

ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

BOOK X.

[Introduction]

21 He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him.

Our Saviour here says that the revelation of the mystery in us will then be clearest when we see ourselves living in conformity with His likeness. For *as I live*, He says, *ye shall live also*; the mind of each being fulfilled as it were not with what he has heard and believed merely, but rather with what he actually enjoys, when he has reached the completion of the promise. For experience is more powerful than language in ability to convince and satisfy. That we may not think that all without distinction are endowed with the power to partake of so holy a blessing, even though they be not good men and illuminated by the fear of God, He has added at once to His speech the qualification, "they that love Me;" clearly showing thereby that no others will be allowed to choose so incomparable a grace, but those who have chosen to live most righteously: for they would be "those that love Him." For even if it be the fact that Christ raises the bodies of all men, for there will be a resurrection of the evil and the good alike, yet not to all without distinction will a new life of glory and felicity be given. For it is clear that some only rise again to punishment, and will have a life more grievous than any death, while others spending ages of blessedness, will actually live the desirable and holy life in Christ. For that they who are doomed to receive the sentence of punishment from Christ on the occasion of the judgment, will abide without a taste of the blessed life, although they shared with the Saints the lot of resurrection, He makes plain by these words: *He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God shall abide on Him.* For know that although while all the evil and the good alike await the resurrection, He says that those who are fast bound by the charge of disobedience cannot even attain to a glimpse of the life, as He declares that it is not the mere act of resurrection that is life, but that that life rather consists in rest and glory and felicity, spiritual of course and of no other kind. A spiritual kind of felicity is meant, the perfect knowledge of God and the complete revelation of the mysteries of Christ, not as in a glass and in riddles, even as now showing the characters of the object of our quest dimly, but shining out to us and glistening in perfect purity and making our knowledge quite complete. *For that which is in part shall be done away*, as Paul says.

Our Lord Jesus Christ then, when He teaches us that to those who choose to love Him and to those who do His commandments is the promise of His revelation given, and to them it is more appropriate and pertinent, and not to those who are otherwise minded and who do the contrary, has conveyed this useful lesson in the words: *He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.* And a man has His commands when he has received the faith, and, laying it to heart, has let into his inmost soul the unpolluted and unmistakable teaching of the Gospel commandments. And he fulfils them by carrying them out into actuality, and by making haste to distinguish himself by the light of his actions. Such a man

then is perfect and wholly wedded to righteousness, a shining light by his faith and conduct, who has witness borne him of his holiness after the pattern of Christ. For *At the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established*, according to the Scripture. A man of this sort again, God the Father will surely love, and no less also the Son will love him. For as He is of the same Substance, so also has He the same Will as His Father. For as the Substance is one the Will also is one, and there is one purpose over all, and there is no discord severing Their Wills in twain. For to those who are thought worthy of the Divine love He promises that He will give a glorious reward and that He will crown them with exceeding great blessings. For *I will manifest Myself unto him*, He says. For to the pure in heart the mystery of the Godhead will be clearly revealed, and Christ gives them light, illuminating the path of every duty by His Spirit, and unveiling Himself and making Himself visible as it were by the ineffable torchlight of the soul. And those who have made their choice once for all are blessed and worthy of all admiration. And methinks the prophet David was a man after this sort when he says, *I will hear what the Lord God will say in me*. And so is also the Divine Apostle when he exhorts us, saying, *If ye seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me*; for He speaks of things concerning Himself in His Saints by His Spirit; yea, reveals other mysteries besides. Therefore it is true that knowing these things well, the Saints sometimes say, *Unto us God revealed them through the Spirit*; sometimes, *But we have the mind of Christ*, meaning by His mind His Spirit.

22 Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto Him, Lord, what is come to pass that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

It is out of love that the disciple proceeds to make this inquiry, but he clearly does not quite understand our Saviour's language. For our Lord Jesus Christ promised to His Saints a kind of special knowledge and not like that vouchsafed to others. For the characters of Divine mysteries are more defined and shine out far more clearly among the men of God: while those who have not yet attained to such purity of heart as to be able definitely to choose the knowledge of those things which pass understanding by the gift of the Spirit, display their knowledge in bare logical processes, and it is limited to their chance acquaintance with the doctrine that Christ is God and truly the Son of the living God. Although then there lies this vast difference between them, widely dissevering the knowledge of the vulgar from that which is seen in the Saints, the disciple, making no distinction, proceeds to inquire why He does not promise to reveal Himself to all in the world, but only to the Saints. And by the exclamation, *How comes it to pass?* he means to hint at some such meaning as this: Is the aim of Thy coming amongst us, Lord, to give to some a complete knowledge of Thyself, which to others is wholly denied? For we heard in the prophets that *all flesh shall see the salvation of God*, and Thou Thyself didst cry out, saying, *Rejoice and be glad, daughter of Sion, for lo! I come and shall dwell in thy midst, saith the Lord, and all nations shall flee to the Lord on that day and shall be His people*. And when we had continual converse with Thee, we heard with our own ears Thy voice when Thou didst say unto us, *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself*; and Thou saidst also to the Jews themselves, *And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall become one flock, one shepherd*. Now then, when the expectation is raised that Thy grace will be poured upon all men and that all will be gathered in to the knowledge of God, and when Thou Thyself hast made us this clear promise and the voice of the holy prophets bears this testimony----*What is come to pass?* cries the Apostle. Whither has the purpose of the promise then shifted and diverted? Why dost Thou manifest Thyself not to all that are in the world but only to us? This then and no other I think is the meaning of the disciple's words. It is well to show what it was that in fact led him astray from truly apprehending our Saviour's words.

For when our Lord Jesus Christ used the words, *A little while, and, the world beholdeth Me no more; but ye behold Me*, it is very clear that by *the world* He did not at all mean those who are in this life or living upon the earth, for all men are in this world, evil and good alike: but by *the world* He rather meant those who are persuaded to mind earthly; things, who have yoked their understanding to the vanity of the world. The disciple then, not quite understanding this, thought that He said that of all the rest of mankind who dwell in this earthly sphere He would escape the eye, I mean the inner and secret vision of the soul, and would be wholly unseen, and known by no living man but His disciples only; and this was the cause of the disciple's misapprehension. For if he had understood at first, he would never have proceeded to ask, *What is come to pass that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?* For he had this meaning I have spoken of suggested to him through his taking the signification of the word in its common and generally-received sense. For we are accustomed to mean by *the world*, using it in its well-worn and obvious sense, all the inhabitants of the world, just as when one speaks of the city one means all the dwellers in it. Still the disciple, even when he says these words, deserves our admiration. For see how he longs that the glory of the Saviour should shine forth through all the world like the sun, although if he had only been taking thought for his own personal welfare, he might, as he had the promise of knowledge, have enjoyed blessings peculiar to himself. But it was not enough to gratify his soul that the boon should be granted as it were to him individually, but because he was at once a lover of God and of his fellow men he longs for the glory of the Saviour to have a wider field and that grace should be extended to all his brethren. For what joy can equal the being called to the complete knowledge of God?

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My word: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

When He saw that the disciple did not quite understand, He goes back again to what He said at first, and teaches clearly that He will not manifest Himself to His own, according to the conception he had formed in his mind, but that the manner of His manifestation will be special to His disciples, and not that common to the rest of mankind. For the vulgar, and those, for instance, who have just escaped from the deceitfulness of idols and have been called to the knowledge of the Living God, rest their faith on bare and unquestioned axioms, merely having learnt to know that there is *no idol in the world*, and that the Living God is One only; while they who have their minds illumined by every virtue and are already in a state to fitly apprehend Divine and hidden mysteries, will receive the torch of the Spirit, and will behold with the eyes of the soul the Lord Himself, Who has taken up His abode in them. The knowledge therefore that the Saints possess is not common to the rest, but is in a manner special and distinct and widely diverse. Christ then benefits us by every kind of word and way. For, first of all, anyone that loves Him is very broadly distinguished from the rest, showing as it seems to me, and as I justly apprehend, that it has not been given to all men to receive the power of His grace, but only to those in whom the glory of intimate connexion with Him may be seen indwelling through their keeping His commandments.

Then in what way He will declare Himself and how He will take up His abode in them He goes on to declare. For *My Father will love him*, He says. For any man who has honoured by his obedience to the Son the Father from Whom He springs, will reap His love as the fruit of his conduct. Then He clearly shows what will be the issue thereof and what profit such a man will gain when He says, *I and the Father will come unto him and make Our abode with him*. For when our Saviour Christ dwells in us by the Holy Spirit, surely there too will be also His

Father; for the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of the Father Himself also, and the inspired Paul at one time speaks of the Spirit as belonging to the Father, and at another as belonging to the Son: not by way of logical contradiction, but rather saying what is true of either, for it is so in fact. He says then to some: *He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you.* Then again, *And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* Do you see that the same Spirit is of the Father and the Son? When then the Only-begotten dwells in your hearts, the Father is not far from you: for the Son hath in Himself the Father, being of one substance with Him, and is Himself by nature in the Father.

This then we may give as the definition and incontrovertible doctrine of the faith; and I should be glad to question thereupon those who have chosen heretical opinions from excess of ignorance and who arm their tongues with conceits about the Spirit. For what have they to answer when we say to them, "If the Spirit is created and alien to the substance of God, as you say, how can God abide in us through Him? And how can he that receiveth the Spirit partake of God?" For if it is within the bounds of possibility by the agency of any created being whatever for us to partake of the ineffable Divine Nature, what can be found to hinder God the Father thrusting aside the Spirit and by means of any other created being that He chooses to select dwelling in us and sanctifying us? But this is impossible: for no one can partake of the living God by any other means than by the Spirit. The Spirit therefore is God and of God, and is not numbered among creatures, as some think.

This consideration also must be taken into account. That which partakes of anything as being superior in nature and distinct from what it is itself must of necessity be different in nature from that which is partaken of. If then the Spirit is created or made, what remains for the sum of creation to partake of? Surely not itself! For in that case both that which partakes and that which is partaken of would alike owe their origin to a creator. But as it is, we being by nature both created and begotten partake of the Spirit as being different in nature from ourselves. The Spirit therefore is not created. And if this is true, and it is true, the Spirit is God and of God, as we have said. For nothing that exists can escape being included in the category of created things except the living God alone, from Whom the Holy Spirit, ineffably proceeding, dwelleth in us as He from Whom He springs. For He is an attribute of His Substance, and as it were a quality of His holiness.

So much for my controversy with these heretics. But as against the Anomoeans and those who have resolved on war with the Son, who are diseased with a like and kindred madness to these which we have just spoken of, I will refute them as briefly as possible. *If a man love Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love Him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.* What, then, my good Sirs, have you to say if any one chooses to inquire and desires to know of you whether we shall have two Gods indwelling in us, the Father and the Son, or whether you conceive of one God as really existing in us. For if the Son is wholly distinct in nature and is conceived of as having a separate nature, how can we avoid believing that there is a duality of Gods in us when we keep His commandment? And if we are temples of one, that is, and not of two Gods, when the Father and the Son take up Their abode in us, how can you prove that the two coalesce unto unity in us, as, according to your crazy notion, identity of nature is out of the question? For either you must say that Christ has told us falsehoods, and that the Father only dwells in us by the Spirit, or He Himself dwells in us and the Father is absent. But this is absurd, and there is one God in us when we receive both. The Only-begotten then will appear to be not different in substance from His Father, but of Him

and in Him, as the light includes the effulgence which proceeds from it. Such, and no other, is the true meaning of the mystery. And certainly the inspired Paul did not call us temples of two Gods, but clearly of one and the same. *Know ye not*, he says, *that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* You see that making the Father and Son coalesce in identity of Substance he says that we have been made temples not of Gods but of one God. Why then do you bring your rash arguments into conflict with the power of the truth, and sow the seed of your poisonous impiety in those who are wont heedlessly to handle the holy and inspired writings?

24 *He that loveth Me not keepeth not My words.*

When He has premised and rightly defined who those that love Him are, and of what blessings they will partake, He at once proceeds to treat of others who have not yet chosen to love Him. "For they will not keep My words," He says; for this is the meaning of the saying, "he will not keep My word," spoken as if of and concerning one man, even though it has a broad and generic signification. And this that He says has a very apt connexion with what precedes. For, if the keeping of His commandments or His Word is a clear proof of love towards Him, surely the converse of this will be true. For treating His bidding as of no account and thrusting His commandment aside will be a sign that we refuse to love Him, as these are the acts of men inured to evil-doing. But just as He promised that together with God the Father He would Himself abide with those who keep His laws, for the same reason, I think, He will pass away from and wholly abandon those who do the reverse. For thus the truth of Solomon's saying will be seen: *Into the soul of him that maketh iniquity wisdom will not enter, nor dwell in the body given over to sin.* For in common life you can observe that a similar result follows: for does not a man gain repute by conversing with those who are likeminded and who choose the same path of life, rather than with others? And *Every creature loves his like*, according to the saying, and *Man will seek union with his like.* And if it seems most desirable even among ourselves to live with those of similar habits to ourselves, how can we escape the reflection that this is still more the case with God? For as He is good by nature and the beginning and source of all virtue, He takes up His abode not in the lovers of wickedness but in the workers of virtue, and disdains the impure, and with good reason. As then we ourselves are naturally eager to rid our houses of filth and stench if any such there be, disdaining to live in them, will not the pure and all-holy God still more disdain the polluted soul, and abominate a heart sunk in the slough of sin? Of this there can be no question. For that he that doth not keep His commandment will be found among these and not elsewhere, being as he is impure and of filthy lusts, our speculation will perforce teach you. For in not keeping the Divine commands the origin of sin is found.

For just as the deprivation of light introduces its opposite, I mean darkness, just so refusing to do virtuous acts causes wickedness to spring up. For inasmuch as the subject-matter that underlies them is one and the same, things diverse from each other in quality may admit of comparison (I am far from saying they are identical) according to the law of contraries.

And so vice and virtue are separate and widely opposed to each other in quality, or how could one speak without falling into error? But both characters cannot belong to any one among us in the same relation and be fulfilled in action. For either a man is good or bad, though he may not have reached the height of iniquity or virtue. Then when the one principle is powerful within us, the other, that is the opposite, will be weak. And so if the formal principle of virtue consist in keeping His commandments, is it not most plain that in not keeping them

wickedness originates? Just as to have in himself the Father and the Son, which is the origin and basis of all satisfaction of soul and glory, is in store for him that keeps His commandments, so he that keepeth them not is wholly cut off from participation in the ineffable Divine nature; which is, in effect, incapacity to enjoy any blessing. If any man then think it a good and desirable thing to partake of the Divine nature and to have God Who is the Father of the universe indwelling and abiding in the shrine of the heart by His Son, in the Spirit, let him thoroughly purge his soul, and wash away the stain of wickedness, by whatever means he can; and most of all, by all kinds of well-doing. For then will he become truly the temple of God; and He will rest and abide in him, according to the Scripture. For then it will not be with him as it was with the lawyer mentioned in the Gospels, who did not wait for grace from the Saviour, but said that he went self-called to follow Him; and, eager to seize so desirable a blessing, exclaimed, *Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest*: but what said Christ to him as in a parable and in riddles, *The foxes have holes and the birds of the heaven have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head*. By *foxes and birds of the heaven* He meant wicked and unclean devils, and the spirits of the world and of the air, which love to dwell and take up their abode in the hearts of pleasure-seekers, fulfilling their own lusts, and so cramping the miserable souls of those who receive them that God can find no place at all for rest in them. This is what He means by *laying His Head*.

Let us then cleanse our hearts from every defilement, for so will God dwell in us and will render us proof against all the malice of the devil, and will make us happy and blessed, and will render us partakers of His ineffable Divine nature.

24 *And the word which ye hear is not Mine but the Father's Who sent Me.*

He once more deals with a difficult subject which required of Him accurate explanation, and again brings forward illustrations by which they might have their understanding better fitted to fully comprehend the depth of the mystery. And He confirms the minds of His hearers in order that they might not be allured by the ignorant prejudices of the Jews, and in their desire to bring their own ideas into conformity with the Jewish do despite unto the holy teaching of the Gospel. What I wish to say is this in plain words: *For the law having a shadow and an impressed type until a time of reformation*, according to the saying of Paul, *hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ*, and provided, as it were, a preliminary training for virtue according to godliness. If any one then were to call the Mosaic dispensation preparatory to true worship in Spirit, he would not miss the mark. For, for this reason, the Law brought nothing to perfection; but our Lord Jesus Christ showed us no longer the shadows of things, but the reality itself openly, no longer sketching the outline of virtue in types and figures, as Moses did, but setting it up naked in the public sight, accomplishing the perfect man in righteousness. The instruction of the words of Christ was then a shifting and moulding of the types into truth. And since, as the truth was already shining forth, it was superfluous for the shadow any longer to prevail, Christ ordained that those who came to Him by faith should no longer frame their conduct by the types of the Law. This was very grievous to the Jews, for they thought that Christ came to destroy the old Law, although they heard Him saying openly, *I come not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil. For I say unto you, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the Law till all things be accomplished*. The realisation of excellence which was introduced by the laws of Christ brings with it the fulfilment of the shadow of the Law, as we have just said. For inasmuch as in their headstrong passion they became backsliders into disobedience, and assuming a zeal for the Law not according to

knowledge, they thought themselves to be advocating the Law by rejecting the commandments of Christ, it was for this very reason in order that He might not seem to any to be laying down some new and peculiar laws adverse to the will of God the Father He conveyed this useful and necessary rebuke---*The word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father s Who sent Me*. Let not any one of those who come to Me by faith, He says, think that I have made any discourse not in accord with the will of God the Father. The tidings of the Gospel are His and not another's, but He gave them not as ashamed of the older enactments, nor again as though the better commandment had been unveiled at the moment; but rather because the type had been moulded into reality at the fitting time. For He That said those things by Me to the men of old time says this also now to you: for I am the living Word That interprets the ineffable Will of God the Father, wherefore am I called *the Angel of great counsel*.

For either after this manner we shall receive the saying, I mean the following ---- *The word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father s Who sent Me*, or we shall understand it in another way. For He says that His own word is the word of God the Father, that they who keep it may know that they honour God when they are persuaded by the words which come from Him: while others, falling into the contrary extreme and not disdaining by disobedience to insult the commandment given to them, sin against the nature of the Most Highest. Now it was possible in two ways to confirm the minds of His hearers: for either the wish to honour God would incline them at all events to obedience, or the fear of coming into conflict with Him would also have this effect. For the calculation of what is useful and expedient runs through both methods. And when He says, "It is not My word," He does not at all put out of our sight the peculiar character which He bears as the Word and God. And, while He still wears His homely shape, and appears and truly is in the guise of manhood, and is really like as we are when He is saying this, He is not willing that His word should be thought merely human, but really Divine and regal; of necessity merging His character in that of the Father, in order that He might not by sundering Himself admit the conception of two Sons, as the Son is one and the same both before and after His Incarnation. For Christ is one, and not two, as some say: for the Word proceeding from the Father, being God, became flesh according to the saying of John not by conversion into flesh, but by enshrining His divinity in flesh from the womb of the holy virgin. In order then that we may not think His word is merely human, or divest the Gospel teaching of its Divine character, but may be convinced that it comes from the God Who is over all, appropriately and with great reason, inasmuch as He was then appearing to them in the form of man, He attributes His words to His Divine Nature, as in the character of God the Father, from Whom and in Whom He is by nature as His effulgence and His word and the Express Image of His Person.

25, 26 These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send unto you in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said.

Contrariwise, His speech has in it the human element, and is not quite foreign to the standards we apply to ourselves, to the extent that the mind into which it entered was fitted to receive the words before us. Perhaps some one will plausibly say that Christ is not amongst us according to the power of His Godhead, although He fills the Universe and is not wholly separated from anything, but rather encompasses with unspeakable might earth and heaven, and does not leave the depths of the abyss: for where is not God"? When, then, He says, *These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you*, we must think that He there

speaks as a man; and since He was about to vanish from our sight, I mean according to the flesh, He says this when the preparation for His departure into heaven was complete; and He says that the most perfect and complete revelation to us of the mystery is through the Comforter, that is the Holy Ghost, sent from the Father in *His Name*, I mean that of the Son. For as His Spirit is Christ in us, therefore He says, *He shall teach you all things that I said*. For since He is the Spirit of Christ, and His mind, as it is written, which is nought else but what He is, in regard to identity of nature, even though He be both conceived of and is existent, He knows all that is in Him. And Paul will be our witness, saying, *For who knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God*. Wherefore as knowing what is in the counsel of the Only-begotten, He reporteth all things to us, not having the knowledge thereof from learning, that is; that He may not seem to fill the rank of a minister and to transmit the words of another but as His Spirit, as we said just now, and knowing untaught all that belongeth to Him of Whom and in Whom He is, He revealeth to the Saints the Divine mysteries; just as man's mind too, knowing all things that are therein, ministereth externally by uttered word the desires of the soul whose mind it is, being mentally discerned in the thoughts, and named as something else than itself, not other by nature, but as a part complemental of the whole, existing in it and believed to go forth from it. Such a relation as this is inapplicable to the ineffable Divine Nature. For small is all the power of illustrations, even if it go on to subtleties. The perfect knowledge then is begotten in the Saints by the Spirit. And indeed the inspired Paul exhorts some: *I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and the love which ye show toward all the Saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working which He hath wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come*. For in the revelation of these things by the Spirit working in us in an unspeakable way, we see the deep meaning of the Incarnation and the power of the hidden mystery. And that His Spirit, indwelling in the Saints, accomplishes the presence and the power of Christ Himself and teaches all things that He has spoken unto us, Paul will once more make none the less clear to us by the words: *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from Whom every family both in heaven and on earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith to the end; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the Saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God*.

Furthermore, we must show that when He said that all would be revealed by the Spirit to the Saints, He does not give them over to another master----do not think that: but He keeps them by His side, through the Spirit, no longer seen by the eye of the flesh, but rather gazed upon as became a God by the intellectual vision of the heart.

27 *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.
Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful.*

Herein when He reminds His holy Apostles of His ascension into heaven, and prepares them for the knowledge that they will be left thereby alone by the saying: *These things have I spoken unto you while yet abiding with you*, He was stricken at heart by the knowledge, being as He was by nature God, that the saying gave them no small alarm, and put them into great fear and trembling, and by laying a burden of grief upon them had stirred the mind of each to its depths. For what could be more grievous than their sorrow, and what so burdensome as to be robbed of the highest blessings and to undergo the unexpected loss of that which was most dear to them? He therefore stablishes them when they were disturbed by grief and fear. For the cause and root of their sorrow, His being about to leave them and go to His Father, was most well-grounded. But He considered their apprehension of unknown suffering as the cause of their grief, and very readily, as He Who was strong to save was no longer present, according to the actual vision of the body. And how does He stablish them, and in what way does He produce in them the brightness of a cheerful spirit, and how are their minds lulled again into a Divine calm? *Peace I give unto you*, He says, *My peace I leave with you*. I have often told you, He says, that *I will not leave you desolate*, nor will you dwell alone in the earth, stripped and robbed of your defender; nay, rather, I will be with you, and though absent in the flesh will again edify you by My consolations as God, and will set you above every terror, and no man shall surpass you in boldness; for all fear shall dwindle away, and cowardice shall vanish from your path, and a Divine power shall spring up in you, bringing you with peaceful mind, and heart at rest, to the revelation of those things which pass man's understanding. And now, He says, *Peace I give unto you*, not simply, but *My peace*. And this was clearly nothing else but saying: I will bring the Spirit, and of Myself will abide with those who receive Him.

For that the peace of Christ is His Spirit, it needs no long argument to completely demonstrate. But I suppose one ought to say this, if He is peace in heaven and on the earth, how can it fail to be clear to everyone, that as we have said, the peace is certainly His Spirit? And indeed the inspired Paul said to some: *And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and your thoughts*. And surely it is right to reflect, that it is not about that peace which has reference to common thought and action that He says this. For that disposition which loathes dispute and strife has and works peace, so far as its own waverings and inclinations will allow it. And we shall not think that the peace which is here meant is something which has not a real and independent existence; but we must suppose that it is found in the temper of those who love it. How then can one think that such a peace as this surpasses all understanding? For that which nowhere and nohow has an independent existence, how could that be thought better and nobler than men, or angels, or even higher beings? for these too we say are mind. The peace therefore that is above all principality, and power, and thrones, and sovereignties, and excels all intellectual existence, is the Spirit of Christ, by Which the Son reconciles all things to God the Father, by willing the things that are His and by wishing to think and do them, and not by being perverted or falling away through turning aside to wickedness. And it is easy and expedient to reflect on this. For just in the same way as since the Son is by nature life, and wisdom, and power, and the Spirit is called and is His, the Spirit is of life, and wisdom, and power; so since the true and sovereign peace is He Himself and no other, His Spirit might rightly be named and thought as He is----" peace." For this reason and in a special manner referring His own peace, that is to say the Spirit, to His own nature, He says concerning Him, *My peace I leave with you*. That

also in the holy prophets the Spirit of Christ has been so named, you will easily perceive, when you hear this from the mouth of Isaiah: *O Lord our God grant us peace: for Thou hast given us all things.* For as the Law brought nothing to completion, and righteousness according to it did not suffice to bring men to perfect piety, He entreats that the Holy Spirit be vouchsafed, by Whom, reconciled to God the Father, we have been admitted into fellowship with Him, who have before been shown to be reprobates through the sin that reigneth in us. *Grant us then peace,* he says, *Lord; for Thou hast given us all things.* And what he wants to show, I say, is this: "Grant us too, Lord, the peace; for we shall then confess that we have all things, and no blessing will be found lacking to him that has once for all reached the fulness of Christ. For it is the completion of all good that God should dwell in us by the Spirit." For since the Spirit is fully sufficient to allay all tumult of the mind, and to dispel all cowardice in us, He promises to give us as provision by the way, that which is needful to maintain our courage and peace, when He says, *My peace I leave with you: let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful.*

28 Ye heard how I said to you, I go away, and I come unto you.

You learnt, He says, from no other lips than Mine My departure hence, for you heard My sayings with your own ears, and what have I, Who cannot lie, promised unto you? *I go away, and I come unto you.* If then His words had threatened that His departure would leave them comfortless, and that their bereavement would be eternal, it was very likely that they would thereupon be dreadfully dismayed, and find it unbearable, and fall into excess of despondency. And whereas I said unto you not simply that I would go away, but that I would come again in due season, why then, He says, do you let into your hearts only the cause of grief, and slight by your forgetfulness that which is able to cheer. Let that which knows how to succour arise in you to combat that which affrights: and let the power of the Comforter wrestle with the incitements to grief. For it has been ordained that I should ascend to God the Father, but I have promised to come again. He allays then the agony of grief He found in His disciples; and just as a fond and good father, compelled for some needful purpose to take his children from the nurse that bears them, and seeing a flood of tears bedewing their delicate and dear cheeks, he tries every blandishment, and by always insisting on the good that will result from her absence, arms in some sort hope against grief, where the affections are most nearly concerned; so also our Lord Jesus Christ shields the souls of His Saints from sorrow. For He knew, being truly God, that His abandonment of them would be very grievous unto them, although He were ever with them by the Spirit. And this proves His love and extreme holiness. For to wish to be with Christ, how does not that most truly become the Saints? And of a truth the admirable Paul has this aim in view when he says: It is better *to depart and be with Christ.*

CHAPTER I. That in nothing is the Son inferior to God the Father, but rather equal to and like Him in nature.

28 If ye loved Me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father; for My Father is greater than I.

He turns the occasion of sorrow into a source of solace, and plainly rebukes them because they do not rather rejoice at what now gives them pain: and at the same time tries to teach them, that those who practise an unaffected and sincere love towards others, must not merely seek their own pleasure and advantage, but rather to benefit those they love, when an

opportunity to do this gives them inducement. Therefore also Paul exhorts us in the words: *Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own.* He speaks of some who seek not their own but others' good. For true love shows itself in our not only providing for our own advantage but also considering our neighbour's benefit. For our Saviour, in the words before us, persuades His disciples to lay this to heart. And, further, let us imprint the power of this thought in clearer characters on our hearts as on a tablet, and thereby attain unto the mystery of Christ. For a type taken from trifling things will oftentimes avail to enable us to arrive even at those things which we hold to admit of no comparison. It was pleasant then, for example, to the disciples of Paul that they should be always with him, but better for Paul *to depart and be with Christ*, as he has assured us by his own words. It was the duty then of those who chose to love him to be eager to fulfil their love towards him, and not to consider that only as endurable which was pleasant to themselves, but rather to reflect upon this, that his departure would be to the benefit of their master; for he was eager to be with Christ.

You have the outline of the speculation so far as concerns Christ's human nature. Let us therefore, illuminating as it were with varied tints our sketch of the power of the mystery of Christ, clearly show the absolute truth. For the Only-begotten, *being in the form of God the Father, and in equality with the Spirit, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God*, and through His love towards us *emptied Himself of His glory, taking the form of a servant*, and underwent this that He might direct us all to perfect knowledge of virtue, so as to prepare us by the incomparable brightness of His miracles to behold the power, and glory, and exceeding might that is inherent in the Divine Nature. For so He might have induced those who have fallen into the depths of ignorance to recover knowledge once more, and no longer to worship the creature beyond the Creator, but to figure to themselves the One true and living God. And the Only-begotten has aided us in other ways by His incarnation, for He destroyed the power of death, and loosed the bonds of sin, and granted us *to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy*. It was then, and with great reason, sweet and pleasant beyond all description to ourselves and the holy disciples, to have continual converse with Christ the Giver of such blessings to us, and to be ever present with Him and in His company. But it was clearly not to His advantage, so long a time to choose to abide in the guise of humility, which He had taken for our advantage, through His love to us, as we just now said: rather was He bound, when His dispensation towards us had been already suitably accomplished, to ascend to His own glory, and, with the flesh that He had taken for our sake, to hasten back to equality with God the Father, which thinking it not robbery to do (for He might have had this honour in His own right), He descended to human humiliation. For while He was yet upon the earth, though He was truly God and Lord of all, He was thought no better than the rest of men, by those who knew not His glory. Nay, more, He was smitten, and spat upon, and crucified, and underwent the ridicule of the impious Jews, who dared to say, *If Thou art the Son of God, come down now from the cross, and we will believe Thee*. And when after He had fulfilled the mystery of our redemption, He ascended to God the Father in the heavens, when the time of His humiliation was already past, and the period of His voluntary degradation accomplished, He showed Himself very God to the powers above. For heaven did not deny the Lord of all when He ascended, but the charge was given to the sentinels at the gates above, that the Lord of Hosts was drawing nigh, although He was borne upward in the raiment of the flesh; and the Spirit was representing the opening of the gates, when He said: *Lift up the gates ye rulers, and be lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, the Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory*. For the manifold wisdom of God which He

purposed in Christ was known *unto the principalities and the powers*, as Paul says. For when He ascended to the Father, although He may be thought greater than the Son in this respect, that He remained in His everlasting home, while the Son underwent voluntary humiliation, and descended in the form of a servant, and ascended up again to His own glory, and heard the words: *Sit down on My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool*. And it was to the intent that He might not seem too presumptuous, and that God the Father in the heavens had not of His own will made the Son sit on His right hand, the Father Himself is introduced saying this: *Sit Thou on My right hand*, the Psalmist says this. And no one with any sense will say that the Father has the second place of honour though He has the Son on His right hand, but will rather take what I have said into consideration. For it is not the Father, but rather the Son, on account of His voluntary degradation and suffering, Who must be conceived as sitting on the right hand, and having a place from which no inferiority could be inferred, as He might be numbered among inferior beings by those who cannot comprehend the mystery of His Incarnation. Therefore a place on the right hand of His Father, against Whom no such charge can be brought, is allotted to the Son that His equality may be maintained.

We have done well to introduce these explanations now, which have an intimate connexion with the present subject. Now taking up again and unfolding from the beginning the whole purpose of our disquisition, I proceed to say that continual converse with our Saviour Christ is sweet and acceptable and pleasant to us, although for our sake He has emptied Himself of His glory, as has been written, and taken the form of a servant and the dishonour of man's nature. For what is man's nature as compared with God! Nor was the Incarnation to the advantage of the Son, but to ascend to His Father profited Him more, and to recover His own glory and power and Divine honour in the sight of all, and no longer obscured. For He sat on the right hand by the will of His Father. For He loves Him as His own Offspring and the fruit of His Substance, and therefore He says, *If ye loved Me, ye would have rejoiced because I go unto the Father: for the Father is greater than I*. Surely it was a proof of His Father's love towards Him that He did not sorrow over His seeming abandonment and the compulsory absence that He had taken on Himself, but rather took into consideration that He went to the glory befitting Him, and His due, and to His ancient honour, that is the Godhead manifest. Nay more, the Psalmist, though he speaks mysteries by the Spirit, says, *Clap your hands, all ye people*: then he explained the occasion of the festival, and introduced the Ascension of the Saviour into heaven, saying, *God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet*: meaning by the shout and the trumpet the piercing and clear voice of the Spirit, when He bade the powers above open the gates, and named Him Lord of Hosts, as we said just now. On the same occasion moreover, we shall find the choir of the Saints rejoicing with great joy of heart. Then too he said in one place, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice*; and in another, *The Lord reigneth: the Lord hath put on glorious apparel, the Lord hath put on and girded Himself with might*. For He that was with us as a man before His resurrection from the dead, when He ascended to His Father in the heavens, then put on His own glorious apparel, and girded Himself with the might that was His from the beginning, for He sat and reigneth with the Father. Then it is right and meet that those who love Him should rejoice because He has gone to His Father in the heavens, to take upon Him His own glory, and to reign again with Him as at the beginning. And He says that He is greater, not because He sat down on the right hand as God, but as He was still with us, that is, in human shape. For as He still wore the guise of a servant, and the time had not yet come that He should be reinstated, He calls God the Father greater. Moreover, when He endured the precious cross for us, the Jews brought Him vinegar and gall when He was athirst, and when He drank, He said, *It is*

finished. For already the time of His humiliation was fulfilled, and He was crucified as man. He had overcome the power of death, not as man but rather as God, I say by the working of His power and the glory and might of His conquest, not according to the flesh. The Father then is *greater* since the Son was still a servant and in the world, as He says that He is God of Himself, and adds this attribute to His human form. For if we believe that He degraded and humbled Himself, will it not be obvious to all that He descended from superiority to an inferiority, and rather from equality with the Father to the reverse. The Father underwent nothing of this, and He abode where He was at the beginning. He is *greater* therefore than He that chose inferiority by His own dispensation, and remained in such a state until He was restored to His ancient condition, I mean His own and natural glory in which He was at the beginning. We may rightly judge that His equality with the Father, which while He might have had it uninterruptedly He did not consider robbery to take for our sake, is His own and natural position.

And as we have spoken at length about the equality of the Son with God the Father in previous books, it may well be fitting to proceed to illustrate all things in order, leaving long discussions on the subject for the present. And since a certain dull-witted heretic, receiving from the Jews some marvellous knowledge of the holy writings, and attempting to explain the verse we have before us, has committed to writing intolerable blasphemies against the Only-begotten, I deemed it a mark of feebleness, and very unbecoming to myself, calmly to pass them by, and to dismiss in silence the awful madness of the man to whom I allude. I think then we ought to encounter him in argument, and show that his words are baseless and old wives' fables, and wholly devoid of sense, and the quibbles of a perverted logic. And with reference to the same passage, I will read over to you what he has dared to write when giving the view he took of the text: "When He called His Father greater than Himself, He not only displayed His own humility but also refuted the heresy of those who maintain that His nature is twofold." And having thus shattered the opinion of Sabellius, he makes a furious and vigorous onslaught, as he thinks, on those who put the Son on an equality with the Father in these words: "Some have reached such a pitch of madness that they cannot at all endure to say that the Father is superior to the divinity of the Only-begotten, but only that the Father seems to surpass Him when compared with Him in reference to the Incarnation, though they are not even able to look at them together in this aspect; and things different in kind can in no way be compared. For no one would ever say that man is wiser than a beast, or that a horse runs faster than a tortoise; but that one man has more reason than another, and that one horse has greater speed than another. Since then only things belonging to the same class are capable of comparison with each other, we must admit that the Father is greater even than the divinity of the Son. For those who fall into the contrary error of drawing a comparison with reference to the Incarnation, so far as in them lies, lessen the honour of the Father."

Such are his puerile babblings. And we must take care to show that he does not even know that he is inconsistent with himself. For he admits that the Son maintains becoming humility, when He says, *The Father is greater than I*; and I marvel that he did not also lay this to heart. For whatever was it which induced him to meddle with theology, although one would not make of no account the knowledge of the fitting time to speak or act if one were wise? What need was there then of such unseasonable discussion of the Divine Nature to His disciples in their agony, when He was about to depart from the world to God the Father? For what kind of consolation could this consideration bring to them? And why does not He merely rebuke them, saying, "If you loved Me, you would rejoice that I go to the Father, because the Father is greater than I?" Tell me then, did He think that this tended to solace the disciples, or to rid

them of the sorrow they felt from their love of God, that He was going to the Father Who was greater than Himself? Although when Philip asked Him and said, *Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us*, then indeed, and very opportunely, as the occasion for theological teaching had arrived, He showed that the Father was in Him, and He Himself in the Father, and that He was in no way inferior to Him, but distinguished by His perfect equality, when He said: *Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? I and the Father are one.* Then indeed, very opportunely, He unravels His discourse thereupon, and it is worthy of admiration. But here, how is the reference opportune? Or what construction would it admit of other than His desire to allay His disciples' grief, and to furnish them, as it were, with a medicine of consolation bidding them rejoice because He "goes to the Father?" Is it not then obvious to any one, however dull-witted he may be, from the very state of the case, that since He was hastening to return to His own glory with the Father, He bade those who loved Him rejoice at this, devising this admirable means of consolation for them with the rest?

But I will now pass this by, and will not lay much stress on their demented folly. But I say that we ought rather to go on to the following considerations. For He thought perhaps when comparing His Incarnate Nature with His Divine, they could not help making profit out of the inquiry, when we say that the Son was emptied of His glory when He became a Man. Is it not so? How could it be otherwise? But speaking of His Divine glory, in contrast with His place as a servant, and His position of subjection, we say that the Son was inferior to the Father, in so far as He was human; but that He was reinstated into His equality with the Father after His sojourn here, not endued with any new, or adventitious, or unaccustomed glory, but rather restored to that state in which He was at the beginning with the Father. And indeed, the inspired writer who initiates us into mysteries, I mean Paul, no longer attributing to Him the humiliation belonging to man's estate after His resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven, exhorts us saying: *Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him so no more.* And of himself again: *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ.* And yet, why is it that when He says that on His second coming to us He will change *the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory*, he now denies it, saying: *Not from men, neither through man*, although destined to be an apostle by Jesus Christ? But how is it that he says he knew Him not in the flesh? Did he then, tell me, *deny the Master that bought him*? God forbid; for he is rightminded. For when the period of the actual humiliation or degradation of the Only-begotten had been accomplished, and come to an end, He makes haste to proclaim Himself and to gain recognition, not in the character which He presented when emptied of His glory, but of His natural attributes of God. For when it had once been known and admitted that He was human, He was bound to instruct believers in Him that He was also God by nature; and for this reason He chooses to speak of His divinity, rather than anything else.

And I marvel that the heretic of whom we are speaking does not blush when he says that "as only things which belong to the same class admit of comparison with each other, they must confess the Father is greater than the Divinity of the Son." For he does not perceive, it seems, that he has armed his own argument against himself. For let him answer us this pertinent inquiry: From what starting point can comparisons of things of the same class best proceed? Can we reasonably start with what they are, according to the common definition of their nature, or with the qualities which belong to, or are deficient in each, or inhere or do not inhere in each? And I will give an example, and will select that which he gave to us by way of

illustration. If any one choose to compare one man with another, looking to the one common definition of their essence, he would find no distinction; for there is no difference between man and man, so far as each is a thinking animal, mortal, and capable of sense and knowledge, as in all men there is one and the same definition of their essence. Nor does one horse differ from another in its essential character as a horse; but one man differs from another in some special sort of knowledge, as writing, and in divers other ways. This does not affect the essence, but clearly proceeds from quite another cause. So also one horse excels another in speed, or is smaller or larger than another; but you will find that superiority or inferiority in these respects lies outside the definition of their essence, otherwise things brought into mutual comparison could have no distinctions made between them. For if one man had a less or greater degree of the essential character of man, how could we conceive or speak of him at all? Then all things of the same type in their essential characters are uniform. But the difference lies in those attributes which either inhere in them, or which lie outside (viewing them in the light of accidents). Since then, according to his premise or statement, which I will proceed to deal with, only things of like nature admit of comparison at all appropriately, he must start by admitting that the Son is of the same class as the Father, that is, of the same Essence. For so you will have the same class in view; for he proved that man might be compared with man, and horse with horse. Then let him go on to tell us the reason why, when the Son is compared with God the Father as being of the same class He has any kind of inferiority to Him, and where we shall find it, when one and the same definition of their essence belongs to things of the same class? For in the case of the essence of a class, its definition is not perfect in some cases and imperfect in others, but is one and the same for all. But we may say that any accident may have a separate cause and accrue to a thing in a different manner.

In order to make what I have said quite clear, I will set before you the illustration I gave at the outset. No man differs from another in his essential character as man; but one man is pious and another wicked; and one is weak and maimed, while another is healthy and strong; and one is vile and another good. But when a man accurately investigates the reasons for these distinctions, he will not trace them to their common definition of the essence, but rather attributes the causes to diseases of mind or body. As then, there is one definition of Godhead for the Father and the Son both in conception and reality (otherwise one could not but go astray), for They are compared as belonging to the same class, and I will use his words for the purpose of the argument----let these deluded men tell us what they think it was that paved the way for the inferiority of the Son to God the Father; was it disease, or indolence, and those things which are known to affect created beings'? Who would be so mad and such a slave of contradictions as even to lend an ear to such blasphemy? When then, being (as He is), of the same class as the living God, He Himself also is manifestly by nature God----for He is brought into comparison with the Father: and nothing can hinder His having a like state with His Father----how is He inferior?

Since, then, this adversary of the truth has given in detail a mass of contradictions, with reference to the text, and has not hesitated to affirm that "the Father is greater than the Godhead of the Son," let us then, after having made a brief defence of the Incarnation, and separated it in our demonstration from the consideration of the matter under discussion, compare the Divinity of the Son with that of the Father, according to Their definition; but let us previously inquire of him who dares to say this, whether he thinks that God, when He is God, is so by nature, or something else besides, but honoured with the appellation of Divinity, as there are *many so that are called gods and lords in heaven, and many on earth*. When then

he asserts that the Son has been honoured by the bare appellation of Divinity, but that He is not by nature really that which He is said to be, we who are rightminded will encounter him, and openly exclaim, "My good Sir, if He is not really God, we shall worship the creature in preference to the Creator, and not only we who inhabit this earthly sphere, but also the multitude of holy angels; and we shall also accuse every Saint who has spoken of Him as the real and true God, and most of all we charge S. John, who said of Him: *We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know the true God, and we are in His true Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God, and eternal life.*" But if, rejecting all inspired writings alike, he confess that He is really God, and be so minded and still suggest the doctrine that even so He falls below the Father's dignity in some respect, has he not introduced to us a new God, wholly dis severed from His natural connexion with the Father, and conceived of as having a separate existence and not inhering in the substance of God the Father? But I think the matter is obvious to every one. For if nothing is conceived of as being greater or less than itself, but as greater than anything which is less, and less than anything which is greater, must he not perforce admit that there are two true and real Gods, so that one is thought the greater, and the other the less. So the faith of the Church is wholly destroyed and overturned by their doctrine, for we shall have not one God but two. Whose temples then are we according to the Scriptures? Surely His Who established His Spirit in our hearts. When then we find in the Holy Writings the Spirit spoken of as not of the Father only but also of the Son, what are we to infer, and what view must we take? Which of the two reject and call the other God? If, however, we are to admit a duality of Gods, one less and the other greater, we shall say that both abide in our hearts by separate Spirits, and we shall be found temples of more than one God, and there are two Spirits dwelling in us, a greater and a less, corresponding to the nature of those who gave them. For who could tolerate such ravings, and who cannot see that their doctrine is absurd and ridiculous, after he has considered the view I have just set forth? But, perhaps, if he is forced to admit that there is a duality of Gods by nature, one the greater and the other the less, he will proceed to that doctrine that is always recurring in his writings; I mean, he will say that the Son has a separate nature----though He is not wholly devoid of the nature of a created being, yet neither does He wholly decline from the Divinity of God the Father. For those who do not scruple to say plainly that He is a creature take refuge in refinements of language, trying as it were to gloss over their profanity. When then we say that the Son has such a nature as not to be wholly God, nor yet to fall entirely into the category of creatures, but that He holds an intermediate place, so as to fall beneath the dignity of God the Father, and yet to exceed created beings in glory, we will say first of all, that there is no authority to induce us to lay down the doctrine they choose to propound. For either let them satisfy us from the holy and inspired writings, or confessing they have no voucher for their private opinion, blush for laying down definitions in matters of faith from their own private judgment.

But since it occurred to them to say this in their rash folly, I will proceed to the view they have propounded, and I will say once more that if only things of the same class are properly capable of mutual comparison,----and the Son has proved that He may properly be compared with God the Father in the plainest language, *The Father is greater than I,*----must not then the Father be conceived of as having the same nature you attribute to the Son? What follows then? Your whole speculation is upset. For so long as you maintain that the Father is greater than the Son, but a created being is less according to you, the nature of the Only-begotten lies between the two. And when the nature of the Father is lessened to that of the Son, one of the extremes is left out, as there is no longer anything above and superior to the Son. And if, as he says, He is compared with the Father as being one of the same class, must not the definition of

Their Essence be one and the same for both? And if you scruple to admit that the Son is of the same Essence with the Father, but rather put Him in a position of inferiority, and debase the glory of the Father to that of a being whom you reckon less than and inferior to Him, do you not see blasphemy springing up like a thorn? Does not then a *root of bitterness springing up* rankle in the heart of those thus minded? Why then do you leave the straight path of truth, and launch into such absurd discussions? Grant then to the Only-begotten in your thoughts an equality with God the Father. For thus there will be One God, worshipped and glorified in the holy and consubstantial Trinity, both by us and by the holy angels.

29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe.

A prophecy of the future is manifestly a sure pledge of what the future has in store for us. Christ confirms therefore the heart of His disciples, and seems to inspire in them a firm conviction that He is really ascending to God the Father in the heavens, to reign with Him and share His throne as God, and as God really begotten of Him. For do not, He says, set My departure, which is according to the flesh and an object of sight (for I will be with you as God for ever), on a level with that of the holy prophets. For they, as they passed from the earth and paid the debt of nature, were brought low, and died according to the law of human creatures. But I, Who am the true God, am not measured by the same standard as My creatures awaiting the time of the resurrection. For I live for ever, and I am the True Life. And I will send the Comforter, and I will grant you My peace also, and will not lie; but to the intent that, when you: receive the promise and are illumined by the grace of the Holy Spirit, you may ratify the truth of My words, recollecting what I have said in the light of experience, and to the intent that you may have the firm conviction that I live and reign with the Father, I have foretold and spoken this to you. The fulfilment of the promise will then confirm the truth of My words. For if I be not the Life, He says, and if I be not enthroned with God the Father, how can I Myself vouchsafe Divine and spiritual graces? And I will bestow them as I have promised, and I will bring to you the Spirit and peace. Is it not then beyond dispute that I am the Life, and that I reign with the Father. For it is not the act of one who is dead, or powerless to illumine with Divine graces those who love him, but it is the act of One Who is living and powerful and Who reigns for ever. Christ therefore has hereby taught us that He made no empty prophecy of the future. For He says that He made this discourse that they might have their faith in Him confirmed, when they came to think upon and reflect on His promises, after they had experienced His grace.

30, 31 I will no more speak much with you, for the prince of the world cometh: and he hath nothing in Me; but that the world may know that I love the Father, as the Father gave Me commandment even so I do.

Now when the impious Jews were already at hand, with the band of soldiers whom they brought, and their leader who also had promised to betray Him, and were ready to take Him and bear Him away in no long time to His sufferings upon the cross, and before the Crucifixion, He declared that He would break off His discourse with them. For, He says, the time is short and already past. And now that the bloodthirsty spirit of the Jews is at its height against Me, and shows itself already within the gates, the time for speech with you is past, and the period of My passion has arrived. But He says, *The prince of this world hath nothing in Me.* And I shall die very gladly, and undergo death to save the world, and through reverence to My Father and love towards Him willingly encounter inconceivable anguish, that I may fulfil

His Will. The aim of what He says here is very plain, and compressing His words into smaller compass we say: Adam, the author of our race, underwent death by a Divine curse, through his breaking the commandment given to him, accused by himself and the devil. He indeed seems to have suffered for good reason, since the doom of punishment justly pursues those who have sinned from indolence; but the second Adam, that is our Lord Jesus Christ, Who can have no such charge brought against Him at all, for He *did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth*, underwent His sufferings for us, having of Himself no responsibility whatever for them, but by His sufferings procured a ransom for the world, owing to His love for the Father, Who yearned for the salvation of the world. For it was truly the work of His love for the Father not to set at nought His decree and firm resolve, but to hasten to bring it into effect. And what was this decree? He willed that His own Son, though of like fashion with Himself and distinguished by His perfect equality with Him, should descend to such humiliation as to take the form of man for our sakes, and not shrink from death to save the world. This the Son did through love of His Father, Who is said to have ordered Him by His own power to suffer death in His fleshly nature, and to destroy the power of corruption, and to quicken the dead, and to restore them to their ancient state. Therefore He says that the time for speech is short. For My suffering is drawing nigh, and the presumptuous counsels of the Jews have burst into flame. I will suffer willingly, as for this cause I have come.

But *the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me*; that is, I shall not be convicted of sin, and the Jews will not be able to establish their charge of drunkenness against Me, the devil hath no part in Me, for vices are as it were his attributes, and wickedness owes its parentage to him. For the truth of our Saviour's words will be most clearly seen from what follows. For how did He sin, Who knew no sin, the true and living God, Who was wholly incapable of turning from the path of righteousness? And we shall see this most clearly by the actual writings of the holy Evangelists. For the most wise John has represented Pilate saying, *I find no crime in Him*; and again, after putting on Him the crown of thorns, as saying these words: *Behold, I bring Him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in Him*; and Matthew says that he so hated the crime, that he washed his hands before the Jews and said, *I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man*; and the same Evangelist points Him out to us, when He was brought into the presence of the high priests themselves, and says: *Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against the Christ, that they might put Him to death; and they found it not, though many false witnesses came*. Still, though accusations were sought against Him by the agency of men, the devil used them as ministers and instruments of his own malice, and it was he more than any one else who sought to find sin in Him. It is then true that the devil had *no part* in Him, whom Christ called *prince of this world*, speaking of the present moment, not as though he were truly lord of it, but as a foreign intruder who has gained by the law of conquest what does not belong to him. For by sin he subjected mankind to himself, and driving them away from God as sheep who have no shepherd, he ruled over them though they were not his own. Therefore was he rightly cast out from the kingdom he had so obtained. For Christ has become King over us, and therefore He says: *Now shall the prince of this world be east out; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself*.

Arise, let us go hence.

The common and usual acceptation of the words before us suggests the thought, that as the period of the madness of the Jews had come, and the priceless Cross of our Saviour was well-nigh set up, He was hastening to depart with His holy disciples, to that place in which the

band of men and officers found and took Him. And the thought is a plausible one. But probably there was another meaning hinted at; I mean a spiritual and hidden meaning. For when He says the words, *Arise, let us go hence*, He means to signify that to all of us there lies open by Him and with Him a change from one state to another, and a refuge from a worse condition in a better; in order that we may realise some such conception as this,---the passing from death unto life, and from corruption into incorruption, by Him and with Him, as I just said, as passing from one place into another. It is a fine saying then, *Arise, and let us go hence*; or you may interpret it to yourselves in some other way. From henceforth we are bound to be transformed from loving to think on earthly things into choosing the will to do God's pleasure; and besides this, to pass from slavery into the dignity of sonship; from earth into the city above; from sin to righteousness,---the righteousness I mean that is due to faith in Christ; from the impurity of man's nature to the sanctification by the Spirit; from dishonour to honour; from ignorance to knowledge; and from cowardice and faintheartedness to endurance in goodness.

Localising then, figurating as it were, our transgressions upon earth in the spot whereon He stood, He says, *Arise, and let us go hence*. For if this meaning entered into the scope of His speech, and He means to show thereby His affinity to us, it can do us no harm at all to act in this way, since He found it in His nature so to do. Moreover, in other places you will find Him saying to His own disciples: *We must work the works of Him That sent us, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work*. Do you hear how He implicates Himself together with us in the duty of doing work, although He does not lie under the necessity of working as we do? And this form of speech is usual with us, and we shall find it just as much amongst ourselves; and the inspired Paul, when he rebuked the Corinthians, ventured on this expression, exhorting them in these words: *Now these things, my brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos; that in us ye might learn not to think beyond the things which are written*. And there is no question that we have not an elder, nor an angel, but the Lord of all Himself, though He was not subject to our infirmities, to point out the way to all that is good, and to turn us from our old lusts to better things. For we have been ransomed not by ourselves, nor by any other creature, but rather by Christ Himself our Saviour. Therefore, when escaping as it were with us, in our company, from the wickedness of the world, He says, *Arise, let us go hence*. He speaks these words not as subject to it as we are, or bound by human infirmities; but as our leader and champion and guide, to point out the way to incorruption and life in sanctification and love of God.

CHAPTER II. That the Son is Consubstantial with God the Father, and not of an alien or foreign nature, as some of the perverse assert.

xv. 1 *I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman.*

He wishes to show us that it behoves us to love, to hold fast to our love towards Him, and how great a gain we shall have from our union with Him, when He says that He is the Vine, by way of illustration; and that those who are united and fixed and rooted in a manner in Him, and who are already partakers in His nature through their participation in the Holy Spirit are branches; for it is His Holy Spirit Which has united us with the Saviour Christ, since connexion with the Vine produces a choice of those things which belong to It, and our connexion with It holds us fast. From a firm resolve in goodness we proceed onward by faith, and we become His people, obtaining from Him the dignity of Sonship. For according to the holy Paul, *He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit*. As then in other places He has been

called the foundation and coping-stone by the voice of the prophets, for upon Him we are built up, ourselves being the stones, living and spiritual stones, into *a holy priesthood for a habitation of God in the Spirit*, and in no other way are we able to be built up into this, save only if Christ be the coping-stone, so here by a similar reflection He says that He is a Vine, as it were the mother and nourisher of its branches. For we are begotten of Him and in Him in the Spirit, to produce the fruits of life; not the old life of former days, but that which consists in newness of faith and love towards Him. And we are preserved in our hold on this life by clinging as it were to Him, and holding fast to the holy commandment given to us, and by making haste to preserve the blessing of our high birth; that is, by our refusing to grieve in any way whatever the Holy Spirit That has taken up His abode in us, by Whom God is conceived to dwell in us. For in what manner we are in Christ and He in us the wise John will show us when He says: *Hereby we know that we are in Him and He in us, by the Spirit Which He gave us; and again, Hereby know we that we are in Him; he that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk even as He walked.* And he makes this even clearer to his hearers by the words, *He that keepeth His commandments abideth in Him, and He in him.* For if the keeping of His commandments worketh love towards Him, and we are joined to Him by love, surely what has been said has been shown to be true by these quotations. For just as the root of the vine ministers and distributes to the branches the enjoyment of its own natural and inherent qualities, so the Only-begotten Word of God imparts to the Saints as it were an affinity to His own nature and the nature of God the Father, by giving them the Spirit, insomuch as they have been united with Him through faith and perfect holiness; and He nourishes them in piety, and worketh in them the knowledge of all virtue and good works.

And when He calls the Father Husbandman, why does He give Him this title, for the Father is not idle or inert in His dealings with us, and while the Son nourishes us and sustains us in a perfect state by the Holy Spirit, the rectification of our condition is as it were the function of the whole sacred and consubstantial Trinity, and the will and power to do all the actions done by It pervades the whole Divine Nature? Therefore it is glorified by us in its entirety, and in one single aspect. For we call God a Saviour, not gaining the graces which are compassionately bestowed upon us partly from the Father, and partly from the Son Himself or the Holy Spirit, but calling our salvation the work of One Divinity. And if we must apportion the gifts which are bestowed upon us, or those activities which They display about creation, to each person of the Trinity separately, none the less do we believe that everything proceeds from the Father by the Son in the Spirit. You will think then quite rightly that the Father nourishes us in piety by the Son in the Spirit. He husbands us, that is He watches over us, and cares for us, and deems us worthy of His sustaining providence by the Son in the Spirit. For this view will be more correct than any other, in my opinion. For if we attribute to each a separate activity in His dealings with us, apart from the others, is it not beyond controversy that since the Son is called a Vine and the Father a Husbandman, we are nourished and sustained in well-being especially by the Son alone, while from the Father we receive merely His providential care. For it is the function of the vine to nourish the branches, and of the tiller of the soil to tend them. And if we think aright, we shall believe that neither the one function, if performed apart from the Father, nor the other apart from the Son or the Holy Ghost, could sustain the whole. For all proceeds from the Father by the Son in the Spirit, as we have said. Very appropriately now the Saviour called the Father a Husbandman, and it is not at all difficult to assign the cause. For it was to the intent that no one might think that the Only-begotten merely exercised care over us that He represents God the Father as co-operating with Him, calling Himself the *Vine* that quickens His own branches with life and productive power, and the Father a *Husbandman*, and for this reason teaching us that

providential care over us is a sort of distinct activity of the Divine Substance. For we were bound to know that God did not only make us partakers of His nature, conceived of as belonging to the Holy and consubstantial Trinity, but also He watches over us with, the most diligent care, which is illustrated to us very appropriately on this occasion by the figure of husbandry. For when He has before spoken of the vine and its branches, how is not the illustration of the husbandman most apt, introducing the One Who takes the care and charge of the whole, that is God. And if we are convinced that the Son is really and truly in His own Father, and He has Him that begat Him in His own nature, and all things are brought to perfection by Both in the Spirit as by One Divinity, neither will the Father be without His share in nourishing us, nor can the Son be thought not to partake in His husbandry. For where Their identity of nature is seen in unmistakable language, there too there is no division of activity, though any one may think that they have manifold diversities of operations. And, as there is one Substance, that is the true and real Godhead conceived of in three Persons, that is in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is it not extremely clear and incontrovertible that when we speak of an activity of one, it is a function of the One and entire Divinity, in the way of inherent power?

Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ, accepting His Father as His Fellow-worker in all He did, once went amongst the impious Jews and said: *Many good works have I showed you from My Father: for which of those works do ye stone Me?* And again, about working on the Sabbath-day: *My Father worketh even until now, and I work.* And no one would think He said that the Father acts separately in His dealings with the world, and so also the Son. For since the Father does all things by the Son, and could not otherwise act, as He is His wisdom and power, for this reason He, on the other hand, called the Father the doer of His own works, when He said: *I do nothing of Myself; but the Father abiding in Me doeth His works.* I think, therefore, we ought to take this view and no other, that Christ takes the place of the vine, and we are dependent on Him as branches, enriched as it were by His grace, and drinking in by the Spirit spiritual power to bear fruit.

And since we who have chosen the right path are assailed by the trenchant arguments of our adversaries, who try to persuade us to take a false view, we will make things clear to our hearers, compressing into short compass what one of them has set forth at length. "Well," he says, "has the Only-begotten refuted and brought to shame those who think that He is of the same Substance with God the Father. For note how He clearly calls Himself the Vine and the Father the Husbandman: for as the vine is not the same in substance with the husbandman, for the one is wood and the other is man, and these things are altogether separate and alien in nature, so the Son is not of the same Essence with the Father, and the definition of Their Essence is widely different and distinguishes Them, if the One is a Husbandman and the Other a Vine. For there is no question that some people unjustifiably attempt to prove that this has only reference to the Incarnation. For He does not say that His Flesh is the Vine, but rather His Godhead. But will it not be clear to everyone," he says, "that our body has no dependence on the Flesh of the Saviour as the branches on the vine, nor yet is the fruit of the Saints fleshly but spiritual? Therefore," he says, "putting on one side for the present all reference to the flesh, we say that the meaning of the speech relates to the Divinity itself of the Son; and we maintain that that Divinity is the Vine on which we depend by faith."

These idle ravings then suggested themselves to him, as he capriciously rejected according to his own private judgment the correct interpretation of the Divine doctrine, and distorted it, in his headstrong folly, into conformity with his own preconceived theory. But we who cling to

the truth are quite of the opposite opinion, and following in the lines of the knowledge of the holy fathers shall retain the correct doctrine. We may now pertinently inquire, according to our lights, how we ought to interpret the meaning of the text, and we must also see how and in what manner we may equip ourselves to encounter their arguments. For if we saw that no harm could steal therefrom unto the hearts of the simple-minded, we would pass them over in silence, and, rightly disdainful to intermeddle with their vain theories, have embarked on the investigation of the ensuing passage. But since such doctrines would be very calamitous if they gained acceptance, does it not follow that we ought, fired with religious zeal, to enter on the contest of words and arguments? For thus the wickedness of our adversaries can be very easily detected. Let us commence by saying that it is the height of folly unseasonably to reject what has been given by way of illustration and brought in as a similitude of the relations of the Trinity to display the manner of Their Nature or Essence. For I say that those who wish rightly to comprehend anything that is said, do well in looking at the purpose of the discussion, and ought attentively to consider what is the meaning of the Maker of the speech in His conversation. For consider, too, in the light of what lies before us, whether I do not seem to you to speak well. It was not the purpose of our Saviour Christ to teach the disciples that He was different in nature or separate from the Father; and it was not for this reason that He resolved to call Him That begat Him the Husbandman and Himself the Vine. For if this was His aim, why did He not end His speech here, without adding any qualification to it? For He would have illustrated what His purpose was, according to your idea, without chance of confusion, if He had merely given these names to Himself and the Father. But now, after premising that He was the Vine, and saying that we depend on Him as branches, and then investing the Father with the character of the Husbandman, He makes it quite clear and obvious to all, I think, that He has no such meaning as you suppose, and wishes, by palpable illustrations visible to the bodily eye, to persuade His hearers that all power of producing the fruits of the Spirit proceeds from Him; as the branches which grow up from the root are pervaded by its inherent quality. For every good thing which we have is given; but it is not so with God. For He is in Himself the originator of His own peculiar attributes, glory and might, which appertain to Him alone. Therefore Christ, being as it were the root, is the Vine, and we are the branches. And if He called the Father the Husbandman, do not think that He spoke of Him as being different in substance. For He does not mean this, as we have said; but wishes to point out that the Divine Nature is the root and origin in us of the power of producing the fruits of the Spirit of life, besides the blessings we have spoken of, tending us like a husbandman, and extending over those who are called by faith to partake in it the providence of love. The unlikeness of the illustrations used then has no reference to the definition of the essence, for it is not the purpose of our Saviour Christ to speak on that subject, but His teaching has quite another object.

And since the deluded heretic chooses to propound his false views in his folly, and says that no argument will induce those who as it were distort the aim of the words which are before us from their right meaning, and attribute to them a reference to the Incarnation of Christ, for we were not united to Him in the body, nor yet did the Apostles as branches abide in the body of Christ, nor were they after this fashion connected with Him, but in temper of mind and faith unfeigned; let us briefly reply to this, and show him that he is altogether astray, and does not follow aright the holy writings. For that we are spiritually united with Christ in a disposition made conformable to perfect love, in true and uncorrupted faith, in virtue and purity of mind, the statement of our doctrine will no way deny. For we confess that he is quite right in saying this; but in venturing to say that no reference is intended to our union with Him after the flesh, we will point out that he is wholly out of harmony with the inspired

writings. For how could it be disputed, or what right-minded man could deny, that Christ is the Vine in this relation? And we, as being branches after a figure, receive into ourselves life out of and proceeding from Him, as Paul says: *For we are all one body in Christ, seeing that we who are many are one bread: for we all partake of the one bread.* And let any one account for this and give us an interpretation of it without reference to the power of the blessed mystery. Why do we receive it within us? Is it not that it may make Christ to dwell in us corporeally also by participation and communion of His Holy Flesh? Rightly would he answer, I deem. For Paul writes, *that the Gentiles have become fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers, and fellow-heirs of Christ.* How are they shown to be "embodied"? Because, being admitted to share the Holy Eucharist, they become one body with Him, just as each one of the holy Apostles. For why did he (S. Paul) call his own, yea, the members of all as well as his own, the members of Christ? For he writes thus: *Know ye not that your members are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? God forbid.* And the Saviour Himself says: *He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.* For here it is especially to be observed that Christ saith that He shall be in us, not by a certain relation only, as entertained through the affections, but also by a natural participation. For as, if one entwineth wax with other wax and melteth them by the fire there resulteth of both one, so through the participation of the Body of Christ and of His precious Blood, He in us, and we again in Him, are co-united. For in no other way could that which is by nature corruptible be made alive, unless it were bodily entwined with the Body of That Which is by nature Life, the Only-begotten. And if any be not persuaded by my words, give credence to Christ Himself, crying aloud: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up in the last day.* Thou nearest now Himself plainly declaring that, unless we "eat His Flesh, and drink His Blood," we "have not in ourselves," that is, in our flesh, "Eternal Life." But Eternal Life may be conceived to be, and most justly, the Flesh of that which is Life, that is, the Only-begotten. And how or in what manner this raises us up on the last day hear now; and I will not scruple to tell you. For since the Life, that is the Word which shone forth from God the Father, took unto Himself flesh, the flesh became transformed into a living principle, and it is inconceivable that the life should be vanquished by death. Therefore, since the life is in us, it will not endure the bondage of death, but will wholly vanquish corruption, since it cannot endure its results. For *corruption* does not *inherit incorruption*, as Paul says. For if Christ uses the emphatic expression, *I will raise him up*, He not only invested His own Flesh with the power of raising those who are asleep, but the Divine and Incarnate Word, being one with His own Flesh, says, *I will raise him up*, and with good reason. For Christ is not severed into a duality of Sons, nor can any one think that His Body is alien from the Only-begotten, as no doubt no one could maintain that the body in which the soul dwells is alien from it.

When then by these disquisitions Christ has been shown to us to be the Vine in this sense, and we the branches, inasmuch as we partake in a fellowship with Him that is not merely spiritual but also corporeal, why does he talk so vainly, asserting that, since our dependence on our fellowship with Him is not corporeal, but consisting rather in faith and disposition to love according to the law, He did not call His own Flesh, he says, the vine, but rather His Godhead? And yet, why, some one may say, does he reject the interpretation that is more fitting and appropriate to the passage, and hasten to adopt one widely divergent? For shall we not grant that Christ is the Vine in a more appropriate way also according to the fellowship of the flesh, and that we are branches through the similarity of our nature? For that which

proceeds from the vine is of like nature with it. And this we say, not as attempting to deny the possibility of union with Christ by right faith and sincere love, but rather from a wish to point out that Christ is the Vine and we are the branches, both in a spiritual and corporeal sense.

Further, the statement of the truth is simple and obvious; but our adversary, in his wickedness, disdains the admission that Christ was the Vine in a corporeal sense also, as conferring His own Life on the branches, that is to say on us, just as the visible and earthly vine confers life on the branches that cling to it. He distorts and does violence to the meaning of the thought, making it have reference only to His Godhead. For he thought that he might thus bring a calumny against it, raising this ignorant contention: "If the Son is the Vine," he says, "and the Father the Husbandman, and the Son differs in nature from Him, as in the figure of the vine, the Son will not be of the same Substance with the Father."

And he thinks he has built up a profound, trenchant, and incontrovertible theory against the doctrines of the Church, but will no less here also be convicted of folly. For when he first asserts that the Son is alien in nature, and places Him outside the Substance of Him That begat Him, how then can he any longer call God a Father, and the Son a Son in any sense? For if he says that He was not begotten, that is, proceeded from the Substance of the Father, just as the offspring of men from men, how could He be in any true sense the Son? How then can he set aside the blessed John, when he says: *He that denieth the Son, will deny the Father also: he that confesseth the Son, confesseth the Father also?* And the saying is true. For the denial or confession of the One altogether involves the denial or confession of the Other. For the Father could not exist if the Son did not; nor could the Son be conceived of if He That begat Him were not conceived of with Him. If then he denies the Son, for he says that He belongs to another class, he thereby denies the Father also. What answer then, my good Sir, have you to make? Whom has faith left? Where is the glory of the Holy Trinity? For the nature that rules over the universe is hereby wholly taken away; that nature which is shown to us in plain language in the Holy Scripture. For their temerity and falsehood force us into the midst of difficult discussions. But, perhaps shrinking from so prodigious a blasphemy, he says that the Son belongs to another class, but was begotten of God the Father. But we will ask him once more to tell us how then does he grant and confess that He is begotten? For if as one of created beings, according to a state of mind that is in love and according to will, for all things are said to be produced from God, this none the less involves the same blasphemy. And if he says that He is truly the Son, but asserts that He is alien, and asserts even after saying this that He is different in class, even after this admission he commits an impiety against the Father Himself. For that which the nature of created beings disdained to suffer, this he would show that God underwent. For surely is not that which is truly the offspring of anything by nature manifestly of the same substance with the father of it? Is it not quite obvious to every one? The world then proceeds according to a suitable principle, for no creature produces anything different in kind from itself. And only in God shall we find the reverse, since He has begotten the Son different in kind and not of His own Nature.

It were likely then that our adversary should not like to make any reply; but if he persists in his folly, and thinks that the Son is different in kind from God the Father, we will not be slack in our advocacy of the doctrines of the truth. For we shall show that he says that God the Father is the same in kind with created beings; and how, or in what way, you may now learn. He clearly contends and maintains that it is not so much the flesh as the Divinity Itself of the Only-begotten that is called the Vine. Suppose it is so then. For I will ask the question, and let him make the reply. "Does he think that the Son is truly God, or not; or does he maintain that

He is spurious, or that His dignity only consists in empty titles?" And if he maintains that He is not God by nature, let him ponder over the testimony of the Only-begotten Himself, when He says, *I am the Truth*. For the truth has only one form, and does not admit of the spurious or mis-named. And let him accept the witness hereon of the most wise John, when he clearly exclaims, and says: *And we are in the true God, Jesus Christ: this is the true God and eternal life*. But if perhaps he is ashamed of this, and gives up his contention, and confesses that the Son is truly God, we will not shift our position, but will use his own words to overturn what he said. "Is not the Father, as the Husbandman, different in nature from the vine; for the one is man and the other wood?" Thus must not the vine be conceived of as really and truly of the same nature with its branches? And I suppose some would attain such a pitch of folly as to venture to deny what is so clear. When then, being truly God, He is of the same Substance with the true and living God, that is the Father, and He is the vine, and we are the branches, of the same nature plainly for this reason with the vine; shall not we ourselves also surely be Gods by nature, putting off as it were our own nature? But such an idea, only those wicked men, who shrink from no impiety, can entertain. For we have been created, and the Son is God by nature. Then how can this be? And how can that which was said of Him be true, if the branches are of the same nature with the vine? For it must be that either we ourselves are uplifted into the nature of the true Godhead, or that is brought down to us. For the branches are of like nature with the vine. And since the Son clearly says: *I and the Father are one*, either we shall ascend with Him to perfect likeness with the Father, or the Father Himself will be drawn down with the Son, Who is like in nature to us, into our likeness. You see then what a mass of blasphemies we have arising from his statement. Therefore we will rather follow the true doctrine, believing that the Son says by way of illustration: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches, My Father is the Husbandman."

2 Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit.

Our connexion with Christ is of the mind, and implies a power of union affecting the tenor of our lives; perfecting us in love and faith. And the faith dwells in our hearts, making the manifestation of the Divine knowledge complete: while the manner of the love requires us to keep the commandment laid down for us by Him. For thus He also indicated him that loves Him, saying: "He that loveth Me will keep My commandments." We must know then that being united with Him by faith, and giving effect to the manner of our union in mere barren confessions of faith, and not clenching the bond of our union by the good works that proceed from love, we will be branches indeed, but still dead and without fruit. For faith without works is dead, as the Saint says. If then after this manner the branch be seen to exist fruitlessly, depending, so to speak, from the trunk of the vine, know that such a man will encounter the pruning-knife of the husbandman. For He will wholly cut it off, and will give it to the fire to consume as worthless rubbish; for this is the judgment of the barren, as I think also in the case of the fig-tree, which was set before us by way of parable. The lord of the vineyard says to the tiller of the soil: *Cut it down; why doth it also cumber the ground?* So in this case too I think that the God and Father of all mows down the thick and barren burden of branches that hangs down from the vine in the figure with no produce of fruit. And I think that the Overseer of our souls, that is God, wishes to show by the parable here employed what and how great is the injury which the soul that is cut off from fellowship with Him has to endure. For it will wholly wither away, and become barren of every good work, and will unquestionably be abandoned to punishment, and be the prey of all consuming flames. Moreover, by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel, wishing to show this very clearly, He said: *Son of man, what is the*

vine-tree more than any other tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? Or will men take it to hang any vessel upon it? The yearly purging of it the fire performs; and at last it faileth. Is it meet for any work? Know then that that which has once been cut off and wholly severed is altogether useless, and cannot be taken to serve for any necessary purpose, but is soon only useful for firewood. Is it not clear that if we be a branch, and have been drawn away from the deceitfulness of a plurality of gods, and have confessed the faith of Christ, but are still barren, so far as the union which shows itself in works is concerned, we shall surely suffer the fate of the barren branches? And what then? For we are wholly cut off, and we shall be given to the flames, and shall have lost besides that life-giving sap, that is to say, the Spirit, Which we once had from the Vine. For that which Christ said of the man who buried his talent one may see accomplished in the case of those who have suffered complete severance. For just as the talent was taken away from him at once, so I think also is the Spirit taken from the branch, as in figure of sap or quality. And why is it taken away? That the Spirit of the Lord may not seem to share in the condemnation of those who are doomed to go to the perdition of fire by the sentence of the judge. For if earthly rulers will not on a sudden determine the fate of those who have once been held in honour, and dignified by kingly favours, but if such an one be convicted of some crime for which he may justly pay the penalty, this fate could not overtake him before he has been robbed of his honours; is it not necessary then that the soul that has been sentenced by the verdict from above to the fate of punishment, should in a manner be divested of, and lay aside, the grace of the Spirit before experiencing the evils? We say further that the barren branch will suffer such a fate, wishing to confirm our minds as far as possible, to be prone to lay fast hold on love towards Him by the active principle of virtue within us and faith unshaken, while He says that the fruitful branch will not at all be left without experiencing the care of the tiller of the soil, but will be thoroughly cleansed, so as to be more able to bear fruit. For God works with those who have chosen to live the best and most perfect life, and to do good works so far as in them lies, and have elected to seek perfection as citizens of God. He, as it were, uses the working-power of the Spirit as a pruning-hook, and circumcising in them sometimes the pleasures which are always calling us to fleshly lusts and bodily passions, and sometimes all those temptations which are wont to assail the souls of men, defiling the mind by divers kinds of evils. For this we say is that circumcision which is not the work of hands, but is truly that of the Spirit, of which Paul in one place says: *For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly: neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.* And in another place, again: *In Whom ye also believed and were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands.* And therefore they say to some, that if the branches of the vine in the figure suffer any purging, that cannot take place, I suppose, without suffering. For it is painful so far as, and to the extent that, the wood can suffer pain. In the same way then we must think it affects the Saints: and, if we consider attentively, we shall give them our consent and approval. For our God, Who loves virtue, instructs us by pain and tribulation. Moreover the prophet Isaiah says thus: *When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the sons and daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.* And the inspired Paul himself too says: *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons, for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not?* Nay, more, the choir of the Saints themselves, who exceed all conception, do not reject the instruction given by the Holy Ones, but rather eagerly welcome it with the words: *Instruct us, Lord, but in judgment, and not in wrath, that Thou make us not few.* For in wrath will be

accomplished the complete severance of the barren branches, for He sends them to punishment; but in judgment rather---that is, consideration and in mercy---will be accomplished the purging of those which bear fruit, which brings but small pain, to the quickening of their fertility, and occasioning a greater abundance of blossom springing up. Further, some accepting this exclaim: *Lord, by brief tribulation dost Thou chasten us*; for the tribulation of purification lasts but a short while, but, giving us instruction from above, makes us blessed. And we will receive the blessed David as a witness, who thus exclaims: *Blessed is the man whom Thou, Lord, chastenest, and instructest in Thy law, to comfort him in evil days*. For the days of the impartial judgment are truly days of evil omen, and dreadful to those who are wholly cut off and doomed to the perdition of punishment by fire; but to those who are chastened in that day the Lord robs them of their terrors. For such a man can no way be numbered among those who are doomed to judgment and punishment, as he is not a barren branch. Let then the fervour that shows itself in works be combined with the confession of the faith, and let it unite action with the doctrines concerning God. For then shall we be with Christ, and experience the secure and safe power of fellowship with Him, escaping the peril that results from being cut off from Him.

We made these observations because we thought we ought to deal with the investigation of the passage after a spiritual manner, and it is likely that Christ wished to hint at some other meaning, by His clearly saying: *Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh it away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit*. For by the branch that has been taken away from fellowship with Christ by the severance of the Father, He means, I think, the people of the Jews, who are not capable of bearing fruit; against whom the thrice-blessed John declares that the axe will be brought; saying that the wood which is cut off will be given over to the flames; while by those branches which do not need to be completely cut off, but which abide in the Vine, and which are to be purged by the providence of God, He means those among the Jews themselves who believed, and the converts to them from other nations, who have one and the same purification; for it is accomplished in the Holy Spirit, according to the Scriptures: but the manner of their purification is separate and distinct. For the children of Israel have cast off from them the wish to guide their life and conduct by the Mosaic Law, while the heart of the worshippers of idols is stripped of the past deceitfulness that held sway over their hearts, and also of the rubbish of impure and ignorant customs, in order that they may bring forth the fruit of the divine training of the Gospel, which may be meet for the table of God, and be acceptable to Him. And that what we have said is clearly true there is no difficulty in satisfying ourselves from the inspired writings themselves. For the inspired Paul enjoins those of the Jews who believed, when making light of the doctrines of the Gospel, they were once more backsliders, honouring the shadows of the Law: *Ye are alienated from Christ, ye who would be justified by the Law; ye are fallen away from grace*. And again: *I say unto you that if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing*. And if the wish to be justified according to the Law alienates them from Christ, is it not beyond question that it is the discarding of the Law as a guide of conduct that invites the power of union with Christ? In this way, then, the Israelites are circumcised, or rather purged, and so also he that once worshipped the creature more than the Creator, by getting rid of his past disease. And what does Paul say to them? *For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life*. And he charges them in another passage, and says: *But now, after ye have come to know God, or rather to be known of God, how turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments of the world, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again?* As therefore those who are willing to serve the beggarly elements become alienated from Christ,

while those who do not endure to serve the creature rather than the Creator become one with Him, shall we not confess that the manner of the purification of the Gentiles shall be the most profitable cutting away by the Spirit of the old deceit, bringing in all manner of good things to us in divers ways in its stead? For in the putting off and casting aside of evil things, the beauty of virtue is conspicuous by contrast. For where vileness is driven out, there holiness is seen to arise.

We must show, too, that our circumcision is by the Spirit fulfilling the need of purification in us, and that the Son brings in the Spirit; *for of His fulness we all received*, as John saith; and He it is that says to us, *Receive ye the Holy Spirit*. The Father then worketh our purification through the Son, by means of the circumcision that we conceive of through the Spirit. We have humbled then the rash and impious hardihood of our adversaries, who did not scruple to maintain that as Christ spoke of Himself as the Vine, and God the Father as the Husbandman, He could not be the same by nature with Him. "For no argument shall convince us," he says, "that the husbandman and the vine are identical in essence." When then the Son is found to be a Husbandman through the circumcision by the Spirit, they must be of this mind for the future, that since husbandmen are of the same class with each other, in so far as they are men, it is clear that the Son is not alien to God the Father, but like in substance with Him.

3 Already ye are clean, because of the word which I have spoken unto you.

He makes then His disciples a palpable and convincing demonstration of the art of the purifier of their souls; for *already*, He says, they are purged, not through a participation in anything else, but merely by the *word spoken* unto them, that is, the divine guidance of the Gospel. And this word proceeds from Christ. What man of sense, then, can any longer call in question that the Father has, as it were, a pruning-knife and hand, through whose instrumentality everything exists; that is, the Son, fulfilling the activity of that husbandry in us, which He attributes to the person of the Father, teaching us that all things proceed from the Father but by the instrumentality of the Son? For it is the Word of the Saviour that purgeth us, though the husbandry of our souls is attributed to God the Father. For this is His Living Word, sharp as a sword, *piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart*. For, reaching into the depths of each man's inmost soul, and having every man's hidden purpose revealed before It as God, It brings Its keen edge to bear upon our vain pursuits by the working of the Spirit. For in this, I suppose, we shall deem our purification to consist. And all things that profit us in the attainment of virtue It increases and multiplies to bear the fruit which is conceived in righteousness.

When then the manner of His husbandry of our souls is shown in the excellence of its operation, the ingenious and impious attempt of our adversaries is surely brought to nought, when they say that the Son is distinct in nature from God the Father, as He is called the Vine, and the Father the Husbandman. Let us consider and reflect on the fact that He declares that His disciples are clean, not through the special and distinct working of God the Father in them, that is, apart from the Only-begotten, but because they were obedient to His Word. As then He is the Quickener of our souls by the Son, and in the Son, in the same way as He is also the Husbandman or Guardian, He may properly be thought to act not otherwise than by the Son. And if those who start the argument against us think they ought to abide by the false theory they once broached, and, as Christ said that He was the Vine, think they are therefore, as it were, perforce compelled to degrade Him into a separate and foreign nature, what is

there now to hinder us too from going to the same height of shamelessness, and distorting the meaning of the illustration, and being converted against our will by a like folly, and choosing to revolt from this puerile and ridiculous conception? For if, since He is spoken of as the Vine, they think that for this reason He falls away from His natural relationship with God the Father, and is wholly different in Substance, since the vine and the husbandman are not identical in nature; why cannot we also, encountering them with an argument as ignorant and unscholarly as their own, say this----Are only the branches profited by the care of the tiller of the soil; and will the branches that depend from the stem alone reap the profit of His art, or will the nourisher or nurse too of the branches, that is, the vine, to which they cling and are fixed by nature, require some tending? I do not think this will be difficult to demonstrate. For our adversary himself will at once agree with us that if the trunk were not tended, the branches could not remain in good condition. Since then Christ has called Himself the Vine, and the trunk itself of the vine requires the fostering care of the tiller of the soil, or it will be wholly and entirely ruined, we shall draw the inference that the Son is on a level with ourselves, and requires, as we do, the Father's providence, that He may not Himself be distorted from what He is into something else, and fall away from His native dignity or the position that He holds. For the ridiculous argument of the enemies of divine truth reduces itself to this.

But let us have done with these diseased and foolish ravings, and enter upon a discussion concerning the Holy Apostles. For He says: *Already ye are clean, because of the word which I have spoken unto you:* just as though He were to say, the manner of your spiritual purification, which is conceived of as by the Spirit and in the Spirit, has been wrought by the Father, through My Word on you first. Behold, casting off the burden of the vain customs and corruption of this world, be ready to bring forth fruits acceptable to God: rid yourselves of the vain and profitless law of the Jews, and pay heed to it no more. My Word has purified you: for no longer do you conduct your lives by the Mosaic Law, or according to the dispensation of the writings thereof. For you will not seek sanctification in what ye eat and drink, nor in doctrines of baptisms, nor yet in sacrificial atonements; but consider that ye are established in firm faith, and make haste to appease God by every kind of good work. For in them is seen the power of spiritual bondage. Those who are destined to be pure will be, He says, even as you are. For they, just escaping from the net of the devil, and getting away from the snares of idol-worship, will be taught no longer to be governed by his decrees; but, shaking off the impurity of former customs as vain rubbish, and being thus for the future fitted to bear the fruits of the virtue that loves God, will be joined to Me in the manner of branches; and, being dependent on their love towards Me, will have their hearts enriched by the influences of the Spirit, and, imbibing the grace of My goodness, will continue stedfast to the end and be nurtured in righteousness. The Israelites, when they have been converted to faith in Me, and have been attached to Me in the manner of branches, then receiving into their mind purification through My Word, no longer devote themselves to the service of the letter; and not fixing their heart, as now, on shadows and types, bear the fruit of a true and spiritual service to God. For *God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship in Spirit and truth.* At the same time also He shows clearly, as in a figure, to His disciples the beauty that will belong to those who are about to be purified, and gives them the greatest encouragement to attain the still more ample excellence; showing them that their service and the training of their past teaching had not been vain ----that teaching of the Gospel, through which they were destined to benefit those who dwell in the whole world----displaying themselves as an example to those that believe on Christ. For it has been written concerning the

Saints, that it behoves us to watch closely *the issue of their life*, and to imitate their faith. And Paul incites those who serve God to be imitators of himself.

4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in Me.

We shall know then, by an accurate investigation of the words before us, that the being received of Christ through faith pure and true is the first work of that zeal which is requisite and dear to God. For this is the meaning of being numbered among the branches, which cling to the true Vine, I mean Christ. But the fruit of our second meditation is by no means less in importance than our first, but it has, indeed, an even more pregnant meaning: the loving to be united to God, and to lay fast hold on Him, through a love exhibited in works, which has the fulfilment of the holy and Divine command. For this causes us inseparably to inhere in, and to be closely united to, Him, as the Psalmist expresses it: *My soul has been joined unto Thee*. The being received then as it were into the rank of branches will not be sufficient for complete joy of heart, or for the sanctification which, as it were, exhibits Christ sanctifying us. But I maintain that the following Him purely through love perfect and unailing is also necessary. For by this means, the power of union or intimate conjunction with the Father may be best maintained and preserved. When therefore Christ said to His disciples, *Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you*; lest any one of those who have once been purified should be considered incapable of falling away, even though he should bestow no care to remain in a state of grace, He adds this useful injunction----that it is necessary to *abide in Him*. And what will this be? Nothing else, as I think, but quite obviously that which Paul well expresses: *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall*. For a thousand backslidings befall those who think that they are firmly fixed, and who do not take great precautions not to lose the place which they have obtained; and I think that we require the utmost modesty and sobriety, even though a man think himself firmly fixed by the progress he has already made towards establishing himself in righteousness. He then has shown the nature and extent of the punishment of him who has, as it were, been cut off from intimate union with God, through slipping back from negligence into what is wrong, in the statement, *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, so neither can ye, except ye abide in Me*. For unless the branch had supplied to it from its mother the vine the life-producing sap, how would it bear grapes, or what fruit will it bring forth, and from what source? You will perceive that the language of Christ has an application by analogy to ourselves. For no fruit of virtue will spring up anew in us, who have once fallen away from intimate union with Christ. To those, however, who are joined to Him Who is able to strengthen them, and Who nourishes in righteousness, the capacity of bearing fruit will readily be added by the provision and grace of the Spirit, as by life-producing water. And knowing this, the Only-begotten said in the Gospels: *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink*. And to this, the Evangelist, inspired by the Spirit, has testified, when in his excellent explanation he says: *But this spake He of the Spirit, Which they that believe on Him were to receive*. And the blessed David, speaking as though to God the Father, thus addressed Him: *With Thee is the fountain of life, and Thou shalt give them to drink of the river of blessedness*. For by the fountain of Divine and spiritual life and of the fulness of blessedness, who else could be meant but the Son, Who fattens and waters our souls in the position of branches clinging to Him by faith and love, with the quickening and joy-giving grace of the Spirit.

5, 6 *I am the Vine, ye are the brandies: he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ openly says that He has been called the Vine for this reason, and this reason only, that we may clearly understand, and not merely perceive with the eyes of the body, as by a palpable, sensible, and most visible figure, that to those who are eager to be closely joined to Him, and who choose to enjoy a close union with His nature, will be added the capacity and the conditions requisite for the production of virtue and spiritual fruit-bearing; since they are evidently provided, from its source, as from the vine their mother, with a potential and an actual force. In those however who have as it were been torn away or cut off from their hold on Him, by turning to what is wrong and to conduct displeasing to God, not merely will no capacity of a fitness for virtue, or of being able to show the fruits that spring from goodness be seen, but the doom of being consumed by all-devouring fire, as by an inevitable necessity, will await them. For that which is useless for righteousness seems fit to pay the penalty, just as the withered branches will be only useful for the fire.

You would find an indisputable and true proof of what we have said, not by perusing the chapters of the saints of old, but rather by applying your attention to the study of the holy Apostles themselves. For they, by neglecting in no way love towards Christ, but abiding in Him, and considering that nothing whatever should be set before righteousness towards Him, have become known throughout the world. And they exhibited through the world the fruit of their virtue, and showing themselves a pattern of a God-loving state, as a bright image to all under the sun, they wreathed for themselves the fadeless crown of glory with God. But he, who by a few pieces of silver was entrapped into the net of destruction, I mean the base and most mercenary Judas, was cut off from the true Vine, that is Christ, and withered away in a certain sense, and lost together his position of discipleship and the quickening quality of the Spirit. For he was cast outside, according to the saying of the Saviour. For he became alienated from Christ, and was given over like rubbish to him that chastises with fire. Pertinently then does our Lord Jesus Christ set forth to His hearers the joy of heart that springs from the desire of intimate union with Him, and on the other hand place before them the punishment resulting from severance, thus conceiving a twofold method of salvation. For either by an aim which looks forward to glory and life, or our dread of the chastisement by fire, we shall lay hold more earnestly, with all the strength of our mind, on intimate union with Him.

But He calls the Father *Husbandman*, attributing to His Divine Nature the watchful care over us, as also we have previously shown at length. For He will be found doing the work of a hand to the Husbandman, Who uses no other hand, according to His Consubstantiality both from Him, and in Him; as is really the case, and as it is in our power to see in the following way. For as a proof that all things are done by the Son, as by the hand of the Father, listen to what the Father Himself says respecting His creatures: *My hand made all these things*; whereas all things were made by the Son, according to the holy writings.

We must observe that the divine Paul figures darkly to us the true cutting, even though it be not that of a vine, when he says: *Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*

7 If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

He says that the love of unbroken union with Him, and the keeping in mind as a Divine and spiritual treasure entrusted to them the pure treasure of the lessons of the Gospel, and the true instruction of the doctrines of the faith, established also by unerring interpretations, will be the root of the most perfect goodness. For the whole discourse of the Saviour would convey this meaning to us, if we consider the aim set forth in the Gospels. For in the promise of Christ that He will continually give what is good to those who ask Him, how shall we deny that a very clear pledge of this is given to us? I suppose it is necessary to inquire what in addition is the accurate meaning of the words: *If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.* For can any one say that to abide in Christ can be attained without keeping in oneself also His words? Now to this question men of sense will doubtless answer "No." For our hearer must remember, that when inquiring into the kind of love towards Christ, and investigating what it was, and how it could exist in perfection, we said that there are two methods given; I mean that through faith which is wholly blameless, and that again which projects itself in actuality, which enters secretly by pure love. And if we trust our Saviour's words that this is so with us, it follows that they adopt a dangerous and intolerable explanation of the relationship, in admitting the bare faith, which consists in words only, but not receiving the love which is moulded by right actions to perfection. They indeed abide in Christ in the sense of the relationship that results from belief, and so far as they do not adopt another religious worship; but when they no longer have His words in themselves they will be condemned. And we do not go so far as to say that, burying the preaching of the Gospels in oblivion, they are altogether unmindful of the words of the Saviour, submitting everything to their own pleasures, and directing their unbridled impulse to the consideration of earthly things alone, and, on account of this, carry themselves away from the true Vine, and, despising the favour of intimate relationship with Him, by their own passions, they deem the citizenship that is in Christ of no account. Now concerning every such person Christ Himself says: *Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of My Father Which is in heaven.* And that faith which is alone, and by itself, and which does not obtain the assistance of the light that proceeds from works, will not suffice to secure an intimate relationship with God, the disciple of Christ also proves, saying: *Thou believest that God is one; the devils also believe and shudder.* Shall one then say to those who think that a faith bare and alone will be sufficient to enable them to get possession of the fellowship that is from above,----will even the band of demons rise to fellowship with God, since they acknowledge His Unity, and have believed in His Existence? How could this be? For the mere knowledge that the Creator and Producer of all things is One God is useless. But I think it necessary that the confession of piety towards Him should accompany faith. For such a man abideth in Christ, and will be seen to possess His words, according to the text in the Book of Psalms: *I have kept Thy saying in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee.* Just as if any one should place into a brazen vessel the element of fire, he will make the vessel entirely the sharer of the warmth arising from it, so also the mind which in soul and heart is wholly possessed by the Divine and heavenly doctrine, by striving up to every kind of virtue is always thereby inflamed towards it. For it is written: *Thy word is very pure: therefore Thy servant loveth it.*

" Let him therefore," He says, "who establishes himself therein, and has attained to this high honour, so as to remain in Me, and to have My words in him, go boldly on, and with complete confidence ask for whatever tendeth to bliss, and without delay it shall be given him. For," He says, "I will grant it." "Well then," says our opponent, "if any one should ask for what is wrong, will He take more fully of this, and will He that loves virtue allot him such a portion as this?" Get thee behind me, thou man of evil counsel! For God will provide nothing that is opposed to His own Nature, nor any of those things which are numbered among evil things. But my view seems more appropriate: does it not appear right and just? It is clear then that He who abides in Christ, and has His words in him, knows, by the very fact of his goodness and righteousness, how to think only those things which are acceptable to God. For it is clear that He has permitted to those who have His Word in their hearts to ask whatsoever they may reasonably wish; well knowing that they only aim at a participation in blessings of a spiritual and Divine nature. As then our Saviour Christ has excellently defined, in these words, the character of the man who prays and asks to receive whatever he wills from God, let us mould our own condition into conformity with this ideal, if we desire to obtain the heavenly blessing. But if you know that you are yourself not such an one as Christ has just indicated to us, take it not ill if you stumble, but if the effort seems burdensome to you, uniting with your faith the glory which proceeds from good works, (for this is abiding in Christ), and, having in yourself His words, go forward in confidence, and yourself receive without delay whatever you request from God.

8 Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, and so shall ye be My disciples.

He says that God His Father has been glorified, being justly admired for His incomparable goodness and crowning as it were His exceeding kindness with actual proof. *For He so loved the world according to the Scripture, that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life.* The life of all, that of course which is fulfilled by Christ, is then the fruit of the kindness of God the Father. For this reason I suppose He Himself, conversing with God the Father, said: *I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to fulfil it.* For the Only-begotten, being entrusted as it were with the salvation of us all, has well accomplished it by the Father, and He a Being not comprehended under the condition of necessary obedience, but Himself the absolute wisdom and power of His Father, apart from Whom nothing whatever can exist. For all things are by Him, according to the Holy Evangelist, and we in a special manner. And for this reason the blessed David declares that the ordering of all that concerns us, and the directing aright of the life of all is entrusted by the Father to the Son, as His power and wisdom, when he says: *O God, order the working of Thy power: O God, confirm that which Thou hast prepared;* and once more: *O God, give Thy judgment to the King.* For it was the work of Him Who alone reigns with God the Father to restore the earth that was entirely corrupted, and to be able to mould it anew into its former state. Therefore My Father was glorified by giving His Own Son as a ransom for the life of the world, being content to see among us Him Who is above every creature, not that He might bring any addition of perfection to His Own Nature. For He is all perfect and self-sufficing, having power over all things, but in order that you may bring forth more fruit and become My disciples. For if He had not become man, we should not, being deemed worthy of sharing His nature, and being united to Him like branches, and gaining for Him the power of bearing fruit by sharing in His Spirit, have produced the fruit of a state of life pleasing to God, which He even calls *much*, putting in the background that which sprang from service of the Law, and showing that it is of less importance. *For the Law hath made nothing perfect*, according to the saying

of Paul. For this reason He said to His holy disciples, nay to all of us who have been united to Him by faith and perfect love: *Verily, verily I say unto you, Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.* And again: *Every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a rich man which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old;* casting, as it were, from the treasury of their hearts the Mosaic injunctions, and the memory of the ancient writings. He therefore, who is a willing hearer, and ready to learn, and is full of the torchlight of the Gospel, has his wealth increased and multiplied; I mean, of course, spiritual wealth. For he brings forth things new and old, transforming the shadow of the Law and the power of servitude to the Law into the pattern of citizenship according to the Gospel. For what the Law figured by types, this Christ did openly in truth. Wherefore also He said: *I came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil;* and again: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the Law, till all things be accomplished.* The power then of the service of the Gospel is the *much fruit*, spiritual, and in truth; seeing that the Only-begotten became Man for the glory of God the Father. And on this account it has followed that those who are on the earth are His disciples. For He spoke to those of old time and formerly through the prophets as God; but has told us and said concerning us: *And they shall all be taught of God.* For to us who believe in Him, not merely has no other person intervened and conveyed the message from Him, or become a mediator of His Will towards us, as Moses doubtless was to the Israelites in Mount Sinai: or again, the prophets after Moses to those among them; but Christ Himself has taught us. And for this reason we are all taught of God. We should not then have at all become His *disciples*, we should not have brought forth the *fruits* of love towards God, and this in abundance, unless *the Father* had been *glorified* by His goodness, taking such pleasure in us, that the Word proceeding from His Essence should become Man. For we shall think thus when we hear the Holy Scripture declaring that He gave His own Son. For He also approved of His choosing to suffer this for us; and, on this account, is said to have given Him: and with justice.

9, 10 *Even as the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you: abide ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.*

We must consider the mysteries set forth in the text with the clearer eye of the understanding; for the saying has a deep meaning, and puts before us in its completeness, so to speak, the significance of the Incarnation. For He assures us that He Himself was loved by God the Father, and that He so loved us in turn, after the same manner, that is, according to which He Himself considered that He was loved by His own Father. What charge then did He lay upon them? That it is our duty to abide in His love. But He gives, as it were, an explanation and most convincing reason of His being with justice loved by the Father, namely, the keeping of His commandments; and exhorts us, too, to hasten to fulfil this, and thus, He says, to remain in His love. We have clearly shown what His meaning is then, summing up and condensing into small compass the sense of the passage, so far as possible. But since I think it right to rob of its terrors that which is likely sometimes to disturb in no small degree the mind of the pure, come, let us say how and in what way we apprehend the meaning of the passage. Our Lord Jesus Christ then appears, setting Himself forth as a type and pattern of the holy state of life, and as being on this account under the Law, and not disdaining to take the measure of our poverty, in order that designedly moulding Himself, according to His plan, into conformity with our dispositions, He might be found as in figures to those that are His, a guide of the way to our recovery of a state and of a life strange to us and wholly untrodden. We must now

inquire then what commandment of the Father He has kept, and in what way, or in what manner He is said to have been loved by Him. Let then the most wise Paul come to our aid, and initiate us into the mystery by his words concerning Him; how *being in the form of God, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He hath humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death; yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the Name which is above every name.* You have heard how, though He was the true God, seeing that He was of the same fashion with His Father, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death. For when God determined to save the corrupted race upon the earth, and it did not satisfy justice that any created being should accomplish this, the Only-begotten God, Who knows the Will of God the Father, Himself undertook the task, as the enterprise exceeded all the power that there was in the world. And thus He came down to a voluntary subjection, so as even to descend to death, and that a most shameful one. For how could the being nailed to a cross be honourable, and how would it not rather pass every disgrace? Since therefore He endured these things, God hath highly exalted Him. You have therefore in His willing obedience the fulfilment of the purposes of the Father; which purposes, the Son says, were ranked by Him as commands. For understanding as Word the counsels in the Father, and searching out the secret thoughts of Him that begat Him, nay rather being Himself the Wisdom and the Power of the Father, He realises His plan, accounting it as a command, and thus naming it after a human analogy. And see herein the measure of His love. For God hath highly exalted Him, He says. He exalts and glorifies Him that was already exalted and glorified; although He is by nature very God; inasmuch as He does not exist as one of the creatures, according to the identity of His Substance, on this account being deemed, and being in reality, beyond all height that is conceived, and even the Lord of Glory, according to the holy writings. But of a truth, He says, He is exalted and glorified; how, or when, and in what way? When of course, He was in the form of a servant and in the likeness of our humiliation; that is, man like ourselves. For He returns clothed with our flesh to be again highly exalted and glorified with the Father. And He was loved by Him, and not then for the first time, when He fulfilled His voluntary subjection; and you will better understand this by the following considerations. For according to the manner in which He was always exalted and glorified, with reference to His Own Nature, He that was bereft of the glory suited to God, so far as the definition of His Humanity was concerned, is said to have been glorified and exalted when He became Man. For being thus from the beginning loved always and through all time, He is said to have been loved even when clothed in flesh. For on this account He appeared amongst us; that is, He took our form upon Him and became Man, in order that He might make pleasing to God that which was hated on account of the transgression at the beginning, and the sin which had crept in in the interval. For, for this reason, Christ is said to have appeared as the Door, and the Beginning, and the Way of all things good to us. Does He then tell you that He has been loved without reproach, because His *Father's commands* have been kept by Him? Did not the declaration of the mystery seem difficult to you, and was not the deep meaning of the Incarnation accomplished in our behalf hardly attainable by your reason? But *they are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.*

Abide therefore, He says, *in My love*; that is, coming with all zeal and ardour, make it the object of your anxiety and concern to be worthy of such a love from Me as I have from God the Father. For I was an obedient worker of the wishes of the Father, and on this account I abide closely in His love. But when ye also yourselves become keepers of My commandments, ye in a like manner will wholly *abide in My love*. You will have then, He says, no excuse for apathy in the work. For you will not bestow labour on these things without profit. For I shall

manifestly give you as much love as I have from the Father; and crown the keeper of My words with honours almost equal. For the Father has *highly exalted* Me, and has given Me *the Name which is above every name*. For I have been declared God of the universe, yet I shall not be found envious or to grudge you such good things. For I have shown you, who are men, and who have for this reason received the nature of slaves, to be gods, and sons of God; making you illustrious through My grace with dignities surpassing your nature to receive; have admitted you into the fellowship of My kingdom; have shown you *conformed to the Body of My glory*; have honoured you with incorruption and life. But this standeth as yet but in hope, and is preserved for the age that is to come. And what have ye now for the time present? Have I not made you illustrious, and glorified you, and made you holy beyond the devotees of all nations? Nay, ye have rebuked the unclean spirits; I have given you power to heal *all manner of disease, and all manner of sickness*. I have given the promise unto you: *Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do*. If we allow our minds to be impressed with the sense of the passage before us, we shall think that this is what He says to His holy disciples. And if we at all times keep our mind yoked fast to the doctrines of the truth, and if we turn the investigation into which we enter so far as we can to the profit of our hearers and to foster the practice of a righteous life, we shall avoid foolishly falling over any stumblingblock in the way. For it is written in the Book of Psalms: *Great is the peace that they have who love Thy law; and they have no stumblingblock in their path*.

11 *These things have I spoken unto you that My joy may abide in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled.*

When, after introducing to us the parable of the vine, He went on to teach us that the branch which is separated and sundered, as it were, from the mother who nourishes it will be wholly useless, and doomed to be consumed by fire, He thereby terrified His disciples not a little. For awful tidings, even though they have no reference to the present, are likely to cause no little alarm to their hearers, especially when the obscurity of the future engenders the suspicion that what they hear may come to pass. Just as the voyager who is about to cross the sea before him, when it seems probable that a storm will actually arise, and the billows rage, and the wild waves lash themselves in fury, even though he do not see these things before his eyes, and they stand yet merely in expectation, and that perhaps baseless, fears them as though they were in his sight. He then fitly raises up anew His disciples, trembling and struck with terror at these dreadful tidings, and stupefied by the thought of future trials, to a sustained courage; and leaving His sad discourse, speaks to them of their joy of heart in God. For it is not, He says, O My disciples, for this cause that I have now spoken these words unto you, to rob your minds of courage, or to inspire in you a vague terror, nor that you should be found altogether broken down by the thought of evil to come, and unable to endure to secure your own blessedness, but that you might be quite otherwise affected, and have pleasure of heart in Me, *and that My joy should abide in you*.

And I think we ought to consider more attentively what the sense of this passage is, and what Christ wishes us to take as His meaning. We must take it then as having a twofold meaning: for either one may say the words that you may have joy concerning Me or in Me, as used in an argument which bears no meaning but the obvious one: for so ye yourselves may make your own power complete, reflecting on the reward of blessings which exceed all things earthly, and the return that your exertions will win, and the greatness of your glory with God; or considering it in another sense, we will not shrink from entering upon a more profound

inquiry. For we ought most eagerly and keenly to hunt in all reverence for the aim of all these investigations. What do then the words *that My joy may be in you* signify? Do they mean that the Only-begotten is as we are, that is, a Man, only without sin, resolved to undergo all the sufferings which the accursed madness of the Jews compelled Him to experience? For we shall find Him insulted and persecuted, and buffeted with bitter reproaches, and spat upon, and beaten with rods, and not exempt from the insult of the scourge, and, last of all, to crown all this, nailed to the cross through our means and for our sakes. And in the presence of all this awful suffering, He was not bowed down in agony, and did not even shrink from the ignominy of suffering as His plan required, but was full of the pleasure of heart and joy which became Him, since He saw the multitude of those who were saved, and the Will of God the Father fulfilled. For this cause He accounted dishonour joy, and thought suffering pleasure. For when they dared against Him many things repugnant to His nature, we shall find it written that Jesus then *rejoiced in the Spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Thy sight.* Note that when He saw wisdom given to babes and simple folk, He rejoiced and exulted by the Spirit, and offered up thanks, as in our behalf, to the Father Who saves us; but when He passed through the land of the Samaritans, and was *wearied with His journey*, as it is written, *He sat by the well of Jacob.* But when the woman represented to Him the need of drawing water, He told her what was likely to come to pass; and foretold that a multitude of Samaritans would come, and seemed to make of small account the necessaries of life. For what did He say to His disciples, when they counselled Him to partake of what they had to eat? *My meat is to do the will of My Father, and to accomplish His work.* Is it not thereby clear that He accounted the fulfilling of His Father's Will, that is, providing a refuge in salvation for the backsliders, as pleasure and joy? It is beyond doubt.

All this then, He says, I have spoken unto you, *that My joy may be in you;* that those things may give you encouragement that give encouragement to Me; that you may face perils bravely, girding yourselves with the hope of those who will be saved; and, if suffering come upon you in this work, that ye may not be brought low into the feebleness of apathy, but may joy more abundantly, when the pleasure of Him *That willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth* is fulfilled by you. For I, too, rejoiced at this, and thought My sufferings very sweet. When then, He says, you elect to have this *joy*, which I thought became Myself, then you will have it perfect and complete.

For we think that *joy* most full and complete, which is in God, and through God, and results from good works, through the fixity and stability of the hope; and because it arose from a proper source, not only we, but also Jesus Himself took pleasure in it. And we say that the joy which is of the world is incomplete: because it is clearly transient and excited by unworthy causes; earthly things which flit away like phantoms and shadows. Just as we say that hatred is perfect which has a just and righteous origin amongst us; just as, of course, the blessed David says about the opponents of the glory of God, *I hated them with a perfect hatred;* and perfect love that which prepares those who have chosen it, in God and through God, to offer themselves wholly unto God; not that which is fixed on any earthly objects, and things worthy of no account.

12, 13 *This is My commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

He now makes clearer by the illustration here given the meaning of the preceding passage; that is, the necessity of His disciples having His joy in them; and clearly says, "I give you this injunction, and teach those who think they ought to follow Me to do this, and be thus minded to practise such manner of love towards one another as I have heretofore shown and fulfilled." How great a measure can a man then find to the love of Christ, He Himself shows when He says that nothing can be greater than such love, which excites to forsake life itself for those one loves. And by all this He not only exhorts His own disciples that it becomes them so little to shrink from fearing to encounter dangers for those they love, but that also He Himself without shrinking held Himself in utmost readiness to undergo the death of the flesh. For the power of our Saviour's love attained so great a measure. And these words were borne out by His action, and by His encouragement to His disciples to attain an exceeding great and extraordinary courage, and by His exhorting them to the perfection of brotherly love, and fencing their hearts with the armour of enthusiasm and love of God, and raising them up into a zeal invincible and undaunted, so as impetuously to hasten to establish everything according to His good pleasure. Such a man Paul showed himself to us, when he said, *For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* And again: *For the love of Christ constraineth us: because we thus judge that one died for all, therefore all died.* And besides: *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* Note how he promises that nothing shall be able to overcome it or prevail to cut us off from the love of Christ. But if tending the flocks and feeding the lambs of Christ be to love Him, is it not quite clear that he who preaches the word of salvation to those who know not God will prevail over death, persecution, and the sword, and will think distress of no account at all? And, if it be fitting to condense the meaning and to compress the words of our Saviour, and to express in a few words what He wishes His disciples to do, He bids them to keep their hearts undaunted and free from every fear, and minister the word of faith in Him, and to preach the Gospel to all who are in the world. And the selfsame command He gives by the word of the prophet Esaias: *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; be strong, fear not.* And we shall find that the holy disciples themselves have power to do this aright, when they ask of God by earnest prayer: for on one occasion, accusing the madness of the Jews, they exclaimed: *And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants to speak Thy word with boldness.*

For those who resist and impiously rail against such as openly minister the Gospel are very many. But even if the terror be keen and the waves of evil counsel rise up most dreadfully, there will be no mention of suffering among His true disciples until the righteous acts that proceed from love attain their end----such love, I mean, as our Saviour set forth to us as a pattern, *Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame,* in order that He might accomplish salvation for those who have sinned. And if He had not been willing to suffer for us, we should be still dead, servants of the devil, *fools and blind,* and remaining in need of everything good, and slaves of pleasure and sin; *having no hope, and without God in the world.* But now the Saviour has even given His life for us from the love that He has unto us, and, exhibiting an incomparable love of mankind, has made us enviable and thrice-blessed, in want of no manner of thing that is good.

The meaning then of the text as thus conceived will fit in with the inspired chapters of the disciples. And if the saying shall go forth to all the world, that is, *This is My commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you,* much profit will result to all from the investigation. For if love towards brethren keeps and works the fulfilment of the whole

command of our Saviour, how will not he who tries as far as possible to accomplish this without laying himself open to censure and blame be very worthy of admiration, since the sum. of all the virtues, so to speak, is stored up in it? For love towards one another is next to love to God, and all the power of righteousness towards God is concluded as in this *one word*, namely, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*.

14, 15 *Ye are My friends, if ye do the things which I command you. No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known unto you.*

In contrast to the terrors which will sometimes assail those inclined towards obedience and love of virtue He has set the gain of their love towards Him, in order that by the consolations ensuing from this, and by their aiming at what is greater, that which is burdensome may disappear and that which sometimes seems to cause pain sink into insignificance. Sweet is their labour to those who love God, since indeed theirs is a near and rich reward. Who then could conceive any thing greater, and what will he say is more glorious, than to be and be called the friend of Christ? For see how the reward surpasses the very limits of the nature of man. For all things are subject unto Him that made them, according to the saying of the Psalmist; and there is, I suppose, nothing in Creation which has not been subjected to the yoke of slavery, in accordance with the decree becoming the Creator and His work. For the work produced is not on an equality with its producer; and how could it be? But God, Who is over all, will hold sway over and direct His own works. The universe then being under the yoke of subjection, and putting itself under servitude to God, the Lord leads up His holy ones to a supernatural glory, if they appear willing to work His Will and bring to Him, as an offering that is due, a blameless subjection. Their reward then is glorious and worthy of envy.

But we must consider this point especially at this juncture, for it will be of no small profit. For if friendship towards Christ will be sufficient in the case of any for the dignity of freedom and the being no longer called slaves, how could He be a slave except as made and created, according to the thoughtlessness of some? For He is not able to allot the honour of freedom to all others, while His own Nature is bereft of this attribute. For I suppose He must appear in possession of it more than all the rest, for then will He most suitably give to those who have it not the blessing that is His own. But the dignity must be conferred on and given to the holy Apostles, or perhaps also to all others who mount up through faith to the friendship that is towards our Lord Jesus Christ, as by way of honour, but not existing in like manner with that enjoyed by Him. For they, mounting up by their likeness to Him to the glory of liberty, would display by this that which naturally belongs to Him alone. For that which is by position is compared with that which is by nature.

This however we must demonstrate; for I think it is necessary to go through every inquiry which is useful and particularly necessitates explanation. For the justice which is derived from faith in Christ has a more ancient manifestation than that justice which is according to the law; and further, because the knowledge of the Divine mysteries is revealed to those that believe and obey Christ, and the counsel of God the Father is interpreted by him who knows that of the Son, but to those who are disobedient, not at all.

Come then, let us again illustrate this by the inspired Scripture, dwelling somewhat at length upon it to advantage. It has then been written in a book of Moses that *Abraham believed in God*, but his faith was accounted unto him *for righteousness; and he was called the friend of*

God. And what was the manner of his faith, or how then was he called the friend of God? He heard the words, *Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, unto a land that I will show thee*. Moreover, when he was enjoined to sacrifice his only son as a type of Christ he learnt the purpose hidden in God. And for this reason the Saviour spoke concerning him to the impious Jews, saying: *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it and was glad*. Therefore the inspired Abraham, owing to obedience and sacrifice, was called the friend of God and put on himself the boast of righteousness.

And not only this, but he was deemed worthy of Divine converse, and knew the counsel of God, which came to pass in the last times. For in the fulness of time Christ died for us---the true, sacred, and holy sacrifice which taketh away the sin of the world.

But see again a like fulfilment in the case of those who mount up by faith to the friendship of our Saviour Christ. They also heard the words *Get thee out of thy country*. And that they did it eagerly we may learn from what they say: *For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come, whose builder and maker is God*. For they are strangers and sojourners upon earth, being citizens of heaven and leaving the land of their birth to speak allegorically of their heavenward aspirations, desiring eagerly the resting-place above. For this the Saviour set before them when He said, *I go and will prepare a place for you; and when I come, I will receive you with Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also*. They were told to go forth from their kindred; and how shall we show this? We will refer to Christ's own words: *He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me*. And that the things of God were preferred to their earthly and fleshly relationship, and their love towards Christ set forth as far stronger, is certainly unquestioned among those who reverence Him. And the blessed Abraham was ordered to bring to God his own son for an odour of a sweet-smelling savour, while others, girding themselves with the righteousness that is by faith, were commanded to offer not others but themselves. For he says: *Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service*. Since it has been written concerning them: *They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof*, they knew the mystery that is in Christ. For they know *the powers of the age to come*, and what will be in the last days; for they will receive the rewards of their labours, and take as requital the recompence of their piety towards Christ. Therefore we shall become just and the friends of God, as did Abraham. And the Gospel dispensation is far more ancient than that of the Law. I mean by the Gospel dispensation that which is by faith and friendship towards God, then moulded first in Abraham, as in the beginning of his race according to the flesh, that is of Israel, but now coming as from a type to truth, and being well fulfilled in the holy disciples themselves, as in the beginning of a spiritual race preserved as a people for God's own possession, which also is called a holy nation and a royal priesthood. Therefore it has been said to the mother of the Jews, I mean the synagogue, by the voice of the Psalmist: *Instead of fathers thy sons have been born*.

For the inspired disciples are truly sons of the synagogue of the Jews, for they were nourished up in the Mosaic usages. They became fathers, holding the position of Abraham, and were the beginning of the spiritual race, and for this reason were ordained as rulers, offering up as a sacrifice the Gospel of Christ in all the world, as did Abraham Isaac as a type of Christ. We thus speak, not depriving the blessed Abraham of the glory which is his due and befits him, but showing in him, as in a figure, what has been appointed in the last days by Christ. The reward of friendship with God which was then seen in Abraham first is intimately conjoined with the freedom which comes by faith, and now also it is seen in the holy disciples as the

firstfruits of a new generation. Let then the inspired Paul point out to us the necessity of thus speaking, vehemently contending with the Jews, that the righteousness that is of faith is far older than that of the Law. For when he made mention of the circumcision according to the flesh, he affirmed that this was given to the firstfruits of the race, that is Abraham, for no other reason save his becoming *the sign and seal of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision*. But if uncircumcision with which also is faith was before the Law, but circumcision which has not the glory of faith after the Law, and Abraham believed in uncircumcision, how will not the justice through faith of those who are justified and freed through love towards God, as was Abraham, be more ancient than the dispensation by the Law? For thus also he will be *father of many nations* by promise, not according to the flesh. And these things have we now pertinently said on account of our Lord's word: *No longer do I call you servants: ye are My friends; for all things that I heard from My Father, I have made known unto you.*

16 *Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you, and have appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He shall give you.*

His aim is neither to depress His holy disciples by words too grievous, being aware, as God, of the great tendency of human reason to weakness, nor again does He permit them by immoderate assurances to fall into a state of backsliding, for this is indeed a disease and a serious one. But forming a mean between these two from a mixture of both, He fitly leads them into a safe path, and works in them a knowledge of the more stable state and of the complete uncertainty of that which is removed from it.

When therefore, then, he has abundantly comforted them with the words of consolation, and with respect to those things at which they would be likely to be cast down, persuading them in turn to rejoice, He again incites them by His injunctions to diligence to a confident courage; persuading them to change their minds and rather to rejoice at those things at which they had not without reason been dismayed, and charges them to display the utmost zeal, and put into practice an overflowing measure of brotherly love, and to benefit those as yet without faith, and to hasten by the words and deeds that make for righteousness to draw those who are astray to a willingness to be united to God by faith.

Offering Himself then as an Image and Pattern of that which must be done, and bringing before them that which has been already accomplished by Him in their behalf, He persuades them to imitate their Teacher and themselves to be conspicuous in like righteousness when He says: *Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you*, and what follows.

Conceive Him then as saying: "Gird yourselves with love towards one another, O My disciples; for ye ought indeed yourselves also to devise and do towards one another, and perform with an eager zeal, those things which I have first accomplished towards you. For *I chose you*, and it is not you that have chosen Me. I drew you to Myself and made Myself known to those who knew Me not through My exceeding kindness, and I brought you into a steadfast opinion so as to lead you up, that is, to confer on you the ability to reach forward to what is greater, and to bear fruit unto God. Attain therefore to the complete confidence that *whatsoever ye shall ask in My name* ye shall receive. Since, therefore, ye follow in the track of My words and ministry, and have the mind which My true disciples ought to be endued with, it follows that ye ought not by your own tarrying to throw obstacles in the way of him who of his will seeks the faith

and is self-called to a life of piety; but that you should rather attach yourselves as guides to those who are still ignorant and astray, and bring to those who do not yet prefer to learn it the Gospel of salvation, and eagerly exhort them to attain unto the true knowledge of God, even though the mind of your hearers be hardened into disobedience. For thus they would be in your condition, that is, they will advance and will return by gradual growth in what is better to fruit-bearing in God, so as to have the fruit that ever remains and is preserved and that most acceptable object of prayer, the bestowal of whatsoever they wish, if only they *ask in My name.*"

So much then on this head: for it is necessary again, compressing in a few words the drift of the text, to make it clear to our hearers. He persuades His disciples to have so much love towards others, and wishes them to exhibit as much zeal in their persistent endeavour in all directions to pursue and bring to holiness the souls of those who have not yet believed, as He Himself first showed towards us and them. For that He Himself chose His disciples is unquestioned, and I think it unnecessary to state how and in what way the call of each was made. Still, that the discourse of the Saviour is pregnant with the meaning I have just given to it what follows will equally persuade us. For he says:

17 These things I have spoken unto you that ye may love one another.

For shall we not allow that the choosing out of those still faithless and astray to obedience to God is the work of the highest love of all? But this is undeniable. And Paul hastened to do this when he said: *We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God.* So also does Peter, saying boldly to the Jews: *And now, brethren, I wot that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. Repent ye therefore and be baptized every one of you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* You see then how and with what zeal they meet those who have not believed, and bring to them the word which they have not sought, not making it necessary for these in their ignorance to choose themselves as their teachers, but anticipating in this even him who has as yet been unwilling to learn any elementary truth.

But since our Saviour's words have this addition, *that ye should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide*, it is our duty to inquire what this means. For what is the meaning of the expression that the fruit of His disciples remains? I think then that by fruit which remains our Saviour means that produced by the training of the Gospel and not by the righteousness of the Law. For the latter has become obsolete by reason of its inability to accomplish anything. For the Law accomplished nothing, as Paul says; but the new righteousness burst as it were into blossom in its stead and lifted up its head, making obsolete and putting away the former, and bringing in the fruit that truly remains and is preserved. Thus speaks the inspired Paul addressing us, and saying that the righteousness by the Law was gladly and readily accounted by him as loss in order that he might gain Christ, that is, the righteousness and fruit-bearing of the Gospel by the faith that is in Him. For such fruit as this will continue and be perennial, being capable of fulfilling the soul of man with righteousness. For no other new instruction will steal in beside the messages of the Gospel making the former obsolete, as was undoubtedly the ease with the Mosaic command. But the Word of the Saviour will stand for ever, as indeed He Himself says: *Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away.*

18 If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated Me before it hated you.

We shall find the course pursued in each case by our Saviour in no way whatever inferior, as I suppose, to the skill and fine art of physicians, as He everywhere follows a plan profitable to His hearers. For physicians check the stubborn maladies which sometimes arise in bodies by means of the resources of their art. But Christ fences off the entrance to evil, fortifying as it were each individual soul with commands ensuring prevention. Since therefore the disciples were destined to be rulers, not indeed over one nation or one district only, but rather to be the instructors of the universe, and to preach to all throughout the world the message of the Gospel and of God, and to turn their hearers to a belief in the true God alone, and to change them from sin to a willingness to do what became them, and to make the law, I mean that of the Gospel, the rule of their life; He bids them account as nothing the hatred of the world, that is of those who set their hearts on worldly things and choose to live wantonly and impiously. For could any one venture to say that, in seeing fit to give such injunctions to His disciples, showing that it was profitable to be hated, He did so without a reason, and not to profit them in any thing that is necessary? Put aside this folly; for His Word would not fall away into such a meaning as this. He counsels them not to guard against being noway hated by every one, and says excellently, in the clearest and most precise language, *If the world hateth you*, that is, if those who honour what is of the world and set their affections on earthly things alone should view you with hatred, know then indeed, He declares, that your Master endured this before you.

But any one might very readily perceive that the command of the Saviour will bring full profit to the expounders of the sweetest mysteries, if he would look at the nature of the circumstances. For it is always dear ---nay, rather, it is the object of their earnest endeavour-- --to thrust away as grievous and as monstrous the word that maketh wise, and to set upon those who are zealous to introduce the noblest of studies, and those by which they will become better than they were before; yielding up the victory to their private pleasures only. But a necessary consideration had well-nigh escaped my notice, although especially appropriate to, and connected with, the investigation of the words before us.

For the Jews, serving only the letter of the Mosaic Law, and putting their own construction on those things that were performed as types *until a time of reformation*, made no account whatsoever of the training of the Gospel, but thought they ought to consider its ministers as even more unendurable than their bitterest foes. And others, pursuing a different error, and attaching the unspeakable glory of God to the creature, I mean the heathen, did not very gladly receive the word that was capable of illumining them. For being as it were absorbed in their former vices, they accounted their ignorance as most precious, and were as little as possible inclined to depart from the disease akin to it. And since the nature of the case was so, who could doubt that the disciples of the Saviour would not only be hated by the Jews but also utterly despised by those diseased with the error of the Greeks? But they were very unwelcome, nay, they were intolerable, to those preferring to devote themselves to pleasure and honouring a life that spent itself in luxury. But if the disciples of the Saviour were to consider the consequence of being hated by those already mentioned as grievous, while they rather hastened to strive after and extravagantly to pursue the affection of those in this diseased condition, is it not quite clear to all that they would be manifestly not putting forth the word that is able to save to any one whatsoever, but would be rather bestowing their thoughts on vain trivialities, and restraining the rebuke that proceeds from boldness of speech according to the Will of God, speaking and expounding forsooth according to each individual taste?

The injunction therefore not too eagerly to seek to be loved and to disregard incurring the hatred of some is necessary if they gain profit from their counsels. This also we shall see St. Paul doing when he says plainly:---*For am I now persuading men, or God? or am I seeking to please men? If I were still wishing to please men, I should not be a servant of Christ.* And again, when he had rebuked someone in Corinth, and heard that he was excessively pained, he says: *For if I make you sorry, who then is he that maketh me glad, but he that is made sorry by me? For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret.* It will therefore be quite indisputable that the word which consults the pleasure of the listeners will flatter rather than benefit the world; but he who obeys the words of the Saviour will not conduct his ministry in this way. For he will prefer rather to please Him, and will regard even the being hated by those, and will consider even the hatred of those who have chosen to treat virtue with the utmost hostility, as spiritual wealth.

When then, He says, the hatred that you have stirred up against you in the world is found at times to militate against your good repute, overcome and cast aside this stumblingblock in your path, seeing that honours paid you by those who love the world cannot give you much pleasure, if they cannot endure to hear the word that profits them. For I am of a truth your Lord and Master. But that those who preferred to mind earthly things and despised the heavenly blessings hated Christ Himself also to their own destruction, I think it not difficult to show. For He said in the Gospels to some: *The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it that its works are evil.* Making Himself then again a pattern to His holy disciples in this, He bids them follow the track there laid down when He said again openly in another place: *Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you, and shall reproach you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

19 *If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

He lightens by His art even that which was most grievous, and gives them unexpected pleasure at that which it was reasonable to suppose would greatly trouble them. For to be hated by any is truly burdensome, because sly injuries and unexpected devices are the result; yet this too is sweet when it happens for the sake of God and righteousness, and it supplies a convincing proof that the man against whom some thus act is not of the world. For as we find physical so also shall we find moral affinities, and a sameness and complete likeness of disposition is sufficient to undermine mere blood-relationship.

For every creature loveth its like, according to the Scripture, *and a man will be attached to his like.* Now whereas similarity of character renews the law of love towards one another, the holy will live with the holy and very readily conform to him, and be joined to him in friendly union. And so also will be the attitude of one of like disposition towards a blasphemer. For this reason the Mosaic Law made a complete distinction between what was holy and profane, keeping such things apart and separate from one another according to the law of love.

Evil company doth corrupt good manners, and differences of disposition are at war with one another, and wills that are divided look in opposite directions and almost accuse one another: each being enamoured of its own pursuit. The lover of virtue then must incur hatred for the very things which excite our admiration---his rebuking vice and unveiling the vileness of the wicked by the contrast that his own manner of life presents. For when goodness is seen by its

side, what is evil must appear unseemly. For this cause then I think those who are not enamoured of the same manner of life rage against the virtuous.

He bids then His disciples not be pained, even though they see themselves hateful to the world on account of their love of virtue and righteousness towards Him, but explains that they ought on the contrary to rejoice, receiving the hatred of the world as a proof of their dignity and praise with God. For see how dangerous He has shown their not enduring to suffer (which it was likely they would prefer) to be. For to be hated by any was not absolutely without loss. But it has not the free pardon from God, and the great gain which results from preferring to suffer it. For if the man who is hated by those who mind worldly things is considered as outside the world, it is necessary then to suppose that the man who is not hated is united to the vices of the world.

What then has Christ established by these words? That they should preach His word with boldness, and should not permit their hearers to be unprofited, from their regard towards sinners or those who prefer to disobey the Divine command; but that, leaving unnoticed the affronts that will often result from being hated, they should give bold and fearless counsel, passing by nothing whatsoever or esteeming anything of more consequence than the necessity of serving God. This object St. Paul well accomplishes when he writes thus: *For am I now persuading mien, or God? or am I seeking to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ.* For it is not possible to please evil men and God. For how could the two coincide, the will of each presenting the widest divergence? For one looks towards virtue, and the other looks towards vice. The man therefore who wishes only to be the servant of God, and who regards nothing as superior to piety towards Him, must necessarily be in conflict with those who love the world, whenever he persuades them to a state of mind out of harmony with the vain folly of the world. For advice which calls to something else is most intolerable to lovers of pleasure, as assuredly are profitable and severe remedies to those whose bodies are diseased by these passions.

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

After having first then shown that the hatred His followers would incur was honourable to them if justified by the occasion---for it can well be borne, nay, it is even thrice-longed for, when it happens on account of God, Who is able to set men above hindrances---He removes that which, as God, He was aware would induce them to be slow to be willing to devote all their energies to the duty of preaching the heavenly doctrine. For whereas disgrace and danger follow for the most part those that are bent on teaching, whenever their words are not found agreeable to those whom they admonish, and besides persecution is incurred, their message sometimes not being received, He vigorously and earnestly exhorts them to be prepared for these things and very ready to meet them. This too He has set forth in other words, saying: *Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come.* But He exercises an entire control over them, representing His own condition in this respect in order that they may not aim at what is greater nor be found behaving unseemly after a different manner, but necessarily as it were following in the wake of the glory of the Lord may be anxious not to be above Him. He signifies to them that they will meet every kind of opprobrium, saying, "the slave is not above his lord." For Me, He says, wicked men assailed with unbridled tongue; and, leaving no kind of insult untried, they called Me a man possessed of a devil, and a drunkard, and the fruit of fornication. Yet I did not

immediately seek their punishment, but not being cut to the heart by their insults, I vouchsafed unto My hearers the word of salvation. Do not, then, seek out of reason your own aggrandisement, nor scorn the limits within which your Lord was bound, Who lowered Himself to such humiliation for us to benefit all. Therefore it makes men superior to the bitterness of speech and the impiety of those who are accustomed to find fault, as indeed also the blessed prophet Jeremiah when harassed said with respect to this very thing: *My strength hath failed me by reason of those who curse me*; while the inspired Paul, showing still more nobility of character under the like treatment, and gaining a great victory over the impiety of those who insulted him, says: *Being reviled, we bless; being defamed, we entreat*. For to love to contend against such things as these is the work of a mind humble of spirit according to the Scripture, and adorned with a truly modest temper. For long-suffering and forbearance spring up and arise as though from a good root, especially at such a time. But the inability to endure words of provocation or any kind of ill repute whatever among men, would give a clear proof of an understanding that loves boasting, and of a disposition but little estranged from the love of worldly glory. For what injury can insolence inflict on him who is free from pride? And how shall the reviling of any one be grievous to him who aims not at worldly reputation?

He well exhorts us to have a mind that goes beyond this most worthless reputation----I mean that which is the object of worldly honour----and that mounts far beyond such things as these. But He forearms them as it were with a necessary safeguard, so that they may be willing to manifest such a spirit, and sets before them an argument which thrusts aside the contumely that results from weakness, namely that which we mentioned at first, the following in the wake of the glory of the Lord, and with joy confronting everything that comes in its season, until they attain to glory through God; not being bowed down by dishonour like a feeble laggard, nor checking the boldness of their teaching and neglecting the Divine commands when they are bitterly reviled, but rather to lay hold of love towards their brethren, and to hasten in every way to help those that are astray.

Persuading them therefore to shun the temporary honour of the world that lies immediately before them, He makes another earnest contention, useful and necessary. For *if*, He says, *they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you*. And the drift of this is allied to His previous words. He still therefore persuades them to endure suffering, and removes by anticipation the weakness caused by the reflections that naturally arise in us. For there was no doubt that the disciples of the Saviour, incurring the anger of the persecutors of the truth, would fall into the terrors of persecution. But it was very right for them to reflect that when they preached the message of the glory of Christ, they would at all events partake of the riches of His mercy, so that they should think nothing at all a hindrance in the way of so desirable a zeal, but should appear superior to all panic and danger, having nothing painful to undergo, but rather exulting in the honours that all men would bestow on them as ministering unto them the word of salvation. And it was a perfectly right object that those who were anxious to call men into eternal life and were found to be messengers to their hearers of blessings from God should expect this, and seek to be included among men so blessed. But as every man inclines his own purpose in the direction of his wishes, and directs it to suit his will and pleasure, it was the more necessary that it should be pointed out that those who are hostile to the truth and are subjugated by the pleasures of vice must fight through conviction with those who call them away from the objects of their pursuit. For lessons which have this object are not pleasant to those who love pleasure. It remained then of necessity to show what they would have to expect from those who, being ranked among their foes, would persecute them, and insult them, and try every kind of assault.

Christ therefore exhorts them to confront this boldly, not denying that it will happen. And because His followers ought to show a manful spirit, He instructs them and foretells the dangers they will encounter. For *if, He says, they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.* This is just as if He had said: "I, the Creator of the Universe, Who have all things under My hand, both in heaven and on earth, did not put a bridle on their rage, nor restrained as it were by bonds the inclination of each of my hearers. But I rather left to the choice of each his own course, and permitted all to do as they liked. And therefore I, when persecuted, endured it, though I had the power of preventing it. When therefore ye also are persecuted, enduring for a time the aversion of those who hate you, and not being too much troubled by the ingratitude of those whom you benefit, following in the wake of My dispensation pursue the same course as I did, that you may attain the like glory. For those who surfer with Me shall also reign with Me."

And by the third addition, *If they kept My word, they will keep yours also,* He bids them not to be disheartened when their teaching is sometimes not received; and He does this also excellently and well. For he who has been appointed to this work thinks that he has lost his labour if any refuse to obey his words. But the case is not so. Let no one think that it is: for how is that possible? For the adviser who has once spoken and set forth the knowledge of what is good, has done that which was in his power. The rest will depend upon the disposition of his hearers. For it is easy for them to turn, each to what he wishes, either to obedience or the opposite. Those then who are our guides to the best life must not shrink back, so that they may sow in the reprobates the Word that is able to profit by Divine power, and may be able to order aright what we cannot attain unto by their faithful ministration, a thing which we find well practised and brought to perfection in the distribution of the talents. For one is found taking ten, and another five, and another two, and besides these yet another taking one, who, disdainng to use it for commercial purposes, buried the talent in the earth. And for this reason it was said to him: *Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou oughtest to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest.* For just as those who have been trained to agricultural industry, and who have this object in view, cutting up the land with the plough and then burying the seed in the furrow, leave the rest no longer to their own skill but rather entrust it to the power and favour of God, I mean the taking root of that which is cast into the earth and nourishing it up to perfect fruit, so I think the expounder of the noblest truths ought only to distribute the Word and leave the rest to God.

The Saviour therefore gives His advice in this matter to His disciples as a medicine for want of spirit and a cure of listlessness. For do not ever choose to shrink, He says, from continuing to teach, even if some of those who have once been admonished should make of no account the teaching that has been given them. But finding that even My words are often not received by many, do not strive to surpass My reputation, and, following in My steps in this also, lay aside despondency. And this instruction was very necessary to the holy Apostles, since they were about to preach to all men the message of God and salvation. And therefore the inspired Paul, as having been nominated to his Apostleship by Christ, has shown himself to us a man of this kind, and is often seen to attain manliness herein. For it is easy to show that he thought he ought to despise the love of honour, and to treat persecution as utterly of no account, while he considered it of great importance not to be too fainthearted, even if some entirely refused to receive the Word that was once scattered among them. For he writes to some: *Ye are wise in Christ, but we are fools for Christ's sake; we are weak, but ye are strong; we have dishonour, but ye have glory. Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst; and*

yet again, besides, these words: *We are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things even until now*. So you see then that he was above worldly repute, on account of the commandment of the Saviour. But, showing his nobleness in persecutions, he said: *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* He writes also to others, that *to speak the same things, to me indeed is not irksome, but for you it is safe*. And yet again to the Galatians: *My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you*. You hear with how little hesitation he repeats the same message, though the first that he had originally given had not gained acceptance, and well says that he travailed in birth for some until the forming of Christ in them should appear. And his preaching effected this, moulding his hearers into the love of God and into the likeness of Christ by faith.

21 But all these things will they do unto you for My Names sake, because they know not Him that sent Me.

He declares that those who choose to act impiously against His holy disciples will do it on no other plea than "My Name" only. For this is a reproach against those who honour God, and an excuse for setting themselves against them on the part of those who do not know Him. But since it is clear to all that no one would suffer anything for the sake of God without reward, for a glorious crown will await them, He incites them again to courage, and makes their spirit steadfast, thrusting aside the misery of that which they expect by the hope of the return. He points out then that the very perils they endure are gain and an object of prayer, and rids of all its terrors that, the very prospect of the occurrence of which might stupefy some, and exhorts His disciples to welcome it with the greatest eagerness. And indeed when they were once summoned before the impious Council of the Jews, and had been severely buffeted with stripes for the sake of Christ, they went forth *from the presence of the council, rejoicing*, according to the Scripture, *that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name of the Lord*. And of a truth they earnestly exhort us to endure suffering in this cause, and in no way to be dismayed by it, even if we have to encounter any pain for Christ's sake. *For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer: but if a man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this Name*. Most pleasant then is suffering for Christ's sake, and sweet is peril when its presence is occasioned by love towards God.

But consider how here again, showing Himself as One with His Father, He says that neither the Jews nor those who were about to persecute the preachers of the Name of Christ, knew either the Father or the Son. For he who deems it his duty to dishonour the Son is avowedly a hater of the Father; not indeed as transgressing against another nature, but as insulting the true dignity of His natural Divinity. For none could be convicted of insolence against the Son, if he respected the nature of the Father. And if he were at all acquainted with the actual nature of the Father, how came he to be ignorant that He was begotten by Him? And will not he who spoils the fruit produced from it injure the parent tree? Sin against the Son therefore is a convincing proof of ignorance of God the Father.

But whereas He did not say, *Because they know not My Father*, but *Him that sent Me*, I think He wished to hint at something of this kind. His aim, as it seems, was to show that those who practised persecution against His devoted servants, plainly tied their heads as it were in a noose of a double transgression. For not merely, He says, will they be convicted of ignorance of My origin, or be justly condemned on the charge of atheism, but will actually be found

rebuking the true wisdom of God the Father. For if He sent His own Son to raise that which had fallen away, to renew that which was worn out, to set forth life to all in the world, while those in the world set themselves against and impiously oppose such as choose to preach Him the Saviour of the world, they will be very clearly convicted of ignorance and of fighting against Him that sent Me. For by the expression "being sent," He introduces a clear proof of His Incarnation. But he that is ignorant of Him that sent Me, shows by this very fact his ignorance of God, and dishonours the mystery of My mission.

22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin.

We may take in two ways the meaning of the words before us. For if any one should suppose that this passage was directed against Greeks and Jews alike, we say that unless the Divine and heavenly message, I mean the Gospel, had come to all that are on the earth, pointing out to each individual the way of salvation and making plain the works of righteousness, their complete ignorance of what is pleasing to God would perhaps have been a strong reason in each case for the pardon of those who are not eager in pursuing virtue. This ignorance of theirs makes them seem worthy of pardon. But whereas the word of the Gospel has been directed to all men, what reason for pardon is there, or with what words should any one address Him that judgeth, when accused after knowledge of the worst crimes? But if the Lord is saying this concerning the Jews only, as having very often listened to His teaching, and as being in no way ignorant of what He commanded them to think and do, let Him illustrate it thus: They will not endure your teaching, He says, but will bring upon you trials and persecutions, and will devise against you every kind of terror, and from their bitterness will be consumed with an unjust hatred against you, not able indeed to charge you with any wickedness, but blaming only your love towards Me. But searching as it were for an excuse for the cruelty of their madness, and diminishing the baseness of their love of self-gratification, they will actually cite Moses and the books of Moses, and will pretend that I was an opponent of their ancestral laws. But if I had not come and set forth commands superior to the Law given by Moses; if I had not fulfilled it by many words, showing that it was now high time to pass beyond mere types, and that there had been enough of patterns and shadows, but that the hour had come in which the truth itself should shine forth; if I had not shown this from the Law itself, saying in the clearest language, *If ye believed Moses, ye would believe Me; for he wrote of Me*; if I had not made it clear that My word harmonized with the testimonies of the prophets, and that the power of My Presence had already been predicted and proclaimed, they would have had reasonable grounds for their madness against Me and you. Since nothing has been left out, but everything that was essential has been said, the reason which they have devised to cover the nakedness of their sin is vain.

This consideration then I think should harmonize with the words of the Saviour; but in showing the terrible charges that will be brought against those who injure them, and in saying that those who dare to do such things will one day be chastised, He removes the greater part of their grief and wisely withdraws that which was likely to cause them no small pain. For the conviction that the workers of wickedness will pay the penalty of their crimes sometimes makes it possible to those who are injured to endure their wickedness. And, knowing this, the Master of all things says: *Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will recompense, saith the Lord*. Nay, even the blessed Paul himself, when struck by one of the high priests, had no other consolation for the bitterness of suffering than this that we have mentioned. For what did he say?----*God shall smite thee, thou whited wall*. This then is a medicine for human weakness--

--I mean the expectation of the punishment of those who have chosen to act unjustly. Our Lord, however, is superior to and above human littleness. *When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not*, according to the Scripture. But when struck on the face, He made no angry remark, nor threatened the man who dared to strike Him, but answered indeed with the greatest mildness and forbearance, *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me?* The word then of the prophet is true: *Who shall be made equal to the Lord in the clouds, or who shall be likened to the Lord among the sons of God?*

23 He that hateth Me hateth My Father also.

He makes a definite charge of atheism against those who choose, in the impiety of their minds and the estrangement of their hearts, to hate Him. And the charge is a true one. For those who dishonour the Son will not be guiltless of transgression against the Father, convinced of the justice of their hatred. For just as those who depreciate the shining of the sun, because it appears and exists for no necessary purpose, bring charges of uselessness, and direct their censure also against its Author; and just as whoever sees fit to despise the scent of flowers will cast reproach on this account against that from whence it was derived----the case will be the same, I suppose, with respect to the Only-begotten and His Father. For it is impossible for those who censure what proceeds from anything else to praise its author. For this reason Christ said to the Jews: *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit: neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit*; when He further told them to make this accurate and unexceptionable distinction in this matter: *Either make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt*. For whatever one could truly predicate of one of such things as these, that I suppose he must necessarily make applicable to both. For when there is one nature, surely the attributes are entirely common even though they are capable of separate manifestation; and whatever a man might do against what proceeds from any fountain, that he would plainly do against the fountain itself. Wherefore Christ says that *he that hateth Me, hateth My Father also*. And He appropriately attributes a reference to the Person of the Father to any charges that men may make against Himself. And He will none the less satisfy us by this discourse that He is not distinct from Him by reason of the complete identity of Their Natures. And besides He terrifies His hearers by showing how very perilous it is to choose to transgress by hating Him, and He assures them that the man who rejects His worship will be defenceless and an easy prey to his enemies, inasmuch as he insults the Person of the Father Himself. For since insolence against His Son affects Him too, He will also be offended.

Is it not quite clear that the reception of this belief raised the confidence of His holy disciples? At the same time, Christ illustrated another essential and profound truth----I mean this of which I will speak. Some thought in their unparalleled madness and excessive folly, that when they were transgressing against the Son, and opposing the words of the Saviour, they were giving pleasure to God, Who was the Giver of the Law; and while they continued to confer the meed of victory on the prophetic dispensation of Moses, they showed themselves true guardians of the love of God. It was necessary therefore to show the falsity of their boast, and to teach the world that those who act counter to the laws of the Saviour set themselves as it were against the entire Divine Nature, insulted in the Person of the Son by their contumacy, and by their persistent and inexcusable disobedience, which He clearly declares is not merely aimed against His own Person, but also affects all who preach the Word for Him and through Him. He then that enters upon opposition against the holy Apostles themselves is an enemy of God, and shows insolence towards Him, and is altogether hostile to the ineffable and

unspeakable Nature of the Divine Being, for the Apostles do not preach themselves, but the God and Lord of all, that is. Christ.

24 If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father.

Christ none the less shows by these words that no excuse was left to the Jews why they should not encounter the doom of punishment and meet irretrievable damnation For clearly nothing that could profit them is left undone, as both a long discourse is vouchsafed them which might easily have put them on the way of salvation, and miracles were shown to them which no one in the world had ever seen before. For what saint ever vied with the Saviour in working miracles? As then the desire of honouring Him was so far repugnant to the Jews that they even preferred to hate Him in the impiety of their minds, will not the burden of the charge weigh most grievously upon them? For it would be better for them that they should never have heard His wise words or witnessed His unspeakable wonder-working power; for perhaps then they might have devised some such specious plea as this for pardon: "We never heard any of the truths essential to salvation, nor did we see anything to induce faith in us," But since it was not from one of the holy prophets, but from Christ Himself Who came from above and was sent to us, that they got their information; and since they also saw strange miracles with their own eyes, for Christ opened the eyes of the blind although no other man had ever before been able to do this; what can excuse the madness of the Jews, or what plea can extricate them from punishment? For though they had heard and seen, they hated both the Son and the Father; they both dishonoured the Word sent from the Father through the Son, and also, rejecting the honour due to the works of the Divine Nature, stood convicted of glaring impiety against the entire Nature of God, which was the agent. For the Father Himself certainly co-operated with the Son when He worked His wonders, not as doing marvellous works by an external instrument, but as being in the Son through the identity of Their Nature and the immutability of Their Substance. The wretched Jews then showed ingratitude, and lie under the grievous charge of gross contumacy, since they held as of no account the incomparable teaching of the Saviour, and besides dishonoured through the Son and in the Son the Nature of the Father, although that Nature was shown to be the worker of exceeding great miracles to them, which ought to have drawn and attracted the most stubborn and unteachable into ability to think what was right and what conduced to the glory of God.

25 But this cometh to pass, that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their Law, They hated Me without a cause.

And He shows clearly that this was not unforeseen by the Law, which predicted all that was to come to pass; but we say that it. was not for this reason that the Law predicted these latter days that the Jews when they visited with hatred both the Father and the Son might be convicted of injustice, but, inasmuch as They were destined to be so hated by them, the Divine and Sacred Law presaged it, showing that the Spirit was in no way ignorant of the future. For it was written in the Book of Psalms, as spoken by the Person of Christ, as rebuking the madness of the Jews and saying, *They hated Me with an unjust hatred.* For surely the hatred was unjust. Certainly they were exasperated against Him without a cause, who so far from having their hatred justified, in regard at any rate to the character of the works that were done among them, ought rather to have loved Him with surpassing devotion and have delighted in a willingness to follow Him. For let any one who wishes to excuse the disobedience of the Jews come forward and tell us what ground for hatred any one could have against Him. Was

any one of the works of Christ deserving of hatred or enmity? His deliverance of them from death and corruption? His emancipation of them from the tyranny of the devil, and destruction of the dominion of sin, and restoration of that which was enslaved to sonship with God? His lifting up into righteousness (by His love of mankind and forgiveness of injuries) those who were dead in sin? His allowing them to participate in the Holy Spirit and the Divine Nature, and throwing open unto us even the dwelling-place of the holy angels, and granting men an access unto heaven? How was it just, that He Who provided and ordained all this for us should incur hatred, and not rather be requited by the silence of unspoken thanksgivings and with the boon of ceaseless gratitude at our hands? Nothing, however, could I think convert the stubborn Jew to willingness to think aright. For he hated without a cause Him Whom he ought rather to have loved with his whole heart and adorned with the honour of obedience. But herein our Lord well shows that He was not unaware of the stubborn temper of the Jews, but had foretold and foreknew that it would be so with them, but still treated them with mildness and forgiveness, as became His Divine Nature. For He set before them, ill-suited as they were to receive it, the Word which called them to salvation; even to confirming the confession of their faith by miracles, if there were any men among them of a good and suitable disposition. Herein too He gives His disciples no small benefit, to the intent that in a forgiving spirit they might extend the preaching of salvation even to those who offered them insult, and might even in this be seen to walk in the track of that excellence which first was conspicuous in Him. For if there be any good thing, it is seen in Christ first, and shown to us-ward; and from Him all blessings flow.

26, 27 But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me. And ye also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.

When He says that both He Himself and His Father were hated by the perverse Jews, this hatred of theirs being gratuitous and without justification, He with good reason makes mention of the Spirit. He thus at once adds to the Word the completion of the Holy Trinity, and also shows that it was dishonoured, to the intent that the spectators of His miracles, who were guilty of insult against the Son, might also be convicted of treating with contumely the power which so far excels every substance, not only by refusing to accept Christ, even though He had worked great marvels to convince them, but also by their actions against Him. For they treated Him with an impiety which is shocking even to think of; and yet one might say, O senseless Jew, Christ was a worker of wonders before you far exceeding the glory of Moses and the glory of every Saint. For the saying of the Lord, *If I had not done among them the works which none other did*, brings back a thought before our minds. While then you crown with honours so illustrious Moses, the servant and minister of lesser things than these, you do not blush when you so perversely reject Him Who is immeasurably superior and a worker of far nobler deeds; even though He brought to their long foretold fulfilment the oracles given by Moses, and terminated the shadow by the truth. Our Lord Jesus Christ therefore of necessity joined the mention of the Spirit to that of Himself and the Father. And He also shows what has been said to be true; that is, that if any one chooses to hate the Son, he will also utterly condemn the Father from Whom He proceeds. And how, or in what way, consider further.

For observe, when calling the Comforter "the Spirit of truth," that is, His own, He says that He comes from the Father. For as the Spirit naturally belongs to the Son, being in Him and proceeding through Him, so also He belongs to the Father. But the qualities of Their Substance cannot be distinct, where the Spirit is common to both. Let not then any of those

who are accustomed impiously to employ the language of folly lead us to the perverted opinion that the Son, executing as it were a kind of ministerial service, vouchsafes the Spirit that is received from the Father to the creature. For some have not scrupled perversely to say this. But it is more consistent to believe that since the Spirit belongs to Him, as He also certainly belongs to God the Father, He sends Him to His holy disciples to sanctify them. For if they think that in making the Son in this also a minister and servant to us, they form and utter a shrewd conception, surely it follows that we say to them: *Ye fools and blind; do you not perceive that you are going back, and diminishing the glory of the Only-begotten, when you string together miserable sophistries from the ignorance that is in you?* For if the Son ministers the Spirit from the Father, being ranked as a servant, surely it is necessary to admit that the Spirit is utterly different in Essence from Him, and perhaps His superior and far above Him, if the case be as you in your ignorance suppose. For if the Son does not proceed from the Father, that is, from His Essence, as you think, surely the Spirit when compared with the Son would be regarded as superior to Him. What then say we, when we hear Christ himself saying of the Spirit: *He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine and shall declare it unto you?*

Now, besides what has been mentioned, this also will necessarily follow. For if you consider that the Son performs a ministerial service, providing us with That which is of another Nature, that is, the Spirit proceeding from God the Father Which is naturally holy, the Son is not by Nature holy, but only by participation, as we are. For by the ignorance of the impious He is declared to be different in Substance from the Father, from Whom also the Spirit provided unto us by Him proceeds. It will then be possible, since the Spirit does not belong to the Son, but He Himself is sanctified by adoption, as is the case with the creature, that He may fall away from the holiness that is in Him. For that which has been acquired as an addition might surely be removed, at the pleasure of Him Who has bestowed it. Who then will not flee away from such doctrines as these? I think, however, that our statement is more conformable to the truth.

The truth then is dear to us, as are the dogmas, expressing the truth; and we will not follow those heretics, but, pursuing the faith handed down by the holy fathers, we declare that the Comforter, that is, the Holy Spirit, belongs to the Son, and is not introduced from outside nor acquired in His case, as He is in that of those who receive sanctification, in whom though not originally innate He is implanted; but that the Son is of one Substance with the Spirit, as also He is with the Father. For if we take this view, the power of the doctrines of the Church will not be reduced in our case to a polytheistic mythology, but the Holy Trinity is united in the doctrine of a Single Divinity. Showing then that there is a Unity of Substance, I mean that of Himself and God the Father, in the same Being, in saying that the Comforter is the Spirit of truth He declares that He proceeds from the Father, and makes plain and beyond contradiction that the opposer of Christ is wholly at enmity with God. For he who in any degree allows himself to condemn the Son may be reasonably considered to transgress against Him from Whom He proceeds.

When then, He says, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, that is My Spirit, Which proceeds from the Father, is come, He will testify of Me. And how will He testify? By working marvels in you, and by you He will be a just and true witness of My Godlike authority, and of the greatness of My power. For He that works in you is My Spirit, and as He is My Spirit, so also is He That of God the Father. Therefore it is necessary to consider that they who, to confirm our faith, work marvels in us by the one good Spirit are alike insulted in the Person of Christ, in Whom dwelt,

as Paul says, no mere part of the ineffable Divine Nature, but *all the fulness* [of the Godhead] *bodily*.

But when the Spirit bears witness, you yourselves also, He says, will bear witness with Him. For you have been eye-witnesses and spectators of what I have done among My own, being even with Me as My disciples.

xvi. 1 *These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be made to stumble.*

The Saviour, having clearly set before His disciples the madness of the Jews, was perhaps about to add to what He had said, that these misguided men would reach such a height of disobedience, and so stubbornly refuse to listen, and in their cowardice advance so far in hatred of God, that even if there should be two witnesses of His glory they would decline to admit it----and this though the Law openly declares that whatever is testified by two or three witnesses should be believed and received as unquestionably true. But He avoids mentioning this on the present occasion for good reasons. For His statement would thus have produced in them an immoderate grief, and, breaking the hearts of His disciples even to despair, would have made the entrance of faint-heartedness and cowardice into their hearts absolutely certain. For they might reasonably have questioned among themselves;----If the masses of the Jews would not only lend to no one a complete obedience, but also set at nought the Comforter though He astonished them with marvels passing description, and in spite of this would actually afterwards be found as guilty of hating Christ as they were before, and in hating Him of hating the Father, what necessity was there for spending their labour in vain? Why should they not rid themselves of their troubles, and choose silence in preference to teaching men unwilling to hear? Knowing then in all likelihood the thoughts that would agitate His disciples, He skilfully conceals what was too grievous to be told, and what would have been calculated to produce cowardice and faint-heartedness in the duty of teaching. But He rightly turns the drift of His speech into an exhortation to hold themselves in readiness and make vigorous preparation for the results that might be expected to follow in the future. For whatever comes to men suddenly and unexpectedly is likely to disturb even the mind that is stable. For the reception of that, the advent of which has been anticipated, the way is made smooth and its burden is lightened, since it has been already foreseen, and lost its edge by the expectation of certain suffering. Something of this kind, I think, Christ wishes to signify. For if, He says, I have already worked such marvels even before your eyes, the Comforter also will work marvels in you. And if the headstrong madness of the Jews is not diminished, and their conduct is the same as before, and even worse, be not offended, He says, when you find yourselves its victims. But keep ever in mind My words: *A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord.*

2 *They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God.*

He extends His forewarning of danger to that which is the most dreadful of all terrors, but not with the intention of arousing in His disciples an unmanly panic. For this would not harmonise with His anxiety to stimulate them to a fearless proclamation of the heavenly message. His object rather was that, thrusting aside the extremity of fear, as already anticipated and for this reason having lost its edge, they might gain a complete victory over every evil, and consider even the possible approach of intolerable evils as of no account whatsoever. For what loss could the lesser evil inflict on those who do not even dread the

greater? And how could those who know how to be superior to the worst objects of fear be dismayed by any of the rest? In order then that they might have their minds bent on enduring everything with a cheerful courage, and to convince them of the necessity of so far withstanding the malice of the Jews as not even to fear an immediate and cruel death, He not only tells them that these things will continually happen, and the devices or opposition of the Jews not be satisfied with merely turning them out of the synagogues, but forewarns them that their impiety will reach such a height of cruelty as to make them consider their extreme inhumanity towards them to be the path of piety towards God. It must be plain that those who held fast to the love of Christ actually were cast out of the synagogues by the Jews, and endured this punishment at the outset of their work---when we are told by the Evangelist that *nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;* and again: *For the Scribes and Pharisees had agreed already, that if any man should confess Him to be the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.* But if, He says, any are indisposed to endure the malice of the Jews, let them then know that their devices against you will not stop here. For be not at all alarmed, He says, even though you must endure this suffering. Their audacity will reach such a pitch of wickedness as to make them suppose your death to be as an actual service towards God. And this we shall find happening in the case of the holy Stephen, the first of the martyrs, and in that of the inspired Paul. For involving Stephen in a charge of blasphemy, and simulating herein the zeal that loves God, they slew him by stoning him. And some of the Jews were so enraged against the holy and wise Paul that they *bound themselves under a curse neither to eat nor to drink till they had slain him.* For we shall find this recorded in the Acts of the holy Apostles. Excellent then and profitable is His prediction, moderating by anticipation their fear of what was dreadful, and forging His disciples anew (as having as it were already suffered), into a courageous disposition. For the foreknowledge in the minds of the sufferers of the dreadfulness of their danger will give them strength beforehand, while it deprives the approach of evil of its power.

3 *And these things will they do, because they have not known the Father nor Me.*

He showed that the zeal of the Jews was *a zeal not according to knowledge*, as also Paul says, but that it had gone far astray and wandered out of the straight path, even though according to the purpose that was in them it seemed to be manifested for the sake of God. For these misguided men thought that by arming themselves with the command given by Moses they pleased God, the Giver of the Law, and actually supposed, that by opposing the prophetic utterances of Christ, they gained credit with Him. For it was for this reason that they persecuted so hotly the preachers of the message of the Gospel, but were ignorant that they were falling into every kind of folly, and by their insults against the Son were transgressing against God the Father Himself, and further, were convicted of complete ignorance of the Nature of the Father and that of the Son Who manifested Himself from Him. And, what is marvellous, they were eager to crown Moses, the wisest of men, who was a minister of the Law given by angels, with the highest honours, but did not shrink from loading with the worst insults our Lord Jesus Christ, Who expounded the unspeakable Will of God, and said clearly, *I do nothing of Myself: but the Father which sent Me He hath given Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak*---even though God the Father worked marvels with Him, and testified by a voice heard from above: *This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.* It is then unquestionable that if any one should choose bitterly to assail those who convey the Divine message, he will be in complete ignorance of the Undivided and Consubstantial Trinity. For such an one, when he excludes from the honour that is His due

the Word manifesting Himself from Him, to suit his own conceit, knows not the Father. For would it not be received as an assured truth by those who are able discreetly to deal with the doctrine of the Trinity, that, since He is of the same Substance with the Father, He will speak in absolute conformity with the Will of the Father; and that, as He partakes in His glory, the dignity of the Father will be equally insulted when He is attacked? In these words then the Lord Jesus Christ defends Himself, and also accuses the audacity of the Jews; fastening thereby a bitter and dreadful censure on those who dishonour Him by their cruelty towards the holy Apostles. For the charge of transgression will not merely have reference to the Saints, but will mount up to Him Who laid upon them the service of apostleship; just as God said unto the holy Samuel concerning the children of Israel: *They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me.*

Most dangerous is it then to refuse to bestow on the Saints the honour which is their due; for the charge of transgression against them will mount up to Him Who gave them their mission.

4 But these things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come, ye may remember them, how that I told you.

He contends that mention has been made to them of these things for no other reason except that they might know that, meeting for His sake the assaults of sin, they would at all events gain glory therefrom. For I have not foretold it unto you, He says, from any wish to enfeeble your courage or to inspire in you a premature alarm by the anticipation of suffering, but rather to give you foreknowledge, in order that by this means you may derive a double benefit. For in the first place, remembering that I forewarned you, you will marvel at My foreknowledge, and the time of peril will itself conduce to complete the security of your faith. For He Who knows the future must be by nature God. And bring this, too, to your recollection; He who is prepared and knows beforehand that he will suffer, will have his fear much diminished; for he will readily overcome all that seems to be dreadful, and will have his mind undisturbed, even in the midst of troubles. For I think the sudden and unexpected advent of suffering sharpens its sting; and for this reason the Psalmist says: *I was prepared and was not dismayed.* He bids His disciples then, for a good and necessary reason, to remember that He has foretold unto them the future. For it was certain that on this account they would believe Him to be the true God (for omniscience is peculiar to the true God), and they will readily believe that He will extricate them from their dangers.

5, 6 And these things I said not unto you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go unto Him that sent Me; and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

Another necessary and useful consideration entered into the mind of Christ. For it was beyond question, that, called as they had been to discipleship at the beginning by Him, and living ever in continual converse with Him, and having often had experience of His miracles, and having laid to heart His incomparable might and power, they thought they would overcome every trial, and at once triumph over perils of every kind. For how could they any longer entertain doubt and be faint at heart, after they had experienced the support of One Who had such power? And inasmuch as Christ forewarned them that they would fall into unexpected perils, with the intent that they might not be much dismayed thereby, reflecting within themselves and saying, "Have we then been disappointed of the hopes we had at first, and has our purpose failed, inasmuch as we thought that we were called to partake of every blessing, but

in the end find ourselves involved in unexpected calamities?" our Lord then is compelled to expound to them the reason why He did not forewarn them at first; and says: *These things I said not unto you from the beginning, because I was with you;* for while He was with them, He sufficed to preserve their peace of mind, and to rescue them from every trial, and to afford them suitable instruction and assistance in all that might befall them. But since He was going to the Father, He suitably, and at the fitting time, expounds to them the inevitable approach of what awaited them in the future. For if even we ourselves are very anxious not to miss the fitting time, surely this would be God's pleasure. The time then for silence was at the beginning, when the need for their receiving this instruction had not yet arisen. But when He was going to the Father, the time for speech had arrived. Did the Saviour then separate from His disciples when He ascended to the Father, and was He still with them, by the working and power and grace of the Spirit? How, or in what way, was He with them? For it is beyond question that He cannot lie when He says, *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,* except so far as the flesh and His bodily presence were concerned. But the Saviour knew that the ascent into heaven of His own Flesh was most essential to His Human Nature, but, as God, He well knew that the heart of His disciples was overwhelmed by the bitterness of their sorrow. For the departure of Christ was very grievous unto them, because they longed to be ever with Him. But since He had resolved to do this, they do not even ask when or for what reason He will leave them, or what is the motive or inducement of His Ascension. He sympathises then with their suffering, as it proceeded from love; and with their ill-timed preference of silence, which did not allow them to inquire the reason for His departure, although to know it would bring them much profit.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter cannot come unto you.

Grievous is the sorrow that has consumed your heart, He says, and bitter the affliction that has cast you down. For you consider that separation from Me will be fraught with pain to you, and your apprehension is well grounded. For you will certainly have to encounter all the trials which I have already foretold, and will endure the fury of impious persecutions. Considering then that expediency should always be preferred to pleasure, I will tell you the truth: *It is expedient for you that I go away.* And we will make all our thoughts subject to the Saviour Who is over us, though I think that the saying may be likely to cause no little perplexity to a simple-minded hearer. For surely the thought will arise in him and occur to his mind, that, if it was better that Christ should go away, His Presence with them could not but infer some loss. And if our advantage lay in His Ascension, surely the reverse would result from His remaining with us. The question may perhaps perplex an unaided judgment; but the man who is guided by knowledge from above to an accurate comprehension of the saying can find here no occasion of stumbling, but will rather discover its true meaning.

We must therefore ponder over and clearly understand this thought in particular, that according to the saying, *There is a time for everything, and all things are good in their season.* At the fitting season, then, it was well for Christ to be present in this world in the flesh: but, on the other hand, when the time came that was proper and suitable for the complete fulfilment of His purposes, He ascended to the Father. And the charge can in nowise be brought against Him that His presence with His disciples was not very advantageous to them, because at the last His departure became necessary. Nor, again, can He be reproached at all because advantage resulted from His departure, inasmuch as His Presence was profitable to them. For both these events, coming to pass at the proper season, brought us

advantage. And that, briefly touching on the drift of the inquiry, we may make it easier for our brethren to apprehend it, let us by way of digression give an explanation of the cause of the Incarnation of the Only-begotten; and, in addition, of the advantage which would result from His departure.

In order then that He might free from corruption and death those that lay under the condemnation of that ancient curse, He became Man; investing Himself, Who was by Nature the Life, with our nature. For thus the power of death was overcome, and the dominion of corruption, which had gained sway over us, was destroyed. And, since the Divine Nature is wholly free from inclination to sin, He exalted us by His own Flesh. For in Him we all have our being, inasmuch as He manifested Himself as Man. In order that He might mortify the *members, which are upon the earth*, that is, the affections of the flesh, and might quench *the law of sin* that holds sway in our members, and also that He might sanctify our nature, and prove Himself our Pattern and Guide in the path to piety, and that the revelation of the truth according to knowledge, and of a way of life beyond possibility of error might be complete---all this Christ, when He became Man, accomplished. It was necessary then to confer on the nature of man the height of blessedness, and not only to rid it of death and sin, but to raise it even to the heavens themselves, and to make man a companion of the angels, and a partaker in their joys. And just as by His own Resurrection He renewed in us the power of escaping corruption, even so He thought it right to open out for us the path heavenwards, and to set in the Presence of the Father the race of man who had been cast out of His sight owing to Adam's transgression. And the inspired Paul, adopting this view, says: *For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, nor into one like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the Face of God for us.* He tells us that being ever in His Father's Presence, and partaking of His Nature by reason of the sameness of Their Essence, He now manifests Himself not for His own sake but for us. For I will repeat what I have already said. He places us in the sight of the Father, by departing into heaven as the firstfruits of humanity. For just as, being Himself the Life by Nature, He is said to have died and risen again for our sake, even so He is said, ever beholding His Father and being in like manner beholden of Him, to appear as Man now, that is, when He has taken human nature upon Him, not for His own sake but for us. And as this one thing was seen to be lacking in His dispensation to us-ward, our ascension into heaven has been prepared for us in Christ, Who was the firstfruits and the first of men to ascend. For He ascended thither as our forerunner, as the inspired Paul also himself says. There, as Man, He is in very truth still the High Priest of our souls, our Comforter, and the propitiation for our sins; and, as God and Lord by Nature, He sits on His own Father's throne, and even on us too will the glory thereof be reflected. For this reason also Paul said concerning the Father: *And He raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ.* When then His mission on earth was accomplished, it was necessary that He should fulfil what yet remained---His Ascension to the Father. Wherefore He says: *It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter cannot come unto you.*

Come, then, let us add yet another reflection, profitable and true, to our previous investigations. All His work on earth had indeed been accomplished, as we just now affirmed. It was however surely necessary that we should become partakers and sharers of the Divine Nature of the Word; or rather that, giving up the life that originally belonged to us, we should be transformed into another, and the very elements of our being be changed into newness of life well-pleasing to God. But it was impossible to attain this in any other way except by fellowship in, and partaking of, the Holy Spirit. The most fitting and appropriate time, then,

for the mission and descent of the Holy Spirit to us was that which in due season came----I mean, the occasion of our Saviour Christ's departure hence. For while yet present in the body with those who believed on Him, He showed Himself, I think, the bestower of every blessing. But when time and necessity demanded His restoration to His Father in heaven, it was essential that He should associate Himself by the Spirit with His worshippers, and should dwell in our hearts by faith, in order that, having His presence within us, we might cry with boldness, *Abba, Father*, and might readily advance in all virtue, and might also be found strong and invincible against the wiles of the devil, and the assaults of men, as possessing the omnipotent Spirit.

For it might easily be shown, both from the Old and New Scriptures, that the Holy Spirit changes the disposition of those in Whom He is, and in Whom He dwells, and moulds them into newness of life. For the inspired Samuel, when he was discoursing with Saul, said: *And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt be turned into another man.* And the blessed Paul thus writes: *But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit. Now the Lord is the Spirit.* You see that the Spirit moulds as it were into another likeness those in whom He visibly abides. For He easily turns them from an inclination to dwell on the things of earth, to the contemplation only of that which is in heaven; and from an unmanly cowardice to a courageous disposition. And that we shall find the disciples thus affected and steeled by the Holy Spirit into indifference to the assaults of their persecutors, and laying fast hold of the love that is towards Christ, can no way be questioned. Therefore the saying of the Saviour is true, when He says, "It is expedient for you that I depart into heaven." For that was the occasion of the descent of the Spirit.

8, 9, 10, 11 *And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.*

When He has shown that His departure to His Father is the fitting occasion of the descent and mission of the Spirit, and has by this means sufficiently allayed the pangs of grief in His holy disciples, He rightly proceeds to show what the work of the Holy Spirit will be. For *when He is come*, He says, *He will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* And He has clearly pointed out what form the reproof in each of these cases will take. But since some are likely to stumble in dealing with this question, I consider it necessary to interpret the text point by point, and to state more plainly its signification.

The reproof of sin, then, has been set first. How then will He reprove the world? When those who love Christ, as being made worthy of Him, and as true believers, are convinced of sin, then it is that He will condemn the world, that is those who are ignorant and persist in unbelief, and are enslaved by their love of worldly pleasure, by the very nature of their case, in that they are bound by their sins and doomed to die in their transgressions. For God will in nowise be a respecter of persons, nor will He vouchsafe the Spirit to some in the world without sufficient cause, and to others wholly deny Him; but will cause the Comforter to dwell only in those who are worthy of Him, who by a pure faith have honoured Him as truly God, and confessed that He is the Creator and Lord of the Universe. And that which the Saviour Himself by anticipation told the Jews when He said, *Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins*, the Comforter when He is come will in fact show to be true.

But further, He says: *He will reprove the world in respect of righteousness, because I go to the Father and ye behold Me no more.* For He will duly hold converse with those who believe in Christ after His ascension into heaven, as duly justified thereby. For they received as the true God Him Whom, though they had in nowise seen Him, they yet believed to sit on His Father's throne. For by calling to mind what Thomas said and did, one might readily perceive that Christ calls those who thus believe blessed. For when he was in doubt about the restoration of the Son to life, he said: *Except I shall put my hand into His side, and see the prints of the nails, I will not believe.* And when, after Christ had permitted him to do as he desired, he believed, what words did he hear? *Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.* Justly then have those been justified who without seeing have believed; but the world has missed the attainment of an equal blessedness, not seeking to obtain the righteousness that is of faith, but deliberately preferring to abide in its own wickedness.

It is necessary, however, to know that the two reproofs already mentioned will apply not merely to the Jews, but rather to every man who is stubborn and disobedient. For the appellation "the world" signifies not merely the man who is incessantly engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, and who clings to the wickedness that is of the devil, but signifies equally those who are dispersed about and dwell in the whole world. Thus the double reproof has a generic meaning, and applies to all. For Christ included not merely Judaea, as was the case in the beginning, or the seed of Israel only, but the entire race that was descended from Adam. For His grace is not partial, but the benefit of faith is extended to the whole world.

The third reproof by the Comforter will be, as the Saviour says, the most righteous condemnation of the prince of this world. And what form this reproof takes I will explain. For the Comforter will testify to the glory of Christ, and, showing that He is truly the Lord of the Universe, will reprove the world as having wandered astray, and as having left Him Who is truly God by Nature and worshipped him whom Nature owns not as God, that is Satan. For the judgment against him is, I think, sufficient to show that this statement is true. For he could not have been condemned and lost his power, nor have paid the penalty of his conflict with God, being delivered into chains of darkness, if he were by Nature God, Who sits unshaken on His throne of majesty and power. But now we see him so incapable to preserve his own honour, that he is even cast under the feet of those filled with the Spirit, I mean the faithful who have confessed that Christ is God. For they trample the demon under foot when he tries and struggles. When then any one sees the swarm of impure demons shuddering and cast out by the prayers of such men, and by the working power of the Holy Spirit, will he not with reason say that Satan has been condemned? For he has been condemned by his no longer being able to prevail over those who have been impressed with the seal of righteousness and sanctification by the Holy Spirit, through the faith that is in Christ. How then, tell me, have we trodden all his power under foot, according to the saying in the Psalms addressed to every man that lives in the world? *By the help of the Most High thou shalt tread upon the asp and basilisk; the lion and the dragon thou shalt trample under foot.* When then the Comforter from heaven enters souls that are pure, and manifests the righteousness of His mission by faith impartially bestowed, then will He show that the world is bound in its own sins, and without share in the grace that is from above, since men repulse their Redeemer; and He will also reprove the world---as causelessly accusing those who have believed---of sin, and as far as they have rightly been justified, although they gaze not on Christ as He departed unto God and wrought marvels, but honour Him by faith. It was, I think, with some such thought as this in his mind that Paul said: *Who shall lay anything to*

the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn? For the mouth of all lawlessness is stopped, according to the word of the Psalmist, as it can lay nothing to the charge of the faithful elect, who are invested with the glory of the righteousness that proceedeth from faith. He will reprove the world as having gone astray and resting its hopes on [the devil], who has received such condemnation that he has lost all the glory of his former condition, and only deserves our contempt, and to be held of no account by those who worship God.

God then has called him the prince of this world, not as really being so in truth, or as though this overruling power were a dignity inherent in his being, but as he had the glory thereof by fraud and covetousness, and as he is still holding sway and ruling over those that are astray by reason of the wicked purpose that is in them, by which having their mind fast bound in error they are inextricably entangled in the noose of captivity, even though it was in their power to escape by being converted through faith in Christ to a recognition of Him Who is truly God. Satan then is but a pretender to the title of ruler, and has no natural right to it as against God, and only maintains it through the abominable wickedness of those who are astray.

12, 13 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak; and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come.

He found their sorrow increased by their knowledge of the future, and that they were ill-disposed to bear the coming evils. For *sorrow*, He says, *hath filled your heart*. And He thought that it would not be meet to dispirit them by adding the rest, but He buries as it were in timely silence what He had to say next, as likely to cause them no small alarm, and reserves what remained for them to know, for the revelation through the Spirit, and for the light that was to be given them at the fitting season ¹. And perhaps also, seeing the disciples slow to apprehend the mystery, because they had not yet been illuminated by the Spirit, nor become partakers of the Divine Nature: *For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Christ was not yet glorified*, as the holy Evangelist says, He speaks thus, wishing to suggest to them that He would hereafter be able to reveal mysteries exceeding deep and passing man's understanding, while at present He refuses to do this, and with good reason, because He says that they are not yet prepared for it. For when, He says, My Holy Spirit shall transform you and change the elements of your mind into a willingness and an ability to despise the types of the Law, and rather to prefer the beauty of spiritual service, and to honour the reality more than the shadow; then, He says, you will surely be able readily to understand the things concerning Me. For the complete expression of these things will find place in your hearts when you are well fitted to receive it.

One might suppose then that our Lord thought He ought thus to address His disciples. For what He once said as by way of illustration is of a piece with, and will fit in with, the meaning we have just given to His words: *No man rendeth a piece from a new garment and putteth it upon an old garment; and again: But neither do men put new wine into old wine-skins; else the skins burst, and the wine is spilled. But new wine must be put into new wine-skins*. For the new instruction of the Gospel message belongs not to those who are not yet moulded by the Spirit into newness of life and knowledge, and they cannot as yet contain the mysteries of the Holy Trinity. The exposition then of the deeper mysteries of the faith is suitably reserved for the spiritual renovation that was to proceed from the Spirit when the mind of those who

believed on Christ would no longer allow them to remain in the obsolete letter of the Law but rather induce their conversion to new doctrines and implant in them thoughts enabling them to see a fair vision of the truth. And that before the Resurrection of our Saviour Christ from the dead, and before partaking of His Spirit, the disciples were living too much after the manner of the Jews, and were clinging to the legal dispensation, even though the mystery of Christ was clearly superior to it, one might very readily perceive. And therefore the blessed Peter, even though he was pre-eminent among the holy disciples, when the Saviour was once setting forth His suffering on the Cross and telling them that He must be outraged by the insults of the Jews, rebuked Him, saying, *Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall never be unto Thee.* And yet the holy prophets had plainly declared not only that He would suffer, but also the nature and extent of what He would endure. And let us also examine this further consideration. For when, as is recorded and as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, Peter was *hungry and desired to eat*, and when he saw thereupon the *sheet let down by four corners* from heaven, in which were included all creatures of the earth and the sea and the air, and heard a voice from heaven, saying, *Rise, Peter, kill and eat*; he answered, *Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean*; and for this received a well-merited rebuke in the answer: *What God hath cleansed, make not thou common.* And yet he ought to have remembered the frequent statement of our Saviour to the Jews: *Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man.* See then what need there was in his case for the illumination of the Spirit. Do you perceive then that it was necessary that his temper of mind should be forged anew into another better and wiser than that which was in the Jews? And therefore when, by being enriched with the grace that is from above and from heaven, they had their strength renewed, according to the Scripture, and had attained to a better knowledge than before, then we hear them boldly saying: *But we have the mind of Christ.* By the Mind of Christ they mean nothing else but the advent of the Holy Spirit into their hearts, revealing unto them in due measure all things whatsoever they ought to know and learn.

When then "*He*," that is the Comforter, *the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth.* See how free from extravagance the expression is: note the soberness of the phrase. For having told them that the Comforter would come unto them, He called Him the Spirit of Truth, that is, His own Spirit. For He is the Truth. For that His disciples might know that He does not promise them the visitation of a foreign and strange power, but rather that He will vouchsafe unto them His Presence in another form, He calls the Comforter the Spirit of Truth, that is, His own Spirit. For the Holy Spirit is not in truth alien from the Substance of the Only-begotten, but proceeds naturally from it, having no separate existence from Him so far as identity of nature is concerned, even though He may be in some sort conceived of as having a separate existence. The Spirit of Truth then, He says, will lead you to complete knowledge of the truth. For as having perfect knowledge of the truth, of which He is also the Spirit, He will make no partial revelation of it to those who worship Him, but will rather engraft in their hearts the mystery concerning it in its entirety. For even if now *we know in part*, as Paul says, still, though our knowledge be limited, the fair vision of the truth has gleamed upon us entire and undefiled. As then no man *knoweth the things of a man*, according to the Scripture, *save the spirit of the man which is in him*, in the same way, I think, to use the words of Paul, *none knoweth the things of God save the Spirit of God which is in Him.*

When then He cometh, He says, *He shall not speak from Himself* (He does not say, He will make you wise, and will reveal to you the mystery of the truth); He will tell you nothing that is not in accord with My teaching, nor will He expound to you any strange doctrine, for He will

not introduce laws peculiar to Himself; but since He is My Spirit, and as it were My Mind, He will surely speak to you of the things concerning Me. And this the Saviour saith, not that we should suppose that the Holy Spirit has merely ministerial functions, as some ignorantly maintain, but rather from a wish to satisfy the disciples that His Spirit, not being separate from Him so far as identity of Substance is concerned, will surely speak the things concerning Him, and will work and purpose the same.

And for this reason He added the words, *and He will show you things to come*; and it is almost as though He said these very words, "This will be a sign unto you that the Spirit is in very truth of My Substance and as it were My Mind---His telling you things to come, as I have done. For I foretold, even though you have not been able to take everything to heart. He would not then foretell things to come, as I have done, if He did not indeed exist in Me and proceed through Me, and if He were not Consubstantial with Me."

[End of the tenth book.]