from the prophetic Scriptures that all who worship idols, and trust in them, are dead? Hear how David says:

”The images of the nations are silver and gold, the works of men’s hands. They have a mouth, and they shall not speak: they have eyes, and they shall not see: they have ears, and they shall not hear. And after a little: ”Let those,” he says, ”who make them become like them, and all who trust in them. You see that they are dead, and

made like the images, who worship them and who trust in them. Whence let us look more carefully whether perhaps, just as those who worship idols and trust in them are said to become like them, so also those who worship the true God, and trust in him, become like him. And this is perhaps why in the beginnings, when it had been proposed that man should be made to the image and likeness of God, he was indeed made to the image, but the likeness was deferred for this reason: that he should first trust in God, and so become like him, and that he himself should hear that everyone who trusts in him shall be made like him. These things we have joined by a kind of digression to what we have discussed concerning the kind of death, so that it might become clearer in what ways God quickens the dead. But let us also see how what he says in the following is to be understood: ”And calls those things which are not as those which are.

We have frequently expounded, in other places too, that God alone is he who said: ”I am who I am”; and that substance of God is one, which always is; and if anyone joins himself to it, he becomes one spirit with him, and through him who always is, he too is said to be. But he who is far from him, and takes no participation of him, is not even said to be — as we the Gentiles were, before we came to the knowledge of the divine truth; and therefore God is said to call ”those things which are not as those which are. For among those who are, that is, who have participation in him who is, are numbered Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the rest of the saints. But if the Gentiles by believing come into the faith of Abraham, the Apostle consequently declares that God has called ”those things which are not as those which are. Yet this too may be observed: that in this place the Apostle may seem to have poured himself out more widely upon the praises of God, and to have recalled with admiration the beginnings of his first creation, when he made all things to be out of nothing, and by his powerful might called forth those things which were not as though they were and subsisted; and that thus nothing was difficult for him in creating, so that, when nothing existed, all things being suddenly called were at once present as though they had always existed.

But if someone should object to us that discourse of the Apostle which he writes to the Corinthians, where he says that ”God chose the contemptible things of the world, and the things which are not, that he might destroy the things which are, so that no flesh should glory before God” — and should say that according to this exposition it is not fitting that the things which are should be said to be destroyed, when the things which are not have been chosen — we shall say to this that in that place he called some men ”those who are,” and others in this chapter in the Epistle to the Romans. For he made clear to the Corinthians that he was speaking of those whom he had enumerated above. For he said above: ”For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise among you according to the flesh, not many powerful, not many noble: but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might confound the wise: and God chose the weak things of the world, that he

might confound the strong. Just as, then, he says that God chose the foolish things of the world, that is, the Gentiles, that he might confound the wise, without doubt the Jews; and the weak things of the world, that he might confound the strong: in the same order he speaks in this place also of the things which are not, that he might destroy the things which are;

and he shows that the Gentiles are not, but that the Jews are — that is, those who were in the law but did not fulfill the law — so that these might be destroyed, and those brought in who were not in the law, and were joined by the merit of their believing to the faith of Abraham. But as to what he said, That he might confound the wise — not that they were truly wise; otherwise God would never confound those who are wise according to the wisdom of God; but he means those who think themselves to be wise, and are not, as he also says elsewhere: ”Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Therefore he confounds the wise of this world by choosing the foolish — not because these too were foolish in like manner through poverty of understanding, but according to that which was said: ”He who wishes to be wise, let him become foolish in this world, that he may be wise with God: because the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.”

[§6] ”Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was said to him: So shall your seed be, as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea. And he was not weakened in faith, nor did he consider his own body now dead, since he was almost a hundred years old, and the dead womb of Sarah. In the promise also of God he did not hesitate through distrust: but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and knowing most fully that whatever he promised, he is able also to do. Therefore it was also reputed to him unto justice. It seems to me that when the Apostle said ”against hope,” he had in view that which is related in Genesis, that Abraham said to the Lord: ”Sovereign Lord, what will you give me? I am dismissed without children: but this son of Masech my homeborn maidservant is Damascus Eliezer. And Abraham said: Since you have given me no seed, this homeborn servant of mine shall be my heir. From which words Abraham is certainly understood to have despaired of receiving children. But as for what he said, ”he believed in hope,” I think he gathers the hope given to him again from that place where it is written: ”And the voice of the Lord came to him saying: This man shall not be your heir; but he who shall come forth from you, he himself shall be your heir.

And he led him outside, and said to him: Look up to heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to count them. And he said to him: So shall your seed be. And he believed God, and it was reputed to him unto justice. From these words, therefore, both his earlier despair and the hope afterwards given to him by God’s promises are declared. And because he believed him, that is written of him which the Apostle

now sets forth, that ”it was reputed to him unto justice. And rightly, and in the manner customary to him whenever he treats of faith, the Apostle joins hope also, knowing that hope inseparably cleaves to faith, just as he teaches the same in the Epistle to the Hebrews, saying: ”Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things that do not appear. And again in this same Epistle to the Romans he says further on: ”For by hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is not hope. For what a man sees, why does he hope for it? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it through patience. What he says, ”by hope we were saved,” is the same as what he says elsewhere, that ”by faith we have been saved”; and, ”Your faith has made you whole”; and, ”According to your faith be it unto you. Which things are certainly said to those who, believing in Jesus, bore the hope that they could be cured by him.

And just as Abraham ”against hope believed in hope,” so all who by faith are sons of Abraham believe against hope in hope concerning each and every one of the things they believe, whether concerning the resurrection of the dead or concerning the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven. For these things, so far as human nature is concerned, seem to be against hope; but so far as the power of God is concerned, they are believed in hope, after the example of Abraham believing that ”whatever God has promised, he is able also to do” — provided, however, that in those who believe there abide faith, hope, and charity. And I think that the first beginnings of salvation, and the very foundations, are faith; but the advance and increase of the building is hope; while the perfection and summit of the whole work is charity: and therefore charity is called ”the greatest of all. Therefore Abraham ”against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations,” which were to be as the stars of heaven, not only in multitude but also in brightness; and he, faithfully believing him who promised, ”was not,” he says, ”weakened in faith. What he says, ”he was not weakened in faith,” seems to me to show that there is a certain weakness in faith. But if there is weakness, there is without doubt also health, as he shows in other places when he says: ”Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.

Blessed, therefore, is he who is not made weak in faith. But if anyone should be made weak, the Apostle describes the care for him when he says: ”Him that is weak in faith take unto you, but not in disputes about thoughts. For one believes that he may eat all things; but he who is weak, let him eat herbs. By which he certainly indicates that the herbs of the word are to be offered to him who is weak in faith, lest the full doctrine of faith be forced upon those who waver in it and are in a manner sick. But that faith is called sound which is perfect and to which nothing is lacking: and it is that faith which believes that it may eat all things, that is, which is able to take in all things; and he who has it is called spiritual, and judges all things, and can be scandalized in no word. From which it evidently appears that there are certain increases and advances in faith, and that some have a small portion of faith,

others a great one, and others indeed have all faith. Whence the Apostle also said: ”If I should have all faith, so that I might remove mountains. But in the Gospels too the disciples say to the Lord, as men in whom full faith was not yet present: ”Increase our faith.

Consider indeed whether, according to those things which we say about faith, we may likewise understand about the increases of charity as well, so that we may say of charity also, as he said, ”If I should have all faith,” — If I should have all charity: and that he has all charity who has all those things which are proper to charity, as the Apostle says: ”Charity is patient, is kind, is not puffed up, is not envious, is not ambitious, does not act perversely, is not provoked: bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things,” and other things similar to these. And if anyone has these, it rightly seems to me to be said that he has all charity: which charity without doubt consists of these several parts mentioned above by the Apostle. And similarly I think it can be said of mercy also, and of piety, and of the other virtues. And perhaps through each of these, just as it was said of faith, that ”faith was reputed unto justice,” so also it can be said of charity, that charity was reputed to him unto justice, or piety, or mercy. But let us now look at the things which follow. ”And he was not,” he says, ”weakened in faith, nor did he consider his own body now dead, since he was almost a hundred years old, and the dead womb of Sarah; in the promise also of God he did not hesitate through distrust, but was strengthened in faith.

So far indeed as pertains to the simple understanding, he has set forth an evident reason: that Abraham, when he heard offspring promised to him by God, did not look to the dead powers of a hundred-year-old body, from which certainly no succession could in any way be hoped for; but gazing upon the power of him who promised, he believed that nothing was difficult among those things which the Almighty was promising: but he gave, he says, ”glory to God,” understanding that it was the gift of God alone where the laws of human fruitfulness had ceased. Rightly therefore did he give glory to God, who had been abandoned by the helps of nature.

Such things, as I have said, so far as concerns the simple understanding, will seem to have been said sufficiently. But if someone objects to us: How can Abraham, set in the hundredth year of his age, be called ”of a dead body,” when, after he had received Isaac, and after Sarah had died — she who had conceived him at ninety and had lived a hundred and twenty-seven years — and after Isaac too, being forty years old, had taken Rebecca, after all these things it is written: ”And Abraham again took a wife whose name was Keturah, and she bore him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah”? How then will he seem to be ”of a dead body,” who, being made much older than he was then, was able both to take a wife and to beget six children? In order that we may fittingly dispose of these objections, we transfer the exposition of ”a dead body” to that sense, so that

we may say that Abraham was dead not by the infirmity of age, but according to that virtue which the saints, fulfilling it first in themselves, admonish others also to have, saying: ”Mortify your members which are upon the earth.

For I think it absurd, if this good which Paul had in himself (for he would not command to others what he had not himself done) — if, I say, this good which Paul had, we should not believe that so great a patriarch as Abraham had, whom the Apostle even calls his own father. There was therefore in him also this mortification of the members: he was not incited by wantonness, he was not burned with lust, like those of whom the Apostle says: ”It is better to marry than to burn. This same thing was in Sarah also, because ”it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. For there was not in her womanly wantonness, nor the looseness of incontinence, nor were they hurried headlong, unwilling, into the exercise of lust; but when they hear of so great a hope of posterity, and of the glory of their offspring to be made equal to heaven and the stars — when they hear these things, they do not look to their own goods, to the grace of continence, to the mortification of the members, but all these things which they had counted gains they judge to be losses, that they may gain Christ. But perhaps you think that I have erred, in that, when I ought to have spoken of Abraham’s posterity and his seed, I have spoken of Christ. We do not err, but we speak with the Apostle. For he himself interprets these things to have been said of Christ when he says:

”It is written: To thee will I give this land, and to thy seed. He did not say, And to seeds, as in many; but, To thy seed, as in one, which is Christ. You see then how the Apostle teaches us that the Lord so spoke to Abraham that in his seed he should understand that Christ was to be perceived; and for this reason I think that the Apostle added and said: ”Giving glory to God. For Abraham could not have offered so much glory from the birth of Isaac as he was able to give glory to God, if he understood that Christ was to be born from his body, already dead and purged of vices. But you too, if you mortify your members which are upon the earth, if, having cast away every heat of lust, you keep your body dead and liable to no vices, you also can generate from it the best fruits; you can generate Isaac, which is joy — and this is the first fruit of the spirit; your seed, that is, your works, can ascend to heaven and become works of light and be compared to the brightness and splendor of the stars, so that when the day of the resurrection shall have come, you may differ, as star from star, in glory. I say yet more: you can, if you be so pure in mind, so holy in body, so unstained in your acts, generate even Christ himself, according to him who said:

”My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you. And thus the Lord himself says of himself: ”Whoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother. Who then shall be the mother of Jesus, save she whose womb is dead? — that so at last she may bring

forth children of chastity, like that woman too of whom the Apostle says: ”But she shall be saved through the bearing of children, if she continue in faith and chastity. Whence also I think it fittingly added for these reasons: ”And it was reckoned to him for righteousness. For how should it not be reckoned for righteousness to him who held perfection not only in faith, but in all the virtues?

[§7] ”Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned to him for righteousness, but for our sake also, to whom it shall be reckoned, believing in him who raised up Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our offenses, and rose again for our justification. In this place, what he says, ”not for his sake alone,” is to be understood as ”concerning him”; and again what he says, ”but for our sake also,” this is, ”and concerning us. For it is manifest that this which is said, ”Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness,” Moses did not write in order that Abraham might read it, who had of course long since died, but that we might take from a reading of this sort a profiting in faith, understanding that if we too so believe God as he believed, our faith also shall be reckoned to us for righteousness, ”believing in him who raised up Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead. I should indeed like to inquire why it is that in this place the Apostle, when naming God, in whom we believe and in whom Abraham believed, did not say ”believing” in God most high, or ”believing in him” who made heaven and earth, or ”in him” who made the angels and the other powers of the heavenly glory; but says: ”who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead.

Let us therefore inquire for what cause this title of the Lord’s resurrection is taken up for the comparison of Abraham’s faith. Had Abraham believed in him who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, when Jesus had not yet then been raised from the dead? I should wish, then, to consider what Paul had in view when he promises us that, just as faith was reckoned to Abraham believing for righteousness, so also it shall be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. In this matter I, according to the smallness of my perception, observe this: that it is far more magnificent among the praises of God to have raised Jesus our Lord from the dead than to have made heaven and earth, to have created the angels and established the heavenly powers. For that was to make the things which were not, but this to repair the things which had perished. That was to establish things not yet destroyed, this to restore things already destroyed. That, finally, was accomplished by a command, this by suffering. But of this so great and so magnificent a mystery, a form and image had gone before in the faith of Abraham. For he had believed, when he was bidden to offer his only son, that God was able to raise him even from the dead;

he had believed also that the matter was then being transacted not for that Isaac alone, but that for his seed, which is Christ, the full truth of the sacrament was being kept in store. Thence, finally, he offered his only son rejoicing, because in

him he was pondering not the destruction of his posterity, but the repairing of the world and the renewal of the whole creation, which has been restored through the resurrection of the Lord; and therefore the Lord says of him: ”Abraham your father rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad. In this way, then, the comparison made between the faith of Abraham and of those who believe in him who raised the Lord Jesus will be seen to be fitting; because what he believed would be, is believed by us to have been done. And at the same time this also is shown, which does not please the heretics: that God, in whom Abraham believed and who reckoned his faith for righteousness, is the very one who also raised the Lord Jesus from the dead; nor is any room left for understanding one God of the law and another the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But let us inquire something else: since there are very many things which Christ is said to be (for he is called both Wisdom, and power, and righteousness, and word, and truth, and life), why the Apostle makes mention, in our faith, chiefly of his resurrection.

The same Apostle says elsewhere that ”God has raised us up together with Christ, and has made us sit together with him in the heavenly places. This, then, is what he admonishes: If you believe that Christ rose from the dead, believe also that you yourselves have risen together with him; and if you believe that he sits at the right hand of the Father in the heavens, believe also that you yourselves are now placed not among earthly things, but among heavenly; and if you believe that you have died together with Christ, believe that you shall also live together with him; and if you believe that Christ died to sin and lives to God, you also be dead to sin, and live to God. And this is what he attests by apostolic authority when he says: ”If you have risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God; savor the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth” — because he who acts thus shows that he believes in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, and to such a one faith is truly reckoned for righteousness. For neither is it possible that righteousness should be reckoned to one having in himself something of unrighteousness, even if he believes in him who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead. For unrighteousness can have nothing in common with righteousness, just as neither light with darkness, nor life with death.

So therefore also, to those who indeed believe Christ, and yet do not put off the old man with his unrighteous deeds, faith cannot be reckoned for righteousness. And in like manner we can say that, just as righteousness cannot be reckoned to the unrighteous, so neither can chastity be reckoned to the unchaste, nor equity to the iniquitous, nor liberality to the miser, nor piety to the impious, so long as he does not cast off the old garments of the vices and put on ”the new man, who is created according to God, and is renewed in the knowledge of God after the image of him who created him. For this reason also in what follows he adds and says of the Lord Jesus: ”Who was delivered up,” he says, ”for our sins, and rose again

for our justification" — that he may show that those things for which Christ was delivered up we too ought to abhor and cast away. For if we believe that he was delivered up for our sins, how is not every sin to be counted by us as foreign and hostile, for which our Redeemer is recorded to have been delivered up to death? For if there should again be for us any fellowship or friendship with sin, we show that we count the death of Christ Jesus as nothing, since we embrace and follow the very things which he overcame and conquered.

And the Apostle, binding all this together as it were into the very body of sin, called it the garment of the old man, which he urges to be put off by those who believe in him who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, so that, having cast away the garment of unrighteousness, they may put on the Lord Jesus, who is the true garment of righteousness, in order that faith may deservedly be reckoned for righteousness to those who believe. "He was therefore delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification. For indeed, if we have risen with Christ, who is righteousness, and walk in newness of life, and live according to righteousness, Christ has risen for us unto our justification. But if we have not yet put off the old man with his deeds, but live in unrighteousness, I dare to say that Christ has not yet risen for us unto justification, nor has he been delivered up for our sins.

For if I believe this, how can I love that for the sake of which he endured death? If I believe that he rose again for my justification, how can injustice be pleasing to me? Christ, therefore, justifies those alone who have taken up a new life after the example of his resurrection, and who cast off the old garments of injustice and iniquity as being the cause of death. But I should like to inquire into this: whether it is only for this reason that the Apostle says that "it was not written for the sake of" Abraham "alone, but for our sake also," namely, because he said, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Do you suppose that this saying alone, out of all the things that are said about Abraham, was written not for his sake only, but for ours as well? Or will certain other things also appear to have been written not for his sake only, but for ours too? Or is it rather the case that all the things which are said about him are said not about him alone, but for our sake as well? And not only concerning Abraham — but see whether perhaps these same considerations ought to be applied in like manner to Isaac as well, so that the things written about him look not to him alone but to us also. And similarly concerning Jacob and the rest of the patriarchs.

For what reason will there appear to be that the things written about Abraham should be said to pertain to us also, but not in the same way the things written about Isaac, and about Jacob, and about Judah, or about Joseph, and the rest? But if no reason appears why this should be so understood of one patriarch and not of the others as well, it will follow that the things written about them all seem to have been written not only for the sake of those who lived at that time, but for

our sake also. And what especially persuades me to think thus is that word of the Gospel in which our Lord and Savior answered those who had said to him, ”Our father is Abraham”: ”If you were Abraham’s seed, you would surely do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill me, a man who has spoken to you the truth which I heard from my Father: this Abraham did not do. By this he certainly shows that those who do the works of Abraham are the sons of Abraham; and that the things written about Abraham were written for their sake. Here now it belongs to a wise man, one enlightened by God, to look closely and to discern how each single work that is written of Abraham may be seen to be fulfilled in himself; for example, what was said to him:

”Go out from your land, and from your kindred, and from your father’s house, and come into the land which I will show you” — how he too who wishes to be seen from his works to be of the seed of Abraham ought to obey these words, which assuredly were written not for Abraham’s sake only, but also for the sake of those who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead; and, when he has fulfilled these things, how he ought also to hope for what is added, that is: ”And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will magnify your name, and you shall be blessed: and I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you, and in you shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed”; and again, when Scripture says, ”And Abraham departed according to the things which the Lord had spoken to him” — how this too seems to have been written not for Abraham’s sake only, but for ours also, that we may walk according to all the things which the Lord has spoken. And likewise concerning Isaac, or concerning the others, the things that are similarly written — how these too may be seen to pertain to us.

But it is not the business of the present occasion to bring all these things forward and to examine each one, showing in what manner the things said or done by Abraham or by the other saints in the divine Scriptures are fulfilled also in us who believe in him in whom Abraham believed; but so far as the necessity of the present work allows, we have opened a road along which whoever desires to be exercised in the Scriptures may advance more widely. Thus far the course of our discussion has run concerning the character of that faith which was reckoned unto righteousness, and concerning the observance of the various laws, and the difference between uncircumcision and circumcision. Now let us see in what manner those who have been justified by faith and not by works are instructed by the Apostle.

[§8] ”Being justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we glory in the hope of the glory of God. By this he most plainly invites the one who has understood what it is to be justified by faith and not by works to that peace of God which surpasses every mind, in which also the

summit of perfection consists. But that we may examine the Apostle's meaning more carefully, let us inquire what the name of peace signifies, and in particular that peace which is through our Lord Christ. Peace is said to exist where no one is at variance, no one at discord, where nothing hostile, nothing barbarous is carried on. We therefore, who were once enemies of God, following the enemy and tyrant, the devil — if we now cast away his weapons and take up the standard of Christ and the banners of his cross, we assuredly have peace with God, but through our Lord Jesus Christ, who reconciled us to God through the sacrifice of his blood, as it is written: "When we were enemies of God, we were reconciled through the blood of the cross of his Son. And elsewhere the same Paul added to these words, saying: "We entreat you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

If anyone therefore has peace with God, and has been reconciled through the blood of Christ, let him no longer touch those things which are hostile to God. But do you wish to hear what those things are which are hostile to God? Paul himself teaches you, who says: "The wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God: for it is not subject to the law of God. If therefore you are wise after the flesh, or expose your life to the desires of the flesh, and are dissolved by an abundance of delights; or if concerning the understanding of the law you think carnally and not spiritually, and defend these views by assertions sought out through human artifice rather than by spiritual grace and subtler understanding, you are made an enemy to God through the wisdom of the flesh. Nor is Paul the only one who writes these things in his letters: hear James also, the brother of the Lord, declaring the like, when he says: "Whoever wishes to be a friend of this world shall be constituted an enemy of God. But John too testifies to the same effect: "Little children," he says, "do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world: for everything that is in the world is the desire of the flesh, and the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of God.

Therefore the man in whom these things are cannot have peace with God, but rather stirs up again those enmities for the dissolving of which Christ came, as the same Apostle also says of Christ: "For he is our peace, who made both one, and dissolving the middle wall of the fence, the enmities in his flesh: emptying the law of commandments in its decrees, that he might create the two in himself, making peace in one new man. But if Christ came to dissolve enmities, to make peace, and to reconcile to God us who were at variance because of that fence of malice which we had woven by sinning — the fence of sin being dissolved — then whoever turns back again to sins without doubt restores the enmities anew, and weaves the fence of dissension again, and by these things undoes the work of Christ and empties out the cross of his passion. But let us, "being justified by faith, have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us have peace, so that the flesh may no longer strive against the spirit, nor the law of God be resisted by the law of the members. Let there not be in us "yes and no," but let us all say one thing, let us be of the same

mind, and let there be no dissension either within ourselves or outwardly toward one another; and then we shall have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

But this must be known most certainly, that everyone in whom there is the vice of malice can never have peace. For while he is always thinking how to injure his neighbor, while he is always seeking out arts of doing harm, his mind never rests in peace. But if you should ask of me how the righteous man can have peace, who is assailed by the devil, who sustains the wars of temptations — I should say that he above all others has peace. For see how carefully the Apostle writes. He did not say, ”Being justified therefore by faith, let us have peace,” and then fall silent; but he adds: ”Let us have peace with God. You see that war against the devil furnishes peace with God, and that we come more fully into the peace of God at the very time when we persist unpacified against the devil, and when we fight against the vices of the flesh. Finally the apostle James also speaks thus: ”Resist the devil, and he will flee from you: draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. You see that he too was of this mind, that one draws near to God precisely when one resists the devil. ”Let us” therefore ”have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And he added: ”Through whom also we have access into this grace in which we stand. How we have access to grace through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior himself says: ”I am the door”;

and, ”No one comes to the Father except through me. Through him, then, who is the door, we have access to grace. But let us see what kind of door it is, that we may know what kind of persons they ought to be who enter through it and have access to grace. This door is truth, and liars cannot enter in through the door of truth. And again, this door is righteousness, and the unrighteous do not enter through the door of righteousness. This door says: ”Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart. Through the door, therefore, of humility and gentleness neither the wrathful man enters nor the proud. If then there is anyone who, according to the Apostle’s word, wishes through our Lord Jesus Christ to have access into the grace of the Lord, in which Paul, and any who are like him, says that he stands, he must be cleansed from all those things which we have mentioned above. Otherwise this door will not allow those to enter through it who do the things that are foreign to it, but is at once shut, and does not permit those unlike itself to pass through. This, no doubt, is what happened to those five foolish virgins as well, who, because they had not gathered the oil of good works in their vessels, on coming after delay found the door shut. For foolish souls could not enter through the door of wisdom and have access into grace.

And well does the apostle Paul say that he stands in grace, who also said elsewhere: ”But I labored more abundantly than all of them: yet not I, but the grace of God with me. Hence if there is any other who labors more abundantly, and who glories in his infirmities, who is often set in dangers — ”dangers of the sea, dangers of

rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers among false brethren" — and in all these stands always in faith, he likewise is said to stand in grace.

But let us also see what sort of thing that is which follows: "And we glory in the hope of the glory of God. It moves me to ask why he did not say that he glories in the glory of God, but "in the hope of the glory of God" — in which something of the expression seems indeed to be lacking, so that one ought to understand, "in the hope" of seeing "the glory of God. Yet by these words he teaches us, just as he himself says elsewhere, that "the things which are hoped for are eternal, but the things which are seen are temporal. For Moses too is said to have seen the glory of God; the people also is said, at the consecration of the house of the Lord, to have seen the glory of the God of Israel. But even concerning a glory of this kind, which could be seen, Paul, who was versed in the mysteries of God, dared to declare that that glory shall be destroyed which was seen even in the face of Moses; whereas this glory which is hoped for, of which he says, "In the hope of the glory of God," shall never be destroyed. For it is such as that of which the same Apostle speaks when he says of Christ: "Who is," he says, "the brightness of glory, and the express figure of his substance. Of seeing this glory, then, they bear the hope of whom it is said:

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" — then, when sorrow and sadness and groaning shall have fled away, and when those things which are now seen in a mirror and in an enigma shall be destroyed, and those things shall remain which are face to face. But if it should perhaps seem to anyone that against this exposition of ours there can be brought the objection of what the Apostle himself says: "But we, beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory into glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord"; and if he says: How does he still bear the hope of glory, who says that already with unveiled face he beholds the glory of the Lord, and is transformed from glory into glory? — see whether we can resolve the objection in this manner. The Apostle seems to me to be showing the differences of glories: that one glory was that which was revealed through the ministry of Moses, of which we have already spoken above; another that which was administered in the fleshly coming of the Saviour, of which John also says in the Gospel: "And we saw his glory, glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Of this glory we cannot say that it is the very one which is to be hoped for; for the apostles say that they saw it, and true is that saying which declares:

"For what a man sees, why does he hope for it? But that glory which is to be hoped for, concerning which the Apostle also in the present passage says that he glories "in the hope of the glory of God," can be understood to be that of which the Saviour says in the Gospel: "When the Son of man shall come in the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels. But when he said, "of the Father, and of the holy angels,"

it is not that he says the glory of the Father and of the angels is one; rather this seems to me to be what he shows, that these glories which were conveyed either through Moses to those of former times, or to us through the coming of Christ in the flesh, were not the glories of angels, but of men; for they were ministered to men, and were of such measure as men could receive. But that glory in which the Son of man is to come to judge the world will be so great a glory of the Father that it can be received by angels alone. And if some even of the saints prove capable of that glory, they will doubtless be those of whom it is said, that ”they shall be as the angels of God.

And in this way it seems rightly said of the future glory, which is to be hoped for, that the Son of man comes ”in the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels” — that is, not such glory as earthly men, but as holy angels, are worthy to receive. For according to the capacity of minds God dispenses also the magnitudes of glories. But just as no one could either believe or receive that glory which the apostles say in the Gospels that they saw, ”glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,” unless that glory also which was ministered through Moses in the law had held the way of understanding — as he testifies who said to Nathanael: ”Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote we have found, Jesus of Nazareth” (in which he certainly shows that, being illuminated by the Law and the Prophets, they beheld the glory of this one, which was as of the Only-begotten of the Father) — so also what the Apostle said, ”We, beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory into glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord,” ought to be understood thus:

that he who contemplates that glory of the Only-begotten with unveiled face, that is, with the full understanding of faith, by the same image by which he came from the Law to the Gospels and to the fleshly coming of the Saviour, with the gaze of his heart illuminated through faith, should none the less strain the keenness of his mind toward the second coming of the glory, and be transformed from the present glory to the future glory which is hoped for. Whence I judge that no one can, or deserves, to become capable of that future glory, unless already from this life he receives some use and practice of it, according to what the Apostle says, beholding it in a mirror and in an enigma by [… of meditation, so that by the constant image of the divine glory which he bears while still set in the flesh he may, better prepared, be carried over to the true capacity of that glory through the power of the Holy Spirit. ”And not only so, but we glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation works patience, and patience trial, and trial hope; but hope does not confound, because the charity of God is poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. The very first phrase of this chapter contains something of ambiguity; for it does not have in what follows anything to which what he said, ”and not only so,” ought to be referred.

Whence see whether we can in this way resolve the ambiguity of the expression. Since in the foregoing he has taught us that many things have been granted to us through our Lord Jesus Christ — as when he says that we have been justified by faith through our Lord Jesus Christ, and that through him we have access into this grace, and that through him also we glory in the hope of the glory of God — to all these things which have been said I think that ”and not only so” ought to be referred: that is, not only the things which I said above, but this also, that we glory in our tribulations, we have through our Lord Jesus Christ. For while others are made sad in tribulation, we, strengthened by the power of his grace, glory in tribulations. For we have learned a new discipline from his instruction, that through tribulations we may receive the good of patience; and having the good of patience we may be judged approved; and, tried through the patience of many tribulations, we may have the hope of the future reward from God — which hope, because it is certain and true, does not confound those who hope.

For faith and hope are followed by the charity of God, which is greater than all, and which not only fills our mind, but also abounds and is poured out in our hearts, for the reason that it is not acquired by us through human art, but is poured in through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Let these things be explained according to the sequence of the discourse itself, that is, of the letter, for the opening up of the apostolic utterance. Now let us inquire what the inner sense contains. And first let us consider, concerning boasting, what he said: ”We boast in our tribulations. For the word ”boasting” is sometimes used in the Scriptures in a praiseworthy sense, and sometimes in a blameworthy one. Indeed, when Jeremiah says: ”Thus says the Lord: Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength, nor let the rich man boast in his riches; but let him who boasts boast in this, to understand and to know me, that I am the Lord who establishes mercy and judgment and justice upon the earth” — in one and the same chapter he has placed boasting both in a praiseworthy and in a blameworthy sense. For if anyone, he says, boasts either in his own wisdom, or in his strength, or in his riches, he boasts blameworthily; but if anyone boasts in knowing the Lord, and in the understanding of his judgments and of his mercy and justice, he boasts in a praiseworthy manner. Since, therefore, this word looks toward both, we must inquire in what things there is right boasting, and in what things a less right boasting. And this we shall at last be able to recognize, if we hold to the natures of things with a fitting distinction. Now what we mean is this.

All things that exist or that are done are either good, or evil, or indifferent. Concerning these, although a broader disputation ought to be held, nevertheless we shall set forth as much as suffices for the present passage. It is certain that those things are properly called good which pertain to the virtues of the soul; and that those alone are defined as evil which have regard to wickedness and are done

against the law of God; but that the rest are indifferent — that is, are to be named neither good nor evil — such as riches, beauty of body, and strength or tallness of stature, and those things which serve the uses of the body. If, therefore, anyone is ignorant of the distinction of this diversity, and boasts in those things which are not truly good, nor pertain to the virtue of the soul, he boasts blameworthily. But Paul, who was most skilled in these matters, when he had said that ”we boast in our tribulations,” lest perhaps he should be thought to boast in things indifferent and intermediate, immediately renders the reason, and shows that his boasting, which he has in tribulations, pertains to the virtues of the soul. For he says that ”tribulation,” for which I boast, ”works patience, and patience probation, and probation hope, and hope does not confound, because the charity of God has been poured forth in our hearts through the Holy Spirit”;

and in these words he teaches that, through virtues succeeding one another, the boasting of tribulations ascends even to the summit of the Holy Spirit, just as he also says elsewhere: ”He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord. Therefore it is fitting to boast neither in one’s own wisdom, nor in strength, nor in riches, but in God alone. But perhaps you may say: Does not wisdom have regard to the virtues of the soul? And why is it accounted blameworthy to boast in wisdom? See, then, how cautious is the word of Scripture, which seems unpolished and rustic. It did not say: ”Let not the wise man boast in wisdom,” and then fall silent; but it says: ”Let not the wise man boast in his own wisdom. For he who boasts in his own wisdom, and not in the wisdom of God, boasts blameworthily, since elsewhere too the prophet says: ”Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and learned in their own sight. The wisdom of God, therefore, is to know God, and to understand his mercy, and his judgment, and the justice which he has wrought upon the earth; and he who boasts in this boasts in the Lord. But human wisdom cannot know and understand the Lord, nor recognize his judgments, and his mercy, and the justice which he has wrought upon the earth; and therefore it is indifferent and intermediate.

For it can come about that one instructed in this human wisdom may come better prepared to the understanding of divine wisdom, and, being exercised in the former, may become more capable of the latter. In like manner is it with him who makes use of the other things which we have said to be intermediate, namely strength or riches: which, so long as they are intermediate — that is, so long as a man is not strong in the work of God, nor rich in mercies toward the poor — he ought to boast neither in strength nor in riches. But if these things which are intermediate are turned toward the virtue of the soul and toward the fruit of good work, they are made worthy of boasting; just as, on the other hand, if they are applied to an evil work, so that through riches a man oppresses the poor, and through strength lays low the weak, then these are no longer thought to be intermediate, but evil. For this reason, therefore, they are said to be by their own nature indifferent and

intermediate, because, when joined to an evil work, they can be called evil, and when united to good works, can be named good. But apart from this inclination toward one or the other of the two, those who call them good must be believed to be unskilled and ignorant of rational definitions and appellations.

Yet by a misuse of language we call a craftsman ”wise,” and a pilot, and an architect, and we name a woman ”wise” in weaving. As to what, therefore, the Apostle says in the present chapter, ”that tribulation works patience” — if it is established that patience is one of the virtues of the soul, then without doubt tribulation, which gives birth to the virtues of the soul, is to be called neither evil nor indifferent, but good. And to such a degree, as we said above, is patience to be called a virtue of the soul, that he says our probation comes about through patience, and that through probation hope is given: which hope assuredly, since it is placed in God, who is the Father of all virtues, does not confound the one who hopes. For together with hope it holds also the abundance of charity, which in the first place — because ”the greatest of all is charity” — is coupled with the Spirit. But if someone should confront us and say that tribulation is intermediate and indifferent, since indeed we find that even the evil and the impious are afflicted with tribulation, and not at once, because they are afflicted for their evil deeds, is their tribulation to be reckoned a virtue of the soul: see whether we may be able to answer in this way, that tribulation properly belongs to the saints, but that the tribulation of the impious and the unjust should be called ”scourges. Finally, in the Psalm he speaks thus:

”Many are the tribulations of the just. But of those others he says: ”Many are the scourges of the sinner. And perhaps for this reason tribulation and straitness pertain to the saints, because they are the ones who walk the narrow and strait way, and for that reason are said to be afflicted with tribulation. Which also I judge the apostles to have understood with respect to the Lord himself, who is the true way along which the saints walk, when they said to him: ”The crowds press you and hem you in, Master. Therefore we ought to understand the tribulations of the just not only as those which come from without, from those things which we have above called indifferent or intermediate — that is, either from losses, or from illnesses, or from any torment of the body — but also in this, that even when placed in rest they afflict themselves and wear themselves down by resisting their own wills, by bridling lust, by restraining license, and by casting down all that stands against the good of continence, according to this same man who said: ”I mortify my body and subject it to servitude, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become reprobate. And in this way the tribulation of the just cannot be called indifferent, but plainly good, since through it the goods of virtue are fulfilled.

The unrighteous, however, even if they are afflicted — which affliction we said Scripture rather calls ”scourgings” — since in these very scourgings and chastise-

ments they do nothing according to the virtue of the soul, bring nothing toward patience, nor hope for proof through patience: for that reason in their case what is to be named is not the tribulation which arrives at these good things, but scourgings, as Scripture willed, even if you may sometimes find the term ”tribulation” used improperly and applied to the unrighteous as well. But that you may know that the tribulation of the righteous does not narrow the virtue of the soul but rather enlarges it, hear Paul himself, writing to the Corinthians, how he distinguishes these things; for he speaks thus: ”In all things we suffer tribulation, but we are not straitened; we are cast down, but we do not perish. You see that he says he suffers tribulation not in one thing, but in all: that is, both in those things which befall him from without and are inflicted by others, and in those which he himself endures within himself for the sake of bodily continence and in the labors of the best disciplines; and therefore he says, ”In all things we suffer tribulation, but we are not straitened. For he cannot be straitened who is enlarged by the virtues. And that what we are saying may become still clearer in this way, Paul himself writes in what follows:

”I know both how to be humbled and how to abound (in all things and unto all things I have been instructed), both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to suffer want. Therefore, if that is true which he said above, ”In all things we suffer tribulation,” it is certain that this is indicated by him: that both when he suffers want he is afflicted, and when he abounds he is nonetheless afflicted. But he is afflicted in want, because something is lacking; in abundance, however, because he restrains himself, lest through abundance he be dissolved, or lest he dispense less fittingly those things which seem to abound. So too both when he hungers and when he is filled, and when he suffers persecutions and when he lives in rest. And in this way, he who is afflicted in all these things rightly glories in his tribulations: from which without doubt is born patience, which, being made approved, brings forth hope, which, joined with charity, associates us with the Holy Spirit. — But as to what he said, ”The charity of God has been poured out in our hearts,” it must be considered more diligently in whose hearts the charity of God is poured out. I think that it is in the hearts of those who no longer have ”the spirit of bondage again in fear,” but also of those in whom ”perfect charity casts out fear,” and to whom the spirit ”of adoption” is given, which cries in their hearts, ”Abba, Father.

It belongs, therefore, not to just any man, but to the perfect, and to such a one as Paul was, in whose heart the charity of God is poured out ”through the Holy Spirit. But this also seems to me to require consideration: whether here he means that charity by which we love God, or that by which we are loved by God, to have been poured out through the Holy Spirit in our hearts. And if indeed that charity by which we love God is understood, this statement needs no proving; but if, because he said that the charity of God has been poured out in our hearts, that charity is rather to be understood by which we are loved by God, it is certain that he sets

charity as the highest and greatest gift of the Holy Spirit, so that, this having first been received from God as a gift, by this very thing we may be able to love God — namely, because we are loved by God. For Paul himself also names the spirit of charity, and God is called charity, and Christ is named the Son of charity.

But if there is found both a spirit of charity, and a Son of charity, and God who is charity, it is certain that from the one fount of the Paternal Deity both the Son is to be understood and the Holy Spirit, from whose abundance also into the hearts of the saints — for the taking hold of participation in the divine nature, as the apostle Peter taught — an abundance of charity is poured in: so that through this gift of the Holy Spirit that word may be fulfilled which the Lord speaks: ”As you, Father, are in me, and I in you, so may these also be one in us” — that is, made partakers of the divine nature in the abundance of charity ministered through the Holy Spirit.

[§10] ”For while we were yet weak, Christ, according to the time, died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die. Yet for a good man perhaps someone would dare to die. Wishing to show more fully the powers of that charity which he had said was poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, he set forth for what reasons we ought to understand this, teaching us that Christ died not for the godly but for the ungodly. For we were ungodly before we were converted to God, and Christ assuredly underwent death for us before we believed: which beyond doubt he would not have done, had he not had toward us an exceeding and most abundant charity — whether our Lord Jesus Christ himself, by dying for the ungodly, or God the Father, by handing over his Only-begotten for the redemption of the ungodly. For since scarcely anyone dies for a righteous man, and each one hesitates to undergo death, even if the cause of death be just, how great is this one, and how great must his charity toward us be reckoned, who, at that time in which he suffered, did not shrink from enduring death for the ungodly and the unrighteous? In this, surely, is the token of that highest divine goodness.

For unless he were coming from that substance, and the Son of that Father of whom it is said that ”none is good save one, God the Father,” he certainly could not have shown so great a goodness toward us. Whence, because from this token of so great goodness he himself is recognized to be good, for this good one perhaps someone would even dare to die. For when each one has come to know so great a goodness of Christ toward himself, and has had his charity poured out in his heart, he will desire not only to die for this good one, but even to die boldly. And we often see this fulfilled in actual deeds and works, when those in whose hearts the charity of Christ has been abundantly poured out offer themselves even willingly and with all boldness to their persecutors, and confess the name of Christ, with the world listening, before angels and men, so that they dare not only to suffer injury for his name, but even to undergo for this good one that death which one scarcely endures for a righteous man. For so great is the love of this life that even when a just cause

of death has come, each one scarcely accepts death patiently. Now a just cause of death seems to be present when it is brought on by the law of nature; and although it is just by the condition of mortality, yet the mind scarcely embraces yielding to the laws of nature.

”Scarcely, therefore, does anyone die for a righteous man. But for a good man someone dares to die, and boldly falls, especially if he has understood that, while we were still according to the time ungodly and weak, he first died for us. And how shall not he who knows that these things were first bestowed on him by that one repay to a good one the death which that one expended upon the evil? But the error of those is refuted who thought this passage was to be so interpreted that what he said, ”For scarcely for a righteous man will one die,” they maintain must be understood of the God of the law, whom they call just but not good; while they assert that Christ is the Son of the good Father. But what will they do, since we find many martyrs in the law as well? Let them read the books of the Maccabees, where with all steadfastness the blessed mother with her seven sons undertakes martyrdom, and they not only endure martyrdom patiently but even heap reproaches upon the tyrant; and let them see whether what they say is true, that ”scarcely does anyone die for a righteous man. Let them see the three youths cast with all confidence into the furnace of burning fire for the freedom of their faith, and let them say that ”scarcely does anyone die for a righteous man. Death for God, then, is the only death which is undertaken with all boldness;

but every other death is scarcely borne with endurance, even if it be just and comes down by the law of the human condition.

[§11] ”But God commends his charity toward us: because if, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, much more therefore now, being justified in his blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him. Since he had said above that ”Christ, according to the time, died for the ungodly,” he now wishes from this to show the magnitude of God’s charity toward men: for if it was so great toward the ungodly and toward sinners that for their salvation he gave his only Son, how much more bountiful and more abundant will it be toward those who have been converted and amended and, as he himself says, redeemed by his own blood? I certainly do not think that this variety of words in Paul is idle — that he sometimes names them weak, sometimes ungodly, sometimes sinners, on whose behalf he says Christ died; and although he confesses himself unskilled in speech, nevertheless I do not judge that in these matters he varied his terms through lack of skill, but rather through profound knowledge. For by these three every kind of sin is gathered up. For either someone, being ignorant of God, sins in darkness, and is called ungodly; or, wishing to keep the commandment, he is overcome by the frailty of the flesh and is deceived by the enticements of the present life, and is called weak; or knowingly

and willingly he despises the commandment, and hates the discipline of God, and casts his words behind him, and is named a sinner.

And thus Paul, who professes himself, as we have said, unskilled in speech, has embraced in these three distinctions all those for whom Christ is proclaimed to have died. But if at times even those who are under the law, and who seem to worship God, are named ungodly in the divine Scriptures, this happens for the reason that, forsaking the God of their fathers, they worship the gods of the nations. But that Paul numbers himself among sinners — he who elsewhere says, ”We by nature Jews, and not sinners from among the Gentiles” — this is the virtue of his humility. For he imitates him ”who, though he had done no sin, was made sin for us”; and though he was God, dwelt among men. ”God therefore commends his charity toward us. Here ”commends” is understood either as ”confirms,” or as ”makes lovable on account of benefits. (For the fact that ”Christ, while we were yet sinners, died for us” gives us hope that much more will he save us, purged from sin and justified, from the wrath that hangs over sinners, through himself; and he who so loved strangers and enemies that he gave his Only-begotten to death for us, much more will he bestow eternal salvation upon those who have been made his own and reconciled to him.

But in what manner Christ died for us, and in what manner, being the Lamb of God, he took away the sin of the world and bore our infirmities and grieved for us, has often been discussed by us in other places, where we adduced also those things which are reported in secular histories: that even among them certain men are said to have driven off plagues, or whirlwinds, and other things similar to these, by exposing themselves to death, and to have freed their country or their nation from the destruction of an impending disaster. How truly these things are written, or what reason they may have if they are true, is for God alone to know. Yet none of those men about whom such things are narrated is said — not even in a fictitious account — to have absolved the sins of the whole world, save Jesus alone, ”who, when he was in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself,” and according to the will of the Father, having taken the form of a servant, offered himself as a victim for the whole world, delivering his own blood to the prince of this world, according to the wisdom of God, ”which none of the princes of this world knew: for if they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of majesty” — nor would that blood which they had thirsted for have extinguished not so much their thirst as their strength, and destroyed their kingdom;

nor would there have befallen them that which the Lord says in the Gospel: ”Behold, now is the prince of this world judged”; and this: ”Behold, I saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven.” — ”Much more therefore,” he says, ”being now justified in his blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him. Above indeed he had said:

”Being justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with God”; and now he says: ”Much more now, being justified in his blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him. From which he shows that neither does our faith justify us without the blood of Christ, nor does the blood of Christ justify us without our faith; yet of the two, the blood of Christ justifies us much more than our faith does. And therefore it seems to me that, whereas above he had said simply, ”being justified by faith,” here he has added, ”much more therefore now, being justified in his blood,” so as to teach that, even if our faith saves us from the wrath to come, even if works of righteousness do so, nevertheless above all these the blood of Christ much more makes us safe from the wrath to come.

But how the wrath of God ought to be understood has been said more fully by us in the exposition of the second psalm, and how that which is written can be fulfilled, namely that we be made safe by fleeing from the wrath to come — fleeing wrath in such a way that it does not overtake us, but pursuing righteousness, piety, faith, charity, patience, meekness, and the rest of the things like these. Wrath, then, is that to which each one is handed over according to the measure and desert of his sins; God nevertheless, according to what is written in the seventy-seventh psalm, not kindling all his wrath. For who could endure it if the Lord kindled all his wrath against sinners, since that is so terrible which is pronounced in the canticle of Moses, where he says: ”For a fire is kindled in my fury, and it shall burn even to the lowest hell: it shall devour the earth and its produce, it shall set ablaze the foundations of the mountains”? Consider, therefore, that this fire which is kindled from the wrath or the fury of the Lord devours the earth and the lower hell, and consumes earthly works; it sets ablaze also not the heights of the mountains, but the foundations — that is, not lofty souls, nor heavenly minds, but those cast down to the ground and to the earth, or even sunk into the depth of the earth, as are the foundations of mountains.

It was necessary, then, to discuss wrath also a little, so that it might be known more plainly from what evils the blood of Christ has rescued us.

[§12] ”For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved in his life. And not only so, but we also glory in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. What he says, ”when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God,” plainly shows that there is no substance which, according to the definition of Marcion or Valentinus, is by nature hostile to God; for otherwise, if what is hostile belonged to nature and not to the will, it would surely admit of no reconciliation. But where someone is made a friend out of an enemy, it is certain that, so long as he does those works which God does not love, he is an enemy of God, and each one becomes an enemy so much the more grievous and more hateful as he has multiplied works deserving of enmity. There are therefore

certain measures and degrees, distinguished by the quality or quantity of their sins, among those who are enemies to God. Whence also he who has sinned above all others is recorded by Paul as the last enemy to be destroyed. But conversely and in like order it is certain that those who have been reconciled through the death of his Son are held among his friends: and that one is a friend in such a way as Moses was called the friend of God;

and that there are others also to whom the Savior says, ”Now I will no longer call you servants, but friends. And I believe that there are yet others still more intimate as friends with God in the heavenly places — either those who always behold the face of God, or those who always stand in the sight of the Most High: so that, just as we said above that there is a certain last enemy, so there too, according to the merits of their virtues, some are reckoned the highest friends. Since, then, these things are so, I do not know whether he who still remains in those works which God hates, and on account of which there is enmity between God and men, can rightly be said to have been reconciled to God through the blood of Christ. For how has he been reconciled, who does the deeds of an enemy? Paul therefore rightly says of himself and of those like himself, that ”when we were enemies, we were reconciled through the death of his Son. It is a great shame that, where such a reconciliation has been made, where the enmities between God and men were dissolved not by the word of a sinner but by the blood of an intercessor, we should turn back again to enmities, and do those things which he hates whom no one but the pouring out of sacred blood had reconciled to us.

But Paul himself, writing more fully to the Ephesians, mentions the principle of reconciliation and of enmity, and the shedding of Christ’s blood; and if we join these passages together, they can more easily open up the passage of the present chapter. He says, then, thus: ”Wherefore be mindful, you who were once Gentiles in the flesh, who were called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh, made by hand, that at that time you were without Christ, alienated from the way of life of Israel, and strangers to the promise of his covenants, having no hope, and without God in this world. But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been made near in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and, dissolving the middle wall of partition, the enmity in his flesh, abolishing the law of commandments in decrees, that he might create the two in himself, making peace in one new man, that he might reconcile both in one body to God, slaying the enmities in himself through the cross; and coming he preached peace to you who were far off, and peace to those who were near, since through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. But especially note in these words this: that Christ dissolved the middle wall of partition in his flesh, that is, the enmity; and that he reconciled both in one body to God through the cross;

and that he slew the enmity on the cross. And in this it is not without reason that Paul there seems to have named the enmity a second time, and in the one place to have said that Christ dissolved the enmity in the flesh, but in the second that he slew it on the cross. For ”to dissolve” seems to me to apply to those who still wage the struggle against sin and fight against it with all their strength; but ”to slay” to those who now no longer admit sin at all, but have in every part mortified their members to sin — among whom was also he who said: ”I have been crucified with Christ. But I live, now not I; rather Christ lives in me. In this way, therefore, Christ also slew the enmity in his flesh, when by undergoing death he gave men an example of resisting sin even unto death: and so at last, the enmity having been dissolved in his flesh, he reconciled men to God through his blood — those, at least, who keep the covenant of reconciliation inviolate by sinning no more. Therefore his death gave death to that enmity which was between us and God, and was the beginning of reconciliation. But his resurrection and life conferred salvation on believers, as the Apostle also says elsewhere concerning Christ: ”For in that he died to sin, he died once; but in that he lives, he lives to God.

He is said to have died to sin — not to his own, for neither did he commit sin — but he himself died to sin, that is, as one who by his own death brought death upon sin itself. And he is said to live to God, so that we too may live not to ourselves, nor to our own will, but to God, that so at last we may be able to be saved in his life, according to him who said: ”But I live, now not I; rather Christ lives in me. But as to the fact that he set down, in like manner as in the earlier passages, ”And not only so, but we also now glory in God,” and added nothing to the ”and not only so,” it is to be understood, just as above, as said of those things which have been set forth above: that is, that not only ”when we were enemies, were we reconciled to God through the death of his Son,” and not only ”shall we be saved in his life, but we also now glory in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the reconciliation. And not without reason did he add ”now,” when he might have said: ”But we also glory in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the reconciliation”;

but he did so in order to show that glorying has been given to us not only in the future, but also in the present, from the knowledge of God, the amendment of life, and the correction of errors — as the same Apostle also says in another place: ”Having hope both of the present life and of that which is to come”: of the present, because it is more honorable and more amended; of the future, because it is eternal.

Commentary on Romans — Book 5

Latin source: J.-P. Migne (ed.), Patrologia Graeca 14 (Rufinus's Latin version of Origen's Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos). This English translation is in the public domain.

BOOK FIVE

[§1] "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into this world, and through sin death, and so death passed through to all men, in whom all sinned. For until the law sin was in this world. But sin is not imputed when there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who sinned after the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is the figure of him who was to come. After he had taught the difference between faith and the law, and between those who are justified through faith and those who cannot hope through the law for the promises that were made to the fathers; and when he had disclosed the hidden things of the secret mystery, that "when we were enemies of God, we were reconciled through the death of his Son," now he consequently sets forth also the reasons why we were enemies, and why that reconciliation required the death of the Son of God: so that, beholding how great the things are that Jesus has bestowed upon us — nay rather, how great the things are that he has endured for us — we may be held to him by a more deeply rooted faith and by an inseparable love. Therefore, though not in every respect laid open, he nevertheless indicates to us the account of yet another secret when he says: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into this world, and through sin death," and the rest.

But before we come to the exposition of the whole chapter, a few things must be said about what appears in what follows to be a defect in the expression itself. For where it is said, "Therefore, just as," it seems necessary that some completion ought to be added, so that it should say: So also this or that — as he himself writes in certain other places, for example when he says: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But here, when he has said, "Just as through one man sin entered into this world, and through sin death, and so death passed through to

all men, in whom all sinned," he did not go on to say, for instance: So also through one man righteousness entered into this world, and through righteousness life, and so life passed through to all men, in which all were made alive. For this is what the sense of the statement set forth seemed to demand, according to those things which he himself declares elsewhere. For there is not much difference between what he says in another place, "For as in Adam all die," and what he says here, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into this world, and through sin death, and so it passed through to all men, in whom all sinned";

and again, what he said, "So also in Christ shall all be made alive," differs in no way from that sense which we said above was lacking to the expression and left to the understanding of the reader. But it seems to me that Paul — who says that "our sufficiency is from God, who also made us fit ministers of the New Testament," and who again says, "Do you seek a proof of him who speaks in me, Christ?" — did not suffer these things through a defect of speech, but foresaw through them something of usefulness: so that, even though those things which we said were lacking to the expression and are to be understood ought to be understood, nevertheless, on account of the more negligent sort who might perhaps be dissolved into laxity if they heard that, just as death passed to all men through sin, so also life passed through to all men through Christ, he judged that these things ought not to be said openly and publicly. And at the same time he shows this also: that even if through one man righteousness entered into this world, and through righteousness life, and so it passed through to all men, nevertheless this does not happen straightway in the present, nor does it fall to the idle, but to those who by much labor and sweat have been able to seek out the things that are hidden, to knock at the things that are closed, to long for the things that are concealed.

Finally, in that chapter also which we brought forward for the likeness of these sayings, that is, "For as in Adam all die," he did not say, "so also in Christ all" have been made alive, or are being made alive, but "shall be made alive" — that he might show that the present time is indeed the time of labor and work, in which merits are gathered through good conduct, but that it is the future in which those shall be made alive who in the present life die together with Christ, as the same Apostle says elsewhere: "For if we die together with him, we shall also live together with him. And for this reason in the present passage as well he forbears to carry through and to fill out in words those things which seem to be understood by the sense and by logical consequence. Someone else perhaps will say that what seems to be lacking in the things we have spoken of above, according to the order of the expression, is indeed supplied late, but is supplied in what comes after, where he says: "But not as the offense, so also the gift. For if by the offense of one many died, much more the grace of God, and the gift, in the grace of one man Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many"; and he asserts that from these words those things have been completed which seemed to be lacking in the earlier ones;

and that it makes little difference that there he said sin passed through to all men, while here he says that the gift and grace of Jesus Christ abounded unto many, since both all men are understood to be many, and it does not seem absurd that ”many” should be understood as ”all” — especially since in what follows he says more openly: ”As through the offense of one, upon all men unto condemnation, so also through the righteousness of one, upon all men unto justification of life. And that he might show more evidently that ”all men” and ”many men” are the same, he added to these: ”For as through the disobedience of one man many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of one many shall be constituted righteous. And what above he had called ”all” men, here in the same sense he named ”many. Unless perhaps someone should say that the Apostle, wishing rather to mingle and to obscure what he had disclosed above — lest, as we have said, he should unnerve and slacken his hearers — named ”many” here those whom before he had called ”all,” so that even what he called ”all” should be drawn to those alone who have obtained the gift of Christ’s grace, who nevertheless are not few, but many.

For it is the custom of the Apostle Paul, when he has disclosed something concerning the kindness of God and his ineffable goodness, again, on account of the more negligent sort of hearers, to sharpen a little, as it were, what he has said, and to hold out some fear to the more slack — as when, disputing with the Corinthians about the end of all things, he says: ”For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive”; and a little after: ”Then the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God and the Father,” and the rest. On account of which words, fearing lest anyone, despising the riches of God’s goodness and patience and long-suffering, should according to his own hardness and impenitent heart treasure up for himself wrath in the day of wrath and of the revelation of the just judgment of God, he added after those things which he had said about the end: ”Do not be deceived.

Evil conversations corrupt good manners. Awake, you just, and sin not. For some have ignorance; I speak it to your shame. He acts, therefore, as a prudent steward of the word; and when he comes to those passages in which something must be said about the goodness of God, on account of the more sluggish sort he brings these things forth in a more hidden and more obscure way, lest perchance, as we have said, they despise the riches of his goodness and patience and long-suffering, and treasure up for themselves wrath in the day of wrath, into which all must needs fall who have treasured up for themselves deeds of this kind. You too, after these things, may see what comes to pass. But also that which he says, ”For until the law sin was in this world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law,” seems to show this: that until the law, that is, until Christ should come who takes away the sin of the world, sin was in the world. And it is manifest that sin cannot be imputed where there is no law to convict the sinner. ”But death reigned,” which had entered in through sin, ”until Moses,” that is, so long as the law endured, ”over those who

sinned after the similitude of the sin of Adam," through whom death itself received its entrance;

"who," namely Adam, "is the figure of him that was to come" — not according to that in which he transgressed, but according to this, that as through him death, so through the last Adam life entered into this world; and as through the former came condemnation upon all men, so also through Christ justification upon all men. Let these things be said concerning the plain sense of the apostolic utterance itself. Let us now see what the inner understanding also contains. But this too I think must be pointed out in the first place, that the Apostle Paul seems to me, especially in these passages which we now have in hand, to speak these things somewhat in this fashion: as if some faithful and prudent servant were led in by a great king, his lord, into the royal treasuries, and there were shown him various great chambers whose approaches are diverse and uncertain, so that entrance is shown him by one way and egress by another; and sometimes from diverse entrances one comes to a single inner room, as we often see certain palaces built here on earth. And there is shown also to this faithful servant who is led about the treasury of the king's silver, and another of gold, and of precious stones and pearls and various necklaces, and the place too of the royal purple, and another of the diadems;

and there are shown him besides the queen's bridal chambers, set in many and diverse apartments — and yet each of these is not thrown open to him with the doors standing altogether wide, but only half-opened in part, so that he may indeed recognize his lord's treasures and the royal wealth, and yet not know each single thing clearly and perfectly. But after these things, let this servant, who has been held so faithful that the king and lord made known to him the greatness of his riches, be sent to gather an army for the king, to hold a levy and to test soldiers. For inasmuch as he is faithful, so as to invite more men to the service and to gather a larger army for the king, he will be under necessity of setting forth in part what he has seen; and again, because he is prudent and knows that it is needful to hide the king's secret, he will use certain hints rather than full accounts, so that the king's power may not indeed be concealed, and yet the ordering and the adornment of the palace and the disposition of its furnishing remain hidden. So then, as I have said, the Apostle Paul also seems to me to do in these discourses, and to temper his speech not only for the reason that he himself says, that he knows in part and understands in part, but also on account of us, who cannot grasp even those things which he knows in part;

and to touch upon and half-open each inner chamber of the mystery with single, or scarcely with two, sentences; and now, having entered by one approach, to go out by another; now, having entered by another, to run together to yet another chamber, so that if you seek him by that approach by which he entered, you do not find his going out. Having therefore first set these things in order in our mind and

spirit concerning what Paul writes, let us now turn, according to our strength, to examining and contemplating the matters we have in hand. And first let us see in what manner ”through one man sin entered into this world, and through sin death. For perhaps someone may ask: if before Adam the woman sinned, of whom it is said that ”being deceived she was in the transgression,” and again before her the serpent sinned — for he sinned when he said to the woman, ”Why has God said this, that you should not eat of every tree of paradise? and he sinned again when, whereas God had said that ”in whatsoever day you eat of it, you shall die the death,” he said to the woman, ”You shall not die the death;

but God knew that in whatsoever day you eat of it, your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” — if therefore before Adam the woman also sinned, and before the woman the serpent, and in another place the Apostle says that ”Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived,” how will sin seem to have entered through one man, and not rather through one woman? For from a woman was the beginning of sin, and before the woman from the serpent, or from the devil, of whom it is said in the Gospel that ”he was a murderer from the beginning. But see that the Apostle in these matters has kept the order of nature; and therefore, since he was speaking of sin, from which death passed upon all men, he ascribes the succession of the human posterity — which succumbed to this death coming from sin — not to the woman, but to the man. For posterity is not named from the woman, but from the man, as the Apostle himself says elsewhere: ”For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man”; and again: ”For as the woman is of the man, so also is the man” not of the woman, but ”by the woman”; and for this reason mortal posterity and bodily succession is reckoned rather to the man as its author, and not to the woman.

But that what we say may become still more evident, we will add this also which the same Apostle writes to the Hebrews: ”But Levi also, who received tithes, was tithed; for he was yet in the loins of his father” (Abraham) ”when Melchisedech met him returning from the slaughter of the kings. If therefore Levi, who is born in the fourth generation after Abraham, is declared to have been in the loins of Abraham, much more were all men who are born and have been born in this world in the loins of Adam while he was still in paradise; and all men were cast out of paradise with him or in him, when he himself was driven thence; and through him death, which had come upon him from the transgression, consequently passed also into those who were held in his loins. And therefore the Apostle rightly says: ”For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. Neither therefore from the serpent, who had sinned before the woman, nor from the woman, who was in the transgression before the man, but through Adam, from whom all mortals draw their origin, is sin said to have entered in, and through sin death.

But this, doubtless, is the one man through whom sin entered in, and through sin death — the man whom elsewhere the Apostle himself calls the first man, of the earth, earthy, while the second is from heaven, heavenly, when he exhorts us, having cast off the image of the earthy, to bear the image of the heavenly; that is, that living according to the Word of God we may be renewed and reformed according to the inner man after the image of God who created him. This man, therefore, who is now being reformed and restored to the image of God, is neither earthy nor in this world, but his conversation is said to be in the heavens; and therefore, according to him who said, ”But you are not of this world,” death cannot pass through into him. But of the one who is still in this world, and is earthy, and bears the image of the earthy, of him it is said that through him sin entered into this world, and through sin death. But if sin and death entered into this world, and dwell in this world, it is certain that those are strangers to death and to sin who through Christ, or with Christ, have died to this world, and having been raised again with him have merited also to sit with him in the heavenly places, having their conversation no longer in this world but in the heavens.

Whence also it is shown by a like consequence that every man is first ”of the earth, earthy,” as the same Apostle says elsewhere; when he bears the image of the earthy, and walks according to the image of the earthy, minds the flesh and savors the things that are of the flesh, and it is scarcely at some time that he turns to the Lord and is led by the Spirit of God, and being made spiritual becomes ”the last Adam into a quickening Spirit. Inquire carefully, since he says that through one man sin entered into this world, and it is certain that he here calls ”world” this earthly place in which men dwell, whether sin entered into no other place, nor is found in those places where ”the spiritual wickednesses in the heavenly places” are named. But consider this too within yourself: whence did sin enter into this world, or where was it before it entered here, or whether it existed at all, or whether it was before him to whom it is said, ”How long shall iniquities be found in thee? and on this account I have cast thee down to the earth. But it is not safe for us to discourse at greater length about these matters, since we see that the Apostle has here barely touched upon them with single phrases. ”Through one man,” therefore, ”sin entered into this world.

And ”world,” as we have said, is to be understood either as the place in which men dwell, or as the earthly and bodily life in which death has its place; to which world, that is, to the earthly life, the saints declare themselves crucified and dead. ”And through sin,” he says, ”death” — that death, without doubt, of which the prophet also speaks, that ”the soul that sins shall itself die”; of which death one might rightly call this bodily death the shadow. For wherever that death has entered, this must needs follow, as the shadow follows the body. But if anyone object that the Savior did no sin, nor was there in him the death of the soul through sin, and yet he underwent bodily death, we shall answer him that just as the Savior, though

he himself did no sin, is nevertheless said for our salvation to have been made sin through the assumption of flesh, so also, though he owed this death to no one and was not liable to it, yet for our salvation he took upon himself this death — as it were the shadow of that dispensation which he had assumed, of which we spoke above — willingly, not of necessity, as he himself said: ”I have power to lay down my soul, and I have power to take it up again. But let us see how ”death passed through unto all men, in that all,” he says, ”have sinned.

The Apostle has pronounced an absolute judgment, that the death of sin passed through unto all men, in that wherein all have sinned, as also elsewhere: ”For all,” he says, ”have sinned, and need the glory of God. And therefore, even if you name Abel as that righteous man, he cannot be excused. ”For all have sinned. For why did he offer ”after days,” and offer his sacrifice from the firstborn after Cain, and not before him, and not at once? Even if you name Enos, who ”hoped to call upon the name of the Lord” — why did he hope, and why does he not call upon him at once, but defer and delay? Even if you name Enoch: it is not written that he pleased God until he begot Methuselah; and Methuselah is interpreted ”sending forth of death. From which it is shown that this death, which passed through unto all men, passed also into him; but scarcely at some point did he perceive that death was within him, and being turned to the Lord he sent it forth from himself, and cast it off through repentance. And therefore he is said to have begotten Methuselah, because he had cast off from himself the death that had besieged him. Rightly then, because he was no longer liable to death, but had cast it off from himself and put it to flight, it is said that God translated him, that he should not see death.

But concerning Noah too, if you inquire more attentively, you will find that it is written of him only in his five hundredth year that ”Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord God,” and that ”he was righteous in his generation,” and that ”he pleased God”; which surely, if he had merited it earlier, the divine Scripture, I think, would never have passed over in silence. But also, if anyone wishes to take into account that he drank wine, and was made drunk and uncovered, he will find from all these things that it is not without cause said by the Apostle, ”in that all have sinned,” even though Noah awoke from his wine. And what shall I say too of Abraham, to whom it is said: ”Go out from thy land, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house”? Which surely would not have been said, if in his father’s house he could have pleased God. But there is no need, with great peril, to enumerate the saints one by one in these matters, since the Apostle’s judgment suffices, which says that death passed through unto all men, and that of him who said: ”No one is clean from filth, even if his life has been but of one day. But this death of sin, which passed through unto all, when it had come to Jesus and had tried to pierce him with its sting (for ”the sting of death is sin”), was repulsed and shattered.

For he ”was Life,” and death was necessarily brought to an end by life; and then it is said to it: ”Where, O death, is thy sting? where, O death, is thy victory? For because it had conquered all, therefore it is here said to it: ”Where, O death, is thy victory? But as for the fact that he did not say that sin entered into all men, but ”into the world”; and death, on the other hand, not into the world, but ”unto all men,” and not that it entered, but that it passed through — I do not think that Paul employed this distinction without purpose. I judge that by ”world” he here designates all the earthly, and those who remain in the conversation of the earthy; but by ”men” he means those who are now beginning to know themselves, and to know that they were made after the image of God.

Therefore he says that sin entered into those who are called ”world,” that is, the earthly ones, and nowhere does he set down its going out. But into those whom he wishes to be understood as already ”men,” he says that sin passed through, that is, that it was indeed there, but was driven out through the repentance of conversion, and passed through, and did not stand any longer in them. From which it appears that in Paul’s writings not even one syllable ought to be felt to be empty of mysteries. Let us now see in what way it was said: ”For until the law sin was in this world; but sin is not imputed, when there is no law. In this place, according to that comparison which we set forth above, Paul seems to me to have entered by one approach and gone out by another. For who can follow him through that approach by which he seems to most people to have entered, so that he would be understood to be speaking of the law of Moses when he says that ”until the law sin was in this world:

but sin is not imputed, when there is no law?” — as though before the law there had been no sin, and no one had sinned, nor had sin been reckoned to anyone before the law of Moses was given, when we read that sin was reckoned both to Cain and to Lamech, and (that we may not linger over individual cases) that God was so provoked by the sins of men that he brought a flood upon the world, and said: ”I will blot out all flesh that is upon the earth; and again that a rain of fire and a sulphurous flame laid waste the Sodomites. How then, in these sins, or in sins of this kind, can it be said that there was no sin, or in punishments such as these will it be denied that sin was reckoned? And therefore a more hidden approach of Paul’s must be sought out by us in what he says: ”For until the law sin was in this world: but sin is not imputed, when there is no law. We find him also in the later parts of this Epistle speaking in this manner: ”For without the law sin was dead: but I was alive once without the law. In which one and the same meaning of both passages seems to me to lie. For what was lacking in the phrase here, he has filled up there. In ”For until the law sin was in this world,” there is lacking ”dead,” which there he expressed more plainly.

If therefore here too we join that word, and say: ”For until the law sin was in this world” dead: ”but sin is not imputed, when there is no law,” see how the sense will be able to stand complete. But this too we have already often said, that in this Epistle Paul disputes indeed about many laws, but more frequently about the natural law, which is especially detected in this passage as well. For until the natural law sin is dead. Therefore at a certain time of life, when someone begins to be capable of reason, and to have the discernment of just and unjust, of what is fair and what is unfair, then sin, which previously was held within the man as though dead, is said to revive, for the reason that there is now inwardly a law which forbids, and reason which shows that the thing must not be done. But so that what we say may be understood more openly, let us use a clear example. It is written: ”He who strikes his father or his mother, let him die the death; and: ”He who curses his father or his mother, let him die the death. If then a little boy of about four or five years, as commonly happens, in anger strikes his father or mother with a rod, so far as the precept of the commandment looks to it, he owes death.

But because the natural law is not yet in him, which would teach him that he ought not to do injury to father or mother, he does not even know that in this he is committing the crime of impiety: there is indeed a species of sin in what he does, since he strikes his father or mother, or curses them; but the sin is dead in him, because through the absence of the natural law, which is not yet in him, sin cannot be reckoned to him. For there is not yet within him so much reason as would teach him that what he does ought not to be done: and therefore even by his parents it is not only not reckoned as a fault, but is received with favor and delight. And in this way, consequently, as I judge, what the Apostle says can be understood: ”For until the law sin was in this world,” so that ”dead” may be supplied. ”But sin is not imputed, when there is no law. For it is fitting that according to this exposition that also be understood which the Apostle says: ”But I was alive once without the law. For how is Paul found to have lived once without the law of Moses, when he himself says of himself that he is a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and, circumcised on the eighth day, was immediately from birth in the observance of the law of Moses?

But it is agreed that he once, that is, in the age of boyhood, before he became capable of reason, lived without the natural law. For in that age there was not yet in him the distinction of just and unjust, nor did the examination of right and wrong lie open to him. And that this is said of the natural law he plainly shows in what follows, when he says: ”But when the commandment came, sin revived: and I died. By which he declares that the sins of that age did indeed exist, but were held as dead, because they were not reckoned as fault. But when I began, he says, to know what must be done, what must be guarded against and avoided, and to receive the commandment of the law that is in force within me; then sin revived in me, which before, through the absence of the law, seemed dead, and ”I,” he says, ”died: for sin now began to be reckoned to me. But Basilides, not noticing

that these things ought to be understood of the natural law, dragged the apostolic word off to foolish and impious fables, and from this saying of the Apostle tries to construct the doctrine of metensōmatōsis (μετενσωματώσεως), that is, that souls are poured over into one body after another. ”For the Apostle said,” he says, ”that ’I was alive once without the law:’ that is, before I came into this body, I lived in that kind of body which was not under the law;

namely, that of a beast or of a bird. But he did not look to what follows, that is: ”But when the commandment came, sin revived. For he did not say that he came to the commandment, but that the commandment came to him; and he did not say that sin had not been in him, but that it had been dead, and had revived. In which he certainly shows that he was speaking of both things with regard to one and the same life of his own. But let Basilides, and any who think this along with him, be left in their impiety. Let us, however, attend to the Apostle’s meaning according to the piety of ecclesiastical doctrine. But let us also inquire what this itself may be, that he says, ”Sin was in this world,” and did not say, in men, since certainly there are in the world both beasts, and the other animals, and trees, and whatever else this world consists of, and yet sin is not believed to be in these.

It seems to me that here the Apostle has in mind those persons who are already capable of reason and obey the natural laws; whereas that age which has not yet arrived at the capacity of reason he has called not so much ”men” as ”the world,” inasmuch as they are indeed parts of the world, yet have not yet come to this, that they should express in themselves by the capacity of reason the image of God, according to which man is said to have been made. But I should also like to inquire into this (unless it seem more curious than is right), whether perhaps, according to those who wish the law of Moses to be understood in these passages, by the words ”But sin is not imputed when there is no law,” the devil also and his angels might seem to be absolved, if where there is no law sin is not reckoned. And how was the serpent condemned before the law of Moses, or how did death enter into the round world through the envy of the devil? How too shall what Jude the apostle says in his catholic Epistle be explained? For he speaks thus: ”The angels also who kept not their princedom, but forsook their own dwelling, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

From all which it stands more and more firmly established that the Apostle is speaking of that law which each one, whether of men or even of angels, bears naturally within himself by a certain divine dispensation or gift; whose force is so great, and whose power is so great, that it convicts even angels, and excepts the person of no dignity whatever, and it is this law which brought about what the apostle Jude says above, namely that the angels who kept not their princedom but forsook their own dwelling should be kept bound in everlasting chains unto the judgment of the great day. This is the law which also drags the devil and his angels into the eternal

fire which has been prepared for them. And just as it is certain that neither would those angels be kept bound in eternal chains unto judgment, nor would these be sent into the eternal fire prepared for them, save because they did not keep the law set for them by God, nor would they come unto judgment unless they had committed something against the law, so it seems certain that, if they had guarded the law set for them, neither would these have fallen into the eternal fire, nor those beneath the chains of eternal darkness. It remains that we also discuss, so far as our powers allow, how this was said: ”But death reigned from Adam unto Moses, even over those who sinned after the likeness of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

This is now the third time the Apostle makes mention of death. First he says that ”through sin death entered into this world”; secondly, ”death,” he says, ”passed through unto all men. But now he says, ”Death reigned from Adam unto Moses. And knowing that there are certain differences among these several statements, he has indicated when it entered and when it reigned. Then, he says, it entered, when the first man transgressed. And he said how it entered: ”through sin,” he says. And now he designates the time of its reign ”from Adam unto Moses”; but how it passed through unto all men he does not show. It seems to me, therefore, that in these words the Apostle is describing something like the entry of a tyrant who wished to invade the kingdom of the lawful king, and who first seized the very gates and approaches of the kingdom through the transgression of the guard; then next attempted to bend the minds of all men toward himself, and for the greatest part succeeded, and thus claimed for himself a kingship not owed to him. While this man, then, was reigning by tyranny, there is sent a leader chosen by the lawful king, namely Moses, to call back the peoples occupied by him to the rights of civil governance, and to teach them to use the laws of the true king.

That tyrant then, that is, the death of sin, who had crept in through the transgression of the first guard, was reigning over all those who had turned aside to him by a transgression like that of the first man. But this leader of the lawful prince does everything to snatch some out of the kingdom of sin and death; and he obtained at last that he should convert one nation, and any who wished to join himself to this nation; and at the king’s command he was the first to institute sacrifices, by the offering of which with a fixed solemnity, as was fitting, sin might be remitted to them. And thus at length men began in some part to be freed from the kingdom of sin and death. For that tyrant who is called death, from Adam — who first by his transgression gave him an entrance, that he might pass through unto all men — was reigning up to that Moses whom we have called the leader, who, sent by God the king of all, began to break his kingdom and to call men back under the law of the just prince. ”Death” therefore ”reigned from Adam unto Moses,” according to that likeness which we set forth above, not over all, but ”over those who sinned after the likeness of Adam’s transgression. For death indeed entered into the world,

and passed through unto all, yet it did not reign over all. For it is one thing to pass through, and another to reign.

For sin passed through even into the just, and grazed them with a certain light contagion. But in transgressors, that is, in those who subject themselves to it with their whole mind and devotion, it holds a kingdom and lords it with every power. ”Death” therefore ”reigned from Adam,” who first by transgressing opened a passage for sin into this world, ”unto Moses,” that is, unto the law. For through the law the purification of sins began to be opened up, and in some part his tyranny to be resisted through victims, through various expiations, through sacrifices, through precepts. But since his domination was so great as to exceed the strength of the law, the prophets are sent to the law’s aid. Yet they too, seeing that the tyrant’s power was beyond their own strength, entreat the coming and presence of the King himself, crying out to God: ”Send forth Thy light and Thy truth”; and again: ”Bow down Thy heavens, and come down”; and once more: ”Arise, O Lord, bring us help. Jesus Christ the Son of God, therefore, was present, and ”in that wherein” the law ”was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin by sin in the flesh,” and reconciled the world to God; and He stripped off the princedoms and powers of the tyrant, triumphing over them in Himself. But we seem to have slipped into these matters by a kind of digression; let us, however, return to our proposition.

Therefore the death of sin reigned from Adam unto Moses, that is, unto the coming of Christ. For Moses is called the law, and the law, as it is written, held its place unto the baptism of John, from which time Jesus began to preach the kingdom of God. But that he singled out certain particular persons over whom death reigned, when he says, ”Death reigned over those who sinned after the likeness of Adam’s transgression,” does not seem to me to be said without the indication of some mystery. Perhaps, then, there were some, up to that time in which men were held under the law as under a pedagogue, who did something of such a kind as Adam is described to have done in paradise — and to have touched the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and to have blushed at his own nakedness, and to have fallen away from the dwelling of paradise.

Or perhaps it seems rather that the passage is to be taken simply, and that the likeness of Adam’s transgression is to be understood without any elaborate discussion, so that by this expression all who have been born from the transgressor Adam appear to be indicated, and to have in themselves the likeness of his transgression, received not only from his seed but also from his upbringing. For all who are born into this world are not only nourished by their parents but also instructed by them, and they are not only the children of sinners but also their disciples. But when their age has matured, and the freedom to act upon what they perceive has come to them, then a man either goes on in the way of his fathers, as is written of certain

kings, or else he walks in the way of the Lord his God. Indeed, something of this sort seems to me to be signified about Abel in what is written: ”And after some days Abel offered a sacrifice to God from the firstborn of his sheep, and from their fat. So then, in saying ”after some days,” he shows this: that in the first days of his life he was indeed held fast by the instruction of his father’s transgression; but after those days, when he came to his senses, when he looked to God, admonished by the law of nature, then he is said to have offered a sacrifice to God.

This passage, therefore, can either be expounded simply in this manner, or else a mystery concealed in the words ”in the likeness of Adam’s transgression,” and hidden away almost inexpressibly, may be gathered by a certain fine thread of understanding — as if someone should suppose that the death spoken of here, which is said to have reigned from Adam until Moses, that is, until the end of the law and the beginning of Christ, is that death of which it is written in the prophet, as though the Lord were speaking in his own person: ”I will snatch them from the hand of hell, and I will free them from death”; or else that certain persons are excepted, and are designated by a more hidden mystery, namely those who are recorded to have sinned after the likeness of Adam’s transgression, over whom alone death has reigned. But if, as some copies have it, this death — that is, the death which was holding souls fast in hell — is said to have reigned ”even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam’s transgression,” then we understand that even the saints, every one of them, fell under this death, if not by the law of sinning, yet certainly by the law of dying;

and that Christ therefore descended into hell not only that he himself might not be held by death, but also that he might drag out from there those who were held there not so much by the guilt of transgression, as we have said, as by the condition of dying — as it is written: ”Many bodies of the sleeping saints rose with him, and entered into the holy city. In this too the words of the Prophet are fulfilled, in which he says of Christ: ”Ascending on high, he led captivity captive. And in this way, through his resurrection, he has already destroyed the kingdoms of death, whence he is also written to have set the captivity free. But hear how the Apostle says that the enemy and tyrant himself, whose kingdoms he dissolved, is yet to be destroyed: ”The last enemy,” he says, ”that shall be destroyed is death. Now the kingdom of death has already been destroyed, and the captivity that was held under it has been led away. But because that enemy and tyrant himself is still to be destroyed at the last, at the end of the age, therefore even now we see him not so much reigning as playing the brigand; and, driven from his kingdom, going about through desert and trackless places, seeking for himself a band of the faithless. And for this reason the Apostle cried out: ”Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey its desires.

But let us be content to have touched briefly upon those things which the Apostle wished to remain covered, and let us look into what follows. After these things he added: ”Who is the form of the one to come. This indeed seems to me ambiguous: whether Adam is called the form of ”the one to come” reckoning from the time at which the Apostle was writing this — which would be the age to come; or from Adam himself, that is, ”to come” relative to Adam, so that it is to be understood of Christ — a time which, for the Apostle writing these things, was not future but past. And yet in another place also, when the same Apostle was speaking of Adam and Eve, he said: ”This is a great mystery: but I speak in Christ and in the Church”; in which he seems rather to have given us this to understand, that Adam is called the form of the one to come in that Christ came to join the Church to himself. I do not indeed see how anyone could fit his transgression, and his sin, and the fact that death passed through him upon all men, into a form of Christ — unless perhaps by contraries, as the same Apostle explains in the preceding passages, when he says: ”For as by one man came death, so also by one man the resurrection of the dead”; and again:

”For as by the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so also by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous. But if we understand the Apostle to have said, reckoning from his own times in which he was writing these things, that Adam is the form of the one to come, then it is better understood thus: that just as in this age death has reigned through the one Adam, and the whole race of men has been made mortal, so also in the age to come life will reign through Christ, and the whole race of men will be endowed with immortality. And in like manner, just as we have said that the expression in which he says, ”Who is the form of the one to come,” is ambiguous, so we find that something was written ambiguously also to the Colossians, where he says: ”Let no one therefore judge you in food, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or new moons, or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come. And likewise elsewhere the same Apostle says: ”For the law has a shadow of the good things to come. In these passages there is certainly a similar uncertainty: whether food, and drink, and feast days, and new moons, and Sabbaths have a shadow of things to come in such a way that at the coming of Christ the truth of that shadow has been fulfilled, or whether it is to be fulfilled in the age to come.

And likewise, as to what the Apostle says, that the whole law has a shadow of the good things to come, it is uncertain whether the truth of that shadow is to be fulfilled at the coming of Christ or in the age to come; for in another place too it is written, even concerning those things which are under the law, that they serve the forms and shadows of heavenly things. Whoever, then, wishes to maintain that these things were fulfilled at the coming of Christ will establish that the matters of food and drink were fulfilled in that place where Peter saw in a vision every kind of animal let down in a linen sheet, and heard a voice: ”What God has cleansed, do

not you call common" — which certainly refers to the diverse characters of men; and he will say that the drink is the cup of the New Testament; the feast day too he will prove, where "Christ our passover has been sacrificed," and we celebrate the feast day "not in the old leaven, but in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Similarly he will show that new moons, that is, new months, come to be through Christ the Sun of righteousness and through his apostles. And he will teach that the Sabbaths too are to be observed, by not carrying the burdens of sin, but by each one standing firmly in his own place, and not kindling a fire — concerning which it is said through the prophet:

"Walk in the light of your fire, and in the flame which you have kindled for yourselves. But another, who transfers these forms and the shadow of the law to the age to come, and holds that these are images of the heavenly ministries, to be fulfilled in that heavenly Jerusalem, will attempt to assign the meaning of food and drink according to what the Lord says: "Until I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father. And he will speak of the feast day according to the saying of the prophet: "What will you do on the day of solemnity, and on the feast day of the Lord? And the new moons, that is, the new months, he will look for in those eternal years of which the Prophet says: "I have called to mind the eternal years, and I have meditated"; and again in the canticle of Deuteronomy: "Remember the eternal days"; and concerning the Sabbath it is said: "There remains therefore a sabbath-rest for the people of God. And he will maintain that, just as each of these holds the form of the age to come, so Adam also, of whom it is said, "Who is the form of the one to come," can be referred to the account of the age to come; and that this is why, when it had first been said of those "who sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression," there was added: "Who is the form of the one to come."

[§2] "But the gift is not like the trespass. For if by the trespass of one many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ abound unto many. And the gift is not as it was by one sin. For the judgment indeed was from one unto condemnation, but grace is from many trespasses unto justification. Since in what precedes the Apostle had said of Adam, "who is a figure of him who was to come," and since he saw that it could be asked whether, if Adam is a figure of Christ, then it is necessary that he bore the figure of Christ also in that wherein he sinned, and in that wherein death reigned from Adam until Moses — but this seemed absurd to think concerning Christ — he at once adds: "But the gift is not like the trespass"; and beginning from this statement he proceeds, as it were, to explain himself, in what sense he called Adam a figure of Christ. "For if," he says, "by the trespass of one many died," namely in Adam, "much more did the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ abound unto many": that is, if, when one man sinned, death, finding a place, was able to be spread abroad into many, much more is the grace of God, which abounded in

Christ more copiously and more widely than death did in Adam, spread abroad into many;

and so far is the condition of the trespass not the same as that of the gift, that whereas judgment was passed upon Adam, and from that one man who trespassed condemnation came upon all men, on the contrary through Christ, out of the many trespasses by which the whole race of men was held fast, justification was given unto all: so that, as death had reigned through one man in trespasses, so also through the obedience of one might life reign through righteousness. Therefore it was not without a profound art of speaking that the Apostle laid it down that Adam is a figure of Christ — a figure that is similar in genus but contrary in species. For in genus the figure is similar in this, that just as from the one Adam it is spread abroad into many men, so also from the one Christ it is spread abroad into many men. But in species it is contrary, in that from Adam, once the transgression had begun, ”many were constituted sinners”; but by Christ’s ”obedience many shall be constituted righteous. Since, then, it has been explained according to the logic of his own language in what way Adam was a figure of Christ, whether in things similar or in things contrary, let us now also see what inner meaning the Apostle indicates in these words, or rather conceals.

And although it may seem hazardous to lay open those things which have been set down more secretly in the Apostle’s writings, nevertheless, so far as it is possible, I do not think it will seem absurd to gather from them certain indications of the divine goodness. The Apostle set out to show what ”the first Adam,” who ”was made into a living soul,” brought upon the human race, and what also ”the second Adam,” who is ”unto a life-giving spirit,” brought. From the transgression of the former, he says, sin appeared, and through sin death entered into all men; or rather, that we may preserve for Paul’s writings the restraint which he has maintained in the present passage, death passed through into many men. But through the obedience of Christ justification, and through justification life, abounded much more unto many. And he wishes to show that life is far stronger than death, and righteousness than sin; and by this to teach that if sin and death were able so to reign in all, taking their beginning from the disobedience of one man, how much more powerfully and more worthily will life reign through righteousness, taking its beginning through the obedience of the one Christ — Christ, I say, who came to this work moved not by any necessity of his condition, but by mercy alone.

For he was ”in the form of God,” and, seeing death reigning throughout the peoples by the trespass of one man, he does not forget his own creature, ”nor does he count it robbery that he is equal to God”: that is, he does not reckon it any great thing for himself that he indeed is equal to God and is one with the Father, while death, having entered by the trespass of one man, feeds upon his own work. Therefore he ”emptied himself” of equality and of the form of God, and took ”the

form of a servant," and becomes man, to tempt whom that one who reigned in all would indeed dare to come, but could not enter in. Yet he took upon himself this common death, though he did not receive that death of sin which reigned in all; that as "through a man came death, so through a man" there might come "the resurrection of the dead": and that as "by the trespass of one many died, much more the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ" might abound "unto many. And it was not without that profound wisdom which Paul says he speaks among the perfect that he tempered his words in this place, and those whom elsewhere he had called "all," here he named "many" or "the more," where he makes a comparison between the sin and death spread abroad from Adam into all men and the justification and life that are from Christ;

lest perhaps, if he declared absolutely that by an equal reasoning and in the same order in which from Adam the death of sin was spread abroad into all men, the justification and life which are from Christ are also spread abroad into all men, he might make his hearers lax, and they might become more sluggish toward observance, being sure of the security of a life that would be handed over to all men through Christ's grace. And therefore he restrains his speech, and does not set down "all men" (as he is accustomed to do elsewhere), but "many," who by the trespass of one were constituted sinners; and again he asserts that in the grace of God the gift through the one man Jesus Christ abounds not unto all, but unto many: whereby he may both hold the more negligent in suspense with fear and make them anxious, and yet not close off from the more perfect the secrets of the divine goodness. And it is well that he set down as "more" those to whom the gift of grace pertains than those who by the trespass of one were constituted sinners. In which I do indeed judge that there is something of a hidden mystery, since elsewhere too he says that death reigned from Adam until Moses, not in all, but only in those who sinned after the likeness of the transgression of Adam. Nevertheless, by a simpler understanding also it can be seen that they were called "more" for this reason:

that although those who were made sinners from Adam are many, yet those who are made alive through the grace of Christ are for this reason called "more," because even that very man from whom the death of sin was spread abroad into the rest is added to their number, inasmuch as together with all those whom he himself had placed under trespass, he too is saved; as it is said of Wisdom: "She," it says, "guarded him who was first formed, the father of the world, when he alone had been created, and delivered him from his own sin. And what is this Wisdom which delivered the first man from his own sin, if not Christ, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God?

Thus Christ brings back to life more than Adam led to death; for Christ has called back to life even Adam himself, who was for the rest the cause of death — so that

what the Apostle writes in what follows may be true, namely that ”as through the trespass of one man there came upon all men the condemnation of death, so also through the grace of one there came upon all men the justification of life. But Adam too is a man: therefore the justification of life will reach him also. But perhaps you will say: If, when one sinned, death passed through into all men, and again through the righteousness of one the justification of life has come to all men, then nothing was done by us either that we should die or that we should live; rather, Adam is the cause of death and Christ of life. Now we have already said, even in the passages above, that parents do not only beget children but also instruct them; and those who are born become not only sons to their parents but disciples as well, and they are driven into the death of sin not so much by nature as by training. For example: if someone departs from God and worships idols, will he not immediately, if he begets sons, teach them also to venerate idols and to offer sacrifices to demons?

This he does after the manner of Adam, and in this way death reigns from Adam — that is, from birth — up to the time of the Law, when a person, coming to the discernment of right and wrong conduct, can be made capable of the grace of Christ; and there he leaves behind Adam, who either begot him or taught him unto death, and follows Christ, who both teaches him and begets him unto life. But do you wish to know that the state in which death reigned from Adam is a matter not only of birth but also of teaching? Learn this from its opposites. For when the Lord Jesus Christ had come to set right what had been wrongly done, in view of the fact that the first birth, which came from Adam, brought forth unto death, he introduced a second birth, which he called not so much generation as regeneration, by which he would without doubt abolish the defect of the first birth; and just as he substituted regeneration for generation, so also he substituted another teaching for the former teaching. For when he sent his disciples to this work, he did not say merely: Go, baptize all nations; but he said: ”Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Knowing, therefore, that both were at fault, he gave a remedy for both, so that mortal generation might be changed by the regeneration of baptism, and the teaching of piety might shut out the teaching of impiety. It is not, then, without any sinning on our part that death has reigned in us; just as, on the other hand, life will not reign in us while we are idle and do nothing. But the beginning of life is indeed given by Christ, not to the unwilling but to believers, and one arrives at the perfection of life by the perfection of the virtues, just as formerly one arrived at death by the likeness of transgression and by the filling up of vices. And although the apostle Paul, as a prudent steward of the word of God, wished these things to be hidden and covered over in his Letters, nevertheless he did insert it and did not keep silent about it in the place where he says: ”But death reigned from Adam until Moses over those who sinned after the likeness of the transgression of Adam. Do you see how Paul excuses no one from sin? But he also indicates the kind of

sin, placing in each one the likeness of the transgression of Adam — although he did not think it safe to declare more openly where, when, or in what manner this likeness of transgression was committed by each one.

But he who has been trained in the law of the Lord knows how to understand a dark saying, and the words of the wise, and their riddles. And so for this reason he speaks also more secretly about the salvation which is in Christ; and when he had said, ”For as in Adam all die,” he did not say, ”so also in Christ all” are made alive, but ”shall be made alive”; and again, when he had said, ”For as by the sin of one death reigned through one, so also through the justification of one,” he did not say, life reigns, but ”life shall reign through the one, Jesus Christ. For he knows, as I have said, that it is written that ”one faithful in spirit conceals matters”; and likewise elsewhere: ”How great is the multitude of your sweetness, O Lord, which you have hidden for those who fear you. For if you ask when life will reign through Jesus Christ, and when his righteousness will be brought about unto the justification of life in all men, and when this blessedness will reach all: learn it from the words of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, in which he says to his disciples: ”Have you heard all these things? They say to him: Yes, Lord. He says to them: Blessed are you, if you do them. Then, therefore, shall we be blessed, when we are able not only to hear and understand the word of God, but also to do it.

For although it is promised that one is at some time to come out of the prison, yet it is indicated that one cannot come out from there unless each one pays back even the last farthing. But if even a farthing — which is the penalty of the smallest sin — is not remitted unless it be paid off in prison and through punishments, how shall anyone grow slack in the hope of impunity, or think that the gift of grace is a license for sinning? Therefore from one man, Adam, sin began to reign in this world, and it reigned over those who followed the likeness of Adam’s transgression; and for that reason ”the judgment came from one unto condemnation”; and again, through one, our Lord Jesus Christ, grace began to reign through righteousness — which will also reign in all who obey him and keep his words, and through these come from many trespasses to the justification of life.

[§3] ”For if by one man’s transgression death reigned through one, much more shall they who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one Jesus Christ. If the gift were as the transgression is, the Apostle would surely have said that just as by one man’s transgression death reigned through one, so also through one man’s righteousness life shall reign through the one Jesus Christ. But as it is he says that ”death” indeed ”reigned by one man’s transgression through one. Yet those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness — not only does death no longer reign in them (which of itself is assuredly no small grace), but two other goods besides are conferred upon them: one, that in place of death Christ Jesus reigns in them as life; the other,

that they themselves also shall reign through the one Jesus Christ. Since therefore these necessary goods come upon them — namely, that they escape the reign of death, and that in place of death life reigns in them, indeed that they themselves also reign in life through the one Jesus Christ — it is plain how ”the transgression is not as the gift is,” and how it can be said: ”Much more shall the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ abound unto many”; and that other saying: ”But the grace is from many transgressions unto justification”; and likewise what he says in the present passage:

”Much more shall they who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one Jesus Christ” our Lord. Now in saying, ”By one man’s transgression death reigned through one,” he shows that it is through transgression that a kingdom is given to death, and that death cannot reign in anyone unless it receive the right of its kingdom from transgression. From which it seems to be judged that, although the soul was created free by God, it reduces itself into servitude through transgression, and hands over to death, as it were, the bonds of its own immortality which it had received from its Creator. ”For the soul that sins, it shall die. The soul itself, in short, cries out through the Prophet, saying: ”You have brought me down into the dust of death. Which surely could not have befallen it except from transgression. Whence it plainly appears that through transgression it has written out its own bonds with death, so that, having lost the freedom of immortality, it should take up the yoke of sin and the reign of death. The Apostle therefore, wishing to show how much greater are the things the soul receives through Christ than what it had lost through Adam, repeats these expressions, so as to say, ”Much more,” and, ”the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness,” and, ”they shall reign through the one Jesus Christ. All of which assuredly declare that the gifts are far more abundant than the losses. But you will ask:

these whom he says shall reign in life through Jesus Christ — over whom shall they reign? It seems to me that, just as he showed the reign of death to have been over those whom it made liable to itself by their sinning, so also he shows that the kingdom of those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, and who are said to be about to reign through the one Jesus Christ, will be over those who become subject to them in the instruction of the kingdom of God, and, so to speak, who have been found capable of the wisdom and righteousness and life that is in them and through which they reign. Whence it seems to me not idly that the Apostle, who in other places had said that ”death passed upon all men,” and again, ”the grace of God abounded unto many,” and again, ”the grace is from many transgressions unto justification,” has here set down neither ”all” nor ”many” nor ”the more part,” knowing that the sum of this blessedness pertains to few, ”who, receiving the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life through the one Jesus Christ. And here the kingdom of death itself is described,

that death which elsewhere is said to be the last or final enemy of Christ to be destroyed. And it will be destroyed in this, that it shall no longer reign.

But if it does not reign, it is certain that neither will there any longer be transgression, in which alone the reign of death consists; then without doubt it will be said to it: ”Where, O death, is your sting?” — since indeed, as the Apostle himself says, ”the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. It remains, then, that the law too will not exist at that time, since it is called the very strength of sin, so that when the strength of sin is taken away, the reign of death may deservedly be abolished as well. But let these things be said now by way of digression, for they will be examined more fittingly in their own places. Yet I should like to inquire — since we have said that death held its kingdom up to the coming of Christ, who is life, and since the Apostle says that Christ came not only to destroy death but also to destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil — who reigns in this middle time, that is, before that comes to pass which is written: ”Then the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God the Father. For if we say what seems to follow, that life reigns now that death has been destroyed, it can be objected to us: How then is sin committed? And it is manifest that death reigns through sin.

But if we say that Christ, that is life, reigns in some and death in others, whom or where shall we find those in whom the reign of life is such that the reign of death has no power in them, that is, who are utterly without sin? These things seem to me to pertain rather to the future kingdom, and to be fulfilled there, where it is said that ”God may be all in all. For this reason too we are taught to say in the Lord’s Prayer, ”Your kingdom come,” as though it had not yet come; and the Lord himself at the beginning of his preaching does not say, ”The kingdom of heaven has come,” but, ”The kingdom of heaven has drawn near. The present time, however, I should call one that seems to be not so much of kingdom as of warfare — a warfare through which the future kingdom is sought; although even in this very time of warfare, because already in some part the reign of death is being broken and gradually destroyed, which formerly had been extended over all men, Christ is said to reign, according to what is written: ”For he must reign, until he put all his enemies under his feet”; and again elsewhere he says: ”But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. Whence it appears that in saying, ”For he must reign,” he has put this for ”prepare the kingdom.

For it is certain that first there must be fighting, and the strong man must be bound, and only so are his vessels to be plundered. And therefore the Savior himself also says: ”I came not to send peace, but a sword. And the fighting must be carried on by those who wish to reign in life through Jesus Christ for just so long, until ”the last enemy, death, be destroyed. But concerning the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness it must also be known that to that kingdom which we said is

prepared through warfare no one comes who has obtained one grace only, that is, who has been pleasing in some one work; but an abundance of grace is required of him, according to him who says: ”But I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. He prays for like things also for those whom he instructs, when he says: ”Grace and peace be multiplied to you. Grace therefore is multiplied and abounds if our speech is always seasoned with the salt of grace, and our work is done with the grace of humility and simplicity, and we do all that we do to the glory of God. Similarly is it to be understood also of the gift of righteousness. For he who is justified by Christ ought to do nothing without righteousness, according to him who says: ”Blessed are they who keep judgment, and do righteousness at all times”;

and according to what Wisdom declares, saying that ”even if one be perfect among the sons of men, if the righteousness that is from God be not with him, he shall be reckoned as nothing. And in this way those who have had the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life through the one Jesus Christ.

[§4] ”Therefore, as through the transgression of one man it came upon all men unto condemnation, so also through the righteousness of one it comes upon all men unto justification of life. We have already said above that through Adam’s transgression a kind of entrance was, as it were, opened, through which either sin, or the death of sin, or condemnation might come upon all men. Christ, on the contrary, therefore opened an entrance of justification, through which life might come in to men, and for this reason he said of himself: ”I am the door. If anyone enters through me, he shall be saved. But enough has already been said about these matters above. This, however, must be observed: that he did not say, ”As it came upon all men unto condemnation” of death, but only ”unto condemnation,” namely so that in all respects he might prove the gift to be far more abundant than the transgression. But we must see in what way, or what sort of condemnation, has come upon all men. And perhaps it can suffice, according to the simple exposition, that we say the condemnation of the transgression is this common death, which comes to all and will come, even if they are seen to be righteous. But if perhaps someone raises the objection of Enoch and Elijah, who were translated so that they should not see death, the case is safeguarded in this way:

that what is said of all is not straightway shown to be false, if some dispensation of God has been made in the case of one man or two. But this too someone will fittingly, as I think, bring forward in this place: that when Adam had transgressed, it is written that the Lord God cast him out of paradise, and set him in this earth over against the paradise of delights; and this was the condemnation of his transgression, which without doubt has come upon all men. For all have been placed in this place of humiliation and in the valley of weeping; whether because all who are born from him were in Adam’s loins, and were cast out together with him; or

whether in some other unutterable manner known to God alone each one is seen to have been thrust out of paradise and to have received the condemnation.

[§5] ”For as through the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of one many shall be made righteous. It can indeed be the case that, according to what we have observed above, Paul, wishing to veil the more secret mysteries, puts ”many” where elsewhere he had said ”all,” lest perhaps, if he had said that through the disobedience of one ”all” were made sinners, and had necessarily added, ”so also through the obedience of one” all ”shall be made righteous,” he should seem, by the security of such a promise, to unnerve the souls of those for whom it is expedient to be under fear. And therefore we, preserving the counsel of a faithful and prudent steward in the word of God, ought rather to give an account of this: how through the disobedience of one not all, but many, were made sinners. For how through the obedience of one not all, but many, are made righteous will present no difficulty to the understanding, according to that which the Lord says in the Gospel: ”For many shall come from the East and the West, and shall recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God,” and he did not say, All shall come. But we must show how sinners are seen to be many and not all, since the same Apostle says that ”all have sinned. It is one thing to sin, another to be a sinner.

He is called a sinner who by transgressing in many things has already come into the habit, and, so to speak, into the eager pursuit of sinning; just as, on the contrary, he is not called righteous who has once or twice done something of righteousness, but he who by always acting justly holds righteousness in practice and habit. For if someone is unjust in almost all other things, but once or twice has done some just work, he indeed will be said to have acted justly in that work in which he held to righteousness, yet he will not on this account be called righteous. So too a righteous man will be said indeed to have sinned if at some time he has committed something that is not lawful, yet he will not on this account be called a sinner, since he does not hold the practice and habit of sinning: just as that man is not called a physician who knows how to lay a cobweb on the lightly broken skin of the head, or who has bathed the swelling of a wound with warm water, although even this seems to belong to medicine; but he is called a physician who has the practice, and the pursuit, and the discipline of healing. From all which I think it has been sufficiently shown that it is one thing to sin, another to be a sinner.

For it can be that all have sinned, even if they have been holy, because ”no one is clean from filth, not even if his life has been of one day. For who is there who has not sinned either in deed, or in word, or — if he is most cautious — at least in thought? And therefore, as I said, all will rightly be said to have sinned, but not all were made sinners; rather, many. In like manner also the righteous will be reckoned many, not all, even if all do some work of righteousness. And the Apostle

well preserves also the reckoning of the tenses. For when he referred the many being made sinners to the past, he transferred the many being made righteous to the future time, knowing without doubt that with the advance of the evangelical preaching the multitude of the righteous would increase greater. But that there were also many righteous even before the coming of the Savior, the same Lord testifies in the Gospels, when he says: ”Many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see. But the Savior speaks here of many righteous in one sense, and the Apostle has put it in another. For the Savior, looking at the number of the apostles, said that the righteous and the prophets were many in comparison with them; but in the present passage the Apostle must be understood to have referred ”many” to a comparison with all who have been born and will be born in this world.

Therefore ”through the disobedience of one many were made sinners,” the many sinners being understood according to that observation which we set forth above concerning the one who sins and the sinner. But if someone objects to us what the Apostle says of himself: ”That Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners, of whom I am the first,” as though he seems even to call himself a sinner, we shall say that it is one thing for someone to be designated a sinner from the person of Scripture, or of a prophet, or of the Lord, and another for a righteous man to become his own accuser and to humble himself that he may be exalted by God; although Paul also, in that he says that he persecuted the Church of God and assailed it, and dragged off men and women and cast them into chains — although he did these things in ignorance, and obtained mercy — nevertheless, when he was doing these things, he may confess that not undeservedly perhaps he ought to have been called a sinner. But that the reason for this distinction which we have given between the one who sins and being a sinner may shine forth still more evidently, look at Cain, who, though he is manifestly a sinner, nevertheless did something right: on account of which the Lord said to him, ”If you offer rightly. And Pharaoh, when he says, ”The Lord is just;

but I and my people are impious,” did something just, but he is not on this account called just. And you will find many things of this sort in the divine Scriptures, from which you may perceive both that a righteous man has sinned in something, and that a sinner has done something of righteousness: nor yet will you find either the righteous man called a sinner because he has sinned in something, or the sinner called righteous because he has done something just. But let not even this escape the attentive hearer, that where he says ”the disobedience of one,” he adds also ”man,” ”through whom many were made sinners. But where he puts ”the obedience of one,” he does not add ”man,” ”through whom many shall be made righteous. For here he through whom they are made righteous is without doubt righteousness itself, just as the same Apostle also says of Christ: ”Who has been made for us righteousness from God. Adam therefore gave to sinners a pattern through disobedience; but Christ, on the contrary, set a pattern for the righteous

through obedience, as it is also written elsewhere: ”But you have obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching unto which you were delivered. For on this account he himself also ”was made obedient unto death,” so that those who follow the example of his obedience may be made righteous by righteousness itself, just as those following the pattern of disobedience were made sinners.

[§6] ”But the law entered in secretly, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, so also grace might reign through justice unto life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. If indeed no one had sinned before the law was given through Moses, Marcion and the other heretics, wishing to accuse the law, would seem to seize an occasion from these words of the Apostle, as though this had been the reason for the law’s being given, namely that sin, which had not existed before the law, might abound. But I do not know what time they can find that was empty of sins before the law. When Cain was killing Abel, and defiling the earth with a brother’s blood, so that it was said to him, ”Cursed is the earth in thy work, which hath opened its mouth to receive the blood of thy brother,” was sin not abounding? Plainly it was abounding — and that when men themselves did not yet abound. Or then, when Lamech was saying: ”I have slain a man to the wounding of myself, and a young man to my own bruising? And whereas vengeance was taken sevenfold for Cain, for Lamech it shall be seventy times sevenfold”?

But in the times of Noe the offence abounded so greatly that, it says, ”the Lord seeing that the wickednesses of men were multiplied upon the earth, and that every man diligently set his heart upon malice all the days of his life, the Lord reconsidered that he had made man upon the earth, and he repented in his heart, and said: I will destroy man whom I have made from the face of the earth, from man even to beast, and from the creeping things even to the birds of the air, because it repenteth me that I have made them. And again, when it is said: ”The earth was corrupted before the Lord, and the earth was filled with iniquities. And God saw the earth, and it was exceedingly corrupted, because all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. Who then is so stupid as to deny that in all these things sin abounded? Or surely when it is said by God concerning the Sodomites: ”I have come down that I might see whether according to the cry of the Sodomites their iniquities are being brought to completion”; or when they stood round about the house of Lot, contriving the crime of their shamelessness even against angels? Or perhaps sin was not abounding then, when Pharao was afflicting the sons of Israel with mud and brick, and commanding their newborn to be killed in the river?

And certainly the law of Moses had not yet entered in when so great a plague of sins was being spread abroad over the earth. From which it is gathered that the heretics whom we have mentioned above, or any others who along with them accept these things as said about the law of Moses, have not been able to touch

even lightly upon the apostolic meaning. Rather, therefore, in this passage it ought to be understood — as we have already often said — that there is a law of nature which is ”written not on tablets of stone, but on the fleshly tablets of the heart; not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God”: which law was so inscribed by him who created man from the beginning upon the governing part of his heart, that at the fitting time, when the pages themselves have grown up with the mind, or rather, as the Scripture named it, when the fleshly tablets of the heart have begun to be opened by the increase of age, it begins to be diffused through the inward parts of the conscience, and to fill the senses with reasonings. Then, therefore, against the precepts which are naturally suggested by a law of this kind, the will of the flesh rises up and suggests other desires:

and this is what the Apostle himself named ”a law placed in the members,” ”resisting the law of the mind.” — This law of the members, then, the Apostle seems now to have set down in this passage, which he says entered in secretly that sin might abound. For the very word which he used seems to me most fully to indicate these things which we are saying. For it is one thing to enter in, another to enter in secretly; just as it is one thing to lead, and another to lead away by stealth; one thing to draw, and another to withdraw. For ”to enter in secretly” indicates this: when, another having entered, under cover of that one another enters. In which the reasoning we have expounded above evidently shows that under cover of the natural law, which the Apostle named the law of the mind, which consents to the law of God, there arose the law of the members, which, suggesting the desires of the flesh and leading man captive, bent toward lust and pleasures, makes sin abound in him. Thus, therefore, ”the law entered in secretly, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded,” he says, ”grace did more abound. As we have taught in what precedes, where he makes a comparison of each single one of the adverse things which seem to have come about from Adam’s transgression, and shows that far greater are the things which have been brought forward through the grace of Christ:

so also in the present passage, when he had said that sin abounded, he used a most worthy word by which he might overcome the abundance and set down a super-abundance. But the grace of Christ super-abounded in this, that it not only absolved man from past sins, but also fortified him against those to come. Since indeed he shows two kingdoms, as it were, in man: one by which sin reigned unto death; another by which grace may reign through justice unto life. Grace, therefore, it is which cast out and expelled sin from its own kingdom, that is, from our members, and with it death also necessarily went out together and was expelled, so that at last grace might both claim for itself a kingdom in us through justice, and where death had been, there eternal life might stand fast. And this is what the same Apostle says elsewhere: ”Let not sin therefore now reign in your mortal body”; and the same elsewhere: ”For as you have yielded your members as weapons of iniq-

uity unto sin, so now yield your members as weapons of justice unto God. There is therefore a great super-abundance from this, that where sin was and death, there now is grace, and justice, and life eternal. And all these things are indeed above the rest through our Lord Jesus Christ.

But it may be that, just as he said that all these good things exist through our Lord Jesus Christ, so also he wished those evil things to be understood as having existed through the devil, but was silent about the name of their author, so that he might designate the super-abundance of grace in all things. For just as Christ is indeed one in substance, but is designated by many powers and operations (for he himself is understood to be grace, as also justice, peace, life, as truth, as the Word), so perhaps the devil also can often be understood under diverse significations. For the sin which is said to reign is to be thought to be he himself; and death is to be believed to be he himself, of whom it is said, ”the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed. But perdition too is understood to be he himself, according to that which was said by the prophet: ”Thou art become perdition, and thou shalt not subsist unto eternal time. But also as to what the Apostle says, ”Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,” I think that it was said rather about him. For he is the author of sin, and of death, and of perdition; and consequently from the things invented the inventor is named. It cannot therefore come about that the soul should ever be without a king; but this must be provided for, that it have Christ as king, whose yoke is sweet and burden light;

and not the devil, whose kingdom is heavy. For it is iniquity that sits upon a talent of lead. But where Christ reigns, there grace and justice super-abound unto life eternal.

[§7] ”What then shall we say? Shall we remain in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. For we who are dead to sin, how shall we still live in it? Since he had said above that ”where sin abounded, grace did more abound,” he now sets before himself the question arising from this: that if the abundance of sin gives birth to the superabundance of grace, then one ought to sin, so that grace may abound the more. But he shows the swift resolution of the question when he says, ”God forbid”; and immediately he adds the reason, saying that those in whom grace has abounded are dead to sin. Now it is certain that one who is dead to sin cannot be a sinner. Therefore he who is dead to sin will not be able to remain in sin. But that these things may become clearer, let us inquire what it is to live to sin, and what it is to die to sin. Just as he is said to live to God who lives according to the will of God, so also he is said to live to sin who lives according to the will of sin — as the Apostle himself indicates when he says: ”Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so that you obey its desires. In this he shows that to obey the desires of sin is to live to sin.

But if to do the desires of sin is to live to sin, then not to do the desires of sin, and not to obey its will, this is to die to sin — which sin, nevertheless, the Apostle says has its seat, as it were, and the throne of its kingdom established in our body. For that part of our substance is more familiar to it, and there is a certain friendly fellowship with the pleasures of the flesh, from which, taking occasions of natural incitement, by a small turning aside it bends the order of nature into the precipice of death. But that what we are saying may be explained still more plainly, let us set down an example. The flesh has natural appetites for food and drink, which are contained within certain measures of sufficiency; and if anyone exceeds these at the persuasion of sin, then the flesh demands not the food and drink that suffices nature, but luxury and drunkenness. In like manner too there is in the flesh a natural incitement by which it seeks union with a woman for the sake of restoring the succession of the race; but if from this occasion, at the persuasion of sin, one turns aside from the law, and the natural motions of desire are stirred up to unlawful things, then he lives to sin who in each of these obeys not the law of God, but the persuasions of sin.

If therefore anyone, admonished by the death of Christ, who ”died for the ungodly,” repents in all these things, and drives out sin like a most wicked king reigning in his own flesh, and makes himself a stranger to its desires and its commands, this man is truly said to be dead to sin through the death of Christ. And here I think that ”sin” names the very author of sin. If therefore anyone dies to sin, it is certain that he dies through repentance. How then shall anyone remain in sin that grace may abound, when grace abounds from the very fact that one dies to sin? For if we remain, as is proposed, in sin, it is certain that we do not die, but live to sin; and to those living to sin, grace cannot abound. It is indeed worth inquiring whether grace superabounds only in those men in whom sin at some time abounded; and whether grace superabounds in no one except in him in whom sin abounded; or whether grace can also superabound or abound in some in whom there never will be, or has been, sin. And if anyone considers what the Apostle says, that ”Christ made peace through his blood not only for the things that are on earth, but also for those that are in heaven”;

and that other saying, ”That apart from God he might taste death for all,” he will suppose that there too there was likewise some abundance of sin, so that nonetheless there might also come to be a superabundance of grace. But if you attend to what the earlier reading recalled, where sin is said to have entered into this world through one man, and death through sin, and so to have passed upon all, you will say that from that beginning these matters also proceed which we now have in hand, so that he seems to be treating only of those things which the Apostle set forth at the beginning — that is, of those things which pertain to men alone. It should certainly be observed with what weighed speech the Apostle spoke, so as to say, ”Shall we remain in sin? For to remain is not to cease from what has been

begun. And if anyone does this, it is certain that he has not even received the beginning of conversion. But this sometimes happens, that a man does not indeed remain in sin, but when he has ceased, he returns again to his vomit, and becomes most wretched, so that after the kingdom of sin and of death has been driven from him, and the kingdom of life and righteousness has been received, he again submits himself to the dominion of sin and of death. And these are what the Apostle calls shipwrecks of the faith.

Nevertheless, although a man may remain in sin, although he may continue under the kingdom and power of death, yet I do not think that this kingdom of death is eternal in the way that the kingdom of life and righteousness is — especially since I hear from the Apostle that death, the last enemy, is to be destroyed. And in truth, if the same eternity be assigned to death as belongs to life, then death will no longer be contrary to life, but equal to it. For the eternal will not be contrary to the eternal, but the same. Now, however, it is certain that death is contrary to life; it is certain therefore that if life is eternal, death cannot be eternal — whence also the resurrection of the dead holds a necessary place. For when the death of the soul, which is the last enemy, shall have been destroyed, then also this common death, which we have said is as it were the shadow of that one, will necessarily be abolished; and then consequently place will be given to the resurrection of the dead, when the kingdom of death will be destroyed together with death itself. But let us not wait for the time when this last enemy is destroyed — we who have been ”once enlightened,” and have tasted ”the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come”;

but let us remain in grace, and not wait to be renewed again after a fall ”unto repentance, crucifying again to ourselves the Son of God, and holding him up to open shame”; but let the kingdom of righteousness in us become an eternal kingdom; and let us not flee back again into the kingdom of death, from which, once delivered, we have come to the kingdom of eternal life — so that ”grace may reign through righteousness” in us ”unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What therefore he said, ”We are dead to sin,” is that which he says elsewhere, that we have been made conformed to the death of Christ, who ”died once to sin. But when he says ”once,” he signifies ”wholly. For Christ died wholly to sin, he ”who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. ”Or are you ignorant that all we who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death? For we were buried together with him through baptism into death; that as Christ rose from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. Observe more carefully the order of the words and their sequence.

For he compares the death which is through Adam with the life which is through Christ; and he says: ”Not as the offense, so also is the gift; and again after these

things he says that the law entered in that sin might abound; but where sin abounded, grace superabounded; and in these words he resolves what seemed to be contrary, and says: ”For we who are dead to sin, how shall we yet live in it? Now therefore, wishing to show by the very facts what it is to be dead to sin, he says: ”Or are you ignorant that whoever of us have been baptized in Christ Jesus, have been baptized in his death? For we have been buried together with him through baptism into death: teaching by these words that if anyone has first died to sin, he is of necessity buried together with Christ in baptism; but if anyone does not first die to sin, he cannot be buried with Christ. For no one alive is ever buried. And if he is not buried together with Christ, neither is he lawfully baptized. But concerning the account of baptism, when we were expounding the Gospel according to John, where we came to that passage in which John says of Jesus: ”He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit; and likewise where the Savior himself says:

”Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” we spoke according to our own powers, so far as we were able to attain — nay rather, so far as the Lord granted — where also we attempted to open up more deeply the force of that very word by which it is said: ”Unless a man be born again. For what we Latins render ”again” (denuo), the Greeks call ἄνωθεν (anōthen), which word signifies both ”again” and ”from above. In this passage, therefore, since he who is baptized by Jesus is baptized in the Holy Spirit, it is not said ”again” in such a way as that, but rather it is fitting that it be understood ”from above”: for we say ”again” when the same things that have been done are repeated; but here the same nativity is not repeated or reiterated, but rather, this earthly one being set aside, a new nativity is received from above; and therefore we should more rightly read in the Gospel: ”If anyone has not been born from above, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God: for this is to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. And to this reasoning, that baptism may be confirmed to be from above, there will not undeservedly be joined to the Holy Spirit also ”the waters that are above the heavens, and they praise the name of the Lord.

And although according to the type handed down to the Churches we have all been baptized in these visible waters and in visible chrism, nevertheless he who is dead to sin, and is truly baptized into the death of Christ, and is buried together with him through baptism into death, he is truly baptized in the Holy Spirit and in the water from above. And consider yet more diligently the consequence of the mystical order. You must first die to sin, that you may be able to be buried with Christ. For burial is owed to one who is dead. For if you still live to sin, you cannot be buried together with Christ, nor be laid in his new sepulcher, because your old man lives, and cannot walk in newness of life. For on this account it was the Holy Spirit’s care to hand down through the Scriptures both that the sepulcher was new in which Jesus was buried, and that he was wrapped in a clean linen cloth:

so that everyone who wishes to be buried together with Christ through baptism may know that nothing of oldness is to be brought to the new sepulcher, nothing of uncleanness to the clean linen. This, then, is that blessed death of which the Apostle speaks, that ”we always carry about the death of Jesus Christ in our body; and again: ”I die daily.

But also that saying of his, ”All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or this world, or life, or death” — he reckons among these that death by which we die to sin and are buried together with Christ. But someone may inquire in these passages why the Apostle, speaking of our baptism and of Jesus, said: ”We have been buried together with him through baptism into death; and likewise elsewhere: ”If we die together with him, we shall also live together with him; and likewise: ”If we suffer together, we shall also reign together; and nowhere did he say: We have been baptized together with Christ; since surely, just as death is compared with death, and life with life, so also baptism would seem to have had to be compared with baptism. But see how great caution there is in the Apostle’s writings; for he says: ”Whoever of us have been baptized in Christ Jesus. Our baptism, therefore, he says is in Christ Jesus. But Christ himself is reported to have been baptized by John, not with that baptism which is in Christ, but with that which is in the law. For so he himself says to John: ”Suffer it now: for so it becomes us to fulfill all justice. In which he shows that the baptism of John was the completion of the old things, not the beginning of the new.

Finally it is related in the Acts of the Apostles that certain of the disciples who had been baptized with the baptism of John were, by the judgment of the apostles, rebaptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ”Whoever,” therefore, ”of us have been baptized in Christ Jesus, have been baptized in his death. You may perhaps inquire this also: that since the Lord himself said to the disciples that they should baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, why here the Apostle took up in baptism the name of Christ alone, saying: ”Whoever of us have been baptized in Christ,” since surely no baptism is held to be lawful except under the name of the Trinity. But consider the prudence of Paul, since indeed in the present passage he desired to discuss not so much the account of baptism as the death of Christ, to the likeness of which he would persuade us also that we ought to die to sin and be buried together with Christ. And it was surely not fitting that, where he was speaking of death, he should name either the Father or the Holy Spirit. For ”the Word was made flesh,” and rightly, where there is flesh, there death is treated of. Nor was it fitting that he should say: ”Whoever of us have been baptized” in the name of the Father, or in the name of the Holy Spirit, ”have been baptized in his death.

Whence from this passage the Apostle’s practice is to be observed in other places also, namely that he does not always, when he takes up something from the Scrip-

tures, take up the whole text of the words as it stands in its own place; but only those things which the argument of the present case requires, as also in the present discourse, since he desired to teach concerning the death of Christ, it sufficed him to say: ”Whoever of us have been baptized in Christ, have been baptized in his death. But to me the Apostle seems not even idly to have prefaced in this chapter what he says: ”Or do you not know? By which he shows that at that time, that is, in the times of the apostles, not — as we see done now — was only the type of the mysteries handed down to those who were baptized, but their power and rational account as well, and this as to those who knew and had been taught that they who are baptized are baptized into the death of Christ, and are buried together with him through baptism into death; and that, just as Christ rose from the dead through the glory of the Father, so those who have been baptized ought to walk in newness of life.

This is what the Apostle writes. Perhaps in the present passage this too may still be asked: if we have died to sin, and have been buried together with Christ, and have risen again with him, it will seem necessary, according to this pattern, to show how we too have spent three days and three nights buried with him in the heart of the earth. And consider whether we may be able to spend three days buried together with Christ when we have begun to have the full knowledge of the Trinity: for the Father is light, and in his light, which is the Son, we see the light of the Holy Spirit. And we spend three nights also when we destroy the father of darkness and ignorance together with the lie that was born of him, and ”he is a liar, as also is his father, and when he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own. But in the third place also we destroy the spirit of error, which inspires the false prophets to say, ”Thus says the Lord,” whom the Lord has not sent. We destroy these things and trample them down, if we have been buried together with Christ, according also to that which he himself says: ”Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy.

And these several things are so contrary to the Trinity as night is to day, and darkness to light, and falsehood to truth — these things, for the present, are what have been able to occur to us in this passage. But if anyone should have a better understanding, let him not be reluctant to set these aside and adopt those. Nevertheless, this is what is gathered from these words of the Apostle by the higher understanding: that just as no living person can be buried with a dead one, so no one who still lives to sin can be buried together in baptism with Christ, who died to sin; and therefore those who hasten to baptism ought first to take care of this, that they die beforehand to sin, and so may be able to be buried together with Christ through baptism, so that they too may say: ”Always carrying about the death of Jesus Christ in our body, that the life of Jesus Christ also may be made manifest in our mortal flesh. But how the life of Jesus Christ is made manifest in the body, Paul himself shows when he says: ”Yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me. This is the same

thing that the apostle John writes in his Epistle, when he says: ”Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God.

In which, assuredly, it is not the one who has pronounced these syllables and uttered them in a common confession who will be seen to be moved by the Spirit of God, but the one who has so shaped his life, and so brought forth the fruits of work, that he has shown by the very religious quality of his deeds and thoughts that Christ has come in the flesh, and has died to sin, and lives to God. Now let us see, after we have opened up, so far as our strength allows, what it is to be buried together with Christ, this also which he says: ”That as Christ rose from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. If we have been buried together with Christ, according to what we have said above — that is, according as we have died to sin — then consequently, when Christ rises from the dead, we too shall rise together with him, and when he ascends to the heavens, we shall ascend together with him, and when he sits at the right hand of the Father, we shall be said to sit together with him in the heavenly places, according to what the same Apostle says elsewhere, that ”he raised us up together with Christ, and made us sit together in the heavenly places. Christ rose through the glory of the Father;

and we, if we have died to sin and been buried together with Christ, and all who see our good works glorify our Father who is in heaven, shall deservedly be said to have risen together with Christ through the glory of the Father, so that we may walk in newness of life. And newness of life is where we have put off ”the old man with his deeds,” and have put on ”the new, who is created according to God,” and ”who is renewed in the knowledge” of God, ”according to the image of him who created him. And do not suppose that the renewal of life, which is said to have been done once, is sufficient; but always, and daily, if it may be so said, that very newness must be renewed. For thus the Apostle says: ”For even if our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward is renewed from day to day. For just as the old man always grows old, and from day to day becomes older, so also this new man is always renewed, and there is never a time when his renewal does not increase. Look, finally, at those who advance in faith and shine forth daily in the virtues, how they always add better things to good works, and seek out more honorable deeds than the honorable ones they have done, how they grow rich in understanding, in knowledge and wisdom, and how the things that before seemed less plain to the understanding they afterwards perceive as open and clear.

And consider whether by these very facts you would not say that such a man is daily renewed; just as, on the contrary, as we have said, if anyone has begun to become old, he will advance for the worse, and will daily be found older and worse than himself. Let us therefore walk in newness of life, showing ourselves daily new to him who raised us up with Christ, and, so to speak, more beautiful, gathering the

comeliness of our countenance in Christ as in a mirror, and beholding in him the glory of the Lord, let us be transformed into the same image, since Christ, rising from the dead, ascended from earthly lowliness to the glory of the Father's majesty. But further, as to what he said, "let us walk in newness of life," consider whether perhaps it points to this mystery: that so long as a person is making progress, he is said to walk. Yet it must not be thought that he is said to walk without end, but that those who walk in these advances come at some time to that place where they are to stand. Thus, in short, to Stephen, the first martyr, who had already come to the degree of perfection, Jesus Christ appeared standing at the right hand of the Power; and to Moses, who likewise, after many advances, had arrived at perfection, the Lord says: "But do you stand here with me. And Paul too, when he recognized in himself the consummation of perfection, says: "I have finished my course.

But to those who think themselves perfect, and yet are not, he says: "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. To the imperfect, however, and to those who are still at the beginnings, it is said that they should walk after the Lord their God; and of others it is said: "I am unwilling to send them away fasting, lest perhaps they faint on the way."

[§9] "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be [planted together in the likeness] of his resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified together with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we should no longer serve sin. For he who has died has been justified from sin. All these things look back to that question, lest he should seem to have given occasion for sinning in what he said: "But where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more. For it is on this account that he says both that we are dead to sin, and that whoever of us have been baptized into Christ have been baptized into his death; and now he writes that we have been planted together into the likeness of his death, adding that if we bear the likeness of his death, by which he died to sin, we ought also to hope for the likeness of his resurrection. But he shows in what way this can come about, saying that our old man must be crucified together with Christ. And our old man is to be understood as the former life which we led in sins, of which we make an end and, as it were, a destruction when we receive within ourselves the faith of Christ's cross, through which the body of sin is so destroyed that our members, which used to serve sin, no longer serve it, but God.

But now, taking up the discussion again, let us see what it is to be planted together in the likeness of Christ's death — in which phrase he presents Christ's death as, so to speak, the planting of some tree, with which he wishes us to be planted together, so that our root also, receiving from the sap of his root, may put forth branches of righteousness and bear the fruits of life. But if you wish to learn from the Scriptures what this plant is with which we ought to be planted together, and of what kind the tree is, hear what is written concerning Wisdom: "She is," he says, "a tree of life to

all who hope in her; and those who trust in her are as in the Lord. Christ therefore, the power of God and the wisdom of God, is himself the tree of life, with which we ought to be planted together; and by a certain new and lovable gift of God his death becomes for us a tree of life. And the Apostle rightly, knowing that in the present passage he is treating not of this common death but of the death of sin, did not say, ”For if we have been planted together” with his death, but ”with the likeness of his death. For Christ so died once to sin that he committed no sin at all, nor was guile found in his mouth. And this can in no way be found in its entirety in any other human being.

For ”no one is clean from sin, not even if his life has been of a single day. Therefore, by that very death by which Jesus died to sin, so that he committed no sin at all, we cannot die in such a way that we know sin not at all; yet we can have the likeness of it, so that by imitating him and following his footsteps we may keep ourselves from sin. This, then, is what human nature is able to receive: that it should come to be in the likeness of his death, while by imitating him it does not sin. For to be altogether and entirely ignorant of sin belongs to Christ alone. But certain of the heretics, not understanding this, have tried to assert from this passage of the Apostle that Christ did not truly die, but had a likeness of death, and seemed to die rather than truly died. Since it is very easy to answer them, I do not think it necessary to bring to bear the weight of testimonies from the other sayings either of the Apostle or of the Gospels, where his death, and not a likeness of death, is written of plainly, since we can say to them: If it was a likeness of death, and not a true death, then there was a likeness of resurrection also, and not a true resurrection; and so we too shall seem to rise and shall not truly rise; and we shall seem to die to sin and shall not truly die.

And so everything that has been done, and is being done, has seemed to be done but has not been done. It remains, then, that in the matter of our being saved also, we have seemed to be saved but have not truly been saved. Wherefore, since these things are so absurd that they need no proofs, let us turn to the explanation of what follows. He wishes us, therefore, to be planted together with the likeness of his death, by which he died once to sin, so that we may also be planted together with his resurrection — for ”planted together” must be supplied with both. And see how fittingly he has taken up the figure of planting. For every plant, after the death of winter, awaits the resurrection of spring. If then we too have been planted together in Christ’s death in the winter of this age and of the present life, we shall also be found, when the spring to come arrives, bringing forth fruits of righteousness from his root; and if we have been planted together with him, it is necessary that the Father, the husbandman, prune us as branches of the true vine, that we may bear much fruit, as he himself also says in the Gospels: ”I am the true vine, you are the branches, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch that does not abide in

me, my Father will cut it off. But him who abides in me, he will prune, that he may bear much fruit.

In this way, therefore, we have been planted together with the likeness of his death, so that we may also be planted together with the likeness of his resurrection. And what it is to be planted together with the likeness of his resurrection, the apostle John teaches: ”Little children, we do not yet know what we shall be. But if he is revealed to us, we shall be like him. And again the Savior himself says: ”Father, I will that where I am, these also may be with me”; and again: ”As I am in you, and you in me, that these also may be one in us. This he certainly says of those who in the present life have been planted together with the likeness of his death. And I think that this may fittingly be said also of that thief who hung on the cross together with Jesus; and through his confession, in which he said, ”Remember me, Lord, when you come into your kingdom,” and through his rebuking of the other who blasphemed, he is seen by these things to have been planted together with the likeness of his death; but he was also planted together with his resurrection through this, that it is said to him, ”Today you shall be with me in paradise. For worthy indeed was that plant of paradise, which was joined to the tree of life. Therefore, what the Apostle had said about being planted together with the likeness of Christ’s death, he now takes up again under another figure, and says:

”Because our old man was crucified together with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed. In many places, and often already, we have said what it is to be crucified together with Christ; and we have often treated of the old man; whence briefly in the present passage we call the old man the one who lived according to Adam, liable to transgression and to sin, and over whom the death of sin held dominion, of whom he who had the power of death held the bonds of sin: and since Christ, blotting these out with his blood, nailed them to his cross, we too, according to the old man who was liable to sin, ought to be crucified, ”that the body of sin might be destroyed, and that we should no longer serve sin. And I think it must be observed that where the Apostle says that the ”body” must be destroyed, he adds ”of sin”; but where he does not speak of destroying, he says not ”the body of sin,” but that it is we ourselves who should not serve sin — so that he may show that if the body of sin has been destroyed, we no longer serve sin, to which of course we were in servitude so long as it had not been destroyed in us, and our members which are upon the earth had not been mortified.

But we must still go back and consider more carefully in what sense he said ”the body of sin. Here a twofold understanding seems possible: either he called our body the body of sin, or he means that sin itself has some body of its own, which must be destroyed by those who ought no longer to serve sin. Since, then, both senses can be admitted in this passage, we shall set forth our view on each. For if we posit that sin has a body of its own, it will appear that, just as it was said of

those who have been restored into the new man that ”you are the body of Christ, and members in part,” so also of those who have not yet crucified the old man it may be said that they are the body of sin and its members, of which body the head is the devil, just as Christ is head of the body of the Church, which has neither spot nor wrinkle. And the members of which this body of sin consists may be seen to be those which the Apostle above enumerated as members upon the earth, that is, fornication, uncleanness, shamelessness, avarice, contentions, wrath, deceits, quarrels, dissensions, heresies, envy, revellings, and the like: of all which members it may fittingly be said that the body of sin consists, and that this body is called the old man.

And if anyone should destroy it through the cross of Christ, and be changed into the new man who is created according to God, he will no longer be said to serve sin — to which without doubt he does serve so long as he lies under any of those things which we have expounded above to be the members of sin. But if instead the Apostle is understood to have called this body of ours the body of sin, it will surely be taken according to that understanding by which David also says of himself, ”I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother conceive me. But the Apostle himself too says in another place, ”Who will free me from the body of this death? and again he names our body ”the body of humiliation. And of the Savior he says in a certain place that he came ”in the likeness of the flesh of sin,” that ”from sin” he might condemn ”sin in the flesh. In which he shows that our flesh is indeed flesh of sin, but Christ’s flesh is like the flesh of sin. For it was not conceived from the seed of a man, but the Holy Spirit came upon Mary, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her, so that what was born of her should be called the Son of the Highest.

Thus, then, Paul, through the ineffable wisdom of God which was given to him, gazing upon some hidden and secret thing I know not what, calls our body ”the body of sin,” and ”the body of death,” and ”the body of humiliation. But David also, knowing the heavenly secrets by the same Spirit, said concerning the body: ”And you have led me down into the dust of death”; and again: ”Our soul has been humbled in the dust. Jeremiah likewise, aware of a similar mystery through the Spirit of God, says in his Lamentations that all men are prisoners of the earth — that is, on account of the body — and he says: ”That he might humble under his feet all the prisoners of the earth, because they have turned aside the judgment of a man in the sight of the Most High, and have condemned a man in judging. The body of sin, therefore, is our body; since neither is Adam written to have known Eve his wife and to have begotten Cain except after the sin. Finally, in the law also a sacrifice is commanded to be offered for the little child that has been born, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons: of which one is for sin, and the other for a whole burnt offering. For what sin is this one young bird offered? Can a newly born infant already have sinned?

And yet it has a sin for which a sacrifice is commanded to be offered, from which sin no one is said to be clean, not even if his life has been of a single day. Of this, therefore, David too must be believed to have spoken that which we mentioned above, that ”in sins did my mother conceive me. For according to the historical narrative no sin of his mother is disclosed. For this reason the Church also received a tradition from the apostles, to give baptism even to little children. For those to whom the secrets of the divine mysteries were committed knew that there are in all people inborn defilements of sin, which must be washed away by water and the Spirit; on account of which the body itself is also named the body of sin — not (as some of those think who introduce the transmigration of souls into various bodies) for those things which the soul, placed in another body, has committed, but for this very thing, that it has come to be in a body of sin and a body of death and of humiliation; and, as he said, that ”you have humbled our soul in the dust. These, meanwhile, are the things concerning the body of sin that could occur to us for the present. But which of the two expositions suits the apostolic sense, or whether neither does, let the one who reads judge.

But as to the fact that in other places the Apostle says that we have already risen with Christ, and been raised up together with him, and sit together in the heavenly places, while here he says: ”For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be so also of his resurrection” — that is, what he elsewhere said had already happened, here he now says is future and to be hoped for — the reason is this, that a twofold resurrection is understood: one by which in mind and purpose and faith we rise with Christ from earthly things, so that we may think upon heavenly things and seek after those to come; the other, the general resurrection in the flesh which will be of all. Therefore the resurrection which is according to the mind and from faith already seems to be fulfilled in those who savor ”the things that are above,” ”where Christ is at the right hand of God. But that general resurrection of the flesh which pertains to all is still to come: because the one is fulfilled at the Lord’s first coming, the other at his second.

[§10] ”But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live together with him, knowing that Christ rising from the dead dies no more, death shall no longer have dominion over him. For in that he died to sin, he died once; but in that he lives, he lives to God. In everything the Apostle has said above, he wished to show this: that if Christ died to sin, we too have died to sin along with him. And when he says, ”we were baptized into his death,” and, ”we have been planted together in the likeness of his death,” through all these things he shows that we have died with Christ to sin, from the fact that Christ indeed died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and to each one of the believers he granted out of his own death, as a kind of gift of faith, the death of sin itself — that is, to those who believe themselves to be dead with him and crucified and buried together with him, and through these things sin cannot work in them as in dead persons, and thus

they are said to be dead to sin. Therefore, then, in the present passage the Apostle draws the conclusion of everything he had established above, and says: ”But if we have died with Christ,” namely through those things which we have shown above, ”we believe that we shall also live together with him. He did not say:

and we have lived together, as he said, ”we have died”; but, ”we shall live together,” so as to show that death is at work in the present, but life in the future — namely, then ”when Christ shall have been made manifest, who is our life hidden in God. Now ”therefore,” as Paul himself teaches, ”death works in us. But even this death that works in us seems to me to have certain distinctions. For just as in Christ there was one time of death, of which it is said, ”And crying out with a loud voice he expired,” and another when he lay placed in the tomb with the door closed, and another indeed when, sought in the sepulcher, he was not found, because he had already risen — of which resurrection the visible beginning was granted to no one of humankind — so also in us who believe in him this threefold account of death is to be held. And first, indeed, the death of Christ must be shown in us by the confession of the voice, when ”with the heart one believes unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Second, in the mortification of the members which are upon the earth, when we now always carry about the mortification of Christ in our body; and this is what he says, that ”death works in us. Third, when we now rise from the dead, and walk in newness of life. And to explain it more briefly and more clearly:

the first day of death is to have renounced the world; the second, to have renounced also the vices of the flesh; but the fullness of perfection in the light of wisdom is the third day, that of resurrection. Yet these distinctions in each of the believers, and the degrees of their progress, he alone can know and discern to whom alone the secrets of the heart lie open. But do you observe Paul’s wisdom in writing: he who, writing to Timothy, said that ”if we die together, we shall also live together”; and who, to those dying together with Christ, joined as something consequent and necessary that they should live together with him — here he added, ”we believe,” so as to show that although it is consequent and necessary for one who dies together to live together, nevertheless this is accomplished through the mediation of faith and of believing. Being certain, he says, and ”knowing that Christ rising from the dead dies no more. For if he were to die again, then just as we have shown it to be consequent and necessary that those who die together with him shall also live together with him, so without doubt it would seem consequent that, if after resurrection and life he were to die again, those also who live together with him would die again together with him as he died.

Therefore, for this reason the Apostle determines by an absolute pronouncement that Christ dies no more, so that those also who live together with him may be secure concerning the eternity of life. But after these things (that I too may use

the very words of the Apostle, in which he says: ”But Isaiah is bold and says”), I too say: But Paul is bold and says: ”Death shall no longer have dominion over him. Did you dare to say this, O Paul, concerning Christ, ”Death shall no longer have dominion over him,” as though at some time it had had dominion? — over him whose voice in the Gospel is carried through the whole body of the Church clearer than light, in which he says: ”No one takes my soul from me, but I lay it down, and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. Do you then say that death had dominion over him who not only laid down his soul by his will, but also took it up by his power? who alone among the dead was ”free,” and whom alone death could not hold? These things, I suppose, and things like them, will be raised against Paul by those who are held by a tender affection toward Jesus, and endure to hear nothing lowly, nothing unworthy concerning him. But we too, when we look to Paul, do not think there is anyone who could surpass him in love of Christ:

whence neither is he to be thought to have spoken anything about him contrary to what is worthy of him. And therefore let us search out more subtly, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, the word of wisdom by which we may be able to perceive Paul’s meaning — nay rather, the mind of Christ which is in him, according to what he himself professes: ”But we have the mind of Christ. Someone, then, may say more concisely on these matters that here he speaks of this common and middle death by which ”he died,” as the same Apostle says, ”according to the Scriptures,” and that nothing seems absurd if he who had taken up the form of a servant endured the dominion of death, which without doubt has dominion over all who, placed in the flesh, are reckoned under the servile form. But this too lies close to this assertion: that for this reason this form of a servant, that is, our very flesh also, is sown in corruption, that it may rise in incorruption; and is sown in weakness, that it may rise in power; and is sown in dishonor, that it may rise in glory; and is sown an animal body, that it may rise a spiritual body — without doubt so that death may no longer have dominion over it, which had dominion over it while it was in weakness, and dishonor, and corruption. For concerning such flesh as is still in these vices of the passions, Paul himself says:

”That flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God, neither shall corruption possess incorruption. But also as to the fact that elsewhere the same Apostle named the body a body ”of death,” he who asserts these things says that this is to be understood of this middle death, which has dominion over a body of this kind so long as it is animal and corruptible, and not yet changed through the glory of the resurrection, and made incorruptible out of corruptible, and glorious out of ignoble. But that which is very much contrary to this assertion (that is, that we have died with Christ, and have been buried together with him — which certainly can in no way be understood of this common death), he will attempt to explain in this manner: that just as in the foregoing, when we were expounding concerning the

diversity of laws, we showed that the Apostle in one and the same place names now the natural law, now that of Moses, now also that of sin, and taught by adducing testimonies from other places as well that this is the usage of divine Scripture, so also in the present passage he may establish that by the Apostle there is named now the common death, now that of sin, now also the very author of death, who is likewise said to be the last enemy to be destroyed, now also the place of the underworld, in which the devil is said to hold the empire of death.

Here too, then, what he says — ”Death shall no longer have dominion over him” — one will maintain was said of that death by which Christ is commonly believed to have died. Yet how sound this assertion may be, let the one who reads it test. But another, who by the power of the Spirit looks into the deeper sense of Paul in these matters, will say that the death spoken of here, over which it is said that it shall no longer have dominion over Christ, is to be understood as that last enemy himself, who was prefigured by that whale which had swallowed Jonah, concerning which it is written in Job: ”But let him curse it who cursed that day, he who is to destroy the great whale” — into which death Christ entered as Jonah into the belly of the whale, that is, into that place which the Savior himself named the heart of the earth, in which he says that the Son of man, after the example of Jonah, would spend three days and three nights, in order that he might bring out those who were there held fast by death. For he had taken the form of a servant precisely for this, that he might be able to enter that very place where death held its kingdom, according to what the Prophet also says in his person: ”And I was counted with those who go down into the pit”; and again: ”What profit is there in my blood, while I go down into corruption?

And that this may be perceived still more plainly, we shall once more make use of a comparison of this sort. Let us suppose a just and noble king who wishes to wage war against some unjust tyrant in such a way that he may not seem to have conquered by a violent and bloody encounter, because those serving under the tyrant were his own, whom he desired not to destroy but to set free. Therefore, by a better plan, he assumes the appearance of those who were with the tyrant, and in outward form becomes in all respects like them, until, placed under the tyrant’s dominion, he might persuade those who obeyed him to depart and return to the lawful kingdom; and might at the opportune moment bind the strong man himself, and strip off his powers and principalities, and tear away and carry off the captivity that was held by him. In this way, then, Christ also, by his own will indeed, ”emptied himself” at that time, and ”took the form of a servant,” and endured the tyrant’s dominion, ”becoming obedient unto death”: and by that death he destroyed him who had the empire of death, that is, the devil, that he might free those who were held by death. For here, when the strong man had been bound and triumphed over on his cross, he went on even into his house, into the house of death, into hell,

and from there plundered his vessels, that is, he drew out the souls which he was holding.

And this is what he himself was saying through riddles in the Gospel when he said: ”Who can enter into the house of the strong man and plunder his vessels, unless he first bind the strong man? First, then, he bound him on the cross, and so entered his house, that is, hell, and thence ”ascending on high, he led captivity captive” — namely those who rose with him and entered the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem. Whence the Apostle rightly says in the present passage that ”death shall no longer have dominion over him. For he will not again give himself over into the tyrant’s dominion, nor will he again empty himself so as to take the form of a servant and become obedient unto death; lest once more, in the form of a servant — though placed there by will and not by necessity — he should nevertheless suffer the dominion of the tyrant and of death. Wherefore I marvel that certain people wish to assert, against this most evident judgment of Paul, that in the ages to come Christ must again suffer either the same things or things like them, so that those also may be able to be freed whom in the present life the medicine of his dispensation could not heal. For they say: ”Can there be any age in the future in which neither anything good nor anything evil is done, but things stand benumbed and deep silences remain? This, they assert, seems absurd. We shall grant, then, that something is done.

”And where anything is done,” they say, ”it is necessary that something be done rightly and something also less rightly, and that in that very activity some make progress and become better, others worse. For freedom of choice will always remain to a rational nature; and just as it was possible even for him who, by reason of the splendor of his glory, was Lucifer, and who because of the light of knowledge rose in the morning, to be changed from his glory and to be made darkness because of the wickedness he took upon himself; and for him who was spotless from his birth, and dwelt with the cherubim, and moved about in the midst of the fiery stones, and was clothed with every ornament of the virtues, nor was there any tree of the virtues in the paradise of God that could be compared to him — and after these things iniquities were found in him, and he was cast down from heaven to earth: so it can happen that in whatever state a soul may be, and in whatever perfection of virtues, since virtue is changeable, it may incur a fall, so that just as it is inclined from vices to virtue, so also from virtues to vices.

And if this is so, it will seem consistent to require a physician where there is sickness, since, according to the Savior’s own word, ’those who are ill have need of a physician.’” Putting forward these things, then, and things like them, they judge that the same dispensations must be repeated by Christ in the ages to come. But to these things we shall reply briefly, as we are able. We do not deny that free choice always remains to a rational nature; but we assert that so great is the power of the

cross of Christ, and of this death which he underwent at the end of the ages, that it suffices for the healing and remedy not only of the present and the future age, but even of the ages past, and not only for this human order of ours, but also for the heavenly powers and orders. For according to the judgment of Paul the Apostle himself, Christ made peace ”through the blood of his cross” not only for ”the things that are on earth,” but also for ”the things that are in the heavens. But what it is that in the ages to come will hold fast the freedom of choice, so that it does not fall again into sin, the Apostle teaches us in a brief word, saying: ”Charity never falls. For charity is therefore said to be greater than both faith and hope, because it alone will be that through which it will no longer be possible to sin.

For if the soul shall have ascended to that perfection, that it loves God with its whole heart and with its whole soul and with all its strength, and its neighbor as itself, where will there be room for sin? Accordingly, in the law too this is said to be the first commandment, and in the Gospels it is charity that is commanded above all else; and when to Peter the sum of things was handed over concerning the feeding of the sheep, and upon him as upon solid ground the Church was to be founded, the confession of no other virtue was required of him but of charity; and John, along with many things about charity, also says this, that ”he who abides in charity abides in God. And therefore rightly will charity, which alone is greater than all things, hold every creature back from falling. Then God will be all in all.

To this degree of perfection had the apostle Paul ascended, and standing in it he said with confidence: ”For who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus? Tribulation? or distress? or persecution? or famine? or nakedness? or peril? or the sword? And again: ”For I am certain that neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, nor angels, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. From all which it is plainly shown that, if all these things which the Apostle has enumerated cannot separate us from the love of God, once a man has ascended to that summit of perfection, much more will freedom of choice not be able to separate us from His love. For although this too is a power, and abides in our nature, nevertheless so great is the force of charity that it draws all things to itself, and joins and claims to itself all the virtues — especially since God first gave us the grounds of charity, ”who spared not His only Son, but delivered Him up for us all,” and ”with Him has given us all things.

Whence even he who was Lucifer, and rose in heaven, or he who was without spot from the day of his birth and was set among the cherubim, was able to fall before he had been bound by the bonds of charity toward the benefits of the Son of God; but after the charity of God has begun to be poured forth in the hearts of all through the Holy Spirit, that will be certain which the Apostle declared, that ”charity never falls away. These things we have said, as best we could, concerning the questions

raised in this place, so that it might shine forth more clearly how Christ died once to sin, and dies no more; and that in that He lives, He lives unto God. But to live unto God is to be understood in this way: that, when that is completed whereby, being placed in the form of God, He emptied Himself and took the form of a servant and was made obedient unto death, He abides again in the form of God, and equal to the Father. Whence also with good reason he adds in what follows: ”So do you also reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord” — namely, that by the imitation of Christ we may die to sin, being made strangers to it, and live unto God by joining ourselves to Him and becoming one spirit with Him.

Nor was it without cause that he said, ”Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin”; which stands better in the Greek: ”Consider (think) yourselves to be dead unto sin. For the matter of which he speaks subsists rather in thought and in reason, since a death of this kind is to be held not in actual fact but in thought. For he who thinks or reckons within himself that he is dead does not sin. For example: if the desire of a woman draws me; if the charm of silver, or of gold, or the covetousness of an estate assails me, and I set in my heart that I am dead with Christ, and think upon that death, straightway the concupiscence is extinguished and the sin is put to flight. Or if, inflamed with hatred or anger, I am stirred to the slaying of my enemy — if I reckon myself to be dead with Christ, and set the thoughts of death in my mind, without doubt the fury is quenched, the hatred ceases, the anger subsides, no place is given to sin; and in this way a man is found to die to sin and to live unto God. But this too, which he further added, ”alive unto God in Christ Jesus,” does not seem to me idle. For I think it is as though he had said: Alive unto God in wisdom, in peace, in justice, in sanctification — all of which Christ is.

To live unto God in these things, then, is to live unto God in Christ Jesus. But if without justice, without peace, without sanctification and the other virtues no one lives unto God, it is certain that no one lives unto God except in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Commentary on Romans — Book 6

Latin source: J.-P. Migne (ed.), Patrologia Graeca 14 (Rufinus's Latin version of Origen's Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos). This English translation is in the public domain.

BOOK 6

[§1] "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so that you should obey its desires; neither present your members as weapons of iniquity unto sin: but present yourselves to God, as those living from among the dead; and your members as weapons of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace. In the passages above he says: "As sin reigned in death. But now he did not say: Let not sin therefore reign in death; rather he says: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so that you should obey its desires" — teaching by this that sin has a certain seat and kingdom in the body. This is what he said elsewhere too: "The prudence of the flesh is an enemy to God"; and again: "The prudence of the flesh is death. But the Apostle also declares that all sins are works of the flesh, which he says are fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil concupiscence, shamelessness, idolatry, sorceries, enmities, quarrels, jealousy, rage, contentions, dissensions, heresies, envy, drunkennesses, carousings, and things like these. But if you ask how heresies too are numbered among the works of the flesh, you will find that they proceed from the sense of the flesh. For thus the Apostle says concerning a certain man: "Vainly," he says, "puffed up by the sense of his own flesh, and not holding the head.

Now these things we have said so that the understanding might become clearer, how sin reigns in the body. For all those things which we enumerated above as works of the flesh are like a certain armed host soldiering under this king, sin, and obeying its law, which is inscribed in the members of the flesh. For it is certain that, from the fact that the flesh renders obedience to the desires of sin, "the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are opposed to one another. Yet notice this: that in showing that it is placed within our own power

that sin should not reign in our mortal body, the Apostle gave a precept, saying: ”Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so that you should obey its desires. For unless it were in our power that sin should not reign in us, he certainly would not have given a precept. How, then, is it possible that sin should not reign in our flesh? If we do what the same Apostle says: ”Mortify your members which are upon the earth,” and if we always carry about ”the death of Christ in our body. For it is certain that, where the death of Christ is carried about, sin cannot reign.

For so great is the power of the cross of Christ that, if it be set before the eyes and faithfully retained in the mind, so that the eye of the mind gazes intently upon the very death of Christ, no concupiscence, no lust, no rage, no envy can prevail; but at once, at its presence, that whole army of sin and of the flesh which we enumerated above is put to flight. Indeed sin itself does not even subsist, seeing that it has no substance anywhere except in deed and act. There is therefore in us both a concupiscence of sin, which has its kingdom in the flesh, and a concupiscence of the spirit, which has its kingdom in the mind, according to what we said above, that ”the flesh lusts against the spirit, but the spirit against the flesh. When, therefore, we desire what is not lawful, or what is not fitting, or what is not expedient, it is the concupiscence of the flesh. But when our soul desires and faints when it may see the salvation of God, that is the concupiscence of the spirit. From which it appears that the soul is in a certain way midway between the flesh and the spirit; and if indeed it joins itself to the flesh so as to obey the desires of sin, it becomes one body with it; but if it joins itself to God, it becomes one spirit with him, according to what has been said: ”For he who joins himself to a harlot is one body;

but he who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit. Nor should you wonder if he calls the flesh a harlot, since it lies subject to all those vices and sins which we enumerated above, as to the basest lovers. But I inquire why he added, ”in your mortal body,” when surely it would have sufficed to say: ”Let not sin therefore reign in your body. Why is ”mortal” also added, as though anyone doubted that the body is mortal? But it seems to me that he added even this not without cause. For by it he gave warning how sin can fail to reign in the body, according to what he himself had also said elsewhere: ”The body indeed is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. If therefore we know that our body can be mortified, and be dead to sin, it can come about that sin should not reign in it. For according to this, that it is dead, it is said to be justified from sin. For a dead man neither lusts nor grows angry, nor rages, nor plunders what belongs to another. If therefore we restrain the body from all these concupiscences, the body is said to be dead to sin. And this is what, in the present passage, that addition of the Apostle seems to bring to mind when he says, ”in your mortal body.

Another perhaps will say that it is by way of distinction from that other body which is immortal that he named this body, in which we now are, mortal. But what the

immortal body is, the same Apostle teaches in other places, where he says: ”For it is necessary that this corruptible put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality”; and there is no doubt that, once mortality is taken away, this very thing which is now mortal is made an immortal body. After these things there follows: ”Neither present your members as weapons of iniquity unto sin; but present yourselves to God as those living from among the dead, and your members rather as weapons of righteousness unto God. Observe point by point the wisdom of Paul, that he uses necessary distinctions. Where he says that weapons must not be furnished to sin or to iniquity, he sets down not us, but our members; but where he urges that we present ourselves to God, he wills that not our members, but we ourselves first be presented to God — that is, our soul, or our purpose — so that when we have first presented our very selves to God and have cleaved to him, then at last we may make our members also weapons of righteousness unto God. For just as those hands are called holy which have ministered to holy works, as the Apostle says: ”Lifting up pure hands without wrath and disputing”;

and again, those hands are called full of blood which have ministered to the shedding of blood: so also in the present passage the members which serve sin and iniquity are called weapons of iniquity; and again, if we mortify the concupiscence of sin in our mortal body, and labor in the work of righteousness, and minister to righteousness with all our members, we become as those living from among the dead — dead, that is, to sin and living to righteousness; and consequently our members too become weapons of righteousness unto God. And he has well kept to the metaphor proposed above, so that, because he had said that sin reigns, he should name the members weapons of sin, and again that our members should bear weapons of righteousness for God as king. There follows after these things: ”For sin shall not have dominion over you. For you are not under the law, but under grace. Here too observe the marvelous caution in the Apostle’s language. When he speaks of us, he says: ”Sin shall not have dominion over you”; when he was speaking of the Savior, he did not say: Sin shall not have dominion (for neither was it fitting that this be said of him), but he says: ”Death shall no more have dominion over him. For in him there was room for death, none for sin. But on the contrary, concerning us it was not fitting to say:

Death shall not have dominion over you — for this we cannot avoid — but rather, ”Sin shall not have dominion over you”; which without doubt he knew we could avoid, according to what we said above, if we mortify the concupiscences of the flesh, in which sin was able to have dominion. For this reason he adds: ”For you are not under the law, but under grace”; and he plainly shows from these words that we are not under that law which he says, being placed in the members, fights against the law of the mind, since he who mortifies his members is certainly not under the law of the members, but under the grace of God. Concerning this law he says elsewhere too that ”the strength of sin is the law. But if anyone wishes to

take these things of the law of Moses, he will without doubt say that we are not under the law of the letter which kills, but under the law of the spirit which gives life, which here he has named grace.

[§2] ”What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. This seems similar to that saying which we expounded above: ”What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid”; and therefore let one and the same explanation suffice for both places. This alone is what seems to constitute a difference, that in the earlier passage, where he says, ”What then? Shall we continue in sin? it seems to be said to those who have not yet departed from sin, lest they remain in that state in which they still seemed to be; but here the question seems to be put as though by those who have already departed from sin: and there, as it were, that grace, which did not yet exist, might abound; but here he speaks as though grace were already present, ”because we are not under the law, but under grace.” 3. ”Do you not know that to whomever you present yourselves as servants to obey, you are the servants of him whom you obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto justice? But thanks be to God, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine into which you have been delivered. And being freed from sin, you have been made the servants of justice.

Perhaps the expression seems less than complete when he says, ”You are the servants of him whom you have obeyed, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto justice”; whereas reason would have required it to be said: You are the servants of him whom you have obeyed, whether of sin, or of justice through obedience. But in one who of his own accord professes himself unskilled in speech, I think it superfluous to look for artistry in the composition of words, since the sense is held to be evident. This, then, is what the Apostle teaches in this place: that each one has it in his own hand and in the power of his choice, to be either the servant of sin or of justice. For to whichever side he shall incline his obedience, and to whichever side he shall be willing to submit, that side claims him for itself as its servant. In this, as I have said, he shows without any hesitation that freedom of choice lies within us. For it is in us to render our obedience either to justice or to sin. But ”no one can serve two masters at once,” sin and justice. ”For either he will hate the one,” namely sin, ”and love the other,” that is, justice; ”or he will bear with the one,” namely sin only, ”and despise the other,” that is, justice. Similar, therefore, is also what the Apostle said: ”You are the servants of him whom you have obeyed, whether of sin or of justice.

But also what is said, ”Everyone who commits sin is the servant of sin,” looks to this same point, although he did not add: And everyone who does justice is the servant of justice. Which perhaps another might think was left out for this reason, that it ought to be understood as though from what follows. To me, however, it

seems that it was deliberately not added. For it would not have been fitting to say that everyone who does justice is the servant of justice. For God himself also does justice, and yet cannot on that account be called the servant of justice, but the Lord of justice. Therefore it is not the case that everyone who does justice is the servant of justice in the same way that everyone who commits sin is the servant of sin. For the devil himself also is without doubt the servant of sin, inasmuch as he departed from the service of justice and rebelled in the sight of the almighty Lord, on account of which he was also called an apostate. It is established, therefore, from these words in which Paul says, ”That to whomever you present yourselves as servants to obey, you are the servants of him whom you obey, whether of sin or of justice,” that of our own accord we present ourselves, with none compelling us, to serve either sin or justice through our own obedience;

and therefore we ought always to remember these things, lest we bring forward empty complaints in excuse of sin — that the devil made us sin, or the necessity of nature, or the condition of fate, or the course of the stars. But hear Paul’s sentence, by which he speaks openly: ”To whomever you present yourselves as servants to obey, you are the servants of him whom you have obeyed, whether of sin, or of justice. After these things he says: ”Thanks be to God, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine into which you have been delivered. He seems to say this to those about whose life and progress, and concerning whom, he had already said above: ”I give thanks to God through Jesus Christ for all these, because your faith is proclaimed in the whole world. Then next he also shows this, that all men first serve sin. For thus it is written: That ”there is not a just man upon the earth who does good and does not sin. For first it is necessary that in every man that be fulfilled which is written: ”But when the commandment came, sin revived. But what follows is said to few, and to those who are already being amended, namely what he says: ”But thanks be to God, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine into which you have been delivered.

We were all, therefore, the servants of sin; but when the form of doctrine was delivered to us, and we chose to obey it not in any casual way, nor with words alone, but from the heart, from the soul, with our whole devotion, we are freed from the servitude of sin, and are made the servants of justice. Whence I fear that perhaps there are rather many of us who seem to have received the form of the doctrine of justice, and in words indeed or in profession seem to obey justice, but in heart obey sin, the vices of the flesh still holding dominion in us. And therefore before all things we stand in need of that mortification of the members concerning which he taught above. But as to what he said, ”The form of doctrine, into which you have been delivered,” I think we must inquire how each one is delivered. For we find that those who ”do not approve of having God in their knowledge,” God ”delivers, according to the desires of their heart, unto uncleanness, so that they

dishonor their own bodies among themselves”; and others who ”exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God,” he delivers ”unto passions of dishonor,” concerning which passages we have spoken in their proper places as we were able. These too, therefore, who present themselves as servants of justice through obedience, God has delivered that they may be instructed and imbued according to the form of the doctrine of justice.

But this also moves me, that he did not say, ”You have obeyed from the heart” the doctrine ”into which you have been delivered,” but he put ”the form of doctrine. Nor do I think that the Apostle held doctrine and the form of doctrine to be one and the same thing; but it seems to me that he knew the form of doctrine to be something less than the doctrine itself; and that now indeed in the present life, while we are in this body, and ”this earthly dwelling weighs down the mind that ponders many things,” we have the form of doctrine, not the doctrine itself, as the same Apostle says elsewhere: ”But now we see through a mirror in an enigma”; while the doctrine itself is that of which he says: ”But then we shall see face to face. Whence also in the present life I think that we can hold the form and shadow of the virtues; but the virtues themselves, then, when those things which are perfect shall have come. And therefore the just man now, as it seems to me, lives rather in the shadow of the virtues than in the virtues themselves. And on this account perhaps Jeremiah says in the Lamentations: ”The Spirit of our countenance, Christ the Lord, of whom we said: In his shadow we shall live among the nations.

But if Christ is justice, and wisdom, and truth, and we say, ”in his shadow we shall live among the nations,” then we live in the shadow of justice, and in the shadow of wisdom, and in the shadow of truth, even if we seem to be just, and wise, and lovers of truth. Therefore it is said on this account: ”If anyone thinks that he has known, he has not yet known as he ought to know. For perhaps even the Word of God himself, according to that whereby ”the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” will be known in one way in the present state of life, and in another way when that which is perfect shall have come; and will be perceived in one way now in the form of a servant, but then in another way in the form of God and in equality with the Father. On account of all which things we seem to live among the nations either ”in the form of doctrine,” as the Apostle says, and not yet in the doctrine itself, or ”in the shadow of Christ,” as Jeremiah named it, and not yet in Christ himself. ”And being freed from sin, you have been made the servants of justice. In these words there is an exposition of the things he said above. For if you no longer serve sin, it is certain that, being freed from it, you have been made the servants of justice. But it is asked who it is that frees from sin.

Without doubt, the knowledge of the truth. For thus Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him: ”If you believe my word, you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. It is therefore the truth that frees from sin, and the knowledge

of the truth. And it is certain that everyone who has been freed from sin serves justice. But when we say, let him serve justice — since justice is one out of the choir of the virtues — it is as if we were to say that if anyone has been freed from sin, he will serve truth, and will serve wisdom, and will serve chastity, and will serve piety. For thus do I understand also that which is said: ”Open to me the gates of justice, and entering into them I will confess to the Lord. For he who wishes to confess to the Lord enters not the gates of justice alone, but also of truth, and of wisdom, and of piety, and of chastity. For there is one hall of all the virtues, whose doors the just man asks to be opened to him under the name of justice.

[§4] ”I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members to serve uncleanness, and iniquity unto iniquity, so now present your members to serve righteousness unto sanctification. By these words the Apostle strikes a certain shame into his hearers, so that they may at least render this much service to righteousness and sanctification as they had formerly paid to uncleanness and iniquity. What, then, is so human — that is, what is so light, what is so free of burden, and what could no weakness of the flesh whatever excuse? ”Just as,” he says, ”you presented your members to serve uncleanness, and iniquity unto iniquity, so now present your members to serve righteousness unto sanctification. It is indeed inglorious that anyone should serve the virtues only in the same measure as he served the vices. For righteousness ought to be honored far more abundantly and far more intently. But I, he says, act humanly and after the common measure: I ask the same things, I require like things. Once your feet ran to the temples of demons; now let them run to the Church of God. Formerly they ran to shed blood; now let them run to set blood free. Formerly your hands were stretched out to plunder what belonged to others; now let them be stretched out to bestow what is their own. Formerly your eyes looked about after a woman, or after something belonging to another, that they might covet it;

now let them look about after the poor, the weak, the needy, that they may show mercy. Your ears took delight in empty hearing, or in the disparagement of good men; now let them be turned to hearing the word of God, to the exposition of the law, and to receiving the discipline of wisdom. Let the tongue that has grown accustomed to insults, curses, and filthy speech now be turned to blessing the Lord at all times: let it bring forth sound and honorable discourse, that it may give grace to those who hear, and let it speak truth with its neighbor. But what need is there to pursue these things one by one, when it is plain even to you how to fit to the virtues the service of each member which it rendered to the vices, and to turn now to chastity and sanctification the activity which it rendered to uncleanness? Here he seems indeed to have named righteousness for all the virtues together, just as, on the contrary, he has put iniquity for all the vices together. He added, to be sure, ”of righteousness unto sanctification,” namely so as to commend the part of chastity both generally along with the rest and specifically by itself.

But look also at this, that everywhere through these words he indicates the freedom of the will, and shows that each one has it in his own power that the services which he formerly rendered to iniquity unto iniquity he may, his purpose being turned to the better, render to righteousness and sanctification — which surely could not come about if either nature resisted, as some think, or the course of the stars stood in the way.

[§5] ”For when you were slaves of sin, you were free with respect to righteousness. What fruit therefore did you have then in those things of which you are now ashamed? For their end is death. But now, having been freed from sin and made slaves to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, eternal life. How anyone is a slave of sin has already been sufficiently said in what went before, when we were expounding that passage: ”Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves as slaves for obedience — you are slaves of him whom you obey, whether of sin or of righteousness? When, therefore, anyone serves sin, he is free with respect to righteousness, that is, a stranger to righteousness. For here he calls ”free” one who is a stranger, and rightly so. For no one can at the same time serve both sin and righteousness, just as the Savior also said, that ”no one can serve two masters. But of these things we have spoken more fully above. This indeed is to be noted, that there is both a blameworthy freedom and a praiseworthy servitude. For to be free with respect to righteousness is a crime; but to be its slave is praiseworthy. And when he says that one becomes a slave of righteousness, understand at the same time a slave of wisdom too, and of piety, and of modesty, and of all the virtues together:

just as, on the contrary, he who is a slave of sin is at the same time a slave of evil desire, and of anger, and of rage, and of unchastity, and of robbery; and he serves all the vices and crimes together. Wherefore we ought always to examine ourselves in each single thing we do, and in every act to consider whom we are serving, whether sin unto iniquity, or righteousness unto sanctification. ”What fruit, therefore,” he says, ”did you have then in those things of which you are now ashamed? For their end is death. Divine Scripture teaches that there is fruit both of good things and of evil, as the Savior himself says in the Gospels: ”Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree evil, and its fruit evil. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruits, nor an evil tree good fruits. In these words the purpose and will of a man seems to be called the tree, either good or evil, while his works are the fruit. If anyone turns his mind and purpose to righteousness, he is without doubt ashamed, and he himself brands himself for his former deeds which he did while placed under sin, because ”their end is death. But I ask, what death? It is certain that it is not this common death. For no one is converted to righteousness after death, or is ashamed for past deeds done badly. What then is it?

Does he perhaps seem to be speaking of the death of sin, since ”the soul that sins, it shall die”? Or can it rather be understood that he is speaking of that death by which we die with Christ to sin, and put an end to vices and crimes, so that on this account he seems to have said that ”their end is death”? ”But now, having been freed from sin and made slaves to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, eternal life. He compares fruits with fruits: and the fruits of sin, for which the saints are now — that is, after they have been freed from sin and made slaves to God — ashamed, he declares to be ended in death; but the fruits of righteousness, which are unto sanctification, he says receive as their end eternal life. In this, first of all, this must not be passed over: that he was unwilling to name in what those fruits consist for which we are now ashamed, whereas he says that the fruit of those who have been freed from sin and made slaves to God is unto sanctification. For the memory of good things is to be kept more often than that of evil ones. And as to his mentioning first the evil fruits and their end, but afterwards the fruits which are unto sanctification and their end, which is eternal life — see how this is like that prophetic saying in which he himself says: ”I will kill, and I will make alive”;

and again: ”I will strike, and I will heal”; and once more in Job: ”He himself causes pain, and gives the remedy: he strikes, and his hands heal. All these things look to this, that one must first die with Christ, and so live together with him; and first suffer with him, and so reign together with him. For unless we first die to sin through repentance, we cannot live to God through righteousness. Moreover, as to what he said above: ”But having been freed from sin, you were made slaves of righteousness” — now, when he has said in like manner, ”But having been freed from sin,” he did not in like manner say, ”you were made slaves of righteousness,” but, ”you were made slaves of God”: the distinction is not idle. For by this it is shown that after anyone has been freed from sin, he ought first to serve righteousness and all the virtues together, so that from there he may ascend by progress to this, that he may become a slave of God — although to serve righteousness is also to serve God. For Christ is righteousness, and to serve Christ is to serve God. Yet there is an order of advances, and there are degrees among the virtues: and therefore Christ is said to reign, doubtless according to this, that he is righteousness, until in each one the fullness of the virtues is completed;

but when the measure of perfection has been fulfilled, then he is said to hand over ”the kingdom to God and the Father,” so that now ”God may be all in all. But I think this too must still be observed (since we have said that the Apostle made a comparison of evil fruits and good fruits): that there, where he was speaking of the evil fruits, he did not say, You had your fruit ”in those things of which you are now ashamed,” but he said, ”What fruit therefore did you have?” — whereas where he speaks of the good fruits, he adds ”your. For thus he writes: ”You have your fruit unto sanctification”: by which he seems to me to indicate that evil fruit,

fruit to be ashamed of and repented of, is not our fruit. For God did not plant in us an evil tree that would bring forth evil fruits, as he himself also says through the prophet: ”I planted you a fruitful vine, wholly true; how have you been turned into the bitterness of an alien vine? Therefore, even if we bring forth evil fruits, they are not ours but another’s, that is, sin’s; but if we bring forth good fruits unto sanctification, they are our own fruits. For human nature received it from its Creator that it should bear these fruits. But those alien ones were not sown in us by God. And do you wish to know that the Lord does not sow evil fruits? Hear him saying in the Gospel:

”Did we not sow good seed in the field? Whence then has it tares? And answering he said: An enemy man has done this. And do you wish to learn still further that these fruits of the flesh are not ours, but another’s? The Lord himself again says in the Gospel: ”If you have not been faithful in what is another’s, who will give you what is your own? Thus, then, by the mystery of a profound reasoning, in the case of evil fruit the Apostle did not add ”your”; but of the good he says: ”You have your fruit unto sanctification. And that he calls those more perfect whom he names as serving God than those whom he had first said served righteousness, is proved also from this, that he placed their fruit ”unto sanctification”; and these may be understood to be those who have devoted themselves to chastity and continence; whereas those whom he said were slaves of righteousness may also be seen to be those who, though placed in marriage, nevertheless devote their labor to righteousness and to all the virtues. But concerning eternal life, although it has often been discussed by us in other places, nevertheless in the present passage it must be briefly touched upon, that eternity in the Scriptures is sometimes put in the sense that it knows no end, but sometimes in the sense that it has no end indeed in the present age, yet has one in the age to come.

Sometimes the span of a certain time, or even of one man’s life, is called eternity, as is that which is written in the law concerning the Hebrew slave: ”If he loves,” it says, ”his wife and his children, and wishes to remain in servitude for their sake, you shall pierce his ear with an awl at the doorpost, and he shall be your slave forever. Here without doubt he has put ”forever” for the time of a man’s life. And again in Ecclesiastes it is said: ”A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth stands forever”: here ”forever” indicates the time of the present age. But where he says ”eternal life,” we must look to what the Savior himself said: ”But this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent”; and again: ”I am the way, and the truth, and the life. And the Apostle himself says in other places, that ”we shall be caught up in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, just as to be always with the Lord has no end, so also eternal life is to be believed to have no end.

[§6] ”For the wages of sin is death; but the grace of God is eternal life, in Christ Jesus our Lord. What he said here, ”The wages of sin is death,” is like what he had said above, ”But their end is death. But whose end? Doubtless of those things ”for which you now blush,” whose fruit he does not even judge worthy to name. And again: ”But the grace of God is eternal life, in Christ Jesus our Lord,” is like that which he said: ”You have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end indeed eternal life. And he rightly preserves the metaphor, that is, the figure of military service proposed from the beginning, so that he says the wages due are paid out as death to those soldiering under sin as king — or rather to those obeying its tyranny. But it was not fitting that God give wages to his own soldiers as though some debt, but rather a gift and grace, which is ”eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. I do not think that this too is empty, that to eternal life he added ”in Christ our Lord”; but perhaps because he wished it to be known that it is one thing to have eternal life alone, and another to have eternal life in Christ Jesus. For those also who shall rise unto confusion and everlasting reproach will indeed have eternal life, yet not in Christ Jesus, but in eternal confusion and reproach;

but the just, who shall rise unto eternal life in Christ Jesus, will have eternal life. Sin therefore bestows upon its own soldiers, in whom it reigns, the wages it deems worthy — death. But we call death not this bodily death, but that of which it is written, that ”the soul that sins, that soul shall die. And although we have often already spoken about the diversity of death, nevertheless, since the present passage has prompted it, to repeat the same things more openly, and to gather into one what has been said in scattered places, would be neither irksome to me nor burdensome to my readers. Death in the Scriptures is indeed one name, but it signifies many things. For the separation of the body from the soul is called death. But this can be called neither evil nor good: for it is intermediate, which is termed indifferent. And again, the separation of the soul from God is called death, which comes through sin. This is plainly evil, and it is also named the wage of sin. This death God did not make, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living; but by the envy of the devil this death entered into the world. And again the very author of this death, the devil, is called death, and he it is who is said to be the last enemy of Christ to be destroyed. But also the place of hell, in which souls were held by death, is itself likewise called death.

There is spoken of also that praiseworthy death by which one dies to sin and is buried together with Christ, through which the amendment of the soul is effected and eternal life is acquired. Since therefore there is so great a difference contained in this one name of death, if you hear God saying, ”I will kill, and I will make alive,” you ought to understand what sort of death it befits God to inflict: that one, doubtless, which confers life — that is, that one should die to sin and live to God. ”When he slew them,” it says, ”they sought him, and they returned. Teaching most plainly through this, that whomever God slays, he slays for this reason, that he

may die to sin and seek God. So do I understand also that which is written, that God slew Her the son of Judah, since he was wicked; and whatever else of this kind we read written about God. So too the Apostle handed over the sinner unto the destruction of the flesh, that he might make the spirit safe — that is, that he might die to sin and live to God. And so in the present passage too the wages that sin gives are said to be death: not that death which separates the body from the soul, but that by which through sin the soul is separated from God.

And again we are said to be baptized into the death of Christ — into that death, doubtless, by which he died to sin once for all, so that we too may be separated from sin and live to God. For whoever dies by such a death is said to be justified from sin. Thus therefore the distinction must be held, that even if God is said to kill and to hand over to death, the death that is given by God is of such a kind as to confer life. For nothing evil is given by the Good; though it be sorrowful, though full of pain, yet it is inflicted with a view to healing and with regard for health, so that the soul which the allurement and sweetness of sin had separated from God, the austerity of severity may separate from sin. But on the contrary, whatever sin gives, whatever it confers, is death to the soul, even if it bestows wages.

[§7] ”Or are you ignorant, brothers (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who is under a husband is bound by the law while her husband lives. But if her husband dies, she is loosed from the law of her husband. Therefore, while her husband lives, she shall be called an adulteress if she be with another man. But if her husband dies, she is freed from the law of her husband, so that she is no longer an adulteress if she be with another man. And so, my brothers, you also have been made dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may belong to another, who rose from the dead, that we may bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the vices of sins, which were through the law, worked in our members, so that they bore fruit unto death. But now we have been loosed from the law, being dead to that in which we were held, so that we may serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the letter. Discoursing more broadly in the preceding passages about faith and the law, he shows that faith is in all things to be preferred — the faith, that is, only of those who believe ”in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

After this he adds what sort of conduct theirs ought also to be, in which he discoursed both about the sin of Adam and the righteousness of Christ; but he also disputed about servitude and liberty, by which one either serves righteousness and is free from sin, or serves sin and is free from righteousness. Now therefore, after a certain rather extended digression, he returns once more to the treatment of the law and of Christ, discoursing in the present passage in some such manner as this: which things, repeating them a little, we shall first attempt to open up according to the sequence of the letter; and then also, as far as our strength allows, we shall

inquire what power each saying holds. I speak, he says, to you who have knowledge of the law, and know that its meaning lies not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit: that is, ”I speak to those who know the law,” and I call you, on account of this knowledge of the law, ”brothers”; and I say: Surely you are not ignorant that the law has dominion over each one who is made over to it and serves it, just as a husband over the woman joined to him? And just as throughout all his life he has dominion over the woman joined to him by laws, so also the law has dominion over the man who is under the law, as long as it lives and is in force.

But just as, if it should happen that the husband to whom the woman had been joined by laws dies, the woman becomes free and is released from the husband’s power, so also he who is under the law, if it should happen that the law dies, becomes free from the works of the law; and just as the woman who has been released from the laws of her former husband has liberty to be joined to another man, so also he who has lived under the power of the law, when he sees the letter dead, has the power to be united to the living Word as to a husband. But if the woman should wish to leave her former husband while he is still living, and to be united to another, she will doubtless be called an adulteress. And this falls in like fashion also upon him who deserts the law as a living husband, and is joined to another. But this, as I said, ”I speak to those who know the law, brothers,” so that you may understand that you also have left the law as a dead husband. Now its death is through the coming of Christ and the assumption of his body, through which you have been made another’s — that is, joined to another husband, namely to him who rose from the dead, and does not again take on death, which that former husband, that is, the law, took on.

You therefore have now been made the bride of that husband who rose from the dead; and therefore you ought to live according to his will, since we are no longer in the flesh, but in the spirit, even if at one time, placed in the flesh, we were pressed by the passions of sin and of the flesh; which passions, by occasion of the law, bore fruit in our members, not to God, but to death — to that death which God did not make. Now therefore, just as when the husband dies the woman is free and released from the law of her husband, so we also have been made free from the law which seemed to have dominion over us as a husband. To which law doubtless we too have died, and are estranged from that condition ”in which we were held,” so that now after this ”we may serve not in the oldness of the letter” as before, but ”in newness of spirit” — which spirit we have received from our Bridegroom as a nuptial pledge, just as he says elsewhere: ”Who gave us the pledge of the Spirit. This is the order of the discourse, and this the framework of the apostolic saying. But now, repeating what has been said, let us examine them one by one. ”Or are you ignorant,” he says, ”brothers (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?

He has a hyperbaton at once at the beginning, which is thus resolved: ”Or are you ignorant, brothers, that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? and after this is restored that which was inserted in the middle: ”For I speak to those who know the law. Now what he said, ”I speak to those who know the law,” is like that which he says a little later: ”But we know that the law is spiritual. That the law is spiritual, however, not Paul alone knew, but also those who were instructed by him — those, that is, who were spiritual, of whom he says: ”But the spiritual man examines all things. For concerning the Galatians I cannot declare that they know the law to be spiritual, of whom he says: ”O foolish Galatians. Unless perhaps they knew it then when they had begun with the spirit; but they did not remain in this knowledge, because they were made complete in the flesh. But the teaching of the apostles, and of those who were trained by them for teaching, was such as would teach men to serve the law ”not in the oldness of the letter,” but ”in the newness of the spirit. Which I think not only the apostles, but also the prophets, and any who were then wise among the people of God, perceived — that the law is spiritual — although for the sake of the multitude they seemed to keep the carnal observance as well.

Nor is this to be wondered at, since Paul himself says: That ”I became to the Jews as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews. Thus therefore many in the former people were advancing in spiritual knowledge, and saw the glory of the Word of God, just as Isaiah is written to have seen the glory of the Son of God, as John testifies when he says: ”But these things Isaiah said, when he saw his glory. Therefore Paul speaks to those who know the law — that is, to those who know what in the law is the oldness of the letter, and what the newness of the spirit; and he who knows this well knows doubtless that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives, just as a husband over a woman; and just as by the death of her husband the woman is freed from the law of wedlock, and receives liberty to be joined to another husband, so also the soul whose husband is the law, when it has detected the oldness of the letter in the law — since what grows old is near to destruction — the law according to the letter being as it were dead to it, receives the power of marrying another husband, who is the spirit of the law: ”Now the Lord is the Spirit. But what he said, ”The law has dominion over a man as long as he lives,” refers not to the man, but to the law.

For he indicates this also in what follows, where he says: ”While her husband lives, she is bound to the law; and the very order of the example that has been taken up declares the same thing more fully: for he has put the law in the place of the husband, and concerning it he says: ”But if her husband dies, she is loosed from the law of her husband. Yet if these things be understood as spoken of the apostles, or of those who believed from the circumcision, no question will be stirred up: for it is clear that these had the law as a husband, under whose authority they were living. But when the fullness of times came, the law began to be weakened in the flesh,

and death followed upon its weakness; and if any had lived under the authority of this husband, they — like a woman, once the letter is dead — are wedded to the spirit by believing in Christ. But those who from among the Gentiles believed in the Lord will not appear to have lived under this husband, that is, under the authority of the law, nor to have had the word of the law as a husband. And Isaiah declares the testimony of this matter — namely, that those who are of the circumcision were under a husband, while those from the Gentiles were without a husband — saying: ”Rejoice, O barren one who dost not bear; break forth and cry out, thou who dost not travail;

for many are the children of the deserted one, more than of her who has a husband. He says that the children of the deserted one are more numerous than those of her who has a husband, because far more believed from the Gentiles than from the circumcision; and he shows that she who has a husband is the Synagogue, which has the law; but that the deserted one, wandering and living without any authority of law, is the multitude of the Gentiles, which was also barren, putting forth no shoot of any lawful word. Therefore in these passages a man who lives under the law is set down by the Apostle as a woman who is under a husband. But he sets down as the husband the word of the law, which husband nevertheless he calls dead — that is, the word of the law according to the letter. But in what way this husband is dead must be thoroughly examined. He can indeed be seen as dead in this respect also, when the spiritual understanding shuts out and as it were slays the bodily understanding, and shows that the letter which kills is to be fled from, and the spirit which gives life is to be followed. But in this way too it will be more evidently proved that this husband is dead.

For as long as the law bore the shadow of good things to come, and in the earthly Jerusalem the type and image of the heavenly worship was carried on, and the altar remained, and the priesthood, the word of the law — that is, the letter — seemed to be alive. For Christ had not yet entered into the holy places not made with hands, nor had he approached the inner veil, which the Apostle, writing to the Hebrews, interprets as the flesh of Christ. But when ”the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,” by his presence the earthly Jerusalem, with its temple and altar and all that was carried on there, was overthrown. Then her husband died — that is, the law according to the letter. Or is not the word of the law rightly said to be dead in this respect, when no sacrifices, no priesthood, no ministries of the Levitical order are rendered to it? It cannot punish a murderer, nor stone an adulteress: for these things the power of the Romans claims for itself; and dost thou still doubt whether the law according to the letter is dead? No male goes up three times a year to appear before the Lord; no sheep is slaughtered at the festival of the Passover in the city which the Lord God is thought to have chosen; the sheaves of first fruits are not offered, no oblation is celebrated; no leprosy, no uncleanness is purged.

And can it be doubted, in all these matters, that the letter of the law is dead? Since therefore it has become clear through all these things that the former husband is dead, it is no transgression to be joined to Christ as to a second husband, just as it is no crime for a woman, when her former husband is dead, to enter upon a second marriage. And for this reason he says: ”Therefore, while her husband lives, she will be called an adulteress if she be with another man,” so as to show that the soul of a man too, if it has now come to Christ and has been joined to Christ as to a second husband, must in no way have the oldness of the letter — which is as it were the former husband — living in it, lest perchance, if it should have him living within it, she become an adulteress, having been so joined to the second that the former was still alive to her. This is what he said above under another figure, that one must first die and thus be buried together with Christ. Finally he adds this also in what follows: ”And so, my brethren, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, that you may belong to another, who rose from the dead, that we may bear fruit to God. You see how, although a diversity of figures appears, yet all are brought back to a single sense.

For also when he says that the law is dead to us, he wishes this same thing to be understood, namely, that we too have died to the law through the body of Christ, in which body ”he bore our iniquities and carried our sins,” and in which he stripped off ”the principalities and powers, triumphing over them in himself. We must hasten, therefore, to that second marriage, which is far more blessed than the first. And consider whether perhaps even then the law was foreshadowing some such thing in this, when it commanded that a woman, upon the death of her former husband, from whom she had received no seed (for such had he been, that he could not bring forth fruit), should be ordered to marry his brother. For the law according to the spirit seems to be the brother of the letter of the law, so that from him rather the woman may bring forth fruit. But these things will be inquired into more fully in their own places. But now, as we have said, one must first die to the law of the letter, that so we may be able to be joined to Christ, who rose from the dead. And it can be that this is understood not only of the law of Moses which is according to the letter, but of every man: since it is certain that by whatever institutions, by whatever customs a man is governed, he must be believed to live as it were under this law which he uses;

to which assuredly either he himself must die, or it must die to him, lest perchance the soul, placed under another husband, in coming to Christ should seem not so much to enter upon marriage with him as to become an adulteress, since indeed it still lives by the laws of the former husband. Yet the Apostle brings this same sense of the exposition forward again under another figure. For he adds: ”For when we were in the flesh, the vices of sins which were through the law worked in our members so as to bear fruit unto death. But now we, having died, are loosed from the law in which we were held, so that we may serve in newness of spirit and

not in oldness of letter. Here too it appears — as we said above by the example of a certain comparison — that Paul passes from one chamber into another by uncertain and hidden steps. For when he had discussed in the foregoing the law of the letter, which certainly would seem to pertain only to those who had believed from the circumcision, now by a hidden turn he examines the law of the flesh and of the vices, doubtless to this end, that this treatment may seem to pertain to other men as well, and not to those alone who are of the circumcision. He says, then: ”For when we were in the flesh.”

And indeed, so far as the matter itself is concerned, he was surely speaking these things while set in the flesh; but ”when we were in the flesh,” that is, when we were living according to the flesh, ”the vices of sins which were through the law worked in our members. What, then, is this law through which the vices of sin work? Can it be that the law of Moses, even if it be observed according to the letter, generates the vices of sins? But it is plain that he is speaking of that law in the members which resists the law of the mind, concerning which we have also treated earlier, when we discussed how ”the law entered in secretly, that sin might abound. It is therefore this very law which causes the vices of sins to abound in those who live according to the flesh, so that they bear fruit unto death. For that law is in our members for this very purpose, that by resisting against the law of the mind it may lead us captive to sin and offer these fruits to death. ”But now we have been loosed from the law, having died to that in which we were held. From this law, then, in which we were held, we have now been loosed. ”Now. When? Without doubt when we died with Christ, and were buried together with him through baptism, and were crucified with him; and therefore he says, ”We have been loosed from the law, having died.

For unless a man has died with Christ, he is not loosed from that law. I know that in other copies it is written, ”from the law of death, in which we were held”; but this reading, that is, ”having died,” is both truer and more correct. But as for what he adds in the conclusion, ”So that we may serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter,” which without doubt seems to be said concerning the law of the letter, this can be understood in the following consequent manner. Set indeed in the flesh, and living according to the flesh, we could not serve the newness of the spirit — because of the vices of sins which that law which was in our members nourished, so that they might bear fruit unto death — so long as that law of the members lived in us; or rather, so long as we lived according to it. But when Christ died for us, and we died with him to sin, we were set free through him from the law of sin in which we were held, and we are now able to serve the law of God; and to serve, moreover, in newness of spirit, not in the oldness of the letter.

For Christ did not draw us away from the law of sin in order that we should serve the oldness of the letter, that is, that we should receive circumcision, and Sabbaths,

or the other things which the oldness of the letter of the law contains; but that we should keep the law of God in newness of spirit, that is, that out of all the things which are written in it we should grasp the spiritual sense, the Spirit granting it, as the same Apostle says in another place, that ”a veil is placed upon the face of Moses; but when anyone shall have turned to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. For the Lord is the Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. I know indeed that certain persons, understanding this ”newness of spirit” badly, have dragged it in such a direction as to say that the Spirit is new, as though he had not existed before, nor been known to the ancients; and they do not know that in this they blaspheme most gravely. For the Spirit himself is in the law, he himself is in the Gospel, he himself is always with the Father and the Son, and always is, and was, and will be, just as the Father and the Son.

Therefore he himself is not new, but he makes believers new, when he leads them from their old evils to a new life and to the new observance of the religion of Christ, and makes them spiritual out of carnal.

[§8] ”What then shall we say? Is the law sin? God forbid. But I did not know sin except through the law. For I would not have known concupiscence, unless the law had said: You shall not covet. But sin, having taken occasion, worked in me through the commandment every concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. But I was living once without the law. Yet when the commandment came, sin revived, but I died; and the commandment, which was unto life, was found by me to be unto death. For sin, having taken occasion through the commandment, seduced me, and through it slew me. And so the law indeed is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. That, then, which is good, is it death to me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear as sin, worked death in me through what is good, that sin itself might become sinful beyond measure through the commandment. When we are set in passages such as these, it is repeatedly necessary for us to give a reminder concerning the diversities of laws. For this is what Paul intends, who under the one name of ”law” transfers the sense from one law to another by silent indications, with that purpose, as I judge, by which the prophetic Scriptures also stand, lest […] What then? Is the law sin? (Rom. vi, 7. It is not the case that, just as ”law” is a single name, so the discourse of Scripture about the law is everywhere one and the same.

Wherefore in each single passage it is needful to pursue and contemplate it accurately, and to weigh now what is signified by the name of law, now what that other thing may be. But in very many other words as well this must be held to. For there are in Scripture words which have been allotted the same appellation for signifying different things, and these confuse those who suppose that, just as the word is one, so also the thing signified is one, wherever that name has its place. Now that the word ”law” is not set down to signify one and the same thing, but several, we

shall set forth — passing over many matters which would demand labor and study to resolve the obstructed senses they contain — those things which can satisfy anyone, namely, that the word ”law” is set down for several things (to be signified): as when in the Epistle to the Galatians it is said, ”For whoever are of the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written: Accursed is he who does not adhere to all the things which are written in the book of the law, to do them” (Galat. iii, 10). It is plain that by these words is signified that of Moses … to those who bring them forward, they should be set out in the open, and handed over, so to speak, to be trampled underfoot;

but rather that, according to those things which we said above by means of a certain likeness, the mystery of its king might come through to few, and more secretly. And so he says: ”What then shall we say? Is the law sin? Did you suppose, he says, that I was speaking of the law of Moses, that it is sin? ”God forbid, God forbid. Let it suffice against both suppositions that I am neither speaking of the law of Moses, nor saying of it that it is sin; but rather, ”I did not know sin except through the law. For I would not have known concupiscence, unless the law had said: You shall not covet. Understand, he says, of what law I am speaking, without which no one would know sin. Is it perhaps the law of Moses through which Adam knew his own sin, and hid himself from the face of the Lord? Is it the law of Moses through which Cain knew his own sin and said, ”My sin is greater than that I should be pardoned”? Or through which Pharaoh knew his own sin and said, ”The Lord is just, but I and my people are impious”? But if all these, and countless others before the law of Moses, knew their own sin, without doubt it will not be the law of Moses of which the Apostle speaks when he says that ”I did not know sin except through the law”;

and of which he says, ”I would not have known concupiscence, unless the law had said: You shall not covet. Rather it is that law of which we have frequently spoken, which ”is written in the hearts of men, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God,” and which teaches each one what is to be done and what is to be avoided. This, then, is the law through which a man knows his own sin. Here he plainly says that the natural law is unknown to us for just so long as, with the advance of age… are yet four months, and then comes the harvest? Lift up your eyes, and see the regions, for they are already white unto the harvest (Joan. iv, 35). For ”harvest” is named twice: the former indeed refers to the bodily harvest, but the latter to the harvest of the spirit. And you will find something similar in the case of the man blind from his very birth who was healed, to whom he speaks these words while he was still blind in body: I came into this world for judgment, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind (Joan. ix, 39). So too: But now, apart from the law of nature, the righteousness of God has appeared, foretold by the testimony of the law of Moses and of the prophets (Rom. iii, 21);

and I would say to those who hesitate to admit a twofold signification of ”law,” whether the same law is understood both in this place, ”But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has shone forth,” and in that one, ”proclaimed beforehand by the law and the prophets. If it has appeared apart from the law, it is not foretold by the testimony of the law; but if it is confirmed by the testimony of the law, it was not declared apart from the law. Accordingly, the law of nature by no means confirms by its own testimony that righteousness of God which was declared in Jesus Christ, for it is lesser than it. But the law of Moses does — not the letter, but the spirit — and the prophets who answer to the spirit of the law, and the spiritual words that are in them. Wherefore he who pores over the divine Scriptures must diligently observe that they do not always use the same words of the same things: which they do sometimes through likeness of naming, sometimes by the principle of figurative speech, sometimes on account of the context of the expression, which demands that a word be employed otherwise in some places than as it is set down in others. And if we observe this attentively, we shall avoid many lapses and sinister interpretations.

It must therefore be known that ”he saw” is not always set down with the same signification, but sometimes refers to the sight of the body, while at other times it is the same as ”to understand. For this must be known universally: that since it has been decreed for the Spirit who speaks in the prophets to conceal, and not openly to set forth, the meanings of the truth — just as also for the word of Christ in the apostles — often it is even intermingled beneath the mode of speech, and is not woven together as under a single continuous sequence of discourse, lest, of course, the unworthy find, unto the judgment of their own soul, those things which have been hidden from them so far as the letter is concerned. And this is for the most part the reason why the Scriptures seem not to cohere with sufficiently fitting composition and sequence — but most of all, as we said above, the prophetic and apostolic writings, and especially the Epistle to the Romans, in which the things said about the law are said in diverse ways and applied to diverse matters, so that Paul seems in that Epistle not to follow through the matter he has proposed. …we have come to know how to discern between good and evil, and have heard from our own conscience. For it speaks to us within the conscience, and says: ”You shall not covet.

But since this law is not always found in a man, nor from the beginning as soon as a man is born, but for some while, as long as his age does not yet allow it, life is lived without this law — as Paul himself confesses when he says, ”But I was living once without the law” — in that time in which we lived without the law, we did not know concupiscence.

He did not say, ”I did not have it,” but says, ”I did not know it” — as though the thing indeed existed, yet it was not known that it was concupiscence. But when

reason came, and the natural law with the advance of years found a place in us, it began to teach us what things were good, and to forbid us from evils. Therefore, while this law says, ”You shall not covet,” we learned from it what we did not know before, that concupiscence is evil. ”But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, worked in me all manner of concupiscence. That law of which he says, ”I did not know concupiscence, unless the law had said: You shall not covet,” is itself also called a commandment. He says, then, that by occasion of this commandment, by which we are forbidden to covet, sin blazed up in us more violently, and worked in us all manner of concupiscence. For in that respect in which the flesh lusts against the spirit — that is, against the law which says, ”You shall not covet” — it is also set against it and wages, as it were, a contest, so that it may not only satisfy the concupiscence but may even conquer its adversary. This, then, is the occasion which he says comes from the commandment. For, somehow or other, the things that are forbidden are more ardently desired;

and therefore, since the commandment is holy and just and good (for what forbids evil is necessarily good), yet while by forbidding concupiscence it rather provokes and inflames it, through what is good it worked death in me. Nevertheless the Apostle indicates in these words that the origin of sin has arisen from concupiscence, since, when the law forbids — whether the law of Moses, which says, ”You shall not covet,” or also, as we expounded above, the natural law — what is forbidden is sought after all the more contentiously. It must indeed be understood that concupiscence is here set down as blameworthy. But in many cases it is also praiseworthy, as we showed above. ”For without the law sin was dead. But I was alive without the law once. Yet when the commandment came, sin revived. But I died; and the commandment, which was unto life, was found by me to be unto death. Concerning nearly all these matters full treatment has already been given in what precedes; and so, that we may not turn over the same things again and again, we shall briefly recall to memory the things that were said. Now, that sin is dead in us without the law — that is, before a rational understanding grows strong within us through age — we have shown, when we also brought forward the example of a boy who strikes his father or his mother, or curses them.

In which case, according to the law that forbids a father or mother to be struck or cursed, a sin does indeed seem to be committed; but that sin is said to be dead, because the law is not yet present in the boy, the law which would teach him that what he does is not permitted to be done. And it is certain that both Paul and all men have at some time lived without this law, that is, in the age of boyhood. For all alike, throughout that period, are not yet capable of this natural law. For otherwise Paul’s declaration on this point would not seem to be true. For how shall it be proved that Paul at some time lived without the law of Moses, when he himself confesses that he is a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and circumcised on the eighth day according to the precepts of the law? But in the manner we have said, he too at

some time lived in boyhood without the natural law. And of that time he did not say that there was no sin in the man, but that it was dead, and that afterward it revived, when the natural law, coming upon him, began to forbid concupiscence: which law, as it were, raised up sin that had been dead. For this is the nature of sin: if that be done which the law forbids to be done. Therefore, when sin came to life again, ”I,” he says, ”died. ”I” — who?

The soul, without doubt, which had done what the law forbade to be done: for ”the soul that sins,” as the prophet says, ”shall itself die. Therefore the commandment which had been given unto life — that is, to the soul, that it might teach it the works of life — was found to have turned out for it unto death, since it does not so much flee from what is forbidden as more ardently seek after it. Yet in these words it troubles me how he could say that sin was dead and revived. For it seems that nothing can be said to be dead except what at some time lived, and afterward lacked life. And this very word which he uses, ”revived,” teaches that it is not a life newly given, but a former life restored: for the very expression ”revived” signifies to have lived again. If, then, sin is said to have revived in the soul, how do these people, from this saying of the Apostle in which he says, ”But I was alive without the law once,” introduce the doctrine of transmigration of bodies (metensōmatōsis) — which teaches that the souls of men were previously in beasts, or birds, or fishes, and so came to men: and that for this reason the Apostle said, ”But I was alive without the law once,” as though he, before he came into this human body, had lived in that order (for example) either of birds or of animals, where no law was had?

How, I say, will they be able to answer this, when he says that sin revived in the soul — not that it newly arose, but that what was dead came to life? And it is certain that whatever revives has at some time lived. Never, then, will the soul appear to have been in that order, where sin without law could neither have been nor have lived. Let these things be said against those who drag the Apostle’s word to an impious doctrine. But we say that this death of sin was granted by the kindness of God at that time in which we lived without the law. And even if, when the commandment comes — which is ”holy and just and good” — sin revives in us and slays us (”for sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me”), it is no accusation of the commandment that he says the occasion by which sin slew me came from the commandment; but this is the logical consequence of that saying. That is called law which teaches what ought to be done and what avoided; and it is necessary that it should also teach of what sort that is which it says must be avoided, so that thereby it may the more easily be avoided. For no one can shun what he does not know.

If, then, someone, having been taught by the law of what sort that is which he ought to avoid, does not so much avoid it as rather do it, he will indeed appear to

have received, by occasion of the law, the knowledge of the thing that was not to be done: but the law had not taught him for this purpose, that he should do what he ought not, and die; but that he should not do it, and should live. Thus, then, ”sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Or else, certainly, since he said, ”Sin by the commandment deceived me, and by it slew me,” he may here by ”sin” have meant the very author of sin, of whom it is written, ”The serpent deceived me”; or he may have fashioned a personification of sin, which is seen to have deceived the man by occasion of the commandment, so as to make concupiscence sweet, and that the soul, while it is delighted by the sweetness of concupiscence, might die by transgressing the commandment which said, ”You shall not covet. But lest anyone should ascribe to the commandment of the law the fact that by occasion of the precept the soul was deceived by sin and slain, the Apostle adds and says: ”And so the law indeed is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. For the commandment is good, and the law is holy. For it enjoins good things, and commands the observance of good things.

”That, then, which is good,” he says, ”is it death to me? God forbid! He refutes an objection that necessarily arises, and says: It is not that the good of the law and of the commandment brought death upon me; ”but sin,” he says, ”that it might appear” how wicked it is, ”through what is good wrought death in me. For the commandment is good when it is kept: but if it is not kept, it will necessarily be an evil to him who has lost the good. Therefore ”sin itself becomes a sinner beyond measure” by occasion of the commandment. We said above too that he fashioned, as it were, a personification of sin, and says of it that sin itself — of whose person he speaks — was made a sinner beyond measure by occasion of the commandment. For it is less of a sin if you commit what is not forbidden. But if you commit things vetoed and prohibited, you are, so to speak, a sinner beyond measure: because you have not only done what you ought not, but you have also transgressed a precept. But as for our saying ”sin is a sinner,” we preferred to admit a fault of language rather than not express the Apostle’s meaning in its entirety: because in the Latin tongue the noun for sin (peccatum) has confined us, since it is declined in the neuter gender, whereas in Greek it is feminine; and therefore we have called it a sinner in the masculine (peccator):

for there it can be called a sinner in the feminine (peccatrix).

[§9] ”For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I work, I do not know: for I do not do what I will; but what I hate, that I do. Now if I do what I do not will, I consent to the law, that it is good. But now it is no longer I who work it, but the sin that dwells in me. For I know that there dwells not in me, that is, in my flesh, what is good. For to will lies near at hand for me: but I find not how to accomplish the good. For I do not do the good that I will; but the evil that I do not will, that I do. Now if I do what I do not will, it is no longer

I who work it, but the sin that dwells in me. I find, therefore, a law, for me who will to do good, since evil lies near at hand for me. For I am delighted with the law of God according to the inner man: but I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind, and leading me captive in the law of sin, which is in my members. Wretched man that I am, who will free me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

If perchance to anyone that exposition which we maintained concerning the diversity of laws seemed to be violently presumed, let him now observe in this chapter how not only a diversity of laws, but also of persons, is introduced. For Paul, who in other places said, ”For we, walking in the flesh, do not war according to the flesh,” in the present passage says that he is carnal: and here he says that he has been sold under sin, he who in other places said: ”You have been bought with a price; and again: ”Christ has redeemed us; and once more elsewhere he says: ”Yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me. And again, he who says, ”On account of his Spirit dwelling in us,” now says: ”For there dwells not in me, that is, in my flesh, what is good. But if the good does not dwell in his flesh, how does he say that our body is the temple of God, and the temple of the Holy Spirit? And moreover the rest, in which he confesses that by the law which is in his members, and which fights against the law of his mind, he is led captive in the law of sin — how will these things befit apostolic dignity, and especially Paul, in whom Christ both lives and speaks?

But let us gather from these things how it is the custom of divine Scripture to change secretly both persons, and things, and the matters of which it seems to be speaking, and names — or rather, to use the same names in one set of things and another, as in the present passage the Apostle says: ”For we know that the law is spiritual. This much, that he said, ”We know that the law is spiritual,” he pronounces with apostolic authority. For he who is carnal and sold under sin does not know that the law is spiritual; but he who has in himself the Spirit of God, he knows that the law is spiritual: which is fittingly said of the law of Moses. For it is that very law which, to him who understands it spiritually, is a spiritual law, and a Spirit giving life; but to him who understands it carnally, it is recorded to be a law of the letter, and a letter that kills. But as to what he says, ”But I am carnal, sold under sin,” here he now, as a teacher of the Church, takes upon himself the person of the weak; on account of which he also said elsewhere: ”I became weak to the weak, that I might gain the weak.

And here therefore, for whoever are weaker — that is, for the carnal, and for those who have been sold under sin — Paul becomes carnal and sold under sin, and he speaks those things which it is their custom to speak, whether under the pretext of excusing or of accusing themselves. He says therefore of himself, as though speaking in their person: ”But I am carnal, sold under sin”: that is, living according to

the flesh, and reduced by a price into the power of sin, of lust, and of concupiscence. ”For what I work, I do not know. For I do not do what I will; but what I hate, this I do. Now as to what he says, that ”I do not know what I work,” it is not the thing itself which one works that he is ignorant of, though he be carnal, but he is said to be ignorant of the cause of the thing which he does. But as to what he says, ”For I do not do what I will; but what I hate, that I do,” he shows that although he who speaks these things is carnal and sold under sin, nevertheless he also strives to resist his vices a little — by the prompting, that is, of the natural law — but is conquered by his vices and overpowered against his will:

as often happens (for example) when someone resolves to bear patiently the one who provokes him, and in the end is conquered by anger, and suffers this against his will: he grows angry therefore even when he does not wish to grow angry. This same thing is also wont to happen through the vice of fear, so that against his will a man is terrified by dread and alarm; this also often occurs in the elation of a sudden or unexpected honor, so that he becomes more arrogant and more puffed up than he wishes. He therefore who is not yet spiritual is conquered in each of these things, even against his will: because that will of his is not yet so strong and so robust as to determine within itself that it must contend for the truth even unto death; nor is it such as to say, ”It is, it is; no, no”; and therefore he cannot work the things he wills, but the things he does not will. Nevertheless, in that part by which he does not will the evil, he consents to the law of God that it is good, since it forbids evil; and the natural law is brought into a certain harmony with the law of God, so that they will the same things and do not will the same things.

But if according to our will we consent to the law of God, then the evil which we do, it is no longer we who work it, but the sin which is in us — that is, the law and the will of the flesh, which leads us captive in the law of sin which is in our members. And here indeed the carnal Paul says, ”It is no longer I who work it, but the sin that dwells in me. But the spiritual Paul says elsewhere, ”I labored more abundantly than all of them; yet not I, but the grace of God with me. Therefore, just as this one ascribes his labors not to himself, but to the grace of God which was working in him, so also that carnal one reckons his works, which are not good, not to himself, but to the sin which dwells and works in him. For this reason therefore he says: ”It is no longer I who work it, but the sin that dwells in me. For there dwells not in me, that is, in my flesh, what is good. For Christ does not yet dwell in him, nor is his body the temple of God. Yet nevertheless he whose person is set forth here is not altogether a stranger to good things, but in purpose indeed and in will he has begun to seek the good, though he is not yet able to attain the good in deeds and works.

For there is a certain weakness of this kind in those who receive the beginnings of conversion: that although one may wish to do at once everything that is good, the

effect does not immediately follow the will. For a man, deliberating within himself, resolves (for example) not to grow angry, and he settles this in his will; but because by long use and lasting habit the vice of wrath has held dominion in him, it resists even his will and purpose, and, taking the path customary to it, the force of rage bursts out. The vice of lust acts in like manner. By an equal disease of habit a lie too creeps in, fear frightens him off; and in each of these that man who is now receiving the beginnings of conversion fittingly says that ”to will is present with me, but to accomplish the good I find not. For the good that I will, this I do not; but the evil that I hate, that I do. But if the will holds the judgment of what is good, while the habit of carnal vices — which has been called the law of the flesh or the law of the members — resists and creeps in, then from the fact that I bear the will of the good, though I do evils, yet because I do them unwillingly, ”I consent unto the law of God, that it is good. For I hate evils, and I desire to do the goods which the law commands.

But if against my will I do evils, overcome by the habit of vices and by the practice of sinning, ”it is no more I” — that is, the inner man — ”who do the good I will; but sin that dwelleth in me. For he has named the habit of sinning ”sin. ”I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. And in these words, as we have often noted above, we seem not to be fully unfolded in the expression, but to be hindered either by the abundance of the conjunctions or by their peculiarities. We ought therefore to read them in some such order as this, that the sense may become clearer: Therefore, because evil is present with me, willing to do good I find the law of God, and I delight in it according to the inner man. By this he shows that the inner man — that is, the will and the purpose which takes its beginning of being converted to the Lord — consents to the law of God and is delighted in it. But, as we said above, it is not immediately, as soon as one has the will to be converted to good things, that the practice of good work also follows. For the will is a swift thing, and is turned about without hindrance; but the work is slow, because it requires practice, and skill, and the labor of working.

And that this may become more evident, let us use also the likeness of an example. For instance, someone wishes to become wise, and yet he is not made wise the moment he willed it; but the will indeed went before, nor can anyone become wise without the will; yet nevertheless, when the will is present, labor must be applied, and study, and carefulness, and vigils, and teaching, and instruction; and scarcely at some time, by long practice and continual meditation, is he made wise. This man, then, from the beginning indeed at once had the will to be wise, but the work of wisdom was not at once present to him. But even in that very process, while he is being trained that he may become wise, how many things has he done foolishly and contrary to wisdom! And yet he could indeed understand how foolishly he had acted, for he already had the pursuit of wisdom; but he was not yet so wise as

to be able to take heed lest he commit anything unwisely. This same order must be held also concerning chastity: that not immediately when one has willed to profess chastity will he also fulfill it in work, so as to be agitated by no goads of concupiscence. So too must it be known concerning meekness, and concerning patience, and concerning each several virtue. In all of which it is fitting to say that "I delight in the law of God," that is, in the virtues, "after the inward man.

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. What he had said above, "for to will the good is present with me," he has here named the law of the mind, namely the will of the good; and this law of the mind agrees with the law of God, and consents to it. But again he calls the motions of the body and the desires of the flesh the law of the members, and the law of sin, which leads the soul captive and subjects it to its laws. For it is certain that the desires of the flesh drag the soul to sin and subject it to its laws; and just as the law of the mind, which consents with the law of God, if it can gain possession of the soul, leads it to the law of God, so also the law which is in the members, and the concupiscence of the flesh, if it seduces the soul, will subject it to the laws of sin. But when Paul, having assumed the person of the weaker man, had taught that these contests are held within a man, and had shown that even against the will, through the desires of the flesh, the soul is by the very practice of sinning snatched into the jurisdiction of sin, he uses an exclamation still in the person of him whom he has described, and says:

"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? He sees himself wretched, within whom so many laws fight against one another, so many battles are stirred up: "the flesh fights against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh"; the law which is in the members fights against the law of the mind, and the soul is led captive in the law of sin and is brought under its yoke, even while the inner man is delighted with the law of God. How, amid so many and such evils as these, should a man not call himself wretched, and say that he dwells in a body of death? For deservedly is that called a body of death in which dwells the sin that is the cause of death. This exclamation, then, is made in the person of him whom the Apostle describes as having indeed received the beginnings of conversion, in that the will of the good is present with him, but he has not yet come into the effect of the good. For he does not find how to accomplish the good, because the practice and exercise of the virtues had not yet grown up in him. But an answer is given to him concerning what he had said, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" — no longer in that man's person, but out of apostolic authority: "The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

From which it appears that the Apostle described all these things, and set forth the evils that were being wrought within us, for this reason: that at the last he might

show and teach from how many evils and from how many deaths Christ has rescued us. But that it is the custom in the divine Scriptures for holy men to assume the persons of sinners, and for teachers to take upon themselves the infirmities of their disciples, we are most fully taught from the book of Psalms, when it says: ”There is no peace in my bones because of my sins, for my iniquities are laid upon my head, and like a heavy burden they have weighed upon me. My scars have putrified and are corrupted because of my foolishness. I have been afflicted with miseries and bowed down even to the end,” and the rest, with which nearly this whole Psalm is written. But if perhaps it will seem to someone that David could have said these things rather concerning himself, on account of the things that had befallen him, than concerning others, what shall we also say about Daniel, of whom indeed no sin is recorded, yet a confession is described in fastings and sackcloth and ashes, and a prayer of this sort, in which among other things he also says:

”We have sinned, we have committed iniquity, we have acted unjustly, we have committed impiety, and we have departed and turned aside from thy commandments and from thy judgments, and we have not hearkened to thy servants the prophets, who spoke to us in thy name, and to our kings, and to our princes, and to our fathers, and to all the people of the land? And to thee, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us confusion of face. Who is there who could deny that in these words the person of sinners has been taken up by Daniel, on whose behalf he seems to say these things as though for himself? Whence it is fitting that we, when reading the sayings of the saints, whenever we see something of this kind said by them, should understand and perceive that they are describing in themselves our passions and our sins; and that they weep over these things for this reason, that by their weeping we may be invited to tears. For they considered that no one could be found so hard and ungrateful that, when he sees his own wounds bewailed by others, he himself should receive no feeling of grief over his own wounds.

So therefore in the present chapter also the Apostle — lest any of us should blush at those things which he feels to be transacted within himself, or lest, even after being converted to the Lord and with his will already changed, he should despair on feeling these things still stirring within himself — himself described them as though they were transacted in himself, so that by the Apostle’s example no one might either be ashamed of the nature of the body, or despair of amendment, or be ignorant of the multitude of his own evils, from which he is set free through the grace of Christ.

[§10] ”Therefore I myself with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. Perhaps someone will say that the Apostle, who up to this point has been speaking not as it were in his own person but having assumed the person of another, now, as though marking a change of person, says, ”I myself,” so as to show that these things which are to be said pertain to that same Apostle himself. And

he says that with the mind he serves the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin — as if so great were the force of sinning, so great the tyranny of the flesh, that not even the Apostle could escape it; and for this reason he said in another place that ”I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a reprobate. But whoever takes these things as spoken in the person of the Apostle seems to me to strike despair into every soul, on the ground that there is absolutely no one who does not sin in the flesh. For this is what it is to serve the law of sin with the flesh. To me, therefore, it rather seems that he is still maintaining the person of the man whom above he described in himself:

one who by will and purpose has already been turned toward better things, and who serves the law of God with mind and spirit, yet has not yet obtained this, that he should bring even the obedience of the flesh into agreement with the mind. For indeed in the preceding passages he had discoursed on the mortification of the body, and had taught that we must die together with Christ; in these present words he seems to show how this work is not idle, and to teach that it is not the case that, as soon as someone wills, and as soon as he has purposed the good, it is straightway also fulfilled in deed; but that either so great is the force of habit, or so great the sweetness of the vices, that although the spirit already strains toward virtue and determines to serve the law of God, nevertheless the desires of the flesh persuade it to serve sin and to obey sin’s laws.

[§11] ”There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed me from the law of sin and of death. What difference there is among those who, placed as it were in a kind of contest, live with the mind according to the law of God but are driven by the desires of the flesh into the law of sin, he taught in the preceding passages. But now he speaks of those who are no longer partly in the flesh and partly in the spirit, but are wholly in Christ; and he declares that in these there is nothing worthy of condemnation, because ”the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed them from the law of sin and death. Now the law of the Spirit of life is one and the same as the law of God, just as, again, the law of sin and the law of death are one and the same. There will therefore be no condemnation for those who are utterly freed from the law of sin, which is the law of death, and who serve the law of God, which is the law of the spirit. But to serve the law of God, and to be under the law of the spirit, this is to serve Christ. And to serve Christ is to serve wisdom, is to serve righteousness, to serve truth, and to serve all the virtues at once.

Hence it is not to be supposed that anyone is suddenly, and as soon as he wills, transferred from the servitude of the law of sin and made to be in Christ Jesus, so that there is in him no longer anything held to deserve condemnation on the score of sin. Rather, righteousness demands in each one its own portion: it tests whether

he has already been so amended and corrected that it finds in him no unrighteous work from which condemnation would follow. Likewise truth too demands in each one its own portion, whether one who has been transferred from the law of sin is now found in no respect to defile the service of truth with falsehood. Likewise chastity also examines its own portion, whether he is stained by no unchaste desires. So piety, so wisdom examine their own portions in each one; and if they find these standing rightly and entire in him, then he will be reckoned to be in Christ and to have nothing of condemnation. And of these things there is surely no doubt that they are acquired by long practice and meditation and by unsleeping labor. And therefore it is certain that these things do not befall the idle or the slothful; but by advancing little by little, and by sinning at first in few things, then afterward in the very least things, and at last, if they are able to attain it, in nothing at all. And perceiving this, the same Apostle seems to me to have written elsewhere:

”Forgetting the things that are behind, stretching myself forth to the things that are before” — teaching by these words that the things behind must be those in which there was something blameworthy and worthy of oblivion, while the things before are those which are in Christ, and that these are the things toward which we ought to stretch ourselves out, and to seek them with the whole eagerness of the mind. As for our saying that the law of the spirit of life must be understood as the law of God itself, we said this, of course, according to that part of it which is said to be spiritual. For this reason he added, ”the law of the spirit of life. For of the law of the letter he could not say this, concerning which he had declared elsewhere that ”the letter kills. This is also called elsewhere ”the ministry of death. The law therefore contains both, the letter that kills and the spirit that gives life. Hence consider whether perhaps that tree also of which it is written, ”of knowing good and evil,” holds the figure of this same thing. For both are contained in one, just as also in the law. But let us not omit this either, that here indeed he who frees from the law of sin and death is called ”the spirit of life”; whereas in the Gospel according to John it is written, the Lord saying:

”If you abide in my word, you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. In which it seems to me indeed that, although these appear to differ from one another in operation or in name, nevertheless in the reality itself they are one. For Christ is life, and he it is who will set free; and here the spirit of life sets free. And how is there not in both one and the same freedom? For the things which the Spirit does, these Christ also does; and the things which are Christ’s, the Spirit does. For just as those whom the Holy Spirit sanctifies, Christ sanctifies, so also those whom the spirit of life frees, life also frees. Only let it be that, freed by the law of the spirit of life, we abide in Christ and be no longer found serving the law of sin; because just as he who is freed by the law of the spirit of life remains in Christ who is life, so he who serves the law of sin remains in the death which comes from the condemnation of sin.

[§12] ”For what was impossible for the law, in that it was weakened through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and concerning sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the justification of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. For they who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they who are according to the spirit, the things of the spirit. For the prudence of the flesh is death, but the prudence of the spirit is life and peace: because the prudence of the flesh is an enemy to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be. But they who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if nevertheless the Spirit of God dwells in you. Since in what precedes he has named so many laws (for he spoke both of the law of God, and of the law of the mind, and of the law of the spirit of life), and on the contrary side has also mentioned the law which is in the members, and the law of death, and the law of sin, it is no small deliberation to choose which of these laws he now speaks of here when he says, ”For what was impossible for the law, in that it was weakened through the flesh.

I think, however, that here too, as we have often said in other places, the Apostle divides the law of Moses into two parts, and names one thing in it flesh and another spirit: and that observance indeed which is carried out according to the letter he calls the sense of the flesh, just as he says of a Jew of this kind, ”Vainly puffed up by the sense of his own flesh”; but that which is received spiritually he names spirit, as he also says elsewhere, ”The letter kills, but the spirit gives life. And in this passage, therefore, what he says, ”impossible for the law,” and ”in that it was weakened through the flesh,” can be taken of the understanding which is according to the letter. For it was both impossible and weak, if it were understood according to the flesh, that is, according to the letter. For what is so impossible as the observance of the Sabbath according to the letter of the law, as we have already often said in many places? For one is commanded not to go out of his house, not to move from his place, to lift no burden. And because the Jews who observe the law according to the flesh see that these things are impossible, they contrive certain inept and ridiculous devices, by which they may seem to patch up the impossibility of the law. But what shall I say of the system of sacrifices, which all at once has been made wholly impossible?

Seeing that there is neither temple, nor altar, nor any place at all for sacrificing. In each of these things the law is, I will not say impossible and weak, but plainly already dead. For before this death it was weakened at that time when it attempted with the blood of calves and goats, and yet could not, to take away sins; and it was weakened in the laws concerning leprosy, which it was never able either to explain or to fulfill. In all these things, therefore, and in countless others, the law was both impossible and was weakened, so far as concerns the understanding of the flesh: and therefore ”God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,

and concerning sin," or, as it is more truly found among the Greeks, "and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. In that he said, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," he shows that we indeed have sinful flesh, but that the Son of God had the likeness of sinful flesh, not sinful flesh. For all we men who have been conceived from the seed of a man coming together with a woman necessarily use that utterance in which David says, that "in iniquities did my mother conceive me.

But he who came to an immaculate body from no contact of a man, but by the Holy Spirit alone coming upon the Virgin and the power of the Most High overshadowing her, had indeed the nature of our body, yet the pollution of sin, which is transmitted to those conceived from the motion of concupiscence, he did not have at all. For this reason, therefore, the Son of God is said to have come "in the likeness of sinful flesh. "And for sin," he says, "he condemned sin in the flesh. That Christ was made a victim for sin, and was offered for the purgation of sins, all the Scriptures testify, and especially Paul writing to the Hebrews, when he says: "For this he did once, in offering himself as a victim"; and again: "Who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. Through this victim, therefore, of his own flesh, which is called "for sin," he condemned sin in the flesh, as the same Apostle says in other places, that "he appeared in the last days for the destruction of sin"; and again the prophet says: "He himself bore our sins, and carried our iniquities. "For sin," therefore, that is, through the victim of his own flesh which he offered for sin, "he condemned sin in his flesh, that the justification of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.

For through this victim of the flesh, which was offered for sin, he both condemned sin, that is, put sin to flight and took it away, that the justification of the law might be fulfilled in us who keep the law according to the spirit, and not according to the flesh: in which part, according to what we have expounded above, the law was impossible and weak. "For they who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they who are according to the spirit, the things of the spirit. Here now more openly, setting the law of Moses as it were in the middle between us and the Jews, he says, "They who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh," that is, the Jews, whom he calls Israel according to the flesh, mind the fleshly things of the law, in that they understand the law according to the flesh; "but they who are according to the spirit" (speaking of those whom he calls Jews by the spirit, not by the letter), "the things of the spirit. And he still dwells upon the same sense, and opens it more evidently, when he says: "For the prudence of the flesh is death, but the prudence of the spirit is life and peace. Is it not one and the same thing that he says, "The prudence of the flesh is death," and that other saying, "The letter kills"? Therefore "the prudence of the flesh is death. Death to whom? To the soul, without doubt.

For he who understands the law according to the flesh, that is, according to the letter, does not come to Christ who is life, and therefore ”the prudence of the flesh is death, but the prudence of the spirit is life and peace. For he has life and peace, which is Christ, who understands the law spiritually. ”Because the wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God: for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be. The same understanding still seems to be unfolded. For how should the wisdom of the flesh, that is, the carnal understanding, not be an enemy to God, when it opposes Christ; when it does not receive him whom God sent; when it says: ”We have a law, and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God”? How, then, should such a wisdom, and such an understanding in the law, not be called an enemy to God, and to his law?

To that which is according to the spirit, namely, it is not subject, nor can it be subject: for as death and life are contrary to one another, so are the killing letter of the law — which is also the wisdom of the flesh — and the life-giving spirit, which is truly the law of God, contrary to one another. ”But they who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the spirit: if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. The same understanding holds throughout. ”They who are in the flesh,” he says — that is, they who follow the law according to the letter — ”cannot please God. For this was long ago declared by God through Isaiah, when he says: ”Your fasts and holidays and your great day I do not endure: my soul hates your new moons and your Sabbaths. But ”you,” he says, in whom the Spirit of God dwells — if indeed it does dwell — ”are not in the flesh, but in the spirit”; that is, you do not follow the carnal understanding of the law, but the spiritual, through which you have come to the life-giving Spirit — if indeed your deeds and manner of life are such that you deserve to have the Spirit of God in you.

Therefore, dividing the law of Moses, as we have said, into two parts, that is, into spirit and flesh, he has handed over to us the things that are of the spirit, which he also called the spiritual law; but the things that are of the flesh he has left to the carnal Jews. So, finally, he interpreted also that passage concerning Abraham when he said: ”But he indeed who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh; but he who was of the freewoman, by promise. And as then he that was born according to the flesh persecuted him that was born according to the spirit, so also now. For it is certain that those who are Jews according to the flesh persecute us who are Jews not outwardly but inwardly, and who keep the law according to the spirit, not according to the flesh. Those, therefore, who are wise according to the flesh consequently also hope for the promises of the law in a carnal way. But we await them spiritually, according to the word of Paul, who says: ”That we may receive the promises of the Spirit”; and again: ”Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. From all of which it is shown both what the law according

to the flesh is and what the law according to the spirit is, and what is the hope of a carnal promise and what of a spiritual one.

It is possible also, according to another exposition — if we take it up again from the beginning — that ”What was impossible to the law, in that it was weakened through the flesh,” be understood also of the law of the mind, which he said above wills to do good but cannot fulfill it through the infirmity and frailty of the flesh; and that on this account God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and of sin — that is, by a victim offered for sin — condemned sin. For when remission of sins was given us, sin was put to flight and driven out of our flesh, and the justification of the law began to be fulfilled in us — of that law, at least, which delights together with the law of God, which is quickly fulfilled when the law of sin that was in our members no longer resists it, if indeed we walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit. For so long as anyone is in the flesh and lives according to the flesh, he is wise in the things of the flesh; but when he has turned himself to the spirit, and has died to the law of sin and of the flesh, he is wise in the things that are of the spirit. For to be wise according to the flesh is the death of the soul; but to be wise according to the spirit is life and peace:

because ”the wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God” — that is, so long as the flesh resists the spirit and is not subject to the law of the mind, which is the law of God, it is at enmity with God; and therefore they who live carnally cannot please God. But ”you,” he says, ”are not in the flesh” — that is, you do not live according to the flesh, but according to the spirit — ”if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. These things can also, as we have said, be fitted to this place according to another exposition. But let the one who reads choose, and let him follow whichever he judges the more fitting — if indeed he does judge it so.

[§13] ”But if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ is in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of justification. But if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies because of his Spirit that dwells in you. That the apostle Paul employs firm syllogisms drawn together by the dialectical art, whether in this place or in others of his Epistles, does not seem to me a thing to be set forth now, lest perhaps we appear to be advocates not so much of his knowledge as of his speech — in which he does not wish to be called skilled; and therefore we shall hasten rather to examine the sense of the chapter set before us. In what went before, where he said: ”But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you,” we explained in a twofold manner what it is to be in the Spirit: that is, either to understand the law not according to the letter but according to the spiritual sense; or else, with the body mortified, to live by the laws of the spirit and not of the flesh.

And now, therefore, as to what he says, ”But if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,” and then adds, ”But if Christ is in you,” it must be asked whether it is a different thing for the Spirit of God to be in someone, or the Spirit of Christ, or even Christ himself, or the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead. But so far as I regard either the sequence of the present passage, or that which the Savior says in the Gospel concerning the Holy Spirit, that ”he proceeds from the Father,” and, ”He shall receive of mine” — and he joins in what follows the explanation of this word, saying: ”Father, all mine are thine, and thine are mine: therefore I said that he shall receive of mine” — when, I say, I behold so great a principle of unity between the Father and the Son, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ seem to me to be called one and the same Spirit. Yet we can also understand in this way what he said, ”But if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (since in truth it seems to be pronounced abruptly), namely, that if anyone has not deserved to be so great and such a one as to be worthy to have the Spirit of Christ, he is straightway denied to belong to Christ — whereas he says in the Psalms:

”Mine are all the wild beasts of the woods, the cattle on the mountains, and the oxen. And if the wild beasts and the cattle are his, how are men not his? But it can, as I have said, be understood thus, like that saying in the Gospel: ”He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. And so here too, he who has not the Spirit of Christ — that is, who is not moved by that same Spirit, so as to be ready to go even unto death for justice, for truth, for announcing the word of God, for preaching the kingdom of heaven, for casting away the letter of the law and opening up its spirit, for resisting against sin — he who is not ready for all these things is not his disciple. He, therefore, who is not such, and does not bear such a Spirit within him, is indeed his creature, like the wild beasts of the woods and the cattle on the mountains and the oxen, but he is not his disciple. Thus, then, in ”If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; but if Christ is in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of justice,” he seems to me in this place to call the Spirit of Christ and Christ one and the same thing.

In him, therefore, in whom Christ is, he himself says that ”we always carry about the death of Christ in our body. But death is imposed upon the body for the sake of sin — that is, that it may not sin. And if the body is dead to sin, necessarily the spirit lives for the doing of justice. For he who is dead in the body and does not serve sin must needs live in the spirit and serve justice. So too the same Apostle says in a certain place that he had delivered a certain man over to the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved. ”But if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies because of his Spirit dwelling in you. Since he had said above concerning those who, after the likeness of Christ’s death, mortify their bodies that they may not sin, he necessarily now makes mention of him who

raised Christ from the dead, so that in like manner and by the same reasoning by which they died together with him and were buried together with him, they may know that they are to be quickened through the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead, and to be raised from the dead after the likeness of Christ. And he shows in what way this comes about, saying: ”Because of his Spirit dwelling in you.

For if the Spirit of Christ dwells in you, it seems necessary that his dwelling-place be restored to the Spirit, and his temple given back. Yet I should wish to know what this very thing is which is said — that either the Spirit of Christ, or the Spirit of God, or even Christ himself dwells in us: whether this Spirit is given to all from the beginning, and afterwards driven away by the worst deeds and by deeds estranged from God, according to that which is written, ”My Spirit shall not remain in these men, because they are flesh”; or whether it is given afterwards by the merit of one’s life and by the grace of faith, according to those things which are taught in the Acts of the Apostles, that the Holy Spirit came upon each one of them as it were in tongues of fire; or certainly as we are taught in the Gospel, when the Savior himself, after he rose from the dead, said to the disciples: ”Receive the Holy Spirit,” and breathed upon each one of them. Whence it seems to me that this gift is both won by merits, and preserved by innocence of life, and increased in each one according to his progress in faith and grace; and the purer the soul is rendered, the more abundantly is the Spirit poured into it.

But as to what he said, ”My Spirit shall not remain in these men, because they are flesh,” this looks to the fact that, since their soul, having repudiated the service of the Spirit, turned itself wholly to the services of the flesh, it takes the very name of that flesh to which it joined itself and with which it was made one. In diverse ways, therefore, can the Spirit be had. Either the Spirit of Christ is had, according to what we said above, from divine inbreathing, where he says, ”Receive the Holy Spirit,” and breathed upon them; or again in that manner in which it is said in the Acts of the Apostles to have been done, that the apostles spoke in diverse tongues. There is also that manner which is related in the books of Kings, when Scripture says: ”And the Spirit leaped upon Saul, and he began to prophesy. There is also yet another manner: as when the Savior after the resurrection, journeying with Cleopas and another disciple and opening the Scriptures to them, set them afire with the Spirit of his mouth, so that they said: ”Was not our heart burning within us, when he opened the Scriptures to us? But do you wish to know that not only did Jesus in speaking hand over his Spirit to his hearers, but also that he who speaks the word of God in his name hands over the Spirit of God to his hearers?

See in the Acts of the Apostles how, while Peter was speaking to Cornelius, Cornelius himself and those who were with him were filled with the Holy Spirit. Whence you too, if you speak the word of God, and speak it faithfully out of a pure conscience, and are not yourself refuted by your own words as one who teaches

one thing and does another, it can come about that while you speak the fire of the Holy Spirit inflames the hearts of your hearers, and that straightway they grow warm and burn to fulfill all the things that you teach, so that they may fulfill in deeds what they have learned in words, and may seek ”the things that are above,” where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God: that they may be wise in ”the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. But in this way too is each one proved to have the Spirit of Christ in himself. Christ is wisdom: if anyone is wise according to Christ, and is wise in the things that are Christ’s, he has in himself through wisdom the Spirit of Christ. Christ is justice: if anyone has in himself the justice of Christ, through justice he has in himself the Spirit of Christ. Christ is peace: if anyone has in himself the peace of Christ, through the Spirit of peace he has in himself the Spirit of Christ.

So also with charity, so also with sanctification, so also with each and every thing which Christ is said to be: he who has it is to be believed to have the Spirit of Christ in himself, and to hope that his mortal body will be quickened because of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him.

[§14] ”Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, that we should live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live. He taught above that the Spirit of Christ dwells in us, and that the gifts of the Spirit have been conferred upon us. Consequently, then, he now adds that ”we are debtors” — debtors, without doubt, for those things which we have obtained from the Spirit of Christ. But ”we are not debtors,” he says, ”to the flesh. For God did not make us to his own image for this purpose, that we should be liable to the servitude of the flesh, but rather that the soul, serving its own Creator, should itself make use of the service and ministry of the flesh. But perhaps someone may say: How are we not debtors to the flesh, since we are compelled by the necessity of nature to provide it with both food and clothing? But in order to show that it is not the bestowing of something upon the flesh that is held blameworthy, but the surrendering of life itself into the flesh’s bondage, he therefore adds: ”For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die. And what it is to live according to the flesh has already been said often. This is to indulge the desires of the flesh.

In this respect, then, he denies that we are debtors to the flesh, just as elsewhere too he says: ”And make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences” — by no means denying that care must be had for the flesh in things necessary, but in its concupiscences. So therefore here also, ”For if,” he says, ”you live according to the flesh, you shall die. And he adds: ”But if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live. And of this it has already been said above, how the body indeed ought to be dead because of sins, but the spirit is life because of justification. He, therefore, who acting according to the spirit mortifies the deeds of the flesh,

shall live because of the spirit of life dwelling within him. Now one mortifies the deeds of the flesh in this manner. Charity is a fruit of the Spirit; hatred is a deed of the flesh: hatred, therefore, is mortified and extinguished through charity. Joy likewise is a fruit of the spirit, but the sorrow of this world, which works death, is a deed of the flesh: this, then, is extinguished if the joy of the spirit be in us. Peace is a fruit of the spirit; dissension and discord is a deed of the flesh; but it is certain that discord can be mortified through peace. So too the patience of the spirit extinguishes the impatience of the flesh, and goodness destroys malice, and meekness ferocity, and continence intemperance, and chastity slays unchastity;

and in such an order he who through the spirit has mortified the deeds of the flesh shall live. It must indeed be observed that, just as he speaks not of that common death but of the death of sin — "For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die" — so also he speaks not of this common life but of that eternal life, to which everyone will come who, according to the things we have set forth above, has perfectly mortified by the spirit the deeds of the flesh. But this too we ought to know, that this mortification of the deeds of the flesh comes about through patience, and not suddenly, but little by little. First it is necessary that they grow faint in those who are beginning; then afterwards, when they have begun to advance more ardently and to be filled with a more abundant spirit, the deeds of the flesh will begin not only to grow faint but even to waste away; but when they have now come to perfection, so that no promptings of sin at all arise in them, whether in deed, or in word, or in thought, then they are plainly to be believed to have mortified the deeds of the flesh and to have handed them over wholly to death.

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