

25 *Some therefore of them of Jerusalem said, Is not This He whom they seek to kill?*

Since it was now the feast of the Law called the feast of tabernacles, and the Jews were thronging, so to say, from all the region round about unto Jerusalem (for so had the Lawgiver decreed), Christ was making His teaching to all. For not surely to the townspeople alone was He speaking. He then that is a thorough searcher after learning, and a diligent hearer, must investigate what induced the Divine Evangelist, to introduce all the other multitude of the Jews as saying nothing, but to attribute the speech hereupon to *them of Jerusalem* only; and what they were considering and reasoning among themselves when they said these things: for a deep plan lies about this word. What then shall we say to this? Since Christ the Saviour of us all had wrought signs scarce-counted in the city, and had often taken up His abode in Jerusalem: certain of the city are (I suppose) persuaded, they are advancing by degrees to a desire of at length believing on Him, but not openly nor freely are they bold to love Him, terrified by the daring of their rulers and constrained not of their own motion unto harmful fear. For this was the blessed Evangelist clearly shewing, when he said in the foregoing that *no man spake openly of Him for fear of the Jews*. He here calls the rulers *Jews*, shrinking, it seems to me, from giving the appellation of rulers to such desperate men. When then our Saviour Jesus Christ speaks openly and mightily attacks the madness of the rulers, and convicts them (and that most clearly) of taking no account of the Law-giver, but that turning aside without stint every man to his own way, they were falling heedlessly into the desire to kill Him as though it were no crime, while He yet was enduring no hurt from those, at whose hands it was likely He would undergo dreadful things;----they *of Jerusalem* take this very circumstance as a proof and assurance of the God-befitting Authority inherent in Him, and receiving this too as an addition to His previous miracles, and heaping it up upon what had preceded, are being driven at length with more fervent motions to the duty of believing on Him. Wherefore they acquiring knowledge by right reasoning say, *Is not This He Whom they seek to kill?* For consider that they all but holding their right hand on high, and reaching it hither and thither, point out Him Who convicts them, and laugh seeing the untamed rage of these people allayed not by subtle reasoning (how should it?) but rather by God-befitting Power and Authority.

But we must note that they *of Jerusalem* alone speak contrary to all the rest of the Jewish multitudes, and how, I will tell. When our Saviour Christ was once giving instruction in things most excellent, the Pharisees stood by cut to the heart thereat, and already unveiled as to their bold daring and pressing on to commit murder; to this He said, convicting them as transgressors, who had made up their minds that they ought to slay Him, *Hath not Moses given you the law, and none of you keepeth the Law? why are ye seeking to kill Me?* And the whole aim of His discourse is shot forth against the hearts of the rulers: nevertheless the multitude of the people are scared and, intolerant at the words, answered more violently, saying, *Thou hast a devil, who is seeking to kill Thee?* But I suppose it is manifest to every one, that Christ says these things, because He saw the Pharisees desiring to kill Him. How is it, then that while certain here deny it and cry out, *Who is seeking to kill Thee*, they *of Jerusalem* alone giving a contrary vote to all the rest say, *Is not this He Whom they are seeking to kill?* and well this too *They are seeking*, that to the rulers alone the daring deeds may be ascribed. Probability then induces us to believe that the rest of the Jewish people were ignorant of the design of their rulers, but that they *of Jerusalem* living for the most part with them and inhabiting one city with them, and constantly meeting them, knew the unholy design which close-filled them against the Saviour Christ. And it fell out that not merely through the Voice of our Saviour was the polluted band of the Jews accused, but also by the

very flock that was under them, which by their senselessness was destroyed and borne down the precipices. For haply one may (I deem) by what has been said see the flock thirsting even now and enkindled as it were unto the faith in Christ, but lacking just a little leading by the hand, which had they obtained, they would easily have received Him Who came to us from Heaven. Responsible then are they to whom was allotted the presidency, for the loss of the sheep. And the prophet Jeremiah is our witness, who crieth, *For the pastors became brutish, and sought not out the LORD; therefore the whole flock understood not and were scattered.*

26 Lo, He speaketh boldly to them, and they say nothing unto Him.

They multiply expressions of assurance among themselves, and advance as it were to more manifest proof, beholding the unperilled boldness of Christ. For they are astonished and that with the greatest reason at finding those that were of old ungodly brought to an unpractised and unwonted patience and, beholding those who had been violent practising a gentleness that was new to them, they thence go forth into reasonable surmises: and in that they wonder at their forbearance in those matters in which they ought never to have been angry, in these very things they are found to be blaming them, as though it were their habit without discrimination to press hard upon the teachers of the most excellent doctrines, and to proceed hotly against any one whatever, if he did but say things dissentient from them, though he should agree with the Divine Law. For dreadful was the conceit of the Pharisees, and the daring of their senselessness knew not bounds. Who then (say they) is He who tames them for the present, and Who is it who puts on sober reasoning as a bridle of their of old intolerable wrath? who He that has so charmed them and like serpents ever rearing themselves lulls them to gentle sleep? *Lo, He speaketh boldly and they say nothing unto Him.* Not merely does He speak, they say, but *He speaketh boldly.* And I do not suppose that any one would justly accuse the wrath of those men of being still, if He that was sought for had spoken against them in secret. For if it chanced not to have been known, neither would their wrath have been excited, but though He spake *boldly* and advanced through the keen reproof of them (for this the word *boldly* proves), they not only refuse to be angry, though very prone to this disease, but even shrink from words. *For they say nothing to Him.*

Do the rulers know indeed that He is the Christ? Seest thou how by reasonable inductions and probable arguments they collecting the duty of believing, are well nigh ashamed because their rulers do indeed now know Him, but while they shrink from openly fighting against God, and endure not to shamelessly entreat Him that came from above, they do yet bury in envious silence the open acknowledgement of Him? For if they knew not (say they) *of a truth that He is the Christ*, what induces them to tolerate His boldly reproving them and innovating even the things of old ordained, in that He was found healing even on the sabbath day, and distressing them in no slight degree by saying outright, *Hath not Moses given you the Law, and none of you keepeth the Law?* All this they bear, although affected beyond endurance thereby, and accustomed hotly to attack even those who do them no wrong. Going therefore through every argument they collect by degrees faith in Christ, but attribute knowledge of a truth to their rulers, inasmuch as they were brought up even before themselves in the holy writings, and are better able than themselves to understand the mysteries of the Divine Scriptures. Observe throughout that the people of the Jews are prepared unhesitatingly to follow their rulers, and they would have been surely preserved if led aright by those over them. Wherefore these shall undergo bitter punishment, since the Saviour Himself also accuses them saying, *Woe unto you, lawyers, for ye took away the key of knowledge, ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye forbid.* For a door as it were

and gate to the knowledge of God, and a way that easily leadeth to all virtue is the word of them that teach aright, and the skill of the shepherd knoweth how to save the flock of sheep: even as the contrary destroyeth them easily, and will bear away the flock down precipices even against their will.

27 Howbeit we know This Man whence He is, but Christ, when He cometh, we know not whence He is.

Not from external considerations only, nor because their rulers had made the pain of their reproof a thing to be borne, does the mind of them of Jerusalem admit the faith; but it after having with great profit produced arguments from what was likely and being brought to true conceptions of Christ through the God-befitting Authority that is in Him, led at length not unskilfully to the apprehension of piety, falls again without knowing it into the unlearning which was foster-brother to the Jews. For they who had well considered those things seem as if they would hunt out the truth from all quarters, and advance to the due faith not merely because of the silence of their rulers and their unwonted gentleness, but would also search the Holy Scripture itself, invited thereto by a right motive, but making their test of the Mystery wholly without instruction or understanding. For merely because they know *whence He is* who is speaking boldly, that is, from what village He sprang, of what parent He was born, they say that He is not He Who was foretold by the Law. Then they add, *but Christ when He cometh no man knoweth whence He is*. And it is clear (I suppose) to every one, that their mistake in this too arose from unlearning. But I suppose one ought to search out whence their thoughts got to this; and what induced those who were well examining all about Him, to for this reason suppose that He was not Christ, because they were not ignorant whence He was: and why they subjoin, *Christ when He cometh, no man knoweth whence He is*: for by this they lose the apprehension of the truth. There is therefore some saying of Isaiah concerning Christ quoted, *His generation who shall declare? for His Life is taken away from the earth*. And the blessed Prophet applying the expression to the Word of God, puts generation for Being. For who at all can tell the mode of the Being of the Only-Begotten? what tongue shall declare the unspeakable Birth of the Son from the Father? or what mind will not be powerless for this? For that He was begotten of God the Father we know and have believed: but the *how*, we say is unattainable by every mind, and the enquiry thereinto most perilous. For we ought not to search into what is too deep, nor to scrutinize what is too hard, but rather to holdfast what we are *commanded*, and have an unshaken belief concerning God, *that He is in truth, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*. But we must not search into, as it is written, the things which surpass understanding and thought, not merely our own, but also that of the whole creation, or even every reasonable creature. Who then shall *declare the generation of the Only-Begotten? for His Life is taken away from the earth*, that is, the tale of His Essence is higher than all that are in the earth. For here again he calls His Being Life.

This then led astray the uninstructed mind of the Jews, and made them wander from the true discernment of Christ. For they considered not (it seems) that the words of the holy prophets respecting Him are two-fold. For sometimes they signify that He will come with Flesh into the world, and manifest to us His Birth of a Virgin according to the Flesh. For *behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son*: yea and they clearly proclaim where He shall be born: *And thou, Bethlehem house of Ephratah, little art thou to be among the thousands of Judah; out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel, and His goings forth from the beginning from the days of eternity*. But when they are expounding (as far as is possible)

His Ineffable Generation from God the Father, they either say what we said above, *His generation who shall declare? for His Life is taken from the earth*, or what is joined to the passage cited, *And His goings forth from the beginning from the days of eternity*. For here he means the *goings forth* of the Only-Begotten as Brightness from Light, and a certain forthcome from the Essence of Him Who Begot Him into His Own Being before all age and day and moment. Since then the Holy Scripture sets both before us, and the sacred writings both tell us *whence Christ* shall be after the Flesh, and honour by silence His Unsearchable Being from the Father, how will one not, finding the Jews in no slight degree unlearned, with reason laugh aloud and say, Not merely from the Generation of Christ being unknown, must one make enquiries respecting Him, but also from its being known Who and whence He springs according to the Flesh?

28 *Jesus therefore cried teaching in the temple and saying, Ye both know Me and know whence I am.*

As the men of Jerusalem were gently whispering those things one to another (for they durst not speak *openly for fear of the Jews*, as it is written) Christ again in God-befitting way receives knowledge of the things spoken. But since He was considering that it were fit to profit those men, He immediately shews the God-befitting Energy that is in Him, and clearly reveals to them that He has knowledge of all things. For He lifts up His cry on high, albeit before time not used to do so, and convicts them again of not having any certain understanding of the Divinely-inspired Scripture, and makes what is secret and has scarcely passed the mouth the basis of His Discourse. Next from those very things from which they foolishly supposed that they ought not to believe Him does He persuade them outright that they ought to believe: such is the pregnant meaning of what He says. Ye marvel (He says) and that most justly, that Power truly God-befitting is in Me, easily taming the purpose of the Jews, murderous though it be: for they seek to kill Me, as ye have truly and accurately remarked, and are putting forth all their diligence to that end. But (He says) when I should be fleeing, and getting Me as far off as possible from those who think it right to kill Me, I caring not a whit for their mad folly, on the contrary speak boldly and convict those who break the Law by not choosing to judge just judgment, and I suffer nothing at all. For they who of old were fierce forbear against their will, and this not the fruit of their own free choice, but the effect of My Authority. For I do not suffer them, although madly raging, and whetted unto inhuman wrath, to dare before the time their murderous purpose towards Me. At these things then (He saith) ye have been most reasonably astonished, and say that the rulers know of a truth that I am the Christ. And ye, following out suitable reasoning herein, turning away to the oracles of Divine Scripture, when ye ought rather to have been benefited therefrom, confirmed in your conception of Me, on the contrary ye were offended. For from your merely knowing *whence I am*, and of whom I am born, ye have decided (He saith) that I am not the Christ. Know therefore, that *ye both know Me and know whence I am*, that is the Divinely-inspired Scripture has given you both to know Me and whence I am. And not because ye know (may be) that I am of Nazareth or Bethlehem, and that I am born of a woman, ought ye therefore to admit the disease of unbelief; but from those things that are spoken of Me, and because of My Birth after the Flesh, ought ye the rather to advance to the apprehension of the Mysteries respecting Me, and not to turn aside merely at a single voice of a Prophet, who is telling My Ineffable Generation from God the Father.

And of Myself I am not come, but He is true That sent Me.

Under the guise of defence He finds fault with the Jews who were insulting through long unbelief. With no slight skill then He composing His Discourse, by every means contrives not to seem to excite His hearers by any occasion to reasonable displeasure, but veiling His words in obscurity, He beguiles their excess of anger and draws off the edge of their passion. Why then (He says) do they, when I have often explained and openly cried out that I am sent by God the Father, still disbelieve, and because they know His Birth after the Flesh, say that He is not He Who was fore-heralded by the Law and fore-declared by the holy Prophets, and well might meet Him with the words: Thou utterest lies O Sir, coming to us, according to Thine Own Will, and dost Thou not blush feigning the Name of the Father? Repelling therefore this accusation of theirs as to this too, He mingles reproof with His defence, and most excellently says, *Of Myself I am not come, but He is True That sent Me.* For it is your custom (He saith) O ye who dare all things with ease, and advance heedlessly to all, even the most heinous actions, sometimes to prophesy falsely, and though God hath not sent you, to say that ye are sent by God. But *I* am not like you, nor yet will I imitate your well-practised villany. *I am not come of Myself*, nor Mine Own messenger, like you, but I am come from Heaven: *True is He That sent Me*, not like your lie-loving sender, the devil, whose spirit ye receiving are bold too to prophesy falsely. *True then is He That sent Me*, but he that stirred you up to invent words from God, is not true. *For he is a liar, and the father of liars.* But that we shall find the Jews accustomed to prophesy lies, we shall see without any trouble from the words of the Prophets. For most plainly doth the Lord of all say of them, *I sent not the prophets, yet they ran, I spake not to them, and they prophesied.* And again in Jeremiah, *The prophets prophesy lies in My Name, I sent them not and spake not to them and commanded them not; for visions and divinations and prophecies of their own heart do they prophesy unto you.* The arrogant Jew then is reprov'd for this that he fastened upon Christ his own boldness against God, i. e., false prophecy. For the utter disbelief in Him Who cries that He is sent from God, even the Father, what else is it save openly to cry out, Thou prophesiest falsely, imitating our practices against ourselves?

29 Whom YE know not, but I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.

Ye have just said (He saith) *When Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is.* But since ye insist that ye hold this your opinion rightly, as being the truth, I agree to your words herein. For True is He of Whom I am, the Father, but He is not known of you. Since then (He says) ye search into the Mystery respecting Me in a manner most unadvised, but as is pleasing to yourselves, and from knowing Who and whence I am after the Flesh, dismiss from yourselves the duty of believing, do ye for this sole cause receive the faith, when ye find that ye understand not whence I am: for I am of the Father, *Whom YE know not*, since ye know not Him That is of Him, in Whom Alone the Father is to be seen. For he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father, and he that knoweth the Son is not ignorant of Him that begat. All their quibbling therefore being by this taken from them, they are again taken in their malice, finding no longer any excuse for their unbelief, who have thrust away the knowledge through their own stubbornness, that that may be found true which is written, *Ye see often and ye kept not, your ears opened and ye heard not.* But since He was occupied upon the words of the Jews, that *when Christ cometh no man knoweth whence He is*, withdrawing Himself of necessity, as God, from the company of things originate, and from all else to whom the title *no man* may reasonably be applied, shewing that He is Other by Nature, He says that He is not as they are, ignorant of His Own Father, but affirmed that He knows in all exactness both

Himself and Him. For He is God of God the Father, possessed of a certain wondrous and strange knowledge of these things, as becometh Himself Alone. For not in like manner as we know, in the same doth the Son know the Father. For the nature of things originate attaineth to the sight of God by conception only, and not overpassing the bounds which befit it, doth even against its will yield to the Divine Nature, the being veiled in ineffable words. But the Only Begotten of God the Father, vieweth Whole in Himself Him That begat Him, and portraying the Essence of the Father in His Own Nature, knoweth Him, in a way impossible to tell: for unutterable are the things of God.

CHAPTER I. That human affairs are not, according to the unlearned surmises of the Greeks, subject as of necessity to the Hours, but that of our own choice we advance both to good and to the contrary: and that we are directed by the Will of God.

30 The Jews therefore were seeking to take Him: and no man laid a hand on Him, because His hour was not yet come.

The Pharisees cut with His reproaches, and perceiving that their silence in those matters was not without damage to their own stubbornness, and was of benefit to the multitudes (for they were being persuaded of the duty of at length acknowledging that He is Christ), are carried along unto their wonted presumption, and again thirst for His Blood. For thrusting aside reverence for the law, as most unserviceable to them, and taking no account of what is contained in the Sacred Writings, and deeming not worthy of remembrance the command, *The innocent and righteous slay thou not*, they are sick of a most unrighteous madness against Christ. But by the Divine Might the result of their devices is turned to the utter contrary. For *the deceitful man shall not attain his prey*, as it is written. For they seek to take Him, as the Evangelist saith, as though they had kept a voluntary and self-imposed silence at His rebukes, and would repel by their after wrath all appearance of having been kept back by Him. For this *some of them of Jerusalem* had accepted as a proof that Jesus is by Nature God, saying, *Lo, He speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto Him: do the rulers know indeed that He is the Christ?* But He Who taketh the wise in their own craftiness, rendereth their daring most useless to them who thus schemed, and confirmeth to the multitudes what had been bruited in secret by way of consideration and conjecture.

For they are repressed by a God-befitting operation, which putteth a bridle upon their unholy deeds, and permitteth their designs to stretch forth but to attempts. For profitably did the most wise Evangelist put forward the reason of their being unable to carry through their proposed design to its fulfilment (for says he, *His hour was not yet come*). Here he evidently calls *hour* the time, i. e., of His Passion, and of the Precious Cross. To whom then will it not be evident by this also, that Christ would not have suffered at all, if He had put away the will to suffer? For not by the violence of the Jews, but of His own Will did He come to the Cross for our sakes and on account of us. Wherefore also He saith, averting the reproach of seeming powerlessness, *No man taketh My life from Me, I lay it down of Myself: I have power to lay it down, and again I have power to take it*. For as we have already before said, He bare no unwilling Cross for us. For He hath offered Himself as a Holy Sacrifice to God the Father, purchasing the salvation of all men by His Own Blood. Wherefore He also said in the Gospel preachings, *For their sakes do I sanctify Myself*. But *sanctify* He here says for "offer," and "consecrate;" for that which is offered in sacrifice to God is holy. But that He accepted being the Sacrifice for all free from all violence from any, we shall know when we hear Him saying in

the Psalms to God the Father, *Sacrifice and, offering Thou wouldest not, but a Body preparedst Thou Me: in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou tookest no pleasure: then I said, Lo I come, in the chapter of the book it is written of Me, to do Thy will, O God.* Seest thou how of His own accord He comes unto His Passion for all? For He says, *Lo I come*, not, I am taken by compulsion by another. He escapes then from the present violence of the rulers, reserving His Passion for its appointed time, and using a most God-befitting boldness in all things.

I suppose then that this will suffice for the elucidation of the present passage, but since it is probable that some of the initiated on hearing the words, *His hour had not yet come*, may be carried away out of too great levity unto the mad folly of the Greeks, so as unreasonably to suppose that the affairs of man are subject to hours and days and seasons, I deem it necessary to say a little on this subject, since our aim is by every thought zealously to provide what is profitable to our readers. To the children of the Church then who are brought up on the Holy Scriptures, I suppose that will suffice for the refutation of the wiles of the Greeks and for the satisfactory casting off of the uncounsel hence arising, which is said by way of accusation or wise rebuke by Paul himself to some who were thus minded, *Ye are observing days and months and times and years; I am afraid of you, lest I have toiled for you in vain.* And indeed, apart from all subtlety of argument, it is manifest that he which is involved in such folly, will both destroy his own soul, and be found to dishonour the Maker of us all, to whom Alone wise and well-tutored reason attributes the helm of our affairs. But they who are minded unrightly to observe those things, will overturn the order of Providence, and believe that the Lord of all things is no longer Dispenser of our affairs, but will commit to times and seasons the government over all things, setting the creation over its Maker and despoiling of fairest Attributes, Him to Whom is due all honour and glory and worship, bestowing on the creature what is above it, and imparting to things made that wherewith they ought to crown the Creator: nor will their evil deeds stop here, but will advance to something yet heavier, for they will openly reproach God, lover of good, and will say that He, the enemy of all sin, is Himself the worker of evil deeds. For if by Him have been made time and hour and day and year, and these bring certain, of necessity and violence, unto sometimes unpurposed wickedness, and cause them to fall into the misfortunes consequent thereupon, how does not what we say shew itself to be true? And what then becomes of what is said by the all-wise Moses, *And God saw (he says) every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good?* But time is one of the *every thing*; and in time are both hour and day and year. But if we call that the introducing of evil, which the Eye of the Divine Nature saw to be good, shall we not be confessing outright that the Lord of all is found to be the Creator of things most base?

I think then that those who are involved in the offences just mentioned will at length blush. But since it is probable that some have chosen not only not to resist the un-counsels of the Greeks, but even to defend them, come let us consider the absurdity inherent in their doctrine in another light also and, heaping up profitable arguments as auxiliaries, let us lead out the truth against their abominations. For if according to you, sirs, at the, so to say, forcible invitation of time, and on the compulsion of the hour, we are drawn to ought good or the contrary, as it may be, then superfluous (as it seems) were reason, guiding us to each action, both counselling us to decline from ill deeds, and exhorting us rather to hasten after what is approved. For what benefit (tell me) remains, what advantageth sound reason, if I must surely suffer and advance even against my will, whithersoever the hour invites and the season chooses to compel? it is meet then, as they say that pilots of ships do, when they declare there

is no hope of the ship being saved in the peril of the storm, to let go every rope, and undo the very tillers, no more enduring any skill therein, and to commit it to the force of the waves and to be tossed on the sea. For nought, nought (from what has been already said) is either the gain to those who desire virtue, nor yet will harm spring up to the workers of evil, unless we receive from God according to each one of the things we have wrought, and receive recompense according to the quality of our actions. For (tell me) will not the hour oftentimes mark out what is most excellent, and the season without distinction profit, even if I be taken in the basest deeds? Again on the other hand, the season will sometimes appoint not a single good thing to some, but rather will bring, so to say, the hardest of all things, upon those who have aimed at honouring above all things the performance of good deeds.

But (haply some one will say) it will be no such thing as this, but the hour and season will give to each what suits him.

Therefore the season will now reign over us, we will put about the hours the dignity of Providence, having no more thought of God, we will ask by prayer, of Him nought, but of the time or the season. And what follows? we shall worship *the creature more than the Creator*, and blasphemously give the glory of the Creator to things made by Him. The disgrace hence accruing and the magnitude of the blasphemy, we shall see with no great trouble to have abomination more open than that of women who are courtesans. But what comes into our minds, we will say for profit's sake. Superfluously, it appears, do the laws both of God and man mark out to lovers of wickedness the punishments suitable for them, and add honours to those whose special aim it is to desire to live more rightly. For if nothing at all lies within our own wills, but all is subject to the necessity from the hours, which lead us without escape or power of refusal to both [good and evil], how can we still rightly allow that praise is meet for the good, and allot the contrary to those who are not so, as their just meed? Why (tell me) do the laws compel us to depart from vice, and press forward after what is better, if others hold the reins of our resolves, and easily bring us to whatsoever they please? For they say and will have it so, that human affairs are under the authority of the hours, taking no thought of the absurdity thence resulting. For will they not declare, even against their will, that he, whose is the supremacy over all things that are upon the earth, will be more wretched than the very brutes, and will live in pitiable state, and he who ought to excel by reason of his nature, will be brought down to the second, yea, even to the last place? For if the beasts by their self-ruling impulses, turn, no one hindering them, to what they please, and admit what they know to be wholesome, and shun what will hurt them, and WE are in bondage to time, that bitter master, and have the authority of the hours, a tyranny not to be escaped, suspended over us like a staff, shall not our condition be far worse than theirs is?

But he will blush, as is probable, who would fain be for (yea rather utter lies against) the hours and times, which were never created for any such purposes, and rejecting the absurdity of such opinions, will come forward saying: "We do not, sir, declare that the hour nor yet the time or season has authority over the affairs of men, but we say that there are evil hours, and seasons too, which sometimes like raging winds, spring upon us miserable."

But we shall answer, O mad in mind, and steeped in sheer ¹ insanity, how is it that YE do not perceive that ye arming your own mind against That Essence which is above all? for will not He be a worker of iniquity, if ought of the things made by Him be wicked? But this, as we have mentioned it before, we will pass over, and will rather endeavour to be persuaded by you, how the hour or season could hurt us, or on the contrary rejoice us, did not God order all things

according to His will, and will that they should, as belongeth to each, give either pain or contrariwise pleasure? For we but now heard you say, that nought of our affairs are under the authority of the hours, but that some are by nature evil, and are borne violently down upon us like the wind. But I do not think it will be any hard matter to shew that this your argument is replete with extremest folly. For who does not clearly see that the twelve intervals of the hours are meted out, some to the day, others to the night, and that night and day do not come to one man, to another not, but pervade all things? but their evil, innate and unavoidably tending thereto, is not evil to one, to another not, nor yet to one perchance, or a second, but rather will bring harm in equal degree upon all, upon whom the interval of night or of day comes? How then does it happen that in a single day or hour, one may see one man prosperous and enjoying himself with many jovial companions, so as to go to sumptuous feasts and gather together with much diligence his guests, and others you may clearly see in opposite plight, so that one is often borne forth to die miserably. What (tell me) is the reason, or how is it possible, that in one single hour or period, one person is found in the former state, another in the latter? what will you call that hour? evil, or the reverse? for I cannot say, looking at either side and finding one man revelling, another lying a breathless and miserable corpse. Will not then those opinions respecting the hours be proved an unlearned fable, and the inventions of devilish madness? I think all will agree to this without any hesitation, and will condemn those who hold such opinions. And we might well, I think, be content with what has been said, but lest by committing every thing to hazard and conjecture I should leave an excuse for quibbling to any, I will betake myself to history, and from facts will confirm past all doubt the already beaten track of our argument. When the Assyrians then encompassing the holy city (I mean the holy Jerusalem) were purposing to besiege it, their general, Rabshakeh, was first endeavouring at one time by words of guile to undermine the minds of the fighting men which were therein, at another thought to do this by threats: and the blessed Hezekiah who at that time held the kingly power trusted not in his forces, but attributed the achievement of victory to God Who is over all, and by most fervent prayer did he keep calling for the alone aid which is from Him, and immediately did God incline His Ear to the righteous man, and granted him grace answerable to his prayers. For *the angel of the Lord went forth*, as it is written, *and slew out of the camp of the aliens an hundred fourscore and five thousand*. What then will you say to this, o most excellent of men? In one night and in the same hour and season, the Assyrian fell overpowered by Angel's hand, the multitude of them of Jerusalem was saved, and the one were in the depths of misery, the other in joy and delight. Where is the power of the hour? how was it apportioned unequally for both? and for the one it wrought rejoicing, for the other an evil death? For you will not venture to call it two-natured and multiform, even though you babble exceedingly. The same argument will hold as to Dathan and Abiram, who having once made a sedition against the authority of Moses, and fearing not unbidden to spring upon the office of the Divine priesthood, went down with all their household into the depths of the earth; and they were in Hades, while the rest of the congregation were preserved. But the vengeance surely should not forsooth, since it was not at all that of Divine wrath, but of the hour, have burst forth upon one part merely of the assembly, but should have taken hold on the whole equally.

Let us not then admit that hour or day or season is the giver either of sorrow or joy, in respect of its own nature or however one might rightly speak of it; but let us grant the profit from the hour or season and contrariwise the damage, when we setting to either skilfully or ignorantly, meet with results pleasant or otherwise. For example, *To every thing a season*, as it is written, and to know the fit times, is most useful, not to know them, replete with damage. For in winter one ought not to make voyages, to do so in summer is not ill-instructed. Being thus

minded we shall commit the helm of our affairs to God the Lord of all. For if, according to the unlying word of the Saviour, this little sparrow of no worth shall never fall into a snare without the Will of God the Father, how shall he who is so honoured and has the authority over all, suffer ought contrary to his mind or wish, unless Providence brings upon him any of the things above mentioned in accordance with the life of each?

I will further add another thing which has been shaken out and come forth of my memory, exceeding kin to the present matter, yea rather calling for the same investigation, though the solution be not hard, but most easy to the man of full understanding and that hath the *senses* of his understanding *exercised to discern both good and evil*. What then is this, of which we so speak? They of Cana, inhabiting the country bordering on Judea, namely Galilee, were once celebrating a marriage, and they invited the Lord to their banquet with His Mother and the holy disciples, and the cause of this their feast was the marriage-bed. But when sitting at meat with those who with Him were assembled for this purpose, the Lord was there to bless that marriage which He had ordained, wine began to fail the company. But the Mother of the Saviour as still having authority over her Son, by reason of His exceeding subjection, and having now learnt by much experience Him too that hath God-befitting Power, saith, *They have no wine*. For she knew that He would perform, and that most easily, whatever the nature of things required. And the Lord said to her, *Woman what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come*. The devout mind, then, far removed from monstrous opinions, and fleeing utterly Greek superstition, will receive piously what is said. For not yet He says, is the time of My manifestation, i. e., by miracles, come. For being God by Nature, He was not ignorant of the time befitting each work (how could He?) But he who of his exceeding senselessness turns about hither and thither (for evil is a beaten track to the multitude, who suppose, as certain trifling say, that Christ Himself also was subject to the operations of the hours,) will be here proved by us to have no understanding and by those very things by which he looked to strengthen his own argument, by these will he be condemned for the inherent absurdity of his tenets. For if we grant that the nature of things is subjected to the operations of the hours, and that therefore Christ said to His Mother, *Mine hour is not yet come*, how (tell me) when according to your abominable and most unwise reasoning He had not yet the operation of the hour to cooperate with His Will, does He become the Creator of the things asked for? for forthwith He manifestly turns water into wine. But if ye think that affairs must be subject to the authority of the hours, how ought not the Lord at the first not a whit to have attempted to accomplish what the concourse of the hours did not grant? But evidently He took no thought of this, but gave them His Grace before that time. The power of the hour was then no hindrance, but since the time was not yet come for His proclamation by miracles, does Christ say thus.

We are then set free from your surmises hereon, and when hour is mentioned, let it be considered to be the time which suits each work: and that we too are set free from the necessity of the hours, I think needs no more expenditure of words to prove: for we have already sufficiently gone through this.

But we will endeavour to shew now, that we shall find that *hour* in the Divine Scriptures signifies the time suitable to each action. And the admirable Paul cries out and indicates the meaning of the word hour, *And that, knowing the time, that it is the hour for you to awake out of sleep: the night is far spent, the day hath drawn near*. Thou seest how having first put *time*, he added *hour*, as indicating by the same, it, and not ought else. For it was time that

they who lay in the deep sleep of sin should rouse themselves and open their eyes to what was their profit, and be raised to a God-loving watchfulness.

31 Of the multitude therefore many believed on Him, and said, The Christ when He cometh, will He do more miracles than those which This Man did?

How great the economy herein, and how fitly it hath followed after those things, is meet to see. For having before said that the Jews *were seeking to take Him* and to enclose Him by the meshes of their senselessness, into so cruel and unseasonably contrived danger, he shews the multitudes of them that believe, that the ill machinations of their rulers against Him may at length be acknowledged. So far are the people from desiring to rage against Him, that they at length even gather some ideas from His miracles, and openly confess that they ought to give heed to His doctrines. For a report (it seems) was noised abroad throughout the whole race of the Jews and spread throughout all their country, that the Presence of Christ would be for some mighty deeds, and that He would work exceeding miracles, and introduce teaching more notable far and superior to the instruction of the Law. For the woman of Samaria, when she came to Jacob's well to draw water and was conversing with the Saviour, said, *We know that Messiah cometh Which is called Christ, when He is come, He will tell us all things.* And the words, *we know*, here, we shall not reasonably apply to the woman alone, but joining the whole race of Samaritans and Jews, we shall confirm the argument we have just adduced. These then now perceiving that the glorious hopes commonly entertained of Him do not surpass what was already present, well-nigh speak thus one to another, For what hath the Law declared that Christ should be revealed to us? what manner of man hath the word of the holy Prophets foretold? a Worker of miracles plainly and instructor in what is most excellent. But we see that He Who is now come is wholly pre-eminent unto both. What exceedingness in miracles remains for them who conceive of somewhat greater yet? In what difficulty has He failed? what that is above utterance and miraculous has He not wrought? in whom shall we still seek for more? let us see whether Christ have not at length reached the bounds of all marvel! what is looked for in Christ which is not apparent in this Man? Shameless now at length is the withholding of our faith, senseless our indifference, and quite unpersuasive the argument of delay under colour of choosing the best. Let God be confessed: for this the nature of things requires, even of those who will it not.

Not unsuitably then nor unbecomingly, might one put this in the mouth of the Jews. We must note however that through the perverseness of the rulers the subjects perished: for the one were most admirable guessers, led by the renown of His Works to the duty of believing on Him, and only waiting for the judgment of their rulers concerning Christ; and these were so mighty in savage cruelty, as to attempt to ill-treat Him Who had been foretold for vast hopes, and was accredited by what He had already wrought.

32 The chief priests and Pharisees heard the people murmuring these things concerning Him.

The multitude are with great reason indignant against their rulers. For they were making a great outcry respecting our Saviour Christ, not because He was a wondrous Wonder-worker and beyond expectation, nor yet because He came telling of things better than the legal worship; but because He was not yet accepted by the chief priests and Pharisees, albeit having glory answerable to what was spoken of Christ, and no whit inferior to what the common reports tell of Him, or the word of the holy Prophets fore-heralded. So then they justly accuse

them of being overcome with envy rather than really caring for the salvation of the people. But the constant utterance of blame as to this does not escape the knowledge of the rulers, and the multitude (it seems) gave them offence, now reasonably astonished at the Lord, and thirsting exceedingly to believe on Him, and already ill enduring the yoke of the rulers' arrogance, and essaying to do that which is said in the Psalms, *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their yoke from us.* For by not subjecting the mind of the people to the commands of the Law, but placing them in subjection to their own inventions, and *teaching for doctrines the commands of men*, they, leaving the right way and beaten track were conducting among precipices and foot-falls, those who were even now ready to be saved and of themselves were being led to rightness of conception.

And the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to take Him.

Albeit the Law declared, *The innocent and righteous thou shalt not slay*, and every where clearly crieth aloud, *Thou shalt not be with the multitude to do evil*, the guardians of the Law desire to kill, overbearing in respect of esteeming Moses' Law holy, and accustomed to blame every one who did not live in the same way. But caring nothing for the Law in these matters, and so to say, spurning its most precious things, they are zealous to take in their meshes Him That had done no wrong at all, but rather is now by His very works accredited that He is indeed the Christ. And surely (some one will reasonably say) these ungodly rulers of the Jews ought, since they are learned in the Divine Oracles and skilled in the Divine Laws, rather to speak to the multitudes, to turn aside their clamour hereat by reasonable arguments, and to thrust aside all suspicions of envy, and turn them to think as they should do, if in ought they, travailing with right surmises about Christ, seemed to have fallen therefrom: they ought to have proved by testimonies from the Prophets and, going in short through the whole Divine Scripture, to have cleansed the multitude from their errors and, as knowing more, to have taught them clearer truth about Christ. But finding no defence from thence, in fear of the holy Scripture, as finding that it agreed with the multitude in accusing them, they fall into shameless daring, and strive to make away with Christ, not being able to convict Him of any offence. And most intolerable of all, this resolution is that not of chance people, but the daring deeds of *the chief Priests* coincident in mind with the Pharisees, albeit they ought to have led them inasmuch as they were superior through the office of the priesthood and, since they had the first place through this, they ought to have shewn themselves guides in thoughts of good also, and to have taken the lead in counsel not counter to God. But since they are outside of any good disposition, and have cast the Divine Law behind their own imaginations, they are carried to that alone which pleased their own undiscerning impulses. For *the head* has become *the tail*, as it is written. For he that is chief follows, and consenting to the impiety of the Pharisees, makes now his unbridled attacks against Christ too. But without a cause is ever found to be the war of the wicked against the pious, and the mode of their contest so to speak halteth, unaided by the auxiliaries of reasonable causes, and merely hampered by the disease of envy. For since they are not able to compete with their mighty deeds, nor through equal strength of soul to attain corresponding glory, or even by better deeds to be seen in better case, they fall into savage-ness of mind, and foolishly arm themselves against the praises of those who surpass them, zealous for the destruction of what makes them to be disgraced. For evil is ever convicted by juxta-position with the better. For they ought rather to desire by equal actions to equal them, and to be zealous rather to do and think the same with those who are praised. But it was likely that the Pharisees should be bitterly disposed. For since they perceived that the multitudes were murmuring, and even now in common talk one to another saying, *Is not This He Whom they seek to kill? lo, He speaketh boldly, and they say nothing*

unto Him: do the rulers know that He is the Christ? repelling again this supposition with the wickedness that was their foster sister, they give orders to bind Him, and send out *officers* to accomplish this very purpose.

33 *Jesus therefore said unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him That sent Me.*

The Lord is not ignorant, inasmuch as He is by Nature God, of the Pharisees' bloodthirsty deeds of daring, and of the unholy design of the chief priests against Himself. For with the Eyes of Deity He beholds now present and mingled with the multitudes, the servants who had been chosen by them to take Him. Therefore He makes His answer common indeed as to all the people standing round, yet having a special answer to them, and at the same time teaches much that is profitable. For He threatens them skilfully, yea He convicts them of pettiness of soul in regard to those things at which they ought to be pleased: and that in another way should their attempt be frustrate, even though it were to take place', and how, we will say, going through the whole account. For in saying, *Yet a little while am I with you*, He evidently all but teaches them, Tell Me (says He) why are ye indignant as though I were lingering too long in this world? I am burdensome to you, I confess it, and am no great pleasure to those who honour not virtue; dashing in pieces him who loves not God, and smiting at times with My rebukes the ungodly, I am not ignorant that I have wrought hatred for Myself. But do not thus untimely spread forth the net of death for Me. *Yet a little while* shall I be *with you*, I shall depart with joy, when the fit time for My Passion comes, nor shall I endure any more to be with evil men (for not pleasant to Me, He says, is the abode with the bloodthirsting) I shall depart from the ungodly, as God, but shall be with Mine Own all the days of the world, even though I seem to be absent in the Flesh. But in saying, *I go to Him That sent Me*, He means something again of this kind: In vain did ye sharpen against Me (He says) the sword of your own blasphemy. Why do ye tear yourselves to pieces with fruitless counsels? stay the weapon of envy, for it is shot forth for nothing: it will not subject Life to death, neither will corruption have the better of incorruption. I shall not be holden of the gates of Hades, I shall not be a dead body in your graves, I shall fly up to Him from Whom I am, I shall ascend again to Heaven, seen as an accusation of your blasphemy by both angels and men. For the one shall marvel at My going up, the other when they meet Me shall say, *What are these Wounds in Thine Hands?* And I shall say unto them, *Those with which I was wounded in the house of My beloved*. The speech then has been made in great meekness and exceeding gentleness, for our example in this too: whence Paul also says that *the servant of God must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves*. For it behoves the pious mind to be free from all tumult and the fierce motions of wrath, and to study to refuse as a wild onslaught of waves what comes of pettiness of soul, and to rejoice in thoughts of meekness like breezeless calms, and to love to live as much as possible in longsuffering, to shew himself forbearing to all, and hold fast a mind wholly good, and make his conversation with his enemies not unseemly.

34 *Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me.*

This too He says skilfully and with much gentleness. For it means what taken generally is not difficult of comprehension, yet contains it some keen mystery hidden within it. For when He says that He shall ascend to Him That sent Him, that is, to God the Father, even though they yet attempt to plot against Him, and do not cease from persecuting Him, He is saying that He That hath ascended into the very Heavens can never be taken by them. But the truer meaning

and that which is darkly signified, is this: I (He says) was sent to give you life, I came to take away from human nature death which from transgression fell upon it, and with long-suffering to bring back to . God those who through sin had stumbled: I came to engraft the Divine and Heavenly Light in those in darkness, and moreover *to preach the Gospel to the poor, to give recovery of sight to the blind, to preach deliverance to the captives, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.* And since it seems good to you in your senselessness to drive forth from you Him who sets before you so rich enjoyment of heavenly goods, after a little I Myself will take Me again to Him from Whom I am, and YE shall repent, and consumed by unavailing after-counsels weep bitterly for yourselves, and though ye should fain find yet the Giver of Life, ye shall not then be able to enjoy Him ye long for. For after having once turned aside and departed from My Love towards you, I shall wholly shut out from you what is profitable to seek after.

Something of this kind we shall also find in the preachings of the Prophets concerning them. For a certain one saith of them of Jerusalem, *With sheep and bullocks shall they go to seek the Lord, and shall not find Him, for He hath withdrawn from them.* For they who would not when it was in their power choose Life, and with foolish reasonings thrust away the good that was in their power, how shall they be fit any more to receive it? and they who made no account of missing the opportunity, how can they have the good things out of their season? For it is while the opportunity exists and is yet present, that we must seek for the good things that are in it and of it, but when it is now passed away and gone by, superfluous at last and most vain is all seeking after the good things it contained. And verily the blessed Paul saith, *Behold, now is the accepted time, behold now the day of salvation,* and also, *While we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men.* For indeed, indeed it beseems those who are good in their habits, not when opportunity is now passing her prime, to have to seek for her good things, but rather when she is commencing and shewing so to say, her most blooming presence.

And one might yet say much more about occasion out of the Divine Scripture, but leaving it for the labour-loving to search them out, I will say a little thing common, and in use among us, but which yet has no mean profit. They say then that those who make pictures on tablets, when they represent occasion in human form, represent the remaining fashion of her body as pleases them, but the head alone like this. They represent her behind as bald and very smooth, touching it with brilliant tints: but from the middle of the scull, they hang much hair over the forehead, full in front and flowing: by this form itself signifying, that while any occasion still exists, and meets us, so to say, face to face, it may easily be laid hold of, but when it is now passed, how can it any longer be taken hold of? being as it were bushy and easy to hold, while yet present, but when passed, no longer. For this the smoothness behind indicates, which all but mocks the hand of him that would hold it. Since then when occasions are passed, we have not what they bring, let us not slumber when good things are present, but rather watch, and not when search is useless, unwisely use diligence to catch what is profitable.

And where I am, YE cannot come.

With greatest gentleness does He again put the race of the Jews forth from the kingdom of Heaven, adding words correspondent to those that He had already uttered, yet concealing therein a deep Mystery. For applying our mind more simply to the words, and admitting a more surface consideration thereof, we say that it signifies something of this sort, that He will

in no wise be apprehensible by them, nor yet will fall into their meshes, having gone back to the Father. For not accessible to them shall be the Heaven too, and He That sitteth by God the Father Himself, how shall He be to be taken of them that *seek* Him? This one word therefore is not deep, but more suited to the levity of the Jews, and superior to ² their understandings (for they are found ever to mind what is more low): but the exact and secret mind of the things said is after this sort; I (He says) having escaped the snare of your unholiness, shall be received back to God the Father; for I shall surely prevent in My departure My worshippers, in order that having shewn the way that upward tends, passable to them too, I may have all with Myself. But *YE cannot come where I am*, that is, ye shall be found without lot in the Divine good things, ye shall be without share in My glory and alien from co-reigning with the saints, untasting shall ye abide of the gift that is in hope, unfeasting shall ye be of the Divine marriage-feast, Mine assembly shall ye not see, ye shall not ascend up to the mansions above, nor shall behold the beauty of the Church of the first-born, unseen of you shall be the city that is above, ye shall not behold Jerusalem in her prosperity ³: for there shall My flock glorify Me, *YE cannot come*. For the Heaven will not receive slayers of her Lord, nor the Cherubim open the gates of Paradise for a people to enter in who fight against God, never shall a man guilty of impiety against God appease the *flaming sword*, it only knows the pious man and honours the devout, and makes faith its covenant of peace.

Some such thought as this shall we bring to what has been said, from all sides tracking the sense which is true and befits those who have understanding. But we will add to them some few things, shewing for profit's sake that all who attain unto devout habits, shall both be with and feast with Christ: but they who go along with Jewish unlearning, not so (whence could it be?), but shall undergo the bitter punishment of their unbelief. Let then the Divine Paul come in crying aloud to those who have died to sin, *For ye died and your life has been hidden with Christ in God: when Christ, your Life, shall appear, then shall YE also appear with Him in glory*: and again putting forth his discourse on the resurrection, he says. *And we which are alive, which remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord*. And things akin to this is the Saviour Himself too seen discoursing of to His disciples. For as He sat and did eat with them, He says, *But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of Heaven*: yea and to the robber who hung on high along with Him, at the very gates of death through faith in Him seizing on the grace of the saints, He saith, *Verily, verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*. They then who by obedience have honoured Him, shall be with Him unhindered, and shall delight them in the good things that pass understanding: but they who refuse not to insult Him with their folly, albeit sons of the bridechamber, shall go away in sorrow to hell, to pay bitter penalties. For *they shall be cast out*, as it is written, *into the outer darkness*. True therefore will be the Lord saying darkly to the Jews, *Where I am YE cannot come*.

35 *The Jews said then among themselves, Whither will this man go that WE shall not find Him? will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles and teach the Gentiles?*

Seest thou herein again the wretchedness of Jewish reasonings? seest thou the most miserable surmise of grovelling mind? for they do not say that He will ascend up to Heaven, although they clearly heard, *Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto Him that sent Me*, but they are imagining the country of the *Gentiles*, as though among them were He That sent Him, unto Whom He promised to return. But the people of the Jews is hereby, as it seems, prophesying, albeit not knowing what it is saying. For moved by some Divine impulse they

present Christ to the country of the Gentiles, in the way of a suspicion thinking of what a little after became true. For He was in truth about to go *unto the Gentiles and teach* them, spurning Jerusalem the ungrateful mother of the Jews.

But note that they do not speak of this simply: for they surmise that He will not only depart *unto the dispersed of the Gentiles*, but in their stubbornness add, *and will He teach the Gentiles*, that their suspicion may again beget for them a plea of accusal. For the having intercourse with *the dispersed of the Gentiles* by reason of going through their cities or countries, was a common thing among the Jews and unblamed, but to explain the Law to aliens and to unfold the Divine Mysteries to the uninitiated, was a matter of accusal and not unblamed by them. And verily God found fault with some who were indifferent about this, saying by the Prophet Jeremiah, *And they read the Law without*. Keenly then do they say that He *will teach the Gentiles*. casting a slur on Him as readily transgressing the Law, and from what He had afore wrought on the sabbath day, believing that to do all things without heed, even if they were counter to the Divine laws, was His habit and that He thought nothing of it.

37 In the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood and cried saying; If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.

We must search well in this too, what it is the most wise Evangelist is hinting with some extreme great care, calling *the last day of the feast great*, or what it was that induced our Lord Jesus Christ, as of some needful reason and belonging to the time, to say on it to the Jews, *If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink*. For He might have used other words, such as, *I am the Light, I am the Truth*. But turning His explanation to the matters of believing, He hath introduced the word, *let him drink*, as something necessary and due to the matters of the feast. And the aim in what is before us *I* will endeavour briefly to say.

When therefore God was ordering what belongs to the feast of tabernacles, He says thus unto Moses, *On the fifteenth day of the seventh month a feast of tabernacles unto the Lord, and ye shall offer whole burnt sacrifices and sacrifices seven days, and the first day shall be notable holy*. Then after enjoining besides the mode of the sacrifices, He added again, *And in the fifteenth day of this seventh month, ye shall offer whole burnt offerings unto the Lord seven days, and the first day a rest and the seventh day a rest. And on the first day ye shall take you boughs of palm trees and thick branches of a tree and fruit of a goodly tree and willows and branches of agnus from the brook to rejoice withal*. Having then already in the second book gone through every portion of the above cited passage and expended much discourse thereon, we will yet again make mention of it briefly. For we said that the feast of tabernacles signified the thrice longed for time of the resurrection: that the taking *boughs* and *the fruit of a goodly tree*, and the other things besides, meant a recovery of Paradise about to be given us again through Christ. But that since it is put at the end that one ought to take every thing out of the brook, and again to rejoice thereof, we said that our Lord Jesus Christ was compared to a brook, in Whom we shall find all delight and enjoyment in hope, and in Him shall delight us Divinely and spiritually. And that He is and is called spiritually a Brook, the most wise Psalmist too will testify to us, saying to God the Father about us, *The children of men shall hope in the shadow of Thy wings: they shall be inebriated with the fatness of Thy House, and Thou shalt give them drink of the Brook of Thy delights*. And the Lord Himself somewhere in the prophets says, *Behold I am inclining to them as a river of peace and as an overflowing brook*.

Since then the Law used to call the first and the seventh day of the great feast *notable*, the holy Evangelist himself too called it *great*, not disregarding, it seems, the accustomed habit of the Jews. There being then in the ordinances about the feast a mention too of the brook, the Saviour shewing that He is Himself that brook which was fore-declared in the Law, says, *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink*. For see how He removes the mind of the Jews away from the types in the letter and transfers fitly the things in figure, if at all they aid for the truth. For *I* (He says) am the *Brook* which by the Lawgiver was fore-proclaimed in the account of the feast. And if one must needs take branches of willow and agnus and thick branches of trees from the brook, and Christ is not strictly a brook, neither yet is the fashion of the feast really in these, but they will rather be symbols of spiritual things which shall be given to the pious through Christ.

But seeing that we discussed these things more at large in the second Book, as we have already said, we will not repeat ourselves, but will rather follow on to the next.

38 He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

He shews that vast and ageless is the reward of faith, and says that he who does not disbelieve shall revel in richest graces from God. For he shall be so replete with the gifts through the Spirit, as not only to fatten his own mind, but even to be able to overflow into others' hearts, like the river stream gushing forth the God-given good upon his neighbour too. This very thing used He to enjoin the holy Apostles, saying, *Freely ye received, freely give*. And the wise and holy Paul too himself longing to be effectual unto this writes, *For I long to see you that I may impart some spiritual gift*. And one may see this most exceeding well in both the holy Evangelists and in the Evangelic teachers of the church, who on those who go to Christ through faith pouring forth most plenteous word of inspired teaching, spiritually delight them, no more suffering them to thirst after the knowledge of the truth, with their wise soundings all but crying aloud into the heart of those who are being instructed. Wherefore the Psalmist rejoicing in spirit called out concerning them, *The rivers lifted up, o Lord, the rivers lifted up their voices*. Great and mighty sounded forth the word of the Saints, and *into all the earth went forth their voice*, as it is written, *and unto the ends of the world their words*. Such rivers did God, the God and Lord of all, promise to set forth to us, saying by the Prophet Isaiah, *The beasts of the field shall honour Me, the dragons and the daughters of the owl, because I have given water in the wilderness and rivers in the thirsty ground to give drink to My chosen generation, My people whom I formed for Myself to shew forth My praises*. Very evident then it is that the Saviour says that *out of the belly* of him that believeth shall come forth the grace that through the spirit giveth instruction and eloquence, whereof Paul too maketh mention saying, *To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom*.

It is good to know besides that the Saviour applied to His own words this saying, not exactly as it had been before put out by the Divine Scripture ⁸, but rather interpreting it according to its meaning. For we find of every one who honoureth and loveth God that he shall be *like a watered garden, and like a spring whose water fails not*. And what He says a little before to the woman of Samaria, this now too He clearly declares. For there He says, *Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be to him a well of water springing up into everlasting life*: and here again carrying up the aim of His discourse to the same meaning, He says, *Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*.

CHAPTER II. That after the Saviour's Cross at His rising again from the dead the Holy Ghost took up His abode in us permanently.

39 *But this He said of the Spirit Which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.*

The sense of what is before us demands for itself keen scrutiny and to understand sufficiently the depth of the mystery will be (and hardly) the achievement of much acumen. For one who revolves in his mind and looks at each of the holy Prophets, with reason goes first into deep thoughts, How *was the Spirit not*, albeit so great a choir of Prophets has been set forth who are found uttering in the Spirit the Divine mysteries concerning Christ in many words. For we do not go so far astray from fit thoughts, as to deem that the mind of the saints was bereft of the Spirit. For there shames us and as of necessity calls us unto the belief that they were in truth Spirit-clad, the very fact of prophecy and the things found in the holy writings.

For Samuel saith to Saul, *The Spirit of the Lord shall spring upon thee and thou shalt be turned into another man*, and of the blessed Elisha himself is it written, *And it came to pass as the minstrel was playing that the hand of the Lord came upon him*. And our Lord Jesus Christ Himself also testifieth of the blessed David that in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries. And many things may one readily heap up akin to what have been said, whereby one may exceeding easily see that the saints are Spirit-clad. But in things so obvious it were superfluous or even burdensome to weary with long discourse. How *the Spirit was not*, we must accurately search; for I think we must deem that the blessed Evangelist speaketh true.

Therefore the very truth, let God the All-wise, know; for we ought not too busily to apply ourselves to things above us. But as far as we can see by pious reasonings, something of this sort comes to us. This rational living thing on the earth, I mean man, was formed from the beginning in incorruption. And the cause of his incorruption and of his abidance in all virtue was evidently that the Spirit from God indwelt him; for He *breathed upon his face the breath of life*, as it is written. But he having from that ancient deceit turned aside unto sin, then by degrees in succession received much advance thereto, along with the remaining good things he suffers the loss of the Spirit and so at length became not only subject to corruption but also prone to all sin. But when the Framer of all designed (doing exceeding excellently) to *gather up all things in Christ*, and willed to recover again the nature of man to its pristine state, He promises along with the rest to give anew to it the Holy Ghost also, for no otherwise was it possible to get back to unshaken stability in good things. He defines therefore the time of the Descent of the Spirit upon us, and promises saying, *In those days* (those of the Saviour that is) *I will pour out* (to wit of My Spirit) *upon all flesh*. But since the time of this munificence brought the Only Begotten upon earth with Flesh, that is, made Man of a woman according to the Holy Scripture, God the Father began to give again the Spirit, and Christ first received the Spirit as First-fruits of the renewed nature. For *John bare record saying, I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven and It abode upon Him*.

But He received It, how? for we must needs investigate what is said. Was it then as not having? we say not so, God forbid. For the Spirit is the Son's Own, and not supplied from without, as the things from God come to us from without, but inexists in Him naturally even as in the Father, and through Him proceedeth to the saints, apportioned by the Father as

beseems each. But He is said to have received, in that He became Man, and it beseemed man to receive. And He, Son of God the Father and begotten of His Essence even before the Incarnation, yea rather before all ages, nothing shames when God the Father says to Him when He became Man, *My Son art THOU, this day have I begotten Thee*. For Him Who God before ages was begotten of Him, He says that He has *this day begotten*, that in Him He may receive us into sonship, for the whole human nature was in Christ, in that He was Man: so is He said to the Son who hath His Own Spirit, to give It, that we in Him may gain the Spirit. For this reason therefore does He *take hold of the seed of Abraham*, as it is written, and *in all things was made like unto His brethren*. The Only-Begotten therefore receives the Holy Ghost not for Himself (for His and in Him and through Him is the Spirit, as we before said) but, since He, having been made Man, had our whole nature in Himself, that He might uplift it all transfashioning it unto its olden state.

Besides what has been said, we must consider this too. For we shall see by going through wise reasonings, and confirmed thereto by words out of the Divine Scripture, that not for Himself did Christ receive the Spirit, but rather for us in Himself, for all good things flow through Him into us too. For since our forefather Adam being turned aside by deceit into disobedience and sin, did not preserve the grace of the Spirit, and thus in him the whole nature lost at last the God-given good, needs did God the "Word Who knows not turning, become Man, in order that by receiving as Man He might preserve the Good permanently to our nature. Of such mysteries will the Divine Psalmist himself too be our exponent: for thus saith he to the Son, *Thou lovedst righteousness and hatedst wrong, therefore God, Thy God, anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows*. For since (says he) Thou ever lovedst righteousness (for Thou art Righteous, O God, never able to be turned aside therefrom) and hatedst wrong always (for hatred of evil is innate in Thee of Nature as the Righteous-loving God): therefore hath God the Father anointed Thee, for Thou Who possessest unchangeable Righteousness as an Excellence of Thine own Nature, couldest never be moved unto sin which Thou knewest not: and thus, Thou preservedst undoubtedly in Thyself (in that Thou wert made Man) to the human Nature, the Holy Anointing from God the Father, i. e., the Spirit. The Only-Begotten was made therefore Man as we, that in Him first the good things returning and the grace of the Spirit rooted might be preserved securely to our whole nature, the Only Begotten and Word of God the Father lending us the Stability of His Own Nature, because the nature of man had been condemned in Adam as powerless for stability and falling (and that most easily) into perversion. As then in the turning of the first the loss of good things passes through unto the whole nature: in the same way I deem in Him too Who knoweth not turning will the gain of the abidance of the Divine Gifts be preserved to our whole race. And if we seem to any not to think and speak altogether what is proper, let him come forward and tell us why the Saviour has been called by the Divine Scriptures the Second Adam. For in that first one, the human race proceeds from not being unto being, and having come forth, decayed, because it had broken the Divine Law: in the Second, Christ, it riseth up again unto a second beginning, re-formed unto newness of life and unto a return of incorruption, for *if ought be in Christ, a new creature*, as Paul saith. There has therefore been given to us the renewing Spirit, that is, the Holy, the occasion of everlasting life after that Christ was glorified, i. e., after the Resurrection, when having burst the bonds of death and appeared superior to all corruption, He lived again having our whole nature in Himself, in that He was Man and One of us.

And if you investigate the reason why not before the resurrection but after it did the pouring forth of the Spirit take place, you will hear in reply, Christ became then the firstfruits of the

renewed nature, when making none account of the bands of death He lived again as we have just now said. How then should those be quickened before the Firstfruit who come after It? For as the plant will not shoot up from the earth, if it be not surely sprung from its own root (for thence is the beginning to it of growth): so it were impossible that we having for our root unto incorruption our Lord Jesus Christ, should be seen springing up before our root. But He shewing that the time of the Descent of the Spirit upon us was now come, after the revival from the dead, He *breathed on* His disciples, saying, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*. For then was the time of the renewal indeed at the doors, yea rather within the doors. And let the searcher after learning again see whether what we say on these things too be not true. For in the beginning, as said the Spirit-clad, Moses, to us, the Creator of all, taking *dust of the ground* and having formed man, *breathed upon his face the breath of life*. And what is the breath of life, save surely the Spirit of Christ Who saith, *I am the Resurrection and the Life*? But since He fled away from the human nature, the Spirit which is able to gather us and to form us unto the Divine Impress, the Saviour gives us this anew bringing us again unto that ancient Dignity and reforming us unto His own Image. For therefore does Paul too say to certain, *Little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you*.

Let us consider again (for I will take up again the aim of my discourse) that in the holy Prophets there was a certain rich shining upon and torch-illumination from the Spirit, mighty to lead them to the apprehension of things to come and the knowledge of things hidden: but in those who believe on Christ, we are confident that not torch-illumination simply from the Spirit, but the Spirit Itself dwells and has His habitation. Whence rightly are we called temples too of God, though no one of the holy Prophets was ever called a Divine Temple. Since how shall we understand this, and what shall we say when we hear our Saviour Christ say, *Verily verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist, notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he*? And what is *the kingdom of Heaven*? The gift of the Holy Ghost according to that which is said, *The kingdom of Heaven is within you*: for the Spirit hath His habitation in us through faith. Seest thou then how He preferreth before every one born of a woman him that is in the kingdom of Heaven even if he be below the perfect? And let no one think that we make little of the glory of the virtue of those Saints or say that those even of least account are superior. For we say not so; for incomparable is the beauty of their conversation. But for clear understanding let us briefly interpret what has been said by our Saviour. Great in truth was the blessed Baptist and through all virtue most renowned, attaining at last to the very bounds of that righteousness which belongs to us, so that there is nought above it. Yet did he who was in this case beseech of Christ saying, *I have need to be baptized of Thee and dost THOU come to Me*? Seest thou how being perfect, as far as pertained to men and the born of women, he beseeches to be in a manner new-created and re-born through the Holy Ghost? seest thou how he yields the greater to those new born, by his saying that himself has *need* of this? for if he were in better case not baptized, what persuaded him to beseech to be baptized? But if he knew that he would be in better case, when baptism came, how does he not yield the palm to those already baptized? Greater therefore than John himself does Christ say that he is who is lesser in the kingdom of Heaven, i. e. the new baptized, who has not as yet attained excellence in work;---in this only that the blessed Baptist was yet born of a woman, but the other is *begotten of God* as it is written, and has become *partaker of the Divine Nature*, having indwelling in him the Holy Ghost and already called a temple of God.

But I will recur again to what was before us. The Spirit came to be in the Prophets for the need's sake of prophesying, He indwelleth now through Christ in believers, having begun in

Him first when He was made Man. For as God He has unceasingly the Spirit Who is Essentially of His Nature and His own. He is anointed for our sakes and said to receive the Spirit as Man, not for Himself bringing in the participation of the Divine good things, but for the nature of man as we have already-taught. When then the Divine Evangelist says to us, *For the Spirit was not yet because that Jesus was not yet glorified*, let us understand him to mean the full and complete habitation in men of the Holy Ghost.

40, 41 *Of the people therefore some when they heard this saying said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is of a truth the Christ.*

Astonishment-stricken are they at His confidence as being God-befitting, and seeing that His words no longer suit the measures of man, they betake themselves to memory of the Law, as having already fore-declared of Christ, and saying that a Prophet should be raised up like to the all-wise Moses who should interpret to Israel the words from God. For so says God concerning Him to the holy Moses, *I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him*. From the quality therefore of His words, and the superiority of His sayings, do they say that He is already shewn to be Him who was fore-heralded through the Law. For to whom will it belong to say, *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink*, and, *He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*, save only to God by Nature? and this is *the Christ*. And even though the Jews thinking meanly of Him, call Him merely a *Prophet*, not knowing the excellence above all of Emmanuel, but meting Him like one of the rest, in this too again will they be caught applying themselves very much without understanding to the thoughts contained in the Law: for they deem that *the Christ* is other than *the Prophet* of the Law. And no marvel if the people lack accuracy herein, where the God-opposing multitude of the haughty. Pharisees is itself found sick with an equal ignorance with that of the people. For in astonishment at the blessed Baptist it once said, *Why baptizest thou then, if THOU be not the Christ nor Elias neither the Prophet?* For whereas two were looked for as to come, I mean the Prophet of the Law, i. e., Christ, and Elias, they were enquiring about three, imagining that the Prophet was other than Jesus. Seasonably therefore may one say of them what is spoken by the Prophet Ezekiel, *As the mother, so her daughter; thy mother's daughter art THOU*; for the people is sick with a sickness kin to that of their rulers. But we must observe that they were already full-prepared to believe, and are persuaded by the Saviour's words to marvel at Him, yet not having the leading of the rulers, they are borne along a many-branching path of ideas, some calling Him and now believing Him to be *the Christ*, others *the Prophet*, for the word of *a truth* annexed, has an emphasis of reasoning now fully confirmed and bringeth in the idea of faith accepted,

42 *Others said, Doth Christ come out of Galilee? said not the Scripture that of the seed of David and out of Bethlehem the village where David was Christ cometh?*

No careless search do the Jews make about Christ, for they were found going through every idea and through varied ideas gathering the perception of the truth. For having first marvelled through His Words, and already taken the eminent confidence of His instructions as a guide to their conjecturing something great about Him, they search besides the Divine Scripture, thinking to find thence a most unerring conception of Him: for so is its nature. That He shall be therefore *of the seed* of the thrice-blessed *David* and shall be revealed in *Bethlehem* of Judaea, they believe, persuaded by the prophecies concerning this. For *the Lord sware in truth unto David*, saith somewhere the wise Melodist, *and will not reject Him*,

Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. And the Prophet saith, And thou Bethlehem house of Ephrata, little art thou to be among the thousands of Judah, for out of thee shall He come forth unto Me to be Ruler of Israel, and His Goings forth from the beginning, from the days of eternity. But the unassisted mind of the Jews was astray and failed of Christ merely on account of *Nazareth* situate in Galilee, wherein was the common report that our Lord was brought up. For so says one of the holy Evangelists, *And He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up.* But they not knowing that He had been born in Bethlehem of Judaea of the Holy Virgin which was of the seed of David (for she was of the tribe of Judah by descent), from merely our Lord having been brought up at Nazareth fall away from the truth and miss of sound reasoning.

43 *There was therefore a division among the people because of Him.*

To no purpose do they wrangle and are split into diverse opinions, some supposing that He is the Prophet, others the Christ. And the cause of their division, that they know not Christ, nor understand the accuracy of the Holy Scriptures: for else would they believing that none other is Jesus than the Prophet of the Law, have departed from their unseasonable dispute.

44 *And some of them would have taken Him, yet no man laid hands on Him.*

They who had been sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to take the Lord, made the dissension of the multitude with one another a seasonable pretext for their daring deed. For they imagined that they would with less dispute suffer them to bear Him away, as no longer careful what should befall Him, but that as having been an occasion of fighting and disturbance, they would be altogether glad at His being insulted. *Yet no man laid hands on Him*, not from reverence to Him, nor yet putting the bridle of piety upon their anger, but checked by His Might alone (for to its own season did He give to endure His Passion for us).

And hardly is the device of the Jews appeased, restrained by the hindrance from above. For they might not attempt bloodshed before the time, but must await, ungodly though they be, the time of ungodliness.

45 *The officers came therefore to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why did ye not bring Him?*

They who had been sent to hunt our Lord, availing to accomplish nought of what had been commanded them took themselves again *to the* rulers. And they are troubled exceedingly at the arrival of *the officers*, not seeing them bring Him Who was sought. And believing that what they suspected had already happened, they are smitten with no small fear. For since Christ was marvelled at for His Signs above nature and His Words above measure, they were wasted with the envy that was their foster-sister, and were again in no slight fear lest the people of the Jews deciding that it ought to follow Him, should get clear out of their hand. Supposing that this had happened (for things suspected are evermore ready to be believed) they eagerly enquire saying, *Why did ye not bring Him?* What was it that hindered you (say they) from bringing to its completion what was pleasing to the rulers? We are more ready to press forward to learn all, and sometimes not discerning what is sorrowful, in our eager desire even seize hold on the perception of things we deprecate.

46 *The officers answered, Never man spake thus.*

Seasonable in truth is it to say of our Saviour Christ, Who *taketh the wise in their own craftiness*. For behold, behold as it is written, He *removed the many-tangled counsel*, and shewed the whole nature of affairs turned contrariwise, on all sides exposing the pollution of the rulers and their unholiness of life as being feeble and perilous, who refused not to fight against God. For the chief Priests and Pharisees, fearing lest the people of the Jews should be persuaded by the Saviour's words, send out officers to take Him, thinking that Christ's being out of the way would remove their care as to Him. But what they suspected, this they that had been sent by them returned actually suffering, and what it was like that they would shudder at hearing, this they learn even against their will, and hear unexpectedly from those who speak contrary to their mind, *Never spake man so*.

But since they say these things in excuse for not having brought the Lord, come let us expand what they said, every way considering the sense of what was spoken. For if we delight ourselves (say they) in the teaching of the holy Scriptures, if we boast that we have been instructed in the Divine Laws, if we marvel at wisdom as some unearthly good, why do we impiously drive away One so wise, and wrong in no small measure Him Whom least we ought, seeing that we rather owe Him special Love: yea we subject our own heads to the perils of the Law, thirsting to slay without cause an *Innocent and Righteous* One. With such a thought may we suppose that *the officers'* words were with reason replete. But *I* think that looking at *Never spake man so*. one may say somewhat keener. For they well-nigh say thus, Not reasonably do ye blame us who could not now bring you Him That was sought: for how could one compel even against His Will a Man Who in regard to His Words possesseth Divine Nature? for He spake not as man, nor were His Words those befitting man, but they belong unmistakeably to Him Who is God by Nature. For let any say, if any (they say) of the holy Prophets can be found to call himself a brook, or who dared say, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink?* when did the mighty Moses himself say to us, *He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of water of life:* these things we heard Him say. He therefore is by Nature God Who without peril exalts Himself in words above man. But to attempt to hunt as though by necessity and compulsion Him Who is above the creature, how will one not say that it is most perilous? or how could He be taken by us against His Will, Who is as far above us as God above Man? *The officers* put forth therefore as an evident proof of the Lord being by Nature God, the words *Never spake man so*. On all sides is the God-opposer smitten, and through what he thought to attain his desire, through the very same is he unwitting slain.

47 *There answered them the Pharisees, Have YE too been deceived?*

It seems likely that the officers were more strongly Jewish, and ever cleaving to *the Pharisees* and sharing their common mind, and ever soused with the words of their rulers, were persuaded to think the same with them, as being ever with them. But when they came, no ways bringing the Lord, but astonishment-stricken beyond their expectation, and late and only now marvelling at Him Whom they ought not to have hated at the beginning, and thinking that all the rest ought to be persuaded by them: they say with a kind of deep anguish, *Have YE also been deceived?* And understand how this saying is replete with a sort of despair of any hope as regards the people. For as though the rest of the multitude had already been deceived, so many as were not over-stable, they put forth their fear as to the officers. For the remaining multitude (says it) of the common people who are not versed in the sacred Scriptures, nor yet fortified by cleaving to us, let it be granted (if so be) to them to be joined to Him with inconsiderate impulses, and easily-caught to agree to what He hath said and done: but whence hath this error been admitted by you too? how have yourselves also been

deceived? what was it drew you off from your love to us, albeit withered in equal unbelief with us? something like this does the Pharisees' word seem to tell us.

48, 49 *Hath any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? but this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.*

They fall away to their wonted boastfulness, casting imputation of unlearning on those who marvelled at Jesus as a wonder-worker and as bringing in things God-befitting, and crown their own heads alone with skill in the law and knowledge of the holy Scriptures. And because themselves consent not to those who rightly marvel at these things, they believe that they are full of virtue. And as though the Law bade them find fault with things worthy of marvel, and cast a perverse judgment on things that surpass wonder, they plume themselves not a little, demented and of too great lightness easily cast into all uninstructedness. And whence they the rather ought to acknowledge Jesus now present, thence are they taken wronging themselves and *weighting their collar*, as it is written, for *professing themselves to be wise, they became fools*. Albeit it had been far better to confess that they knew not the Law, than thinking and saying that they knew it well, and then dishonouring Him That was proclaimed thereby, to fall into keener doom and be pierced with woes past escape. For he *which knew*, (He says) *his Lord's will* and did it not, *shall be beaten with many stripes, but he that knew not* and did not, *shall be beaten with few stripes*. Therefore in confessing that they know the Law, themselves full well accuse their own unbelief, and laugh at the multitude as unlearned and therefore caught by our Saviour's miracles, then unable to dissuade them through the declarations of the Law, they boastfully insult, calling them uninstructed who were ready to understand. For this is ever the wont of more ignorant teachers who having nought to say of what they are asked, repel by anger the minuteness of enquirers. And they say that they who believe are *cursed*, while themselves would more rightly be persuaded to say this of their own selves. For it better befits the unbeliever to be accursed, seeing that the Law declares clearly of the Prophet our Saviour Christ, *And it shall be whosoever will not hearken unto the words which that Prophet shall speak in My Name, that soul shall be destroyed from among his people*.

50, 51 *Nicodemus saith unto them, he who came to him aforesaid, being one of them, Doth our law judge a man before it heareth him and know what he doeth?*

One of the rulers is Nicodemus, and he is numbered among those who had authority, yet not wholly unbelieving nor altogether vying with their folly, but already pricked, not indeed having his love to Christ yet free, yet to some degree feeling shame at the convictions of his conscience. For that he came to Him by night, and affirmed that he knew well that He was *a teacher come from God* and that no one could do such signs, except he had God with him, I think that all have learnt, the blessed Evangelist having clearly said it at the beginning. He therefore marvelling at Jesus along with the multitudes, is somewhat smitten at being styled along with them *cursed*. For consciousness is quick at persuading not to be quiet in things contrary to one. As therefore aggrieved hereat, he returns upon them equal insult, not yet openly, but putting forth against them his indignation in words which have their strength out of the Law, and not in unveiled openness. For whereas the Law (he says) tells judges on each question before them, *And thou shalt enquire diligently* with exactness and clearness, whether it be so; ye judged recklessly those who had not been yet called to trial, and before hearing ought of them, ye bring against them so hasty a sentence. It is YE therefore (he says) who are more truly cursed, despising the Law. For it is written, *Cursed is every one that*

continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them. For in that he is indignant at the Pharisees for condemning the people for only marvelling at Jesus, it is clear that he agrees with those who do believe. For being still sick of an harmful shame, and not yet mingling boldness with his zeal, he permits the faith that is in him to be not seen uncovered, but casting about it dissimulation like a darksome cloak, he as yet conceals that he is on Christ's side; yet is he sick with a grievous sickness.

For we ought to believe fearlessly, glorying rather than ashamed, practising a transparent openness, and refusing slave-befitting dissimulation, for therefore did the wise Paul declare that he that *rightly divideth the word of truth* ought to be a *workman unashamed*, and himself too shewing the virtue that shone forth in himself somewhere says, *For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.*

Keen therefore (for I will resume again what I was saying) is Nicodemus' speech: for why did himself alone speak and withstand the words of the Pharisees, albeit their bloody confederacy had many others in it? But it is clear to every one, that since he was numbered among those who marvelled at Christ) he is shewing that they are accursed in their turn who lay a curse upon those whom they least ought.

52 They answered and said unto him, Art THOU too of Galilee? search and see that out of Galilee hath not arisen a prophet.

Being a Jew (it says) and home-born, why dost thou feign to have no knowledge of the Galileans, and art strangely co-ignorant of our matters with those who are absolutely ignorant? and being most conversant with the most sacred Scriptures, and versed in the appointments of the Law, whence knewest thou not (he says) that it is not possible to look for a *Prophet out of the Galilaeans*? This then is the aim of the Pharisees' words. But we must notice this again: they spurn the multitudes as knowing nought of the things they ought to have had accurate knowledge of, and finding fault with their extreme want of learning, and loathing them and haughtily styling them uninstructed, themselves are caught sick of yet worse, and no wise differing from their inexperience. For those on receiving the miracles done through Christ, and gathering little by little faith in Him, at one time said, *Christ when He cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this man. hath done?* at another time drawn off from so right an opinion, they missed only from Nazareth being situate in Galilee wherein the Divine Scripture proclaims that the Lord was brought up, and they therefore said, *Doth Christ come out of Galilee? said not the Scripture that of the seed of David and out of Bethlehem the village where David was, Christ cometh?* But these loudly laughing at the ill-instructedness of the people and calling them *curse*d therefore, were in no superiority to their ignorance. For see they too say, *Search and see that out of Galilee hath not arisen a prophet.*

But one may with reason moved against them say, O ye who yield to none the palm in ill-instructedness, ye who have missed and are hard, where is the boast of your pride, a footprint of wisdom in you? where the understanding that belongs to those learned in the Law? for we ought not to doubt of our Saviour Christ, but to believe, nothing hesitating, God the Father saying of Him to holy Moses, *A Prophet will I raise them up from among their brethren like unto thee. From among their brethren*, how must it not surely mean of the Jews and of Israel? Verily ye shall not need accusers from without, yourselves of yourselves shall be convicted of being without understanding. For whereas our Saviour Christ teacheth and

openly saith, *I have come down from heaven not to do Mine own will but the will of Him That sent Me*, ye were then thinking bitter things, and full besides of no slight wrath, ye said again, *Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother WE know? how saith He now, I have come down from heaven?* Since then thou confessedst in plain words that thou knewest exactly His *father and mother*, thou knewest surely that He is of the root of Israel: how then saidst thou that He was a Galilaean Who was born of Jews? how an alien Who was of Israel? for not surely the having been brought up in *Galilee*, and having spent some time there, removes him that is of Israel from his race, since nought would hinder him that is sprung of Galilaeans from being a Jew by race if he should come into the land of the Jews. Vain therefore is it for the Pharisees wise in their own conceits to say of Christ our Saviour, *that out of Galilee hath not arisen a Prophet*. For they should rather have enquired how it was that He Who was of Jewish parents came to be a Galilaean, and so at length to consider His bringing up at Nazareth, and not on this account stray away from believing.

But we must observe again that no wise able to find fault with His miracles, albeit whetted to the uttermost hostility, they gainsay from merely His country, since He was (according to their surmise) from Galilee. Their suspicion thence being therefore loosed, not doubtful at length would have been their faith, if they had been wise ¹³.

viii. 12 *Again therefore spake Jesus unto them, saying, I am the Light of the world.*

As we said that Jesus had made His Discourse in accordance with what was written of the feast, when at its last day He was standing crying, *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink*, because the oracle of Moses had made mention of the brook: so now too does He make His explanation most seasonable, and due to the nature of things. For since He saw that the teachers were partners in folly with the multitudes and that the laughers were sick of the like with them they laughed at, drenched (so to speak) all of them in one night of unlearning and seeking to get hold of His Mystery yet finding nought at all, He brings forward the reason of the want of understanding that is in them, crying, *I am the Light of the world*. Ye (He says) going through the whole holy Scripture and thinking to test the things spoken of Me through the Prophets, are far astray of the way of Life. And no marvel: for He is not in you Who revealeth mysteries and illumineth the whole world, and like a sun shineth into the hearts of them that receive Him. And needs must he who has not within him the Divine and spiritual Light surely walk in darkness and stumble on many absurdities therefrom.

But that the Only-Begotten is by Nature Light, as beaming forth from God the Father Who is by Nature Light, we have shewn at great length in the first book, on the words, *He was the Very Light*.

But we must note again that He says that He is the Light not specially or solely of them of Israel, but of all *the world*. And herein He tells a thing most true: for He says that He it is Who infused into all the nature the light of understanding, and like some deposit of seed sowed the understanding befitting man in every one who is called into being, according to what is said of Him, *He was the Very Light Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*. But I think, that there is something keen deep buried in the words. For if what He had said were not replete with something of this kind, He would have merely said, *I am the Light*. But since He hath added, *Of the world*, I think that now too He wills something of this sort to be hinted. *God was known in Judaea alone, in Israel alone was His Name great*; and

all the rest of the earth a deep darkness filled, not one of those that were in the world possessing the Divine and heavenly Light, save only Israel.

But as then while all the nations in this world were together banished from the knowledge of God, and lay as it were in some rank of their own, *the Lord's portion was His people, Israel the cord of His inheritance*: so again when the spiritual sun was transferred unto the whole world, and the light taken away from them of Israel and removed unto the Gentiles, Israel was found to be external to all: for while they waited *for light darkness came to them*, as it is written, *awaiting brightness, they walked in gloom*. Not in vain then saith the Saviour when communing with the Pharisees, *I am the Light of the world*, for He threatens well that He will remove from Israel and will transfer the grace unto the whole world, and will spread forth the ray of Divine knowledge at last upon others.

But we must observe that although by His hearers He was seen as Man and with flesh, He does not say, *In Me is the Light*, but, *I am the Light*, that none divide Christ after the Economy of the Incarnation into a pair of sons: for *One Lord Jesus Christ*, as Paul saith, both before Flesh and with Flesh, and One and Alone in Verity Son is the Word of God the Father, even when He was made Man, not counted apart from the Temple that was taken of a woman: for His Own is the Body, and to wholly sever after the Incarnation, as regards Sonship, is not free from blasphemy. But we must know that though we say that the Word of God was made Flesh, we do not say that He was clad in flesh alone, but in the word flesh we signify the whole man.

He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

He is again persuading them on all sides to aim at hunting after what is profitable, and to desire rather to be led by His appointments, than to choose to follow their own unlearning and bereave themselves of everlasting life. He shews how great shall be the profit to those who are obedient to Him, seeing He is by Nature Good and *willeth all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*. But since He knew as God that they would gainsay, He fashions His speech after an elder image of things and from what had befallen their ancestors He declares plainly that the desire to follow Him will be to their great profit. It was written then of them of Israel, that *in the daytime also He led them with a cloud and all the night with a light of fire*. For when they were crossing the wide desert, hasting unto the Land of promise, a cloud was suspended over them like a roof in the day driving off the sun's flame, by Divine Counsel that is: by night a pillar of fire contending with the darkness and marking out to the travellers their un-erring road did lead them. For just as they who at that time followed the guiding and conducting fire, escaped straying, and were borne straight forward along their right and holy ground, recking nought of night or darkness: *so he that followeth Me, i. e., who goeth in the track of My teachings, shall in no wise be in the dark, but shall gain the light of life*, that is, the revelation of My mysteries able to lead him by the hand unto everlasting life. The Lord being a skillful workman in His speech, in no wise provokes the Pharisees, who rage and rave not a little, by telling them more openly that they shall both abide in the dark and shall die in their unbelief: but in other guise does He tell them this, transferring unto the better the force of His speech. For whereby He here promises that he who has chosen to *follow Him shall have the light of life*, by this same does He shew covertly, that by refusing to follow they shall have dearth of that light which availeth to recover them unto life. For is it not clear to all and unhesitatingly to be received, that to those who flee what cheers, the

reverse: must needs befall? True then was the word of our Saviour and undoubted that which was contrived through His skill.

13 *The Pharisees therefore said, Thou bearest record of Thyself, Thy record is not true.*

Dull and slow is the Pharisee, and most hardly led unto the power of seeing the Godhead of the Lord: he errs again by reason of the flesh, and imagines nought beyond what he sees. For while seeing that He uses utterances beyond man and hearing words most God-befitting, he yet conceives of bare man, not looking to the illustriousness of the Godhead nor opening the eye of his understanding to look at Emmanuel. For to whom will it belong to say, *I am the light of the world*, save to One and Alone God That is by Nature? who of the holy Prophets dared to say such a word? what angel ever burst forth such a word? let them traverse the whole God-inspired Scripture and search into the sacred and Divine Word, and shew us this. But they making no account of what necessarily follows, deem that they ought to contradict, and advance hotly to what alone they know accurately, accusal out of love of fault-finding, For they depreciate Him as not being the Light of the world, accusing the things spoken by Him, affirming that *not true* is His *record*. For *they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge*, and suppose that they can overturn and that by chicanery His *record*, attempting to invalidate it from just merely our own customary ways, not by the commands of the Law.

For where does the Law (let them tell us) say that a man's testimony of himself is invalid? For wearisome I suppose and unendurable at times is a person's witnessing excellences to himself: and verily the most wise compiler of Proverbs saith, *Let thy neighbour praise thee and not thine own mouth, a stranger and not thine own lips*. Yet not altogether false is that which is said by any of himself. For let any of the Pharisees come forward, and let him tell us what we shall do when the blessed Samuel testifies most excellent things to his own self. For he is somewhere found to be making his defence to those of Israel and saying, *The Lord is witness against you and His anointed is witness this day that ye have not found ought in my hands*. But if the Law forbid any one to witness to himself, how (tell me) came Samuel to set it at nought, albeit the Divine Scripture saith of him, *Holy was Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His name, they called upon the Lord and He answered them, in the pillar of the cloud did He speak unto them, they kept His testimonies and the ordinances that He gave them*. Seest thou how he was conjoined with Moses as having virtue commensurate with him, and is witnessed to by the Spirit as an accurate keeper of the Law? How then did he transgress the Law by witnessing to himself, will one say? But he did not transgress it; for he is witnessed to as keeping it, and he hath witnessed to himself. The Law then forbids to none to witness to himself. And moreover what shall we say, when we see the blessed David saying, *O Lord my God, if I did this, if I recompensed those that recompensed me evil? yea moreover the blessed Jeremy saith, O Lord God of hosts, I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, but was circumspect because of Thy Hand*: and the most wise Paul again, though *taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers*, as himself too testified, openly cries out, *For I am conscious of nought of myself*.

Let the Pharisee therefore say again of each of these, *Thou bearest record of thyself, thy record is not true*, even though to those who refuse not to chide the very Lord of all, the behaving most ill to the rest is a matter of course. But this we say, resuming again what we were saying, that the contradiction of the Pharisees is no necessary one taken out of the ordinances of the Law, but made only out of what prevails in common custom, and from the habit not seeming to be one befitting good people. And their contradiction out of the Law is

rather railing, to steal away those who are already marvelling at Him and are persuaded that they ought to believe. For they revile Him as not true, and damaging the credit of what He just now said, the wretched ones draw forth the destruction of blasphemy upon their own heads.

14 *Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I hear record of Myself, My record is true, because I know whence I came and whither I go.*

On Christ saying that He is what He is by Nature and truly (for He openly declared, *I am the Light of the world*) the multitude of the Pharisees unrecking of danger deemed that He spake falsely. For in their exceeding folly they knew not that when some set forth their own nature and tell what is essentially inherent in them, we shall not, if we think aright, suppose that they do so out of boasting, nor shall we say that they are bent on hunting vain-glory, but rather that they declare what they really are. As for example we say that when an angel pointing out his own nature says, I am an angel; when a man shewing what he is says, I am a man: yea, if one should clothe with voice the sun, and it teaching the property of its nature should say, I hasting around the circuit of the heaven, let forth bright light to those on the earth:---one would not reasonably suppose, that it were witnessing to itself things not its, but what it really was by nature. In the same way (I deem) as to our Saviour Christ too, even though He says that He is the Light, He will say the truth, and will be found boasting not less than they in things external to Him.

The many therefore living in ill-instructedness, not understanding Emmanuel, suppose that He is vain-glorious and attack Him as though one of us, and have not shuddered to say, *Thy record is not true*, to Him Who cannot lie, for *guile was not found in His Mouth*, as it is written. But it behoved Him to lead by the hand them who were astray, having fallen away exceedingly from the truth, and gone away from right reasoning, and in all forbearance to tell them that they had missed of what was becoming, unholily ascribing the love of even lying to Him Who is from above and begotten of God the Father. For *true* (He says) is *My record, even though I hear record of Myself*. For in men is sometimes seen the desire from self-love of witnessing things most excellent to themselves, even though they have them not (for prone to ill is their nature); but to Me (He says) belongs not the power of being sick of the same ills as those on the earth. For *I know whence I am*, Light of Light and Very God of Very God the Father, having the Nature that is beyond the reach of infirmity. For even though (He says) I became Man because of My Love for men, yet not on this account shall I be deemed bereft of God-befitting Dignity, but I remain what I am by Nature, God. A clear proof of this, is My knowing *whither I go*: for I shall ascend unto the heavens to the Father of Whom I am. This I suppose one would say pertained not to a man as we are, but to Him Who is by Nature God even though He became Man. Hence the words *I know whence I am*, indicates that the Son is by Nature of the Father, and the *whither I go*, a demonstration of God-befitting Authority (for He will ascend as God, *above the heavens*, as Paul saith); yet hath it some fit threat, even if not altogether clear, against the impiety of the Jews. For that He shall full soon depart altogether from their race, does He here evidently say; and leaving them in dearth of the Divine Light, will prepare them for being in ignorance and deep darkness, as He shews them elsewhere more clearly: for He says, *While ye have the Light, walk in the light lest darkness come upon you.*

15 *YE judge after the flesh, I judge no man.*

We shall again find the Lord of all using gentleness most worthy of love; for not with equal wrath does He repay those who blaspheme Him, albeit knowing that they ought to participate in bitter punishment: but imitating the more gentle of physicians, He will (I deem) in this too be rightly marvelled at. For they often make no account of the slights of the sick, but forbearing most patiently make their skill helpful to them, curing what gives them pain, and railed at at times, they explaining what is for the good of health persuade them to be diligent in what is for their good and make known the cause of their sickness. And the Lord Jesus Christ both bears with those who blaspheme Him and reviled He does them good, He binds up the wounds of them who insult Him: yea and most clearly counts up to them the causes of their unbelief in Him, whence their sickness befell them. For YE (He says) *judge after the flesh*, i. e., ye err, and with great reason, since ye look to *this flesh* alone, albeit ye ought far rather to give heed to the magnificence of the deeds: believing that I am such an one as you because I am clothed in your flesh, ye have been greatly deceived, and not contemplating the deep mystery of the Economy with Flesh, ye put forth a most ill-advised judgment against Me, saying that the Truth lies. But *I shall put off judging you until another time, for God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved.*

I think then that the question before us has been solved not amiss: but one may going through other thoughts also make the sense clear as far as we are able. YE (He says) *judge after the flesh, I judge no man*. Having nought at all (He says) to find fault with and not able to reasonably blame My Wonder-workings, ye depreciate them only on account of the flesh, and because I am seen a Man as you, ye impiously class Me as nothing. But *I* (He says) do not for this condemn you; for not because ye are men by nature, shall I therefore esteem you as nothing nor for this shall ye render account to the Judge. I find not fault with the nature, I condemn not Mine Own creation, I say not that there is any transgression in man from his being man. Yet *ye* by reason of the flesh esteem Me as nought, and for this did ye condemn Me: but *I* have not so reckoned of you, but knowing that a great and honourable thing is man even though he be made of earth, albeit Very God and in the Form of the Father Who begat Me, I humbled Myself taking servant's form and made Man: in respect of which alone am I now condemned by you, albeit Myself condemning no man for this. *And if I judge My judgment is just and true because I am not alone but I and the Father that sent Me.*

"Doth then," will haply one say of those who think contrary to the doctrines of the Church, "the Son know how to judge aright, only for this reason, that the Father is with Him when He does so? This being so (and that in truth) what yet hinders from saying that the Son is in a way directed unto uprightness through the Will of the Father, not possessing this in perfectness, nor able of Himself to act irreproachably?"

What then shall WE too respond to their words? Impious, sirs, is your idea and most befitting Jewish folly alone, for not as though not possessing the power of judging rightly of Himself, does the Son so speak; for the Psalmist will testify to Him saying in the Spirit, *God is a Righteous Judge*. And that none other save He is Judge, Himself will be our witness, saying in the Gospels, *For neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath given all judgment unto the Son*. Hath then God the Father given the judgment to one who knoweth not to judge rightly? But any one (I suppose) would attribute to the uttermost folly so to deem of the Righteousness of the Father, i. e. the Son. For the Father knoweth His own Offspring and gave Him judgment, and by giving it, clearly testifies His Power to judge aright. It is therefore most manifest, that not as being impotent to judge justly does He say that the Father co-judges with Him, but the words are replete with some thoughts akin to those above and in sequence.

What then He wishes to make known, we will clearly say. YE (He says) O leaders and teachers of the Jews, made an evil and most unjust judgment against Me: for by reason of only the flesh, ye deem ye ought to esteem Me as nothing, although I am by Nature God. But *I* when I begin to judge of you, shall not put forth such a judgment against you, for not because ye are men by nature, shall I therefore deem it fit to condemn you: but having the Father in all things Co-willer and Co-judge, I condemn you justly. And why? Ye did not receive Him Who cometh from Heaven, ye have not ceased to insult Him That was sent to you from the Father, ye depreciated Me Who came for the salvation of all, for merely the flesh's sake, spurning far the Law which was ever dear to you. For where (tell me) doth Moses bid you condemn any because he was a man by nature? YE therefore judge and reckon unjustly: for ye have not the Law as your Co-willer herein, but by yourselves are bold to every daring deed, having not the inspiration of the Divine will: but I not so, for having in Myself the Father as My Assessor and Co-approver in all things that concern you, I judge most justly in giving up to desolation your whole country, and burying it in the misfortunes of war, yea in expelling from the very kingdom of Heaven those who have so raged against Him who willeth to save them, and who for this cause came in man's form.

17, 18 *And in your Law it is written that the testimony of two men is true: I am one that bear witness of Myself and the Father too That sent Me beareth witness of Me.*

Having said that God the Father will co-judge and co-condemn those who blaspheme against Him, He taketh the pair of Persons unto something else that is profitable. For *I* (He says) will not refuse to tell you what I am by Nature. For *I am the Light of the world*. And *I* would not seem to any to be fond of boasting: for not in external endowments but in those that accrue to Me Essentially do I glory. But if in saying this, I seem to you not competent to receive from you approval for truth, because I am alone and have witnessed to Myself, I will take to Me God the Father co-working and co-witnessing to My Endowments. For He co-works with Me (He says) as ye see, and co-operates. For as far as regards human nature, *I* should not do any thing at all, if I possessed not the being God by Nature: as far as regards My being of the Father, and having in Myself the Father, I confess that I can accomplish all things, and am witnessed to by the Nature of Him who begat Me: for as having Him in Myself by means of Sameness of Nature, I come to the achieving of all things unhindered. For our Lord Jesus Christ hath of the Divine Nature all-creative Power as God even though He became Man, and He is witnessed to by the Father, having Him Co-worker in all things according as is said by Him, *Of Myself I do nothing, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, Himself doeth the works*. But we deem that the Father co-works with the Son, not as introducing some other power of His own for the achievement of the things done, to one who was wanting in power (for if we thus conceive, we shall concede that both the Power of the Father and that of the Son are surely imperfect, if ought of miracle be wrought by Them Both, as though One were not sufficient for the need) but conceiving of, and taking the words in more pious wise, we shall say that since there is in Father and Son One Godhead, and the un-differing Authority and Power of the Same Nature, the works of the Son will surely be those of God the Father, those again of God the Father, the works of the Son.

But He saith, *I do nothing of Myself*, not as though a servant or under-worker, or in position of a learner, and waiting to be commanded by the Father, or instructed in order to accomplish wonders: but rather signifying with all precision, that having sprung of the Essence of God the Father, and like Light produced Ineffably and without beginning from His Innermost Bosom and Eternally co-with Him, and conceived of and being the Image and Impress of His Person,

He hath the same Mind so to speak with Him, and the same energy in everything. For that He might clearly teach that He is Co-willer in all things with Him Who begat Him, He says, *I do nothing of Myself*. Just as though He said, I am not turned out to any private will of My own, which is not in God the Father. Whatever the Nature of the Father wills and judges, this same is surely in Me too, since I beamed forth of His Bosom, and am the Very Fruit of His Essence.

Hard then are these things to explain, and that which is unattainable by the very understanding may not without difficulty be unfolded through the tongue: nevertheless bringing such things as far as in us lays to a pious view, we shall gain to ourselves heavenly reward, and thus preserve our mind unwounded and unmoved by turnings aside unto ought else.

But we must note that the Saviour adding and crying to the Jews, *And in your Law is it written*, persuades the Pharisees as of necessity to admit the pair of Persons. For I (He says) *bear witness of Myself, and the Father* will be with Me herein: will therefore the pair of witnesses confirmed by the book of the Law, be accepted by you, or will ye again, looking only to your envy at Me, not keep even the Law that ye admire?

19 *They said therefore unto Him, Where is Thy Father?*

In this too most especially may one, I deem, and with good reason cry out against the stolidity of the Jews, uttering that word of the Prophet, *Behold O foolish people and without heart*. For after much discourse and often with them from our Saviour Christ, Who over and over makes mention of God the Father in Heaven, the wretched ones sink down into so great folly as to dare to say, *Where is Thy Father?* For they think nought at all of Him Who is His God and Father in the Heavens, but look round at and seek for Joseph, believing him to be Christ's father and no otherwise. Thou seest then how they have been with reason called a people verily foolish and heartless: for able not so much as to raise the eye of their understanding above things of earth, they shew that true it is which was said of them, *Let their eyes be darkened that they see not, and bow Thou down their back alway*. For of irrational creatures is the back bowed, for they have this form from nature, and there is nothing of uprightness in them. And the mind of the Jews has become in some way like the beasts and has declined ever downwards, seeing nothing of heavenly things. For shall we not by the very fact itself, instructed aright in this matter, think and judge truly concerning them? for if they had at all thought of God the Father in Heaven, how would they have sought in place the Unembodied? how (tell me) would they, saying most unadvisedly of God Who filleth all things, *Where is He*, not fight with the whole Divine Scripture, albeit the Divine-speaking Psalmist, going through (as he was able) his words about God, and attributing to Him the power of filling all things, says, *Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, and from Thy Presence whither shall I flee? if I ascend up into heaven, THOU art there, if I go down to hell, behold Thou, if I take my wings at morning and depart unto the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy Hand lead me and Thy Right Hand shall hold me*. Yea and God Himself Who is over all, shewing clearly that He possesseth not nature circumscribed by space, saith to those so unholy Jews, *Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord? what house will ye build Me, or what the place of My rest? Heaven is My Throne and earth My footstool*. One may therefore see the Jews in all things without understanding, when they say to the Saviour Christ, *Where is Thy Father?* except they say this of His reputed father after the flesh, in this too dotting.

But it is likely that the words of the Jews had some other deep meaning. For since they thought that the holy Virgin had committed adultery before marriage, therefore they rail most bitterly against Christ as not even knowing from whom He is, saying, *Where is Thy father?* doting.

Jesus answered, Neither Me do ye know nor My Father, if ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also.

True is the word and in no respect can it be accused of lying. For they who indeed suppose Christ to be of Joseph, or of fornication, and who know not that the Word beamed forth of God the Father, how will they not with reason hear, *Neither Me do ye know nor My Father?* For if they had known the Word that beamed forth of God the Father, and was for our sakes made in the flesh, according to the Divine Scripture, they would have known Him too Who begat Him. For most accurate knowledge of the Father is through the Son implanted in the understanding of the more zealous after learning, as He too affirmed, saying unto God the Father, *I manifested Thy Name to the men*, and again, *Thy knowledge was made marvellous by Me*. For since we know the Son, we know by Him Him Who begat Him. For through Both is brought in the perception of the Other: and when the Father is mentioned, the memory of His Offspring surely comes in with it, and again with the signification of the Son, the Name of Him Who begat Him comes in too. For therefore is the Son a Door (so to speak) and way leading unto the knowledge of the Father. And so does He say, *No man cometh unto the Father but by Me*. For we must needs first learn (as is possible) what the Son is by Nature; and so, as from Image and most accurate Impress, understand well the Archetype. For in the Son is the Father seen, and in the Nature of His own Offspring as in a mirror, is He Perfectly seen. But if this be true, as it is true, let the God-opposing Arian blush. For needs must the Impress of His Essence be in every way and manner like to Him, lest ought else than what the Father is, be supposed to be perfectly beaming forth in the Son. And if He love to be known in the Son and to shine forth in Him, He knows (I suppose) of a surety that He is Consubstantial too, and in nothing whatever inferior to His Own inherent Glory: for He would not have chosen to be believed to be in lesser case than He is by Nature. And since He loves and has willed this, how must we not needs now confess that the Son is every way like the Father, in order that through Him we may know Him also That begat Him, as we have already said, ascending aright from the Image to the Archetype, and be able to have an unblameable conception of the Holy Trinity?

Thus then he who knoweth the Son, knoweth the Father too. But consider how the Lord after having said the truth to the Jews, interweaves some other device also in His speech; for having said clearly, *Neither Me do ye know nor My Father*, He draws gently off the mind of the Jews, that they should not think only humanly of Him, nor suppose that He is in truth the son of Joseph who was taken economically but should rather seek and enquire Who is the Word in Flesh, Who His Father by Nature.

CHAPTER III. That no work of Jewish might was the Suffering on the Cross, nor did Christ die from the tyranny of any, but Himself of His own will suffered this for us that He might save all.

20 These words spake He in the Treasury as He taught in the Temple, and no man laid hands on Him, because His hour had not yet come.

The most wise Evangelist profitably makes plea in behalf of the saving Passion and shews that the Death on the Cross was not of human necessity, nor did Jesus suffer death against His will from the tyranny of another, but rather did offer Himself for us a spotless Sacrifice to God the Father by reason of His inherent love for us. For since He must needs suffer (since thus would the imported corruption and sin and death be overturned), He hath given Himself a Ransom for the life of all. What then will be found in the words before us making for the saving Passion, and what of profit the aim of the thoughts therein is replete with, do thou again hear. For Christ (he says) was speaking *these words* not outside of Jerusalem, nor in any city of those round about, nor yet in a more insignificant town or village of Judaea, for He was standing by the very *treasury*, i. e., in the midst of the very courts in the Temple itself was He making His Discourse on these matters. But the Pharisees, albeit deeply cut to the heart and grieved exceedingly at what was said by Him, *laid not hands upon Him*, when it was in their power most easily to do this; for He was, as I said, within the meshes. What then was it that persuaded to be quiet even against their will, those who are raging like fierce beasts? what was it that checked their anger? how was the bloodthirsty heart of the Pharisees charmed? *Not yet*, he says, *had His hour come*, that is, not yet was the time of His Death at hand, by no other hand marked out for the Saviour Christ, nor yet cast upon Him by fate (as the lying fables of the Greeks say) or by the hour (after their babbling speech), but rather marked out by Him according to the good pleasure of God the Father. For being God by Nature and Very and unknowing to miss of what was fit, full well did He know how long time it was right to live in Flesh with those on the earth, and when again to depart to heaven, having destroyed death by the death of His own Flesh. For that not by the tyranny of any, was death brought upon Him That is by Nature Life, is I suppose clear to all who are wise: for how should the bonds of death prevail over the Life by Nature? and the Lord Himself somewhere testifieth saying, *No man taketh My life from Me, I lay it down of Myself: I have power to lay it down, and again I have power to take it*. For if the time in which He must surely suffer death, were laid down as of necessity by some other, how should we find it in His own power to *lay down* that *Life*? for it would have been taken even against His will, if His Passion were not in His own power. But if He *lays it down* of Himself, we shall see the Passion to be not in the Power of any other but in His own Will. For then did He permit to Jewish folly to go through to its own end, when He saw that the fit time for His Death had now come.

Let not then the haughty Pharisee brag of his own daring deeds, nor puffed up with exceeding ill-counsel say, If Christ were by Nature God, how came He not to be without my meshes? how escaped He not my hands? for he will hear in reply from those who love Him, Not thy meshes, O sir, prevailed, for it were nought hard for God supreme over all to crush thy snare, and pass forth of the net of thy impiety: but the Suffering was the salvation of the world, the Passion the undoing of death, the Mighty Cross the overthrow of sin and corruption. This He knowing as God, submitted Himself to thy unholy daring. For what, tell me, was the hindrance to thy enfolding Him *then* especially when thou wert gnashing thy teeth at Him, as He was *teaching* by the very *treasury*? and if it was the work of thy might to overcome Christ, why didst thou not make Him a prisoner then? But thou stoodst in anger unmitigated to bloodshed all revealed, yet doing nought of the things thou wouldest. For not yet did He will to suffer, Who was persuaded by thy mad folly, as by bits which may not be snapped. These things may one with reason opposing to the vain talk of the Jews, shame them even against their will, into not bragging of what they least ought. And one may well admire the holy Evangelist reasonably shewing, and clearly saying that the Saviour was *teaching these things in the temple by the Treasury and no man laid hands on Him*: for he was witnessing so to speak to Christ's own words, which He said to the Jews when they were at hand to take

Him, *As against' a robber are ye come out with swords and staves for to take Me? daily did I sit teaching in the temple and ye laid no hold on Me.* And one would not (I suppose) say, if one thought rationally, that He was blaming the Jews, that they had not brought on His Passion untimely, nor yet that letting slip the right time, they were advancing too slowly to shed blood: but rather He is convicting them, as unwisely supposing that they should have prevailed even against His will, and could have seized by force Him who may not suffer except He will. For *I was sitting teaching in the temple and ye laid no hold on Me*, for then I willed it not, nor would ye now avail to do this, except I willingly subjected Myself to your hands. Hence one may on all sides see, that no work was it of Jewish might to put our Lord to death; but to their unholy daring may one attribute the attempt, to our Saviour Christ the will to suffer for all, that He might free all and, having bought them with His own Blood, present them to God the Father. For *God*, as Paul saith, *was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself*, and in all forgiveness restoring that which had fallen away from friendship with Him, unto what it was in the beginning.

21 *He said therefore unto them again, I go My way, and ye shall seek Me and shall die in your sins.*

That we must needs take hold of the present time for whatever one may receive profit from to oneself, does Christ herein well declare unto us. For to be too late in what is good and to take after-counsel for what is profitable, clearly brings no gain but ministers wailing befitting the neglect. Our Lord therefore being *good* and gracious, as it is written, both bears with those who dishonour Him and aids those who insult Him and is found as God superior to all the littleness of man. Yet does He for their good threaten to depart from them, and says plainly *I go My way*, that He may implant in them a more resolved mind, and that they considering that they ought not to leave their Redeemer when present frustrate of His work, He may whet them to pass on to the faith and may make them now at length more ready unto obedience. And having cried out, *I go My way*, and threatened departure from the whole nation, He subjoined economically the damage therefrom ensuing unto them. For (He says) *Ye shall die in your sins*; and we shall see the nature of the thing bringing in the truth of what is said. For they who did not at all receive Him Who came to us from Heaven that He might justify all through faith, how shall they not beyond all contradiction *die in their sins*, and not receiving Him Who can cleanse them, how will they not have lasting defilement from their impiety? For to die unredeemed, yet laden with the weight of sin, to whom is it any doubt where this will conduct the soul of man? For deep Hades will, I deem, receive such an one, and he will continue in great darkness, yea he will inhabit fire and flames, with reason numbered among those of whom it has been said by Prophet's voice, *Their worm shall not die neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be for a sight to all flesh*. Whereof that they may escape the trial, Christ kept manifoldly calling them to a speedy turning away from their wonted unbelief, saying not only that He should leave them and go away, but also of necessity putting before them how great misfortune they will thence undergo. For *ye shall die* (He says) *in your sins*. But since He put in between, *And ye shall seek Me*, and hitherto we do not find the Jews seeking Him, we shall reasonably go to some other meaning: for He must needs be True. For even though they now in the body and yet in full enjoyment of the pleasures of the flesh, for their exceeding senselessness seek not their Redeemer, yet when they wretched fall into hell and have their abode in the place of punishments, when they are in the ill itself, then, then will they *seek* even against their will. For *there* (He says) is *weeping and gnashing of teeth*, each (it is likely) of those there wailing his carelessness in what was good, and well-nigh saying what is in the Book of Proverbs, *I have not obeyed the voice of him that instructed me*

and taught me. Therefore as Paul saith, Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into His Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For we must run, that we may obtain, and not by our disbelief insult Him Who draws us out of bitter bondage, but submit ourselves and with upturned hands lay hold on the grace.

and whither I go, YE cannot come.

Not only does He say that they *shall die in their sins*, but declares clearly that, ascending not to the mansions above, they will remain outside of the good things of the kingdom: for they who received not Him Who came from above, how could they also follow Him ascending up? Double therefore is the punishment to them who believe not, and not in any single thing their loss. For just as they who have fallen into bodily loss of health must needs suffer and endure the trials of the suffering and besides be deprived of the pleasures of health; so and not otherwise do they who have departed into Hades, and there undergo punishment proportionate to the sins, both endure the state of punishment and lose the enjoyment of the hope of the saints. Most excellently then does our Lord Jesus Christ say not only that they *shall die in their sins*, but also that they shall not mount up to the mansions above: for binding them as by a twofold cord, does He haste to draw them away from their inherent ill-counsel. From all sides saving that which was lost and binding up the broken and raising up that which was broken down (for these are the ways of a Good Shepherd and One Who readily gives His Life for the salvation of the sheep) does He tell His own disciples, *I will go and prepare a place for you, and will come again and receive you with Myself*, shewing that the very heaven will be accessible to the saints and teaching that the mansions above have been prepared for them that love Him, but to those who have chosen to disbelieve Him, rightly and needs does He say, *Whither I go YE cannot come*. For who at all will follow the All-holy Christ, if he love not the cleansing that is through faith? or how shall he that is yet defiled and that has not cleared off the filth from his passions be with our Lord Who loves us? *What communion hath light with darkness*, as Paul saith? For I deem that they ought to be holy who would say to the All-Pure God, *My soul cleaveth after Thee*.

I think that this meaning has now too not amiss been put on the words before us, but if one must go about and view it differently, and say yet something else besides, we will not shrink from doing this too. *Whither I go, YE cannot come*. Being Very God, I am absent from no one, I fill all things, and being with all, I dwell specially in Heaven, gladly having abode with holy spirits. But since I am the human-loving Framer of all things, I deemed intolerable the loss of My creation, I beheld man going away to utter destruction, I viewed him falling from sin unto death, I must needs reach forth an helping Hand to him as he lay, I must needs in every way aid him overcome and falling. How then was it meet to save that which was lost? it needed that the Physician should be with those in peril, it needed that Life should be there present with the dying, it needed that Light should have its abode with those in darkness. But it were not possible that ye being men by nature should take wing to Heaven and have your abode with the Saviour. Therefore have *I Myself* come to you, I heard the Saints oftentimes crying aloud, *Bow Thy Heavens o Lord and come down*; I bowed the Heavens therefore and have come down; for in no other way could ye look to come hither. Yet do I endure to remain with you, do ye more resolutely lay hold of life, purify yourselves through faith while He is with you Who knows to, and can, compassionate with authority. For I shall go, yea shall return again whither *YE cannot come*; even though ye should seek the Giver of salvation by an untimely after-counsel, ye shall not find Him: what follows ye may see. For *ye shall surely die in your sins*, and weighed down by your own transgressions, shall go mourning to the prison-house of

death, there to pay the penalty of your lengthened unbelief. The Saviour then being good and exceeding loving to man, compels the Jews by fears of future punishment even against their will to be saved.

23 *And He said unto them, YE are from beneath, I am from above.*

Some one haply of those who have a more studious mind and are wont to approve the more subtle of the Divine Thoughts, will enquire what it was that induced our Lord Jesus Christ, Who but now addressed the Jews and said, *I go My way, and ye shall seek Me*, to add as something necessary, *YE are from beneath, I am from above*. For these words seem somehow not to harmonise altogether with those above, but they are replete with a hidden economy. For since He is God, having no need as the Divine Evangelist John himself somewhere says, *that any one should testify of man, for He knew what was in man*, for He penetrateth *even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and conceptions of the heart*: He is not ignorant of the unlearned fantasies of the Jews, who, since a gross and feeble mind was their inmate, when they heard from the Saviour's Lips, *I go My way*, foolishly thought either that leaving Judaea He would flee somewhere or that He is saying somewhat of this kind, While I live and survive believe, lest death should befall me. For, *I go My way*, taken in its common meaning signifies this too. And it is no wonder if the Jews have fallen into such uncounsel as even to imagine something of this kind as to Christ. For they knew not that He is God by Nature, but looking only to this body which is of the earth, they imagined that He was a man as one of us. Therefore does the Saviour blaming them say, *YE judge after the flesh*. Removing them therefore from so puerile and grovelling a notion, He again teaches them that not of any one subject to birth and decay are they reasoning such things, but of Him Who is in truth begotten from above and from God the Father. Not to Me therefore (He says) will belong death and flight, for *I am from above*, i. e., God from God (for God is above all) but you will this rather befit. For *from, beneath are ye*, that is of nature subject to death and falling under decay and dread. Of Me therefore (He says) do ye letting go your own weakness imagine nought of this sort, for not of equal honour with the Lord is the bond, with Him Who is from above and begotten of God the Father that which is *from beneath* and of the earth.

But that *from above* signifies the Eternal Generation of the Son from God the Father, wise reasoning will persuade us to hold. For *from above* understood of place signifies the being from Heaven, but nought would be in the Son special above the creature that is below and subject to God, if He come only from Heaven, since the more part of the angels too *sent forth to minister* walk below, ordering some of the affairs on the earth, descending from above and from Heaven. And the Saviour is a witness to us saying, *Verily verily I say unto you, ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man*. Since then angels too descend from above, from heaven, why vainly does Christ boast as of something great and surpassing the whole creation, in having come I mean *from above*? But one may without the smallest toil and trouble see Who is by Nature the Only-Begotten, what the angels that are from Him. Needs therefore does *from above* signify to us not this From Heaven which is common [to Him and the Angels] but that the Son beamed forth from the Nature Which is most exalted and above all things. Therefore doth *from above* in regard to the Only-Begotten Alone, signify the being from God and nought else. For

while all things are said to be and to exist from God, the Son has this special above all, viz., to be of the Very Essence of the Father by Generation and not as creatures by creation.

CHAPTER IV. That the Son is by Nature God, wholly remote from likeness to the creature, as regards Essence.

YE are of this world, I am not of this world.

He shewed herein and very clearly what is the meaning of *Above*, what of *Beneath*. For since it was like that the Pharisees able to understand nothing would consider what had been said in a more corporal manner, and understand the *Above* and *Beneath* of place and would thence stray into many notions, profitably did our Lord Jesus Christ bare His word of the obscurity that seemed to have been cast upon it and from all want of clearness, putting more clearly in the sequel what He had said darkly. For YE (He says) *are of this world, i. e.,* from beneath, *I am not of this world*, this then is From above. For God overpasses all that is created, not having superiority in local exaltation (for it were foolish and utterly uninstructed to conceive of the Incorporeal as local) but surpassing things originate by the ineffable Excellences of Nature. Of this Essence does the Word say that He is, not the creation, but the Fruit and Offspring. For observe how He says not, From above have I been created and made, but rather, *I am*, that He may shew both whence He is and that He was ever Eternally with His own Progenitor. For He is as the Father too is: but He That is and is Eternally with Him That is, how He was not, let the folly of them who think otherwise ¹⁵ say.

But haply the foe of the Truth will withstand us saying, "Not without qualification hath Christ said, *I am not of the world*, but by adding *This*, He hath shewn accurately that there is another world, the spiritual, whence He might be."

Therefore among creatures is the Son (for this is what thy language, O sir, is working out for us), among those who have originate nature will the Creator be surely classed, putting about Him some angelic perchance and slave-befitting dignity you deem that yourself will escape the charge of blasphemy. For do you not know, that though you attribute to Him that highest position and status which the holy angels will be conceived of as having, though you confess that He is above every Princedom and Authority and Throne, and yet believe Him to be originate, you sin against Him no whit the less? For there is no worthy place whatever of superiority over the rest to the Only-Begotten, so long as He is at all conceived of as created. For not in having precedence of any hath He glory but in being not originate, yea rather God of God by Nature. But THOU again art classing Him Who beamed forth from God and therefore is God, with things originate, and thou reckonest Him to be a part of the world, and if not perchance of this one yet of another (for imagined distinction of worlds will make no difference at all, in respect of having been made): and dost thou not blush putting the Word Who sitteth with Him Who begat Him, in the category of His guards and those who stand before Him? for dost thou not hear Gabriel saying to Zacharias, *I am Gabriel that stand in the Presence of God and I was sent to speak unto thee*, and Isaiah, *I saw the Lord of Sabaoth*

sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and the Seraphim were standing round about Him. And (marvel!) the Prophet was beholding the Son and called Him Lord of Sabaoth, and introduces Him as King with the highest Powers as Body-guard. And that it really was the Glory of the Only-Begotten which he was beholding, the wise John will testify saying, *These things said Esaias because he saw His glory: and of Him spake he.* Wherefore the Divine Paul too, both from His Co-sitting with God the Father and from His being called Son by Nature, coming to most accurate perception of the Mystery and gathering the knowledge pertaining to the idea, says, *For unto which of the Angels said (i. e., God the Father) at any time, My Son art THOU, this day have I begotten Thee?* (for in the word *I have begotten*, He shews that the Son is by Nature God of God) and again, *But to which of the Angels said He at any time, Sit on My Right Hand?* And he does not in saying this accuse God the Father of either being wont to do aught unjust or as dishonouring the nature of the angels, when He honoured that by a position below the Son. For what hinders (may one say) since God the Father is just and good, His making the nature too of the angels assessor with Himself, if the Son be altogether among things originate, and con-natural with them in respect of having been created, even though by some other excellences He surpass the measure belonging to them, just as they may surpass us. But not unrighteous is God the Father, who bade the Angels to stand in the Presence, and gave this Dignity to their nature, having His own Son co-seated with Himself, since He knows that He is by Nature God, and that His own Offspring is not alien from His Essence. How then is He any longer originate, how of an originate *world* and not rather in the same [state] wherein is Very God, i. e., above all things that are conceived of and acknowledged to exist in every world?

But since ye put out as something great and resistless Christ saying with some fair distinction, *I am not of this world*; and by the word *this*, ye affirm that the other world is meant, saying that He is of it, let us see again if ye are not staying yourselves upon rotten arguments, prompted to reason and think thus by only your own want of thought. For the word *This*, or of *this* (as it may be), or whatever we say pronomically, is demonstrative, and not altogether or necessarily indicative of *another*. And verily the blessed Baruch, pointing out to us the One and only God, says, *This is our God, there shall none other be accounted of in comparison with Him*, but if the word *This* were altogether significant of another, how would not another be accounted of in comparison of Him? yea and the righteous Symeon too, prophesying the mystery of Christ, says, *Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many dead in Israel and for a sign which is spoken against*, although unto whom is it not most manifest, that not as severing us from other persons does the righteous man say, *This*, but intimating that He Who is now present and has been set for this, is by Himself? Therefore when Christ says, *I am not of this world*, not surely as being of another world does He say it, but as defining and laying down in a more corporeal form, as if two places, the originate nature I mean and that of the Man Who is Ineffable and above every essence, He puts the Jews in the place of things originate, saying, *YE are of this world*, Himself He altogether severing from things created, and connecting with the other place, I mean Godhead, says, *I am not of this world*. Hence contrasting (for our knowledge) the Godhead with the world, He gives *Of this* to the latter, Himself He apportions to God Who hath begotten Him and to the Essence which is Supreme over all.

"But" (says he) "God the Father will in nothing wrong the nature of the angels, if He do not please to honour it in the same degree as the Son. For variety in the creation, or the apportioning glory in befitting degree to each, in no wise argues that God is unjust, since how then should WE be less than the angels, albeit we confess that God is Righteous? What then

we are in respect of the angels, that are the angels too in respect of the Son; for they yield as to one better than they, the being in greater honour than themselves be."

But, most excellent sir, shall we reply, shaming the unlearned heretic, if even though we be remote from the glory of the angels, since we come short of the piety too that is inherent in them and though there be much variety in the creation and diversity, and superiority in honour or inferiority according to the will of Him Who made them, yet is the being created common to all, and in this there is nought at all that surpasseth or cometh short of other. For that an angel should excel a man in honour and glory is nought wonderful, or an archangel too an angel; but the power of mounting up to the glory of Him Who made all things, we shall find to accrue to no one of creatures: for not any of the things that have been made will be God, nor will the bond be equal in honour with the Lord, co-sitting with Him and co-reigning. What measure then of honour will there be to the Son? being according to you originate and of the spiritual world, will He have God-befitting Dignity? how will that which is connatural with the creation mount up to the same glory as He Who is by Nature God, albeit God saith, *My Glory will I not give to another?* what (tell me) put the devil forth of the heavenly halls? was it the thirsting for honour which beseemed the originate nature, yet better and greater than the measure which accrued to him, and was it in this that the nature of his crimes lay? or was it that he dared to say, *I will be like the Most High?* For the creature pictured to itself that it could mount up to the Nature of its Maker and be co-throned with God Who has the power over all. Wherefore he hath also fallen *as lightning*, as it is written, *from heaven*. But THOU springing heedlessly upon things so insecure, accountst it nothing that the Son being according to you of some world, and consequently parcel of the creation, should be called by way of honour by God the Father to sit with Him, though Essence in no wise bestow upon Him this nor call Him to Dignity befitting and due to it. For He receives, if it be as YE in your babbling say, things above the creature in the way of favour. Away with such blasphemy, man, for we will not be thus minded, may God avert it! For we believe that angels and archangels and those in yet higher place than they, are diversely honoured by the Authority and Counsel of the All-wise God, Who allots to each of the things that are a just Decree: but as to the Son by Nature, we will not imagine that He is so, for no glory by way of favour and imported hath He, but since He is of the Essence of God the Father, Very God of God by Nature and Very, He is co-throned and co-seated with Him, having all things under His Feet as God, and of the Father with the Father in God-befitting way aloft above the whole creation. Wherefore rightly heareth He, *For all things are Thy servants*. And since from all sides He is found to be Very God, it is (I suppose) wholly clear that He is *not of this world*, i. e., originate. For the *world* here signifies to us the nature of created things, carrying the comparison from a part unto the whole that is conceived of as created. As then God withdrawing Himself from all connaturalness with the creature said in the Prophets, *For I am God and not man* (and not because He said that He is not man as we, shall we surely therefore class Him with angels or any other of things originate, but from part going unto the whole, will confess that God is by Nature Other than all things originate), so I deem that we ought piously to understand the hard things that come in our way; *for we see in a mirror by a figure*, as Paul saith.

24 *I said therefore unto you that ye shall die in your sins.*

Having by few words overturned the most ill-counselled fantasy of those who thus conceived, and convicted them again of talking nonsense about Himself, He returns so to speak to the original aim of His Speech, and resuming it again He shews them in how great ill they will be and into what they will fall, if they most unreasonably repulse any believing on Him. A thing

very befitting a wise and grave master is this too: for I think that a teacher ought not to quarrel with the ignorance of his hearers nor to be slack in, his care for them, even if perchance they do not very readily take in the knowledge of the lessons, but anew, yea many times, to return to the same things and go through the same words (since verily the enduring ploughman cleaving the field and having exhausted no slight toil thereon, when he has sown the seed in the furrows, if he see any spoilt, he turns again to the plough, and grudges not to sow upon the now ruined parts): for having missed his aim the first time he will not altogether do the same the second. A like habit the Divine Paul too practising somewhere says, *To say the same things to you to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.* Seest thou that as the teacher is found superior to sloth, then to the hearers often follows the being in safe practice? Serviceably then does our Lord Jesus Christ repeating His Discourse with the Jews affirm that the penalty of not believing on Him will be in no passing things: for He says that they who believe not must surely die in their sins. And that death in transgressions is an heavy burden, because it will deliver the soul of man unto the all-devouring flame, none may doubt.

For if ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins.

He explains more exactly what will happen, and having made the mode of salvation most evident, He shews again by what way they going shall mount up to the life of the saints, and shall attain to the city that is above, the heavenly Jerusalem. And not only does He say that one ought to believe but affirms that it must needs be on Him. For we are justified by believing on Him as on God from God, as on the Saviour and Redeemer and King of all and Lord in truth. Therefore He says, *Ye shall perish if ye believe not that I am.* But the *I* (He says) is He of Whom it is written in the Prophets, *Shine shine o Jerusalem for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.* For *I* (saith He) *am* He Who of old bade go to the putting off of the diseases of the soul and Who promised the healing of love through saying, *Return ye returning children and I will heal your backslidings. I am* He Who declared that the God-befitting and olden goodness and incomparable forbearance should be poured on you, and therefore cried aloud, *I, I am He That blotteth out thy sins and I will not remember.* *I am* (He says) He Who by the Prophet Isaiah also said, *Wash you, make you clean, put away your wickednesses from your hearts from before Mine Eyes, cease from your wickednesses, and come and let us reason together saith the Lord, even though your sins be as scarlet, I will whiten them as snow, even though they be like crimson, I will whiten them as wool.* *I* (says He) *am* He concerning whom again Isaiah the Prophet himself says, *O Zion that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain, o Jerusalem that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength, lift ye up, be not afraid; behold your God, behold the Lord cometh with strength and His Arm with rule, behold His reward with Him and His work before Him: like a shepherd shall He feed His flock, He shall gather the lambs with His Arm and shall comfort those that are with young: and again, Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall hear; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the stammerers be clear.* *I am* (He saith) He of Whom again it is written that *suddenly shall come to His Temple the Lord Whom YE are seeking, even the Messenger of the covenant Whom YE are desiring, behold He cometh, saith the Lord of hosts, and who shall abide the Day of His Coming? or who shall stand in His Sight? for He shall enter in as fire in a smelting house and as the sope of fullers.* *I am* (He saith) He Who for the salvation of all men promised to offer Myself for a Sacrifice to God the Father through the voice of the Psalmist and cried, *Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, a Body preparedst Thou Me; whole burnt offerings and for sin Thou delightedst not in, then I said, Lo I come, in*

the chapter of the Book it is written of Me, to do Thy Will, O God. I am, He saith, and the very law through Moses did preach Me, saying thus, A Prophet of thy brethren like unto me will the Lord thy God raise up unto thee, unto Him shall ye hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly.

Therefore with reason (says He) shall ye perish and shall pay to the Judge most righteous Doom, for your much unholiness of manners not giving heed to Him Who through many saints was fore-heralded to you, and attested by the things too which I work. For verily and in truth no argument will liberate from the obligation of undergoing punishment those who believe not on Him, seeing that the Divinely-inspired Scripture is filled with testimonies and words regarding Him and Himself affords by His Works Splendour conformable to what was long ago prophesied of Him.

25 They said therefore to Him, Who art THOU?

Their word commingled with fiercest anger proceeds from boastfulness. For they eagerly ask, not to learn and believe, but out of much madness they spring (so to speak) on Christ. For He says in more simple word, *I am*, not adding, God of God, nor yet ought else to indicate His inherent Glory; but in lowly wise and apart from all boasting He says only this *I am*, leaving it to the better instructed to add what was wanting; and they go on to wildest and unbridled madness, and from unmeasured haughtiness they all but cut short the Saviour's word not yet advanced to its completion, and so to say rebuke and interrupt Him in the middle and say, *Who art THOU?* This is the part of one who openly says, Dost Thou dare to think of Thyself ought greater than WE know? we know that Thou art son of the carpenter, a man low and most poor, of no note with us and altogether nought. They therefore condemn the Lord as being nought, looking only to His family after the flesh, but the Magnificence that pertains to His works, and still more His Generation from above and from the Father, whence they might specially recognize that He is by Nature God, they do not so much as admit into their mind. For who will work the things that befit God Alone? will not He surely Who is by Nature God? but Christ wrought them; He therefore was and is God, even when made Flesh for the salvation and life of all. But they whose belief is confined to their own mis-counsels, and take no account at all of our Divine and Divinely-inspired Scripture; they in regard of the very things for which they ought to give thanks, do disparage Him, knowing *neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.*

Punctuating therefore with emphasis at the word THOU, and throwing back what is called the acute accent, we take the word as a question with note of admiration; for they say THOU, as though, Thou Who art nothing at all, and art known by us to be so, Thou Who art mean and of mean extraction, what canst Thou say illustrious of Thyself, what worth speaking of those about Thee? For nought of such daring is foreign to Jewish madness.

Jesus said unto them, That I speak to you at the beginning.

I am dishonoured (He says) albeit I invite unto everlasting life, unto forgiveness of sins, unto putting off of death and corruption, unto holiness, unto righteousness, unto glory, unto boasting in the sonship with God: yea I Who would crown you with all these, am counted for nought, and esteemed by you thus worthless, yea verily I am in deserved condition (He says) because I made a *beginning* of discourse with you, because I have spoken somewhat that

could profit you, and devised to save those who were on the point of descending to such deep depravity as to aim at repaying bitter requital to Him Who hath elected to save them.

Something else besides does Christ appear to indicate to us hereby. It was right (He says) that I should not converse at all with you *at the beginning* but on them rather should confer this who shall most gladly rejoice in My words and without delay submit their neck to the Gospel ordinances. He means by these the multitude of the Gentiles. But while we conceive of Him as saying thus, we will guard against the words of the adversaries. For one of those who are wont to fight against Christ will haply say, "If the Son ought not to address the Jews at the beginning, but rather the Gentiles, He missed of what was fit, by doing this rather than that." But we will reply, Not as repenting of His own or of the Father's Will, does the Son say thus, nor yet as having transgressed what befitted the Economy (for God would not have devised ought which did not altogether beseem to be): but by saying that not to you was it right to speak at the beginning, nor among you to lay a foundation of saving teaching, He shews that both the Father and Himself are by Nature True and Loving to man. For lo He freely gave to the unholy Jews though not worthy of it the saving word, having put in the second place the multitude of the Gentiles albeit more readily making it their aim both to believe and obey Him.

What was it then which persuaded Him to prefer and fore-honour before the rest the stiffnecked people of the Jews? To them He made through the holy Prophets the promise of His Coming, to them was the grace due for the fathers' sake. Wherefore He also said, *I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, and to the Syro-phenician woman, *It is not meet to take, the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs*. Therefore has Israel been honoured and ranked before the Gentiles, although he had the crooked disposition. But since he knew not the Lord of all and the Perfecter of the promised good things, the grace of the teaching departed at last to the Gentiles, whom it behoved the Lord at *the beginning* and first to have addressed, not in regard of the promise made to the fathers, but in regard of their innate obedience.

26 I have many things to say and to judge of you.

Seeing that the Jews condemn Him more recklessly, and though they have nothing at all to accuse Him of, are haughty on account only of the poorness of His Birth after the Flesh, and therefore say that He is nought, He shamed them mildly, having said above more openly, *YE judge after the flesh, I judge no man*. But judging after the flesh will reasonably have some such meaning as this: They who delight only in earthly things, see nought of the heavenly good things, but looking only to illustriousness in this life, admire the wealthy or him who boasts in some other petty glories. But they who after the law of God examine thoroughly into the nature of things say that he is really the man worthy of love and admiration, who has within him the desire to live according to the counsel and will of Him Who hath made him. For low position after the flesh will nothing harm the soul of the man who is accustomed to do well, and on the other hand illustrious portion in this life and the splendour of wealth will nothing profit those who refuse to live aright. They therefore *judge after the flesh*, as we said just now, who look not to holiness, who use not to prove their walk, their manners, but turn aside their mind to only earthly things and deem worthy of all admiration him that is brought up in wealth and luxury. YE then, O most unwise rulers of the Jews, albeit by the Law of Moses instructed unto accuracy of giving judgment, judging upon no grounds at all, condemn for only bodily low estate Him Who through many wondrous works is shewn to you to be God.

But *I* will not imitate your ill-instructedness, nor will I pass such kind of judgment on you: for nothing at all is human nature. For what is this perishable and earthly body? rottenness and the worm and nought else. Yet I will not for this reason condemn you, nor because ye are men by nature, will I therefore decide that ye ought wholly to be spurned: *I have many things to say and to judge of you*, that is, every accusing word has a full office to you-ward, not of one thing alone shall I accuse you, but of many, and in none shall I speak falsely as do YE, *I have to judge* you as disbelieving, as braggarts, as insulters, as fighters against God, as without feeling, as unthankful, as wicked, as lovers of pleasure rather than habitually loving God, as receiving *honour one of another and seeking not the honour that cometh from the Only ¹⁸*, as setting on fire the spiritual vineyard, as not feeding aright the flock entrusted to you by God, as not leading them by the hand unto Him That is proclaimed by the Law and the Prophets, i. e., Me. Such things will the Saviour be declaring to the Jews, but by adding, *I have yet many things to say and to judge of you*, He threatens them that He will one Day appear as their Judge, Who seemed to them to be nought by reason of the Flesh.

But He That sent Me is True, and I the things which I heard from Him, these speak I unto the world.

Having taken leave of the Jews' ill-instructedness, and reckoned as nought those who dared without restraint to revile Him, He returns again to what He was saying at the beginning, reserving the judging them and that in all freedom for not this present but for the fitting time, and retaining to the time of the Appearance its proper aim (for He *came not to judge the world but to save the world*, as Himself says). Wherefore keeping fast hold of the things befitting Him, and repeating the word that calls unto salvation, He carries on His exhortation. For herein was it meet that we should both marvel at the measure of His Forbearance and the exceedingness of His inherent Love for man: wherefore doth Peter too write of Him, *Who when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, He threatened not but committed Himself to Him That judgeth righteously*. Therefore will I expend (He says) discourse upon you now in particular, not for what ye are wont to do it, for faultfinding I mean and exercise unto nought that is profitable: but having reserved the judging you for its fit time, I will keep to what is for your good, and will not cease from care of you, even though ye of your innate madness foolishly insult Me. I said therefore to you just now, *I am the Light of the world, he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life*; at this ye unreasonably vexed sprang sharply upon Me saying, *THOU bearest record of Thyself, Thy record is not true*; to this again I, *Even though I bear record of Myself My record is true, for I know whence I came and whither I go*. But if I seem to be burdensome to you saying these things to you, if I be not a reliable witness of the Dignities accruing to Me by Nature, yet *He That sent Me is True and the things which I heard of Him, these speak I unto the world*. I speak the same (He says) as the Father Who sent Me, I utter words conformable to His, in saying that I am by Nature Light. The *things* then which *I heard* God the Father say of Me, *these things I speak to the world*. If then I speak false according to you, and *My record is not true*, ye must certainly needs say that the Father spake falsely before Me. But He is *True*: therefore I do not speak falsely, and if ye do not believe My Words, reverence (He says) the Voice of Him That sent Me. For what said He of Me? *Behold a Man, The Day-spring His Name*, and again to those who reverence Him, *And unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of righteousness arise and healing in His wings*; and to Me Whom ye unknowing insult, He says, *Behold I have given Thee for a Covenant of the people for a light of the nations*. But that I am also a Light was told you by Him, for He says, *Shine shine O Jerusalem for thy Light is come and the glory of the Lord hath risen upon thee*. These things did I hear the Father

Who *sent Me* say of Me, and therefore do I say that *I am the Light of the world*, but YE disparaged Me, because of the Flesh only judging not rightly, and therefore are ye bold to say frequently, THOU *bearest record of Thyself, Thy record is not true*.

Therefore (for it is meet to sum up the whole mind of what is before us) He shews that the Jews are fighting right against God, and that not only with His words, but also with the Father's decree. For He knows that His Son is by Nature Light and calls Him therefore Dayspring and Sun of Righteousness, but they pulling down the destruction of unbelief upon their own heads reject the Truth calling *good evil* and therefore shall rightly the *Woe* follow them.

27 They knew not that He spake to them of the Father.

The Spirit-clad is astonishment-stricken at the senselessness of the Jews, and with great reason: for what more without understanding than such, who, when much discourse and often had been made to them concerning God the Father, conceive not of Him a whit when they hear our Saviour saying, *But He That sent Me is True?* What then is the plea, and why the blessed Evangelist says that the Jews knew not that Christ in these words signified God *the Father* to them, we must needs say. For since the Saviour said to them, *If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also*, in order that in this too He may be found saying what was true, the Evangelist brings in those who know not the Son, as ignorant of the Father too. For the Son is (so to speak) a Door and Gate unto the knowledge of the Father, wherefore He also said, *No man cometh unto the Father but by Me*. For the mind darting up from Image to Archetype imageth the other from what is before it. It was necessary therefore to shew that the Jews had no conception of the Father, since they would not be led, upward mounting from knowledge of the Son to conception of the Father. Wherefore does the Evangelist clearly shew that when Christ says, *He That sent Me is True, they knew not that He spake to them of the Father*.

28 When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am.

Imitating the most excellent physicians, He lays bare the cause of their soul's infirmity and clearly opens what it was that hinders their going with resolution to understanding and faith towards Him. For since looking at the Flesh and its family, they were induced to think slightly of Him and, having this veil over the eyes of their understanding, they would not know that He is God even though He is seen as Man, needs did He address them saying, *When ye have lifted up the Son of Man then shall ye know that I am*, i. e., when ye cease from your slight and grovelling conception of Me, when ye have some lofty and supermundane thought of Me, and believe that I am God of God, even though for your sakes I am become Man as you, then shall ye know clearly that *I am the Light of the world* (for this I just now told you): for what would any longer hinder (He says) Him Who is wholly admitted to be Very God, from being also Light of the world? For not to so great depth of madness and daring will any go as then too to venture to say, *Thy record is not true*, for he will in no wise accuse what God by Nature and Very shall say.

It is then most evident from the words too of the Saviour, that if we have a mean opinion of Him and consider Him to be bare Man and bereft of the Godhead by Nature, we shall surely both disbelieve Him and not admit Him as Saviour and Redeemer. And what is the result? we have fallen from our hope. For if salvation is through faith and faith be gone, what will yet

save us? But if we believe and lift up to God-befitting height the Only-Begotten even though He hath become Man, advancing as with a fair wind and speeding across the all-troublous sea of life, we shall safe moor in the city that is above, there to receive the rewards of believing.

The same in another way.

When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am.

Having with many and good words bathed the wrath of the Jews, He sees it not a whit the less swelling. For they cease not heedlessly blaspheming, yea at one time they set aside His Speech and impiously call Him a liar: for to say *Thy record is not true*, what else is it than this? at another time again, to Him out of love declaring the things that belong to salvation and on this account saying, *If ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins*, they began hotly to oppose Him and arraying against those utterances of love their words of madness said, *Who art THOU?* For them therefore who thus unmitigatedly wallowed in unreasoning audacity there was need of a word that should sober them and persuade them to be more gently disposed and put a bridle on their tongue even against its will. Therefore was He threatening them telling them most clearly that they shall not escape punishment for their impiety, but even though they see Him for the present forbearing, yet when their impiety towards Him has gone forth to its dread consummation, I mean Death and the Cross, they shall undergo all-dread justice and shall receive in return intolerable lot, that of the war with the Romans, which after the Saviour's Cross befell them from the wrath above from God. And that they should suffer all-terrible things, the Saviour again signified more clearly to them saying, at one time to the weeping women, *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me but weep for yourselves and for your children*, at another again, *When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then shall ye say to the mountains, Cover us and to the hills, Fall on us*. For to such an extent do the sufferings of the war overcome the Jews, that every kind of death was to them pleasanter and rather to be chosen than the trial of them: their removal from their country, the enslavements of those who inhabit it and their most savage slaughter and the famines in every city and their child-devourings therein Josephus too relates in his history.

When then (He says) ye having betrayed to the cross the Son of man endure your retributive punishment, and pay penalties correspondent to your daring deeds against Me, then shall yeweeping know that I am the All-Powerful, that is God. For if one sparrow enter not the snare of the fowler without the will of God, how shall a whole country, (He saith) and the beloved nation go on to destruction so complete, except God supreme over all had surely permitted that so it should be? Evil therefore and all-dread is the contempt of God which bringeth to the consummation of things to be deprecated. Wherefore Paul too rebuketh some, saying of God, Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God is leading thee to repentance, but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath in the Day of wrath?

The same in another way

Christ spent long time dwelling with the Jews, and speaking in every synagogue, so to say, and addressing them every sabbath-day and, setting before them often and ungrudgingly profitable teaching, was continually inviting them to the illumination through the Spirit, and verily He saith, in that He is God by Nature and Very, *I am the light of the world*; but they thinking most foolishly were ever gainsaying Him who said these things, for (says he)

THOU bearest record of Thyself, Thy record is not true. And not at contradictions in words did the daring of the Jews stay, nor only in love of reviling was their untamed audacity consummated, but going without stint through all savageness, they at last betrayed Him both to Cross and Death. But since He was by Nature Life, having burst the bonds of death, He arose from the dead and (as was reasonable) departs from Jewish defilement and hasted away from Israel and that with justice, and betaking Himself to the Gentiles, He invited all to the Light, *and to the blind* He freely bestowed recovery of sight. It befell then that after the Death on the Cross of our Saviour Christ, the understandings of the Jews were darkened, in that the Light had departed forth from them, and that the hearts of the Gentiles were enlightened, in that the Very Light beamed upon them. *When* then, He says, *ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am*, instead of, I will await the consummation of your impiety, I will not bring upon you wrath before its time, I will accept the Passion and Death, I will endure along with the rest this too. But when ye shall betray to the Cross *the Son of Man* deemed by you to be bare man, *then shall ye know*, even against your will, that not falsely have I said *that I am* the Light of the world. For when ye see yourselves darkened, the innumerable multitude of the Gentiles enlightened by having Me with them, how will ye not even against your will agree that *I am* of a truth *the light of the world*? For that the Saviour was going to depart from the Synagogue of the Jews after His coming to Life again from the dead, is doubtful to none (for it has been accomplished and done): yet may one see it somehow (yea even clearly) from His words, *While ye have the Light walk in the Light, lest darkness come upon you*. For the repression and withdrawal of light generates darkness, and again the presence of light causes darkness to vanish. Therefore is Christ shewn as being of a truth Light, Who darkened the Jews through His Departure from them, and enlightened the Gentiles through His Presence with them: and a bitter lesson to the Jews was their experience of dread things.

The same in another way

When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am.

Since looking only (He says) to the flesh, ye believe that I am mere Man, and deem that I am one like yourselves, but the Dignity of the Godhead and the Glory from thence, do not so much as enter your mind:---a most evident token to you of My being God of Truly God and Light of Light, shall be your all-dread and most lawless deed of daring, the Cross that is and the Death of the Flesh thereupon. For when ye see the issue of your mad folly frustrate of its purpose and the snare of death crushed in pieces (for I shall surely rise from the dead): then shall ye even against your will and of necessity at length assent to what I said to you and shall confess that I am by Nature God. For I shall be superior to death and decay, I being by Nature Life shall raise again My Temple. But if to overmaster death and to triumph over the meshes of corruption belong to Him Who is by Nature God and to no other being, how shall I not (all contradiction and all doubt being removed) be shewn thereby to overcome all things mightily and without trouble? therefore does the Saviour say that His Cross shall be a sign to the Jews and a most evident demonstration of His being by Nature God.

And this you may see Him elsewhere too, clearly saying: for when many and unnumbered prodigies had been shewn forth by Him, the Pharisees once came to Him tempting Him and saying, *Master, we would see a sign from Thee*. But He since He saw the imaginations which were going on in them, and was not ignorant that they were bitterly minded, says, *An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and a sign shall not be given to it, but the sign of*

the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man too be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Hearest thou how to the Jews asking a sign as a proof that He is God by Nature, even though they said it tempting Him, He says that no other shall be shewn to them save *the sign of the prophet Jonas*, i. e. the three days death and the coming to life again from the dead? For what token of God-befitting authority so great and manifest, as to undo death and overthrow decay, albeit by Divine sentence having the mastery over human nature? For in Adam it heard, *Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return*; but it was in the power of Christ the Saviour both to end His Anger, and by blessings to overthrow the death which from His curse prevailed. But that the Jews exceedingly feared the sign of the resurrection as mighty to convince that Christ is by Nature God, their final deed will clearly tell us, for when they heard of the Resurrection of the Saviour, and that He was not found in the tomb, terrified and exceeding fearful thereat, they planned to buy off the informations of the soldiers by large money. For they gave them money to say, *His disciples came by night and stole Him while we slept.* Mighty therefore is the sign of the Resurrection, having undoubted demonstration that Jesus is God, whereat the hard and unbending heart of the Jews was sore troubled.

CHAPTER V. That not inferior in Might and Wisdom to God the Father is the Son, yea rather His very Wisdom and Might.

And of Myself I do nothing, but as the Father taught Me, I speak these words.

He speaketh in more human wise, in that the Jews could not otherwise understand, nor endure to hear from Him unveiled things God-befitting. For on these matters are they found hurling stones at Him, and setting it down as blasphemy, that *being Man*, He made Himself *God*. Withdrawing therefore the surpassingness of God-befitting glory and having much bereft His language of its splendour, He condescends most excellently to the infirmities of the hearers, and since searching into their mind within He finds that they know Him not to be God, He fashions His Discourse in human wise, that their dispositions may not be again kindled unto anger and they foolishly dart away from cleaving to Him even a little. *Ye shall know* therefore (He says) *when ye have lifted up the Son of Man, that I am*, ye shall know again in like manner that *of Myself I do nothing, but as My Father taught Me, so I speak.*

And what need of these words (tell me) may some one haply say, and what does Christ teach us herein? Therefore we will say, piously and with fair distinction expanding each of the things said; Ye have never ceased (He saith) falling upon My Deeds, as though wrought madly and un-holily, ye condemned Me oft as not refusing to transgress, as wont to act contrary to the Lawgiver. For I loosed the paralytic from his so great infirmity, I compassionated a man on the sabbath. But seeing (He saith) you who ought to have wondered at it, finding fault thereat and missing much of what befit Me, yea even just now I explaining to you what belongs to salvation was persuading you to advance to the desire of sharing in light. Then did I shew you the Very Light, for declaring to you Mine own Nature, I said, *I am the light of the world*, and YE acting and counselling most unadvisedly, rose up against My words and dared unrestrainedly to say, *Thy record is not true.* When then *ye have lifted up the Son of man*, that is, when ye compass Him about with death and behold Him superior to the bonds of death (for I shall rise from the dead, since I am God by Nature) then *ye shall know* (He says) *that I do nothing of Myself but as My Father taught Me so I speak.* For ye will learn when ye see that the Son too is God by Nature, that I am by no means self-opiniated, but ever of one Will with God the Father, and whatsoever He doth, these things I too do not shrink from

doing and whatever I know that He speaks, I again speak. For I am of the Same Essence as He That begat Me. For I healed the palsied on the sabbath day, YE again were bitterly disposed thereat, yet shewed I you My Father working on the sabbath also: for I said, *My Father worketh hitherto and I work: therefore of Myself I do nothing.* Again I said, *I am the Light of the world,* but ye imagined that I was saying something discordant from the Father and in this too did I again shame you, shewing that He said of Me, *Behold I have set Thee for a covenant of the people for a light of the nations.* In vain therefore (He saith) do ye accuse Him Who ever hath One Will with the Father and doth nought dissonant to Him nor endureth to say ought which is not His. For this is the meaning I think that we should fit on to the words.

But the bitter wild beast will haply leap upon us, the fighter against Christ, I mean Arius, and will cry out upon us (as is likely) and will come and say, "When the discourse, sir, was proceeding all right, what made you pressing forward thrust it aside to your own mere pleasure and do you not blush at secretly stealing away the force of the truth? Lo clearly the Son affirms that He does nought of Himself, but that what He learns of God the Father, this He also speaks, and so is conscious that His Father is in superior position to Himself."

What then, most excellent sir (will such an one hear in return), is the Son supplied with might and understanding from the Father, that He may be able to do and to speak without blame? how then is He any longer God by Nature, who borrows from another power and wisdom, just as the nature of the creature too has it? for to those who from not being obtain being, every thing that accrues to them is also surely God-given. But not so is it in the Son; for Him the Divine Scripture knows and proclaims as Very God and I think that to Him Who is by Nature God do all good things in perfect degree belong, and that which possesses not perfection in every single thing that ought to be admired, how will it be by Nature God? For as incorruption and immortality must surely belong to it naturally and not from without or imported, so too the all-perfection and lacking nought in all good things. But if according, sir, to thy unhallowed and unlearned argument the Son be imperfect in regard of being able to do things God-befitting and to speak what is right, and yet He is the Power and Wisdom of the Father according to the Divine Scripture, to the Father rather and not to Him will so great an accusal belong. For thus defining these things you will say that in potential no longer is God the Father Perfect, nor yet is He wholly Wise. You see then whither the daring of thine unlearning sinks down. And I marvel how this too has escaped thy acumen.: how (tell me) will God the Father supply might to His own Might, or how will He render His own Wisdom wiser? For either one must needs say that it ever advances to something greater and goes forward by little and little to being capable of somewhat more than its existing strength (which is both foolish and utterly impossible), or must impiously suppose that He is strengthened by another. How then will the Son be any more called *Lord of Hosts* or how will He be any longer conceived of as Wisdom and Might, strengthened (according to you) and made wise by another? Away with the blasphemy and absurdity of reasoning. For either grant outright that the Son is a creature that ye may have the whole of Divinely-inspired Scripture crying out against you, or if ye believe that He is by Nature God, grant, grant that the Properties of Godhead pertain to Him in Perfect degree. For it is the property of the Natural Being [of God] neither to be impotent about anything, nor to come short of supreme Wisdom, yea rather to be Wisdom and Power's very self; but in wisdom nought is through teaching, nor yet in the Chief and truly conceived-of Power do we see imported power.

But that by examining also the very nature of things, we may more accurately test what are said by Christ, we will add this too to what has been said. What so great deed hath the Only-Begotten made Man wrought, that will surpass His inherent Power? For it was like I suppose that some would say that it then resulted that He should fitly say, as having borrowed the Power from God the Father, *Of Myself I do nothing*, because He drove out the evil spirit, let go the palsied from his infirmity, freed the leper from his suffering, gave the blind to see, sated a no easily reckoned multitude of men with five loaves, appeased the raging sea with a word, raised Lazarus from the dead: shall we say that the manifestation herein is superior to His innate Power? Then how (tell me) did He stablish the so great Heaven and spread it *out as a tent to dwell in*, how founded He the earth, how became He Artificer of sun and moon and what pertains to the firmament? how created He angels and Archangels Thrones and Lordships and yet besides, the Seraphim? He Who was in so vast and supernatural position, lacking neither Might nor Wisdom from another, how could He be powerless in matters so small, or how should He Who by the holy Prophets is glorified as Wisdom need one who must teach Him what to say to the Jews? For I hear a certain one say, *The Lord who made the earth by His power, who established the world by His Wisdom, and stretched out the heavens in His discretion*, and besides, the Divine Daniel too says. *Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever, for wisdom and understanding and might are His*. But if His, according to the Prophet's voice, are both *might and wisdom*, who will any more endure the wordiness of the heterodox, saying that the Wisdom and Power of the Father is supplied with both power and wisdom from another?

"But if we said (says he) that there were some other to supply to the Son what He lacked of power, or to teach Him, reasonably could ye attack us with words, knowing that ye were on the side of Him as insulted: but since we say that God the Father gives this, what plea for grievance any longer appears to you from thence?"

Therefore if ye think that ye will in nothing wrong the Son, in respect of His being by Nature unlike Him Who begat Him, even though He be said to be supplied by Him, remember, man, your late words, and be taught thereby not to be offended: grant Him to be in all things Equal to His Progenitor, and in no way or respect whatever inferior to Him. But if it draw thee aside from the reasonings of orthodoxy, and persuade thee to deem of Him what is not lawful, why dost thou vainly attempt to beguile us with so rotten words? for it will make no difference at all, whether God the Father Himself, or any other than He, be said to give ought to the Son. For having once fallen under the charge of receiving ought, what gain will He derive, though the Person of the Giver were exceeding illustrious? For what difference (tell me) will it make to a person who refuses a blow to be struck with a wooden rod or a gilt one? for it is not the suffering in this way that is good but the not suffering at all. The Son therefore being proved to be lacking in both power and wisdom, if He be shewn to receive ought from Him, and having herein complete accusal, how is it not utterly foolish that we should smite our hearers with stale words, and by inventions of deceit smear over the charge by deeming that no one else but the Father Alone is admitted as supplying Him? But I marvel how though they think they are wise, and in no slight degree practised in the art of making subtle distinctions with words foreign to the subject, that this escaped them, viz., that by disparaging the Impress of God the Father, i. e., the Son, ye do not so much accuse Himself as Him Whose Impress He is, since He must of necessity so be as He is seen to be in the Son.

"But," says he, "the Son's own voice will compel thee even against thy will to consent to what He did not disdain to utter: for Himself hath confessed that He doth *nothing of Himself* but that whatever He was *taught of God the Father these things* He speaks."

Well then to thee, good sir, let the things even that are well said seem to be not well, seeing that thou deniedst the light of truth: but WE again will go our own way, and will deem of the Only-Begotten as is customary and wonted, with becoming piety comparing them with what is before us. For if the Only-Begotten had said, *I do nothing of Myself* but receiving power from God the Father, I both work wonders and am marvelled at, it would be even thus a speech shewing that He nowise ought to be accused therefore, yet would our opponent have seemed to oppose us with greater shew of reason. But since He says simply and absolutely without any addition, *I do nothing of Myself*, we will not surely say that He is blaming His own Nature as infirm for ought, but that He means something else that is true and incapable of being found fault with. In order that transforming the force of the expression to man, we may see accurately what He says, let there be two men having the same nature, equal in strength and likeminded one with another, and let one of them say, Of myself I do nothing, will he say this as powerless and able to do nothing at all of himself, or as having the other co-approver and co-minded and co-joined with him? thus conceive I pray of the Son too, yea rather much more than this. For since the Jews were foolishly springing upon Him as He was working marvels, even accusing the breach of the sabbath, and imputing to Him transgression of the law, He at length shewed God the Father in all things Co-minded and Co-approver, skillfully shaming the unbridled mind of them who believe Him not. For it was like that some would now shrink from any inclination to blame Him when He said that He did all things according to the Will of the Father and pointed out His own Will in His. For that the Son does all things according to the Will of the Father will shew that He is not less and an under-worker, but of Him and in Him and Consubstantial. For since He is the Very Wisdom of the Father and His Living Counsel, He confesses that He does not do ought else than what the Father wills, Whose both Wisdom and Counsel He is, seeing that the understanding too that is in us does not ought of itself, but accomplishes all that seems good to us. And little is the example to the verity, but it hath an image not obscure of the truth. And as the understanding that is in us is accounted nought else than we ourselves, in the same way I deem the Wisdom of God the Father, i. e., the Son, is nought other than He in regard to sameness of Essence and exact Likeness of Nature: for the Father is Father and the Son Son in Their own Person.

But because to this He adds, *As the Father taught Me, I speak these things*, let no one think that the Son is in need of teaching for any thing whatsoever (for great is the absurdity of reasoning herein): but the force of what is said has this meaning. For the Jews who were not able to understand ought that was good, were not only offended at what were marvellously wrought, but also when ought God-befitting was uttered one may see them in the same case, and specially when He truly says, *I am the Light of the world*, they were both cut to the heart and counselled all-daring deeds. But the Lord Jesus Christ that He might convict them of vainly raging about this says that His own Words are God the Father's, saying *Taught* in more human wise. Yet we shall find the force of the speech not without a subtle inner-thought, and if the enemy of the truth will not admit what is human, he very greatly wrongs the plan of the economy with Flesh (for the Only-Begotten humbled Himself being made Man, and for this reason oftentimes He speaketh as Man): but let him know again that the saying, *As the Father taught Me, so I speak*, will no way injure the Son in respect of God-befitting Dignity, for we will show that this saying of His too is on all sides sound and right. But let yon accuser of the doctrines of piety answer us who ask, Who (tell me) teaches the new-born babe to use human

voice? why does he not roar as a lion or imitate some other of the irrational creation? But nature its teacher fashioning after the property of the sower that which is of him must needs surely and will proceed to that common sound used by all. It is then possible without being taught to learn of nature which infuseth so to say the whole property of the sower into the offspring. Thus therefore does the Only-Begotten Himself here too affirm that He learned of the Father. For what nature is to us, that full surely may God the Father be reasonably conceived of to Him; and as WE since we are men and of men, learning untaught from nature speak as befits men, so He too, since He is God of God by Nature, learnt as of His Own Nature to speak as God and to say things befitting God, as is *I am the Light of the world*. For what He knows that He is because of the Father from Whom He is (for He is Light of Light), this He said that He learnt of Him, having a sort of untaught learning of God-befitting works and words from the own Nature of Him Who begat Him, mounting up as by necessary laws to sameness in all things of will and of word with God the Father. For how must not sameness of Will and Equality and Likeness in Words needs be without contradiction in Those Who have the Same Nature? Of God altogether are we speaking, not of us; for us divergences of manners and differences of wills and tyrannies of passions drag aside from the limits of what befits: but the Divine and Inconceivable Nature being the Same always and fixed immoveably in Its own Goods, what divergences unto ought else can It have? or how will It not altogether advance the straight course of Its own Purpose and both speak and accomplish what belongs to It? The Only-Begotten then being of the Same Essence with Him Who begat Him and pre-eminent in the Dignities of the One Godhead, will (I suppose) surely and of necessity work whatever the Father Himself too works (for this is the meaning of doing *nothing of Himself*); and will surely speak what belongs to Him Who begat Him, not as a minister or bidden or as a disciple, but possessing as the fruit of His Own Nature, to use the words also of God the Father. For herein shines forth clearly and apart from all railing this, viz. that nothing is said by Him [as from Himself].

29 And He That sent Me is with Me, and hath not left Me alone.

Herein He shews clearly that He interprets the Counsel of God the Father, Himself having none other than is in Him (how could He? for He is Himself the Living and Hypostatic Counsel and Will of Him Who begat Him, as is said in the Book of the Psalms by one of the Saints, *In Thy Counsel Thou guidedst me*, and again, *Lord by Thy Will Thou gavest might to my beauty* :for in Christ are all good things to them that love Him) but as bringing forth unto our knowledge the things that are in God the Father. For as this word of ours uttered externally and poured forth through the tongue makes known what is in the deep of our understanding, both receiving, as some learning, the will that is in our mind in respect of anything, and impelled by it to utter it in such manner: so again we will piously conceive that the Son (surpassing the force of the example in that He is Himself both Word and Wisdom of God the Father) uttered what exists in Him. And since He is not impersonal as is man's, but inbeing and Living as having His own Being in the Father and with the Father, He says here that He is not *Alone*, but that *with Him* is Him also *That sent Him*. But when He says, *With Me*, He indicates again something God-befitting and Mystic. For we do not think that He saith thus, viz. that as God may be (for instance) with a Prophet, guarding him, that is, with His own Might and aiding him by His favour or by the enlightenment through the Spirit stirring him up to prophecy:---that so is He That begat Him with Him. But here too He puts *with Me* in another sense: for *He That sent Me* (He says) i. e., God the Father, is in the same Nature as I.

After this sort will you understand that too which is in Isaiah the Prophet about Christ, *Know ye people and he ye worsted for with us is God*. For our discourse hereon will befit those who have set on Him their hope of being saved. And these too say *With us is God*, not as though any should imagine that God will be our co-worker and co-assistant, but that He will be *with us*, that is, of us. For the Word of God hath become Man, and in Him we all have been saved and burst the bonds of death, and put off the corruption of sin, since God the Word being in the Form of God hath come down to us and become *with us*. As then we here understand *With us is God*, for, The Word of God the Father hath become of the same nature with us: so here too preserving the same analogy in our thoughts, when Christ says, *He that sent Me is with Me and hath not left Me alone*, we shall clearly understand Him to indicate mystically that (as we said before) God the Father is of the Same Nature as I *and hath not left Me alone* : for it were altogether impossible not to have wholly with Me God the Father of Whom I am begotten.

And perhaps some one will say and will ask more thoughtfully, Why does the Saviour say such things or what was it induced Him to come to this explanation ?

To this WE will reply, shewing that profitably and of necessity did He add this too to what He had already said. For since He said that *as the Father taught Me, I speak these things*, needs does He shew that the Father is now co-with Him and consubstantial with Him, that He may be believed to speak what is His, as God the things of God, and urged on by the Natural Property of Him That begat Him to say what is God-befitting, just as the children of men having of their nature some untaught learning, as we said above, know truly the properties of human nature. We must not therefore be offended, when the Son says that He learnt ought from the Father; for not for this reason will He be found less than He nor yet alien according to them. And let us consider the matter thus. Not in knowing any thing or in not knowing it, is the matter of essence tested, but in what each by nature is. As for example suppose Paul and Silvanus; and let Paul know and be instructed perfectly in the mystery as to Christ, Silvanus somewhat less than Paul. Are they then not alike in nature or will Paul surpass Silvanus in respect of essence, because he knows the depth of the mystery more than the other? But I suppose that no one will be foolish to such an extent as ever to suppose that their nature is severed by reason of superiority or inferiority in knowledge. When then the condition of essence is (as we have said) accurately proved not to lie in learning or teaching ought, it will no wise injure the Son in regard of His being by Nature God, if He say that He learns ought of His own Father. For not on this account will He go forth from Consubstantiality with Him, but abideth wholly what He is, God of God, Light of Light.

But you will perhaps say, How then? the Father is greater in knowledge, for therefore doth He teach the Son. But we again will say that we have entirely shewn through many words that the Wisdom of the Father is without any need of learning and instruction and having joined together many arguments thereto, we proved that their speech has its exit in boundless blasphemy. Next, it is necessary to tell thee besides that the Son's aim and special care is ever to abate His own Dignity and not to speak much in God-befitting manner, because of the Form of the servant and of the abasement thence for our sakes undertaken. For whither hath He descended, and whence unto what removed, if He say nothing inferior and not wholly worthy of God-befitting glory? For for these reasons He often takes the form of not knowing as Man what as God He knows. You will see this clearly in the history of Lazarus of Bethany, whom when now of four days and stinking, He with wonder-working might and most God-befitting voice caused to return to life. Look at the economy fashioned herein. For knowing

that Lazarus was dead and having fore-announced this, as God, to His disciples, in human wise He asked, saying, *Where have ye laid him?* O wondrous deed! He Who was living far away from Bethany and was not ignorant as God, that Lazarus is dead, how sought He to learn where the tomb was? But you will say (thinking most rightly) that He made feint of the question, arranging something profitable. Receive therefore in this case too that He economically says that what He knows as God, this He learnt of the Father; not permitting the mad folly of the Jews to be further excited, and punishing the wrath of the more unlearned, He does not introduce God-befitting language to them unsoftened, although it rather befitted Him so to do.

But since they were surmising that He is yet mere man, He mingling as it were the Dignity of Godhead with man-befitting words speaks economically more lowly than He is, *For I do always the things that please Him*. Receive (I pray) herein too the solution of what seem hard and observe clearly that He rightly interprets. *Of Myself I do nothing*. For for this reason (He says) testified I that *I do nothing of Myself*, when I but now addressed you, because it is My habit and practice to do nothing discordant to God the Father, nor to be able to do anything save what pleaseth My Progenitor. It is then very clear that in this alone will it be understood that the Son doth *nothing of Himself*, viz. in His ever doing what pleases God the Father, so that except He had thus wrought, He would have done somewhat of Himself, i.e., contrary to the Will of Him That begat Him. It is not then because He comes short of the Paternal Goodness, nor because of being able to achieve nought of His own Strength, that He here affirms that He does nothing of Himself, but because He is Co-minded and Co-willer ever with His Progenitor in every thing, and has no thought of ever accomplishing any thing as it were separately. And we do not, going off into extravagant notions, think that the Son is here displaying in Himself any virtue proceeding of choice and habit, but rather the Fruit of Nature That knows no turning, Which needs not the Divine [help] in counselling to do anything. For as to the creatures, inasmuch as they are capable of turning to the worse, and of giving way to changes from better to worse, good will be fruit of the pious and virtuous disposition: but as to the Divine and All-Surpassing Nature it is not so. For since all change and turn is removed and has no place, good will be the fruit of the unalterable Nature, just as heat in fire or cold in snow. For fire has obviously its proper action, not of voluntary notion, but natural and essential, without the power of being otherwise except it be driven away from its action by the will of its Maker. Therefore not as WE, or ought other of the rational creation, mastered by our free will to press forward to do what pleases God the Father; not so does the Only-Begotten say thus, but as following the laws of His own Nature and able to think and do nought save according to the Will of Him Who begat Him. For how could the Consubstantial and One Godhead ever be at variance with Itself? or how could It do what liketh It not, as though any had power to turn it aside unto ought else? For though God the Father exist properly and by Himself, likewise both the Son and the Spirit, yet is the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity not riven asunder unto complete severance, but the whole Fulness thereof mounteth up unto One Nature of Godhead.

We must besides consider this too, that no argument can reasonably pull down the Son from His sameness of Nature with the Father, seeing that He affirmed that He *always* doth *what pleaseth Him*, but rather being Consubstantial with Him will He be thereby acknowledged to be God of God by Nature and Very. For who (tell me) will savour the things of God after a God-befitting and exact manner, except Himself too be by Nature God? or who will perform always what is pleasing to Him, if he have not a nature beyond the reach of the worse, and have for his share the choice Dignity of the Divine Nature, I mean being unable to sin? For of

the creature it has been said, *Who will boast that he has his heart clean, or who will be confident that he is pure from sins*, and elsewhere the Divine Scripture extending its utterance even to the very utmost bound says, *The stars are not pure in His Sight*. For angels, albeit far removed from our condition, and having a firmer status as to virtue, have *not kept their own principdom*. For by reason of some being altogether torn thence and falling into sin, the whole nature of the rational creation lies under the charge of being recipient of sin, and powerless to be imparticipate of change for the worse: and the reasonable and godlike living creature upon the earth hath fallen, not after any long period, but in the first man Adam. Wholly therefore refused to the creature is unchangeability and un-turning and being able to be of nature the same; to God Alone That is in truth will it belong. But this shines forth full well in the Son, for He *did no sin*, as Paul saith, *neither was guile found in His Mouth*. God therefore is the Son, and by Nature of God who cannot sin, nor over overstep what befits His Nature. When then He confesses that He does *always those things that please the Father*, let no one be offended, nor deem that in lesser rank than the Father is He who is of Him, but let him rather think piously that as God of God by Nature He ascendeth unto the sameness of counsel and (so to speak) sameness of work with Him Who begat Him.

30 *As He spake these words, many believed on Him.*

The wise Evangelist oftentimes marvels at Christ practising depreciation in His Words because of the infirmity of the hearers, and wont to achieve something great thereby. For whereas it was in His Power as God to speak all things, and to fashion His Discourse free and with royal Authority over all, keeping measure in His Speech economically, He encloses many unto obedience, many again He persuades to give heed more zealously unto Him. Therefore not empty is the Saviour's purpose, I mean His speaking to the multitudes in more human wise: for some of the more unlearned were used to rage against Him not a little and readily to desert Him, beholding a man and hearing God-befitting words. But since He was God and Man in one, having unblamed the authority that pertains to each, and able to speak without fault in whatever way He please, He doing exceeding well fashioned it in view of the levity of His hearers, diversely declaring of Himself (and that often) the things that belong to a man, such (I mean) as *Of Myself I do nothing* and things akin to this: for they understanding nothing whatever, but attacking without any investigation what was said, went to this common and offhand mode of understanding it, and thought that He said, Receiving power of God I work miracles, and He is with Me, since I do always what is pleasing to Him.

Likeminded then with the unholy Jews are the accursed enemies of the Truth, who contradicting the dogmas of piety and loving to wrangle, think meanly of the Lord, and seizing on what is economically and rightly said, to overturn therewith His inbeing Glory and Authority, they steal away the Beauty of the Truth. For they have not (it seems) remembered Paul who saith that one ought to cast *down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God* and to bring *into captivity every thought to Christ* and to His *obedience*: they have not known what was uttered concerning the Divine Oracles by one of the Prophets, *Who is wise and he shall understand these things? prudent and he shall know them?* For unless some exceeding great obscurity hovered upon them, and a deep darksome veil floated over, what were the need for a *wise* and *prudent* man being sought after who might find out the knowledge of them?

And this is abundance for the present matter, we will speak rather on what is before us, choosing something profitable. Upon Christ when saying these things, there *believed on*

Him, as saith the Evangelist, not all but *many*. Yet albeit He is Very God, and hath nought that is not wholly *naked unto His Eyes* and knows and that with all accuracy that He will not take hold of all unto belief, He yet perseveres, expending long discourse on them who come to Him, giving us an Example most fair in this too, and offering Himself a Pattern to the Teachers of the Church. For even though all be haply not profited because of their own depravity, yet since it was likely that some would reap good thereby, we must not be sluggish to lead to what is profitable. For if we bury so to say in unfruitful silence the talent given us, that is, the grace through the Spirit, we shall be like that wicked servant who said without any restraint to his Master, *I knew Thee that Thou art an hard man reaping where Thou didst not sow and gathering whence Thou didst not straw and I was afraid and hid Thy talent in the earth, lo, Thou hast Thine own*. But to what end that so wretched man came, and what penalty He exacted of him, the studious man well knows having met with it not once only in the Gospel books. Therefore let us lay this to heart and consider aright that it is his duty to be free from all indolence in teaching, his I mean who is set forth for this work, and in no wise to turn aside to despise it, even though all be not persuaded by his words, but rather shalt thou rejoice at what thou gainest by thy toil. It is meet too to consider with all sobriety that which has been spoken by our Saviour, *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord: enough for the disciple that he be as his master and the servant as his lord*. For if the Lord persuade not all on account of the crookedness and hardness of heart of the hearers, who will blame our feeble speech, though it demand understanding of free-choice not of necessity?

31 *Jesus said therefore to the Jews which believed on Him, If YE abide in My word, ye are My disciples indeed.*

He demandeth of those who believe a disposition established and fixed and prepared for the abode of that good which they had once chosen. And this is faith in Him. For wavering shews utter senselessness and unprofit, seeing that *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways*, as it is written: but to press forward firmly to have hold of what is profitable, is indeed wise and most useful. As far then as belongs to the more obvious meaning, He says this, that if they shall desire to obey His Words, then shall they be surely called His disciples also. But as regards some hidden meaning, He signifies this: for in saying *If YE abide in My Word*, He is clearly withdrawing them by degrees and gently from the Mosaic teachings, and removing them from adherence to the letter and bidding them no longer cleave to what were uttered and done in type, but rather to His own Word which is clearly the Gospel and Divine preaching. For He it was Who ever of old was speaking to us through the holy Prophets, but they were the mediators, through whom (that is) He spake to us. But the Gospel preaching will be conceived of as properly His Word (for not through another do we find that it came to us but through Himself) wherefore when Incarnate He says, *I That speak am present*. And Paul too will testify saying in the Epistle to the Hebrews, *God Who in many ways and modes of old spake unto the fathers by the prophets in these last times spake unto us by the Son*. Himself therefore a worker unto teaching hath the Son come to us at the last periods of the world: therefore will the Gospel teaching be rightly called His Word. It were meet then more nakedly and openly to say, Ye who have accepted the faith in Me, and though late have yet acknowledged Him Who of old is preached unto you by the law and prophets, no longer be ye attached to the types through Moses, nor be persuaded to cleave to the shadows of the law, nor lay it down that the power of salvation consists wholly in them, but in the spiritual teachings, and in the Gospel preachings that are through Me. But it was not unlikely, yea rather it was undoubted, that receiving but now and hardly the faith, and having their

understanding shaken and ready for unsettling, they would not endure such words, nor would at all hold out, in that they are ever prone to anger, but as though the all-wise Moses were hereby insulted, and put to nought because the things appointed to them of old through him were despised:---they would have turned readily to their proper daring and, ever set upon agreeing with him, thought nothing of any longer believing on Christ. Economically therefore and veiledly as yet arranging the things of Moses in contrast with His own words, i. e., putting the Gospel preaching over against the law, and setting the new teachings in very superior place to the elder ones. He says, *If YE continue in My Word, verily ye are My disciples*, for they who are pre-eminent in perfect faith and unhesitatingly receive into their mind the Gospel teaching, not unduly regarding the shadow of the law, are in truth disciples of Christ, while they who act not thus, mock themselves, not able to be in truth *disciples*, and therefore falling away from salvation. And verily the blessed Paul to those who after the faith foolishly desire to be justified by the law, openly writes, *Ye were set free ²³ from Christ, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye fell from grace*. Wondrous then and precious is single faith and the desire closely to follow Christ, drawing the shadows of the law unto the knowledge of Him, and transfashioning the things darkly spoken unto spiritual instruction. For through the law and the prophets is preached the Mystery of Him.

32 And ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free.

Obscure as yet and not wholly clear is the word, none the less it is replete with force akin to those before it, and though after other fashion wrought will go through the same reflections. For it too persuades those who have once believed gladly to depart and remove from the worship according to the law, instructing that the shadow is our guide to the knowledge of Him, and that leaving the types and figures, we should go resolutely forward to *the Truth* Itself, i. e., Christ the Giver of true freedom and the Redeemer. *Ye shall know* therefore (He says) *the Truth*, if ye abide in My Words, and from knowing the Truth ye shall find the profit that is therefrom. Take then our Lord as saying some such thing as this to the Jews (for we ought I think to enlarge our meditation on what is now before us, for the profit's sake of the readers): A bitter bondage in Egypt, (He says) ye endured, and lengthened toil consumed you who had come into bitter serfdom under Pharaoh, but ye cried then to God, and ye have moved Him to mercy towards you, bewailing the misfortunes which were upon you ye were seeking a Redeemer from Heaven: forthwith I visited you even then, and brought you forth from a strange land, liberating you from most savage oppression I was inviting you unto freedom. But that ye might learn who is your aider and Redeemer, I was limning for you the mystery of Myself in the sacrifice of the sheep, and bidding it then to pre-figure the salvation through blood: for ye were saved by anointing both yourselves and the doorposts with the blood of the lamb. Hence by advancing a little forth from the types, when ye learn *the Truth*, ye shall be wholly and truly *free*. And let none (He says) doubt about this. For if the type was then to you the bestower of so great goods, how does not *the Truth* rather give you richer grace?

Nothing forbids us to suppose that such were what Jesus says to the Jews, if His Discourse run out to a wide range of thought: but it is probable that some other meaning also beams forth from what is before us. The Law through Moses typified washings and sprinklings, and moreover whosoever it befell to be caught and to fall into the pit of sin, him it bade to sacrifice a bullock or sheep and thus to abate the blame for each one's transgressions. But nought avail these things for the washing away of sin; for they will never liberate the condemned from blame, nor shew free from obligation of punishment those by whom the Divine Law has been

trampled. For what will sacrifice of oxen profit a transgressor, what gain will any one find in sacrificing of sheep? For what will be pleasing from these, as far as pertains to transgression of the Law, to God who has been insulted? for hear Him saying, *Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?* and yet besides openly to the Jews, *Gather your whole burnt offerings unto your sacrifices and eat flesh, for I spake not unto your fathers concerning whole burnt offerings or sacrifices, but this thing commanded I them saying,* Judge righteous judgment. Wholly profitless therefore is the approach through blood nor can it wash away the spot stained into the man through sin. You will have another proof when you see Him say to Jerusalem the mother of the Jews through the voice of Jeremiah, *Why wrought My beloved abominations in Mine House? shall prayers and holy flesh take away from thee thine evil or shall thou escape in these? For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should talte away sins,* as Paul saith. But that they concerned about a fruitless worship, and zealous to perform the offerings through blood, or their gifts, to no useful end, were with reason sent away from the Divine court, He will teach again saying by the mouth of Isaiah, *Tread My courts no more: if ye offer fine flour, it is vain, incense is an abomination unto Me.* Not in these therefore (I mean the ordinances of the Law) is true salvation, nor yet will any one win hence the thrice-longed for freedom, I mean from sin. But bounding a little above the types, and surveying the beauty of the worship in Spirit and acknowledging *the Truth*, that is Christ, we are justified through faith in Him, and justified we pass over unto the true liberty, ranked no more among slaves as heretofore, but among the sons of God. And John will testify this, saying of Christ and of them that believe on Him, *But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become children of God.* Profitably then doth our Lord and Christ not suffer them who believe on Him to marvel any more at the shadows of the law (for there is nought in them that profits or that bestows the true freedom) but bids them rather know *the Truth*; for through this does He say that they shall be entirely freed, according to the mind of the words.

33 *We be Abraham's seed and have never been in bondage to any man, how sayest Thou, Ye shall be made free?*

They laugh at the promise of our Saviour, rather they even take it ill, as though they were insulted. For that which has no share at all of *bondage*, how will it need (he says) of One Who calls us unto freedom, and Who gives us a something over and above what is in us already. But they know not, though wont to have a conceit of being wise, that their forefather *Abraham* was of no notable father after the world, nor yet of highest repute among those who are admired in this life, but was ennobled by faith only in God: *Abraham believed God*, it says, *and faith was imputed to him for righteousness and he was called the Friend of God.* Thou seest then very clearly the cause of his illustriousness. For since he was called the friend of God who ruleth over all, he hath become on this account great and famed, and his faith was imputed to him for righteousness, and *the righteousness which is of faith* hath become to him the cause of freedom towards God, Therefore when he by believing was justified, that is, when he shook off the low birth that is from sin, then did he appear illustrious and of noble birth and free. Foolishly then do the Jews spurning the grace which freed the very founder of their race advance only to him who was freed thereby, but considering neither whence is or whither looks what is illustrious in him, they dishonour the Giver of what is most excellent in him, and forsaking the Fount of all nobility they think greatly of him who is participate thereof; but they will be caught vainly boasting of being never in bondage to any man and what they say about this will be no less proved to be false. For they were in bondage to the Egyptians for 430 years and through the grace that is from

above were hardly delivered from the house of bondage and from *the iron furnace*, as it is written, to wit the tyranny of the Egyptians. And they were in bondage both to the Babylonians and Assyrians, when they removing the whole country of Judaea and Jerusalem itself transferred all Israel to their own land. In no respect then was the speech of the Jews sane: for besides being ignorant of their truer bondage, that in sin, they utterly deny the other ignoble one and have an understanding accustomed to think highly about a mere nothing.

34 *The Saviour answered them Verily verily I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

He lifts out of their innate unlearning these who were carnal and looking only to things corporal, He transfers them to the more spiritual and removes them to a mode of teaching wholly unpractised and unwonted, shewing them their hidden and through long ages unknown bondage; and that they falsely say, *To no man have we ever been: in bondage* He wisely passes by, neither does He say that to no purpose do they boast of the nobility of their forefather, in order that He may not appear to be inciting to what was not right them who were already prone and much inclined to anger, but advances to this needful matter and one which they needed verily to learn, that he is *sin's bondman* who doth it, as though He said thus: A compound animal, sirs, is man upon the earth, of soul that is and body, and bondage as to the flesh pertains to the flesh, but that of the soul and which takes place upon the soul, has for its mother, the barbarian, sin. The freedom then of man from bondage after the flesh the authority of the rulers will effect, but that which sets free from sin, is meet to be spoken of God Alone and will belong to none other save He. Therefore He persuades them to think reasonably and to desire real and true freedom, and thus to seek at length not the illustriousness of ancestors which nothing profits them thereto, but rather God Alone authoritative over His own Laws, the transgression whereof creates sin the foster mother of bondage to the soul. But our Lord Jesus Christ seems to be privily as yet and full veiledly convicting them of vainly thinking great things of a man and imagining that the blessed Abraham was altogether free. For His shewing generally that he who doeth *sin* is *the bondman of sin*, makes Abraham himself to have been once the bondman of sin and within its toils. For he was justified not as being himself righteous, but when he believed God then called to the freedom of being justified. And not at all as quarrelling with the fame of the righteous man do we say this, but since none among men is without trial of the darts of sin, he too who is reputed great was surely brought under the yoke of sin as it is written, *There is none righteous, for all sinned and have come short of the glory of God*. But the glory of God besides other things is the being utterly incapable of falling into sin, which has been reserved for Christ Alone, for He Alone has been *free among the dead*: for He did no sin albeit being among the dead, that is reckoned among men over whom the death of sin once had mastery.

Therefore (for I will sum up the aim of what has been said) the Lord was hinting that the blessed Abraham himself too having been once in bondage to sin, and through faith alone to Christ-ward set free, availed not to pass on to others the spiritual nobility, since neither is he master of the power of freeing others who put away the bondage of sin not by himself nor was himself on himself the bestower of freedom, but received it from Another, Christ Himself Who justifieth.

35 *The servant abideth not in the house for ever, the Son abideth ever.*

Having shewn that unfree and in bitter bondage is he who is subject to sin, He adds profitably both what will happen to him who hath loved bondage, and what again shall be their lot from God who have chosen to live after the Law and have therefore been ranked among the sons of God. For *the bondman*, He says, *abideth not in the house for ever* (for indeed and verily he shall go forth into the utter darkness there to pay the penalty of his enslaved life) but *the Son abideth ever*. For they who have once enjoyed the honour of adoption, shall abide in the presence of God, in no time thrust forth from the court of the firstborn, but rather passing a long and lasting season therein. And you will understand accurately what is said, if you bring forward and read the Gospel parable wherein Christ (it says) shall set *the goats on the left, the sheep on the right*, and that He shall send away the goats saying, *Depart ye cursed into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*: and shall gather the sheep to Himself and receive them graciously, crying out, *Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*. For by *the goats* is meant the unfruitful multitude of them who love sin, by *the sheep*, the choir of the pious, laden with the fruit of righteousness, as though wool. Therefore he who beareth the disgrace of bondage shall be thrust forth of the kingdom of heaven like some useless and basest vessel: every one who loveth to live aright shall be received and shall abide therein, and be ranked therefore among the sons of God. And it seems likely that the Lord in saying these things hints also to them, that if they admit not the freedom that comes through faith, they shall surely depart forth of the holy and Divine court, that is, the Church, as is said by one of the Prophets, *I will drive them out of Mine House*. For that that which was afore spoken has reached its fulfilment, the very nature of things attests: for *the daughter of Zion was left as a tent in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers*, as it is written: wholly fallen and destroyed is the temple, and themselves have gone forth *not abiding therein for ever* and in their place hath arisen and been raised up for Christ's sake the Church of the Gentiles, and they *abide* in it *ever* who have been called to Divine sonship through faith. For the boast of the Church will never cease nor ever fail, for the souls of the righteous depart from things of earth and are safely moored at the city that is above, the heavenly Jerusalem the church of the firstborn, *which is our mother*, according to the voice of Paul.

But since examining into what was said about bondage, and desiring every way to track out the truth, we have said that Abraham himself was numbered among bondmen, and not even him did we put outside the boundary of our contemplations, because of its being said more generally by Christ, *Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin*: come now let us following out our own words make clear the force of what has been said. The Jews were thinking great and excessive things, putting forward Abraham as a sort of head and fount of their nobility: but that it needed to seek to be freed through the grace that is from above, they admitted not even in bare thought, *fools and blind* according to the Saviour's voice.

Needs therefore does Christ design to shew that what is by nature bond, sufficeth not for the freedom of others nor yet one whit for its own, for how can that which lacks freedom as to its own nature, give freedom to itself, and that which borrows its own grace from another, how will it suffice for the supply of another? To Him Alone Who is by Nature God of God will befit and rightly be ascribed the power of freeing. Clear proof therefore gives He that all must needs be and be acknowledged bond that *abides not for ever*, i. e. to which belongs not being always the same. For every thing created will surely be also subject to corruption, and that which is so will be bondservant of God Who called it into being. For respecting the creatures it was said to Him, *For all things are Thy servants*. And this which is said is general, and one portion of the whole is the blessed Abraham, or again the whole human nature. But the

abiding for ever gives a clear sign that the Only-Begotten God Who shines forth from God is King and Lord of all. For to whom will pertain the being always the same and being established in firm tenure of the everlasting good things, save to Him Who is by Nature God? in this way doth the Divine Psalmist too shew us that the creature is bond, God the Word which beamed of God the Father King and Lord. For extending the mental view from a portion to the whole of creation, he says of the heavens and of Him Who is by Nature Son, *They shall perish but THOU abidest, and they all shall wax old like a garment and as a covering shalt Thou change them and they shall be changed, but THOU art the Same and Thy years shall not fail.* Seest thou how by this too exceeding well and true confessedly it is that the bond *abideth not for ever but the Son abideth* and that the non-abiding is a proof that that is bond of which it is predicated? And by analogy the other, i. e., the abiding for ever will be a clear token of His being Lord and God of whom such a word may be properly and truly said. Sufficient then were the Psalmist to testify to what we say, but since (as it is written), *In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established,* come let us besides him shew the blessed Jeremiah too thinking and saying consonantly. For he shewing that every thing that is made from its being corruptible is therefore bond, and shewing that the Son because He abides and is Unchangeable is by Nature God and manifestly therefore also Lord, says thus to Him, *For THOU endurest for ever and we perish for ever.* For at every time will the originate be corruptible by reason of its having been made, even though by the Power of God it decay not, and God will ever *sit*, what is here called sitting indicating the stability and unchanged fixedness of His Essence together with Its concentration and Its illustriousness in Royal Appearance and Reality, for sitting has an image of these.

Therefore (for I will go back to what I said at the beginning) from his not abiding for ever He shews that the blessed Abraham is corruptible and originate, for he has died and passed in a way out of the Lord's house, i. e. this world. By the same reasoning He would have us conceive of him as bond also and so not competent to bestow freedom upon others, and from the *Son abiding ever*, He says that He is clearly God of God by Nature, whereon will surely follow the being King and Lord. And what is the economy from the above mentioned distinction, shall be shewn in the next that in order follows.

36 If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed.

To Him Alone (He says) Who is by Nature Son of a Truth free and remote from all bondage is found to pertain the power of freeing and to none other whatever save He. For as He because He is by Nature Wisdom and Light and Power, makes wise the things recipient of wisdom, enlightens those that lack light and strengthens those that want strength; so because He is God of God, and the Genuine and Free Fruit of the Essence That reigns over all, He bestows freedom on whomsoever He will. For no one can become truly free at his hands who has it not of nature. But when the Son Himself wills to free any, infusing His own Good, they are called *free indeed*, receiving the Dignity from Him who hath the Authority and not from any of those who have been lent it from Another and been ennobled with so to say foreign graces.

Most needful therefore is the preceding explanation, and great the profit which arises from that distinction to those who are zealous to hear it more diligently. For it was right to understand why it should be needful to seek for nobility towards God and to learn that the Son can make us free. Let them then who rejoice in the dignities of the world use themselves not to be swollen with lofty conceits nor let them run down the glory and grace of the saints, even though they should be little and spring of little after the flesh: for not the seeming to be

illustrious among men suffices to nobility before God, but splendour in life and virtuous ways render a man *free indeed* and noble. *Joseph was sold for a bond-slave*, as it is written, but even so was he free, all radiant in the nobility of soul: Esau was born of a free father and was really free, but by the baseness of his ways he shewed a slave-befitting mind. Noble therefore before God, as we have just said, are not they who have riches and are flooded with superfluity of substance, and rejoice in the bright honours that are in the world, but they who are radiant with holy life and an ordered conversation.

37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye are seeking to kill Me because My word hath no place in you.

Having manifoldly shewn them that the boast and conceit from their being of kin to Abraham is utterly empty and devoid of any good. He says this, that they may seek the nobility that is true and dear to God. For God looks not on the flesh according to what is said by our Saviour Christ Himself, *The flesh profiteth nothing*, but rather accepts and accounts worthy of all praise nobility of soul and knows that they have true kinship, whom likeness of work or sameness of manners gathering unto one virtue, causes to be ennobled with equal forms of good and similarly the contrary. Since how are WE who are of earth and compacted *of clay*, as it is written, called kin of the Lord of all, as Paul saith, *Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God?* For confessedly have we been made kin to Him, because of the Flesh That pertains to the Mystery of Christ. But it is possible in another way also to see this truly existing. For by thinking His Thoughts and resolving in no cursory manner to live piously, we are called sons of God who is over all, and forming our own mind after His Will so far as we can, thus are we to likeness with Him and most exact similitude truly kin.

But that God does take likeness and accurate similitude of works or of ways to have the force of kinship, we shall clearly know, if we look closely into the holy words, and explore the Holy Scripture. In the times therefore of Jeremiah the prophet, there was a certain false prophet, *Shemaiah the Nehelamite* by name, belching things forth *of his own heart* as it is written and *not out of the Mouth of the Lord*. And since there was some other great multitude of lying witnesses and false prophets going about among the people, and drawing them away to what was not meet, God the Lord of all was at last rightly indignant. Then after having expended many words upon Shemaiah, and declared more in detail what penalties he should pay for his deed of daring, at last He adds, and *I will visit upon Shemaiah and his seed*, who do like deeds with him ²⁶. Hearest thou how He sees kindred in like attempts? for how could He who judgeth right punish along with Shemaiah *his seed* after the flesh, not like-mannered with himself as regards baseness, albeit He says clearly by the Prophet Ezekiel, *The soul that sinneth, it shall die*. In order then that one may not imagine anything of this sort respecting him, having said, *his seed*, He immediately added, *Who do like deeds with him*, defining kindred to be in sameness of action. But that we may see that what is said is true of the very Jews, let us call to mind the words of John (I mean the holy Baptist), for shewing that rotten was their boast of kindred with Abraham, he says, *And say not within yourselves, We have Abraham for a father, for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up seed unto Abraham*. For since it had been said unto him by God, *Multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven*, the people of the Jews resting upon the Promiser being surely and of necessity unlying, were thinking big, and expecting that in no wise could they fall from the kinship to their ancestor, that the Divine Promise may be kept. But the blessed Baptist annihilating this their hope, very clearly says, *God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham*: And with these falls in the blessed Paul too thus saying, *For not all they of*

Israel are these Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children. It being shewn therefore on all sides to be true that God acknowledges kindred in manners and habits, clearly vain is it to boast of holy and good ancestors, and be left behind and depart far away from their virtue.

With reason therefore does the Lord say to the Jews, *I know that ye are Abraham's seed yet do ye seek to kill Me because My Word hath no place in you.* Yea (He says) when I look to the flesh alone and consider whence the people of the Jews sprang, then I see that ye are of the seed of Abraham, but when I look at the beauty of his conversation and disposition, I see that ye are aliens and no longer kin. For *ye are seeking to kill Me*, albeit your forefather, of whom ye now think great things, was no murderer, and worst and most lawless of all, on no just pretexts am I persecuted by you, but ye desire to kill Me in utter injustice: for for this reason alone did ye devise to destroy Me, *because My Word hath no place in you*, albeit calling you to salvation and life. It *hath no place in you*, because of the sin that indwellesh in you, and which suffereth not advice and counsel for good to have any room in you. Murderers therefore alike and most unrighteous judges are the Jews, determining that they ought to award to death Him who nothing wronged them but rather was engaged in doing them good and zealous to save them. How then are they any longer kin to the righteous and good Abraham, who are so far behind the good that was in him, and have strayed so far from like conduct with him, as one would admit were distant and say were parted vice from virtue?

38 I speak that which I have seen with My Father, do YE then do that which ye heard from the Father.

Uncontained by the Jews did He say that His word was, and having said that this was the only reason why they were incited against Him, yea rather convicting them of desiring even to kill Him, needs does He add these things also, and why, I will set forth. He was not ignorant, it appears, that some of the Jews would rise up and dispute His words and belching forth from their innate madness, say again, Not for nothing (as Thou sayest) do some desire to slay Thee, for reasonable causes are they stimulated thereto, pious is their motion and their zeal free from all just accusal: for without place in them is Thy word seeing Thou madest it dissonant from God. Thou teachest us (he says) *another error* and drawest us off from the way of the Law, and removest us to that which pleases Thyself Alone. The Jews then whispering these things privately or imagining them in their hearts, the Lord again meets them, knowing the motions of their imaginations within (for He is Very God) and therefore says, *I speak that which I have seen with My Father*, I beheld close the Nature of Father, I saw oftentimes of Myself and in Myself Him Who begat Me, and am a Beholder of the Will That is in Him. I saw, by innate knowledge that is, of what works He is the Lover, and these *I speak* to you, I shall not be found to say ought dissonant to Him, nor have I appointed any thing other than pleases Him. To that was I earnest in calling My hearers, not departing from what is Mine (for in Me are His, and Mine again in Him) but if I Who am thus by Nature and am in all things Co-willer with God the Father, appear to you to be not true and I am adjudged to be leading you astray from the Divine Teachings, let the charge be dismissed, cast away suspicion; *do that which ye heard from the Father*, He hath spoken to you by Moses, accomplish the command, ye heard Him say, *The innocent and righteous slay thou not*, how then are ye seeking to kill Me and breaking the Father's commandment?

But in another way again will we take the words, *Do YE then do that which ye heard from the Father*. He has spoken to you (He says) through the Prophets, ye heard Him say, *Rejoice*

greatly o daughter of Zion, shout o daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy King cometh unto thee, He is just and having salvation and mounted upon a colt the foal of an ass, and again through the voice of Isaiah, O Zion that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain, o Jerusalem that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength, lift ye up, be not afraid, behold your God, behold the Lord cometh with strength and His Arm with rule, behold His Reward with Him and His work before Him: like a shepherd shall He feed His flock, He shall gather the lambs with His Arm and shall comfort those that are with young. Obeying therefore the commands of the Father, receive Him Who is fore-announced to you; honour with faith Him Who has been fore-preached. Give at least to the words of the Father to prevail in you.

But we must know that He says that the Law is God the Father's, albeit spoken by Him through Angels, not putting Himself outside of the law-giving, but He yielding to the surmises of the Jews who believed that it was so, and economically, does not oppose Himself to their surmise, for oftentimes doth He shame them, since they receive Him not, for He brings before them the Father's Name.

39 They answered and said unto Him, Our father is Abraham.

O great unlearning and mind withered unto unbelief and looking to only wrangling! For while our Saviour Christ consenteth and saith openly, *I know that ye are Abraham's seed*, they persist in the same, and as though one were holding out and contradicting and saying that they were not of Abraham's seed after the flesh, they again say, *Our father is Abraham*, and blush not going off through the same words, who think that they ought not to yield even to Batus, but are but most excellent emulators of that man's babbling. But perchance they had some most unreasoning plea for this, and what, we will tell. For when the Lord says, *I speak that which I have seen with My Father*, they did not imagine that He hereby intended God the Father, but thought that He spoke of either the righteous Joseph, or some other of those on the earth, ridiculing and deeming and thinking exceeding little things of Him. For the holy Virgin conceived in her womb the Divine Babe, not of marriage but *of the Holy Ghost*, as it is written. And the blessed Joseph knowing not at first the mode of the economy *was minded to put her away privily*, as Matthew saith. But it was not by any means unknown by the Jews that the holy Virgin conceived in her womb before marriage and coming together, yet they understood not that it was of the Holy Ghost, but thought that she had been corrupted by one of the nation, whence they had no right conceptions of Christ. For they deemed that He was a child begotten of some other father who had corrupted (according to their madness) the holy Virgin, and that He was attributed only to Joseph, being a bastard and not son in truth. When then He says, *I speak that which I have seen of My Father*, they took in no thought at all of God, but that He meant some one of earthly fathers and fancied that He was trying to move them from their honour to their ancestor, and suspecting that He was apportioning to His own kin the honour due to another, and that most ancient glory of the Patriarchate, they meet Him in a more contentious and vehement manner saying, *Our father is Abraham*. For just as though they were saying, Albeit, sir, you drench us with clever words, and din around us with portentous marvels, and strike us hard with mighty deeds beyond speech, you will not remove us from our pristine boast, we will not register Thy father as the head of our race, we will not attribute such a glory to another, nor will we take new ancestors in exchange for the elder ones. It is no marvel, nor hard to believe, that the Jews should fall into such folly, when they

imagined that He is even a bare man and in manifold wise holding Him cheap would call Him *the carpenter's son* and rank as though nought the King and Lord of all.

But that they had no right opinion as to the holy Virgin also, as though she had been denied, we shall know full well by what follows.

40 *Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham; but now ye seek to kill Me, a Man That have told you the truth which I heard of God, this did not Abraham.*

Soothing, so to say, by every way and word the boldness of the Jews, Christ speaks to them veiledly, not applying open conviction but mingled with gentle speech, and in lowly wise and manifoldly charming their wrath. For since He sees that they are most exceeding silly and understand nought of what is said, He makes His Discourse free at length from any veil and bared of all covering. For it needed (He says) it needed, if ye believed that being classed among *Abraham's children* was the highest honour, that ye should be zealous to imitate his manners: it needed that ye should track the lovely virtue of your ancestor, it needed that ye should be zealous of and love his obedience. For he heard God say, *Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and come into the land that I will shew thee.* And nought delaying in the fulfilment of what was bidden him, he hastens forthwith from his country, and relying on the mercy of Him who bade him, arrives in a foreign land. And being at the very goal so to speak of life and passing his hundredth year, he heard, Thou shalt have a seed, and nothing doubting, he gave fervent faith to Him That spake, heeding not the weakness of his flesh, but looking at the Strength of Him That spoke to him. He heard that he was to offer to God his beloved for a sacrifice and forthwith he strove against the longings of nature, and made his love for the youth second to the Divine Command. In you I find all contrary to these, for *ye are seeking*, He says, *to kill Me because I have told you things from God, this did not Abraham.* For he insulted not by his unbelief Him who spake to him, he sought not to do any thing that grieved Him. How then are ye any more *Abraham's children* being as far distant from his piety as the difference of your actions shews?

But observe how He arranges His speech: for He said not that they heard *the truth* from the Father but *from God*, since, as we just now said, from their innate unbounded folly they were dragged down to untrue conceptions of Him, thinking that He was speaking of some one of earthly fathers. And exceeding well does He making His Discourse about dying call Himself *Man*, in every way retaining to Himself incorruptibility as God by Nature yet not severing from Himself His own Temple, but as being One Son, even when He became Man, yet says that He spake *the Truth*. For not in types any more and figures does the Saviour's word teach us to practise piety, but persuades us to love the spiritual and true worship.

But when He says, *Which I heard from the Father*, we must by no means be offended. For since He says that He is Man, He speaks this too as befits man: for as He is said as Man to die, let Him be said as Man to hear also. But it seems likely that in the word, *heard*, He puts the inherent knowledge which He has of the will of His own Progenitor, for so is the wont of the Divinely inspired Scripture oftentimes to say of God. For when it says And the Lord heard, we do not by any means attribute to Him a separate and distinct sense of hearing, like as there is in us, for the Divine Nature is simple and remote from all compound, but we take rather hearing as knowledge and knowledge as hearing; for in the simple there is nought compound as we have said.

And to these meanings we will add a third, not departing from fit aim. God the Father said somewhere of Christ to the most holy Moses, *A Prophet will I raise them up* (i. e. to them of Israel) *from among their brethren like unto thee and I will put My words in His Mouth and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him*. For this reason therefore did our Lord Jesus Christ say that He heard *from the Father the Truth* and spake it to the Jews, at once convicting them of fighting against God the Father and shewing clearly that Himself is He whom the Lawgiver promised before to raise up to them.

41 YE *do the deeds of your father.*

Having shewn that the Jews are utterly of other manner than their ancestor, and far removed from his piety, He with good reason strips them of their empty fleshly boast. And saying openly that they ought not any longer to be enrolled among his children, He allots them to another father like unto them, and affixed similitude of deeds as a sort of bond of kindred, teaching that the good ought to be joined to the good, and deciding that it is meet that they who live ill should have as fathers those who have been condemned for the like. For like as they who have chosen to live excellently, and are therefore even now called saints, may without hazard call God their Father, so to the wicked is the wicked one rightly ascribed as father, seeing that they form the image of his wickedness and perversity in their characters. For not altogether is he who begot of himself conceived of as father by the Divine Scripture, but he too who has any conformed to his own character, of whom he is said to be therefore father. Thus does the Divine Paul too write to certain, *for in Christ Jesus through the Gospel did I beget you*. As then (as we said) some are conformed both to God and to the holy fathers through likeness in manners and holiness; so to the devil too and to those like in conduct to him are some rendered like-minded, suffering this through their own depravity. Therefore to the saints the saints are fathers, but to the wicked the wicked who betake themselves to them, most befittingly. And the one, who in holiness take the impression (so to say) of the Divine Form on their own souls, and have the confidence that befits own sons, will with reason say *Our Father which art in heaven*: the bad again will be ascribed to their own father, begotten as it were through likeness unto him unto equal depravity with him. To the Jews therefore Christ allots and names another father than the holy Abraham, and who, He does not as yet clearly say.

They said therefore to Him, We have not been born of fornication, we have one Father, God.

Already now have I said that the all-daring Jews were easily sick with bitter and unholy conceptions of our Saviour Christ. For they thought that the holy Virgin had been corrupted, I mean the Lord's Mother, and that she was taken with child, not of the Holy Ghost or of operation from above but of one of those on the earth. For being wholly disbelieving and without understanding, they either made no account of the prophetic writings, albeit openly hearing, *Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son*, or looking only to the flesh and following the order of events usual with us, and not thinking of the Nature which works beyond speech, to which nought is hard to perform, every thing that seems good to Him easy; they deem that no otherwise could a woman conceive in her womb, save by coming together with her husband and cohabitation. Sick of such a suspicion, the wretched ones dared to accuse the Birth through the Spirit of the Divine and wondrous Offspring. But when putting them forth from kindred with Abraham He allots them to another father, very angry are they, and unrestrainedly foaming up their inherent anger, they reviling say, *WE have not been born*

of fornication, we have one Father, God. For they say darkly somewhat of this sort, Two fathers hast Thou, neither wert Thou born of honourable marriage, *WE One, God.*

But let a man see and consider clearly how great their disease of madness in this too. For they who by reason of the naughtiness and depravity that was in them are by the Righteous Judge put not even among the children of Abraham, advance to such a measure of madness, as to call even *God* their *Father*, perhaps because of what is said in the books of Moses, *Israel is My son, My first-born*, not admitting into their mind what is said through the voice of Isaiah, *Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord.*

And one may reasonably enquire what it was that induced the Jews at present to say no longer, Our father is Abraham, or, We have one father Abraham, but to go straight up to *One God*. To me they seem to have had some thought of this kind. For when they, smiting with their railing the Lord, as though His mother had been dishonoured before marriage, were ascribing to Him two fathers, needs did they seek to take the title of one as an ally of their own ill-will. For whereby they affirm that they have *One Father God*, by the same they indirectly reproach the Lord of having two, setting the *One* over against two. For they imagined that if they said, We have one father Abraham, they would be altogether denying the rest, I mean Isaac and Jacob, and the twelve who were from him, which if they should do, they would seem to be arming themselves against themselves and to fight with their own choice and boast, estranging Israel from the nobility of the fathers, and thereby to go along with the Lord's own saying. Escaping then the damage that thence seemed to accrue to them, they no longer say, We have one father Abraham, but rather ascribe to themselves *One Father God*, spell-subdued by only the most unsure pleasures of railing, that they might fall into yet greater blame, craftsmen of all impiety, yet daring to take as their father the Enemy of all impiety.

42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father ye would love Me, for I proceeded forth from God and am come.

The Lord does not hereby take away the power of any to be ranked among the sons of God, but shews rather to whom will pertain the boast of it, and that it will be found rather in the saints, and convicts the insulting Jew of being mad. For *I* (saith He) am sprung the *One* and *True Son* by Nature, from God the Father that is; and all are adopted, formed after Me and mounting up unto My Glory, for images are always after their archetypes. How can ye then (He says) at all be numbered among the children of God, who are minded not only not to *love Him* Who beamed forth from God and transfashions unto His own Form those who believe on Him, but do even dishonour Him, not in one way but in many? and they who receive not the Image of God the Father, how will they be at all formed after Him? Besides it is lawful (He says) not to any chance persons without blame to call God their Father, but those in whom the beauty of piety towards Him shall flash forth,----those I deem and none other will it befit. *I* have come from Heaven to counsel you things most excellent, and My Word invites you to the being formed after God. But if it be verily your aim and longing to have God as your Father, surely ye would have loved Me your Guide and Teacher on such a path, Who give you the opportunity of likeness to the *One* and *True Son*, Who through the Holy Ghost render conformed to Himself those who receive Him. For he (He says) who altogether boasteth of ownness toward God, how would he not love Him That is of God? how (tell me) will he honour the tree who foolishly loatheth the fruit that is its offspring? *Either* therefore, He saith, *make the tree good and his fruit good, or make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt.* If therefore the Tree (i. e. God the Father) be Noble and ye know how to draw the

Splendour thereof on your own heads, why loved ye not the Fruit that is of Him, believing It to be such as He is? The verse before us therefore hath at once a bitter reproof of the Jews (for it shews them to be liars, for when they essay to call God their Father, they are far away from the virtue that pertains to those who are called to this, because they love not Him Who is of God by Nature) and at the same time it profitably brings in the mention of His own Ineffable Generation, that they might be caught in impiety in this too, calling Him ill-born and bastard. For if the saying, *I proceeded forth from God*, signifies His Ineffable and Eternal Generation from the Father; adding *I am come*, [He shews] His appearance in this world with Flesh. And surely one will not say that God the Word then first beamed forth from God the Father, when He became Man (for so it seemed to some of the unholy heretics) but he will rather take it as is meet and will conceive of it piously. For not because He joined the words, (I mean *I proceeded forth* and *I am come*) will the Word of the Father be co-eval in time with the Birth of the Flesh, but to each of the things indicated will we keep its proper meaning. For we believe the first Generation of the Word conceived of as from God to be without beginning and above mind; wherefore it hath been set forth first in the words, *I proceeded forth from God*; the second, i. e., that after the Flesh, *for neither have I come of Myself but He sent Me*. I was Incarnate as you, that is, I became Man, in the Good Pleasure of God the Father came I in this world to declare to you the things of God and to tell to those who know not, what it is that pleases Him. But ye loved not (He says) Him Who from the Divine counsel was revealed to you as Saviour and Guide. How then will ye any more be called children of God, or how will ye gain the grace of oneness with Him, if ye honour not Him That is of Him? It is likely that the Lord again means something by this and aims by such words also to silence the people of the Jews who are vainly yelping at Him. And what it is that is intended we will briefly say.

Many among the Jews esteeming no whit the Divine Fear, but admiring and accepting only honours from men, and overcome by base lucre, dared to prophesy, speaking out *of their own heart and not out of the Mouth of the Lord*, as it is written. And verily the Lord of all Himself chid them saying, *I sent not the prophets, I spake not to them yet they prophesied*; yea, He threatened to do dread things to them crying out, *Woe unto them that prophesy out of their their own heart and see nothing at all*. Such an one was that *Shemaiah* who to the words of *Jeremiah* opposed his own lie and having taken the yokes of wood and shattered them, said, *Thus saith the Lord, I will shatter the yoke of the king of Babylon*. Since then when our Saviour Christ says, *But now ye seek to kill Me a man who have told you the truth which I heard of God*, the Jews began to murmur, and not knowing Who He is in truth, to imagine that He is some false prophet and to be therefore hardened, so as to even dare to revile Him, and so angrily desire to kill Him as even to press on to do it:---profitably does He again terrify them, saying that He *came not of Himself* as was the wont of them who prophesy falsely, but was *sent* by God, that by the same He both putting aside the reputation of being a false prophet and teaching that they will incur no slight doom, who not only dishonour Him that has been sent by God the Father, but also dare to devise murder against Him, might cut short their unbridled daring.

This then for what is before us. But it is probable that the heretic will make what has been said the food of his innate impiety. He will haply accuse the Essence of the Only-Begotten and will deem that it is in lower case than the Father's because of His saying that He had been sent by Him. But let such an one consider the mode of the economy but now spoken, and remember Paul crying aloud of the Son, *Who being in the Form of God thought it not robbery to be Equal with God, but emptied Himself taking servant's form, made in the likeness of men and found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself made obedient unto death*. But if He hath of

His own will humbled Himself, the Father, that is, consenting and Co-willing it, what accusal will He have, going through the whole mode of the Economy unto its consummation, in any reasonable way? But if because of His saying that He has been sent, you deem that the Son lies in lower case than the Father, how (tell me) doth He That is in lower case, according to thy unlearning, work in all exactitude the things of God? For where does the lesser shew itself in Him who possesses perfectly all that belongs to His own Progenitor and the fullest God-befitting Authority? Therefore He will not be conceived of as less on account of being sent, but being God of God by Nature and verily, since Himself is the Wisdom and Power of the Father, He is sent to us as from the sun the light which is spread abroad from it, in order that He might make wise that which lacks wisdom, and that thus at length that which was weak might be lifted up through Him and strengthened unto the knowledge of God the Father and recovered unto all virtue. For all things most fair beamed on the human race through only Christ. There is therefore nothing at all of servile kind in Christ, but it belongs only to the form of the flesh: but God-befitting is His Authority and Power even all, even though the language meetly conformed to the measure of lowliness take human fashion.

43 *Why do ye not understand My speech? because ye cannot hear My word.*

What we have oftentimes said we say again for profit to the readers: for there is no harm in our discourse going very frequently through what may profit. It is the custom then of our Saviour Christ not altogether to accept from those who disbelieve Him, the word that boiled up from their tongue, but to look rather on the hearts and reins, and to make His replies to the thoughts that were yet revolving in the depth of their hearts. For man who knows not the thoughts that are in another, will needs admit the uttered word, but God not so; for He knowing all things, takes the thought for the voice. When then the Lord said to the Jews that He had come not of Himself, like them who of their own mind and not of the Divine Spirit advance to prophesy, but that He was sent by God, they again imagine, or reason among themselves, or secretly whispering one to another said, Many Prophets have spoken the things of God and brought words from the Spirit unto us, but we find nought among them of such sort as is in this man's words. For He bears us wholly away from the worship after the Law and removes us to some other polity and introduces to us a strange transition of life. Dissonant therefore manifestly and irreconcilable is His Discourse with that of those of old. Since He beheld them thinking (as is likely) these things, shewing that He is by Nature God and knoweth the counsels of the hearts, He takes hold of it and says, *Why do ye not understand My Speech? because ye cannot hear My Word.* I am not ignorant (He says) that *ye cannot* comprehend *My Speech*, or doctrine; but I will tell you the reason and will clearly set before you what is the hindrance. *Ye cannot hear My Word.* He says, *ye cannot*, convicting them of impotence unto perfect good, because of their being fore-mastered by their passions. For the love of pleasure unnerves the mind, and the unbridled tendency towards evil yet weakening the sinew of the heart, renders it feeble and most spiritless to the power of performing any virtue. Being therefore fore-weakened by tendencies to vice and tyrannized by your own passions *ye cannot*, He says, *hear My Word. For right are the ways of the Lord*, as it is written, *and the just shall walk in them, but the transgressors shall become impotent in them.* Akin to this will you find that too which was in another place said to the Pharisees, *How can ye believe which receive honour one of another and seek not the honour that, cometh from the only God?* for verily in this their not being able to believe shews the voluntary weakness of their understanding or that their mind has been before overcome of vainglory. And we find again that that is true of the Jews which has been spoken by the voice of Paul, *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are*

foolishness to him. Since therefore they were *natural*, they deemed that He was foolishness Who was inviting them to be saved, and was teaching them the path of an excellent conversation, and directing them full well unto the power of pleasing God who delighteth in virtue, to whom be all honour, glory, might, for ever and ever. Amen.