

BOOK IV

CHAPTER I

GREEK¹

THE INSPIRATION OF DIVINE SCRIPTURE

1. Now in our investigation of these important matters we do not rest satisfied with common opinions and the evidence of things that are seen, but we use in addition, for the manifest proof of our statements, testimonies drawn from the scriptures which we believe to be divine, both from what is called the Old Testament and also from the New, endeavouring to confirm our faith by reason. We have not yet, however, discussed the divine character of the scriptures. Well then, let us deal in a brief manner with a few points concerning them, bringing forward in this connexion the reasons that influence us to regard them as divine writings. And first of all, before we make use of statements from the writings themselves and from the events disclosed in them, let us speak of Moses, the Hebrew lawgiver, and of Jesus Christ, the introducer of the saving doctrines of Christianity.

¹ Chs. I. and II., with part of Ch. III., marked as Frag. 28, Koetschau, are preserved in Ch. I. of the *Philocalia*. See the edition of J. A. Robinson, p. 7 ff. The titles of the chapters, which form together a single title to Ch. I. of the *Philocalia*, are here separated to agree with the chapter divisions found in Rufinus.

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THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

1. Now since in our discussion of these great and important subjects it is not sufficient to leave the conclusion of the matter to human opinions and the common understanding and, so to speak, to pronounce on things invisible through visible means, we must take into account, for the proof of these statements of ours, the testimonies of the divine scriptures. And in order that these testimonies may carry an assured and indubitable conviction both in regard to what we are about to say and in regard to what we have said already, it seems necessary first of all to show that the scriptures themselves are divine, that is, are inspired by the Spirit of God. We shall therefore set our seal to this proposition in as brief a manner as we can by quoting from the divine scriptures themselves the passages that chiefly influence us, that is, first the passages from Moses the lawgiver of the Hebrew people, and then from the words of Jesus Christ, the

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For although there have been very many lawgivers among both Greeks and barbarians, and teachers who proclaimed doctrines which professed to be the truth, we have no record of a lawgiver who has succeeded in implanting an enthusiasm for the acceptance of his teachings among nations other than his own. A great apparatus of supposed logical proof has been introduced by men who profess that their philosophy is concerned with truth, and yet none of them has succeeded in implanting what he regarded as the truth among different nations or even among any number of persons worth mentioning in a single nation.

Yet it would have been the wish of the lawgivers to put in force the laws which appeared to them to be good among the whole race of mankind, had that been possible; while the teachers would have wished that what they imagined was the truth should be spread everywhere throughout the world. But knowing that they could not summon men of other languages and of many nations to the observance of their laws and the acceptance of their teachings they wholly refrained even from attempting to do this, considering not unwisely how impossible it was that such a result should happen to them. Yet all over Greece and in the barbarian part of our world there are thousands of enthusiasts who have abandoned their ancestral laws and their

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author and leader of the Christian religion and doctrine.

For although there have been very many lawgivers among both Greeks and barbarians, as well as innumerable teachers or philosophers who professed that they taught the truth, we remember no lawgiver who has succeeded in instilling into the minds of foreign nations a desire and enthusiasm either to adopt his laws voluntarily or to defend them whole-heartedly. Nor has anyone succeeded in introducing and implanting what he regarded as the truth among, I will not say many other foreign nations, but even among the people of a single nation, in such a way so to cause a knowledge of and belief in it to extend to all.

Yet we cannot doubt that the lawgivers would have wished their laws to be observed by all men, had that been possible; while the teachers would have wished that what they regarded as the truth should become known to all. But knowing that this was altogether impossible and that they did not possess the enormous influence that was necessary to summon men of foreign nations to the observance of their laws and teachings they did not venture to make the least attempt at this, for fear lest an ineffective and futile effort to do so should stamp their conduct with folly. Yet all over the world, in the whole of Greece and in every foreign nation, there are innumerable people who have abandoned their ancestral laws and their

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recognised gods for observance of the laws of Moses and of the teaching contained in the words of Jesus Christ, in spite of the fact that those who submit to the law of Moses are hated by the worshippers of images and that those who accept the word of Jesus Christ are not only hated but in danger of death.¹

2. Now if we consider how in a very few years, although those who profess Christianity are persecuted and some are put to death on account of it while others suffer the loss of their possessions, yet the word has been able, in spite of the fewness of its teachers, to be 'preached everywhere in the world',² so that Greeks and barbarians, wise and foolish³ have adopted the religion of Jesus, we shall not hesitate to say that this achievement is more than human, remembering that Jesus taught with all authority and convincing power that his word should prevail.⁴

Consequently we may reasonably regard as oracles those utterances of his such as, 'Ye shall be brought before kings and governors for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the

¹ See also Origen, *Con. Celsum* I. 26, 27.

² See St. Matt. XXIV. 14.

⁴ See St. Mark XIII. 31.

their recognised gods and have submitted themselves to the observance of the law of Moses and to the discipleship and worship of Christ, and this in spite of the fact that an intense hatred has been aroused against them by those who worship images, to such an extent that they are often subjected to tortures at the hands of these men and sometimes even led to death. Nevertheless they embrace and guard with all affection the word of Christ's teaching.¹

2. Now we can see how in a short time this religion has grown up, making progress through the persecution and death of its adherents and through their endurance of confiscation of property and every kind of torture. And this is particularly wonderful since its teachers themselves are neither very skilful nor very numerous. For in spite of all, this word is 'preached in all the world',² so that Greeks and barbarians, wise and foolish³ now adopt the Christian religion. Hence there can be no doubt that it is not by human strength or resources that the word of Christ comes to prevail with all authority and convincing power in the minds and hearts of all men.

Moreover it is plain that this result was predicted by him and established by the divine oracles he uttered, as when he says, 'Ye shall be brought before governors and rulers for my

³ See Rom. I. 14.

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gentiles';¹ and . . . ² 'Many shall say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not eat in thy name and drink in thy name and in thy name cast out daemons? And I shall say unto them, Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I never knew you'.³ Now there was once a possibility that in uttering these words he was talking idly, because they were not true; but when words spoken with such authority have come to pass it shows that God has really become man and delivered to men the doctrines of salvation.

3. And what need is there to say also that it was predicted that those who are called 'rulers' 'shall fail from Judah and the leaders from his thighs, when he shall come for whom it'—that is, clearly, the kingdom—'is reserved', and when 'the expectation of the gentiles shall dwell here'.⁴ For it is abundantly clear from history and from what we see at the present day that after the times of Jesus there were no longer any who were called kings of the Jews, and that all those Jewish customs on which they prided themselves, I mean those connected

¹ St. Matt. X. 18; St. Mark XIII. 9.

² St. Matt. XXIV. 14. The quotation is omitted in the Greek, no doubt by mistake.

³ St. Matt. VII. 22, 23; St. Luke XIII. 26.

⁴ See Gen. XLIX. 10. (Sept.).

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sake, for a testimony to them and to the gentiles';¹ and again, 'This gospel shall be preached to all nations';² and also, 'Many shall say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunk in thy name, and in thy name cast out daemons? And I shall say unto them, Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I never knew you'.³ Now if these words had been spoken by him and had not come to the predicted fulfilment they might have appeared to be scarcely true and to possess no authority; but now, since the events which were predicted by him do come to pass, and since they were predicted with so great power and authority, it is most plainly shown that he is really God who has become man and has delivered to men the precepts of salvation.

3. And what are we to say of this, that the prophets have predicted beforehand of him that 'rulers shall not fail from Judah nor leaders from his thighs, until he shall come for whom it'—that is, clearly, the kingdom—'is reserved', and 'until the expectation of the gentiles shall come'.⁴ For it is abundantly clear from history and from what we see at the present day that after the times of Christ kings have not existed among the Jews. Moreover all those Jewish ceremonies of which they boasted so much and on which they prided themselves, that is,

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with the temple and the altar and the performance of worship and the garments of the high priest, have been destroyed.¹ For the prophecy has been fulfilled which says, 'The children of Israel shall sit for many days without king or ruler, without sacrifice or altar or priesthood or oracles'.²

Now we use these sayings as an answer to those who, in regard to the difficulty arising from the words in Genesis spoken by Jacob to Judah, say that the Ethnarch,³ who comes from the tribe of Judah, is the ruler of the people, and that men of his seed will not fail until the advent of the Christ as they picture him. For if 'the children of Israel shall sit for many days without king or ruler, without sacrifice or altar or priesthood or oracles',² and if from the time the temple was razed to the ground there has been 'neither sacrifice nor altar nor priesthood', it is clear that a ruler has 'failed from Judah and a leader from his thighs'. And when the prophecy says, 'A ruler shall not fail from Judah nor a leader from his thighs until there shall come what is reserved for him',⁴ it is clear

¹ The Christian argument from Gen. XLIX. 10 is given also by Justin Martyr, 1 *Apol.* XXXII; *Dial. cum Tryph.* LII.

² Hosea III. 4.

³ In Origen's *Ep. ad Africanum* 14 (Migne P. G. 11, p. 82 f.) he states that the Ethnarch has almost the powers of a king granted to him by the Romans. The Jewish contention, therefore, was not utterly without force.

⁴ Gen. XLIX. 10. For the two forms of the quotation see Justin Martyr, *Dial. cum Tryph.* CXX.

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those connected with the adorning of the temple and the decorations of the altar and all those sacerdotal fillets and the garments of the high priests were destroyed at one blow.¹ For the prophecy has been fulfilled which said, 'The children of Israel shall sit for many days without king, without ruler; there shall be neither sacrifice nor altar nor priesthood nor oracles'.²

Now we use these sayings as evidence against those who apparently maintain that what is said by Jacob in Genesis is said of Judah, and who declare that there remains to this day a ruler who comes from the tribe of Judah, that is to say, that person who is the ruler of the Jewish nation and whom they call the Patriarch, and, they add, men of his seed cannot fail to continue until the advent of that Christ whom they picture to themselves. But if what the prophet says is true, that 'the children of Israel shall sit for many days without king, without ruler; neither shall there be sacrifice nor altar nor priesthood',² and if certainly from the time the temple was overthrown no sacrifices have been offered nor has an altar been found there nor a priesthood existed, then it is quite clear that rulers

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that he has come for whom are the things reserved, that is, he who is the expectation of the gentiles. This is evident from the number of gentiles who through Christ have believed in God.

4. And in the song in Deuteronomy it is prophetically revealed that there shall be an election of foolish nations on account of the sins of God's former people; which has come to pass through no other than Jesus. For it says: 'They moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their idols; and I will move them to jealousy with that which is not a nation, and with a foolish nation I will provoke them to anger'.¹ Now it can be very clearly perceived in what manner the Hebrews, who are said to have moved God to jealousy with that which is not God and to have provoked him to anger with their idols, have themselves been provoked to anger and jealousy with that which is not a nation, and with a 'foolish nation', which God chose through the advent of Christ Jesus and his disciples.

We see, then, our calling, that 'not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God chose

¹ Deut. XXXII. 21.

² Gen. XLIX. 10. For the two forms of the quotation see Justin Martyr, *Dial. cum Tryph.* CXX.

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have 'failed from Judah', as it was written, 'and a leader from his thighs, until he comes for whom it was reserved'.² It is evident, then, that he has come, 'for whom it was reserved', he in whom also is 'the expectation of the gentiles'. This seems plainly to have been fulfilled in the multitude of those who from different gentile nations have through Christ believed in God.

4. Moreover in the song in Deuteronomy it is prophetically revealed that there shall be an election of a foolish nation on account of the sins of God's former people; which election is certainly none other than that which has come to pass through Christ. For it speaks thus: 'They have provoked me to anger with their idols, and I will move them to jealousy; with a foolish nation I will stir them to anger'.¹ Now it can be very clearly perceived in what manner the Hebrews, who are said to have moved God to anger with those that are no gods and to have provoked him with their idols, have themselves been provoked to anger and jealousy by a 'foolish nation', which God chose through the advent of Christ Jesus and his disciples.

For the apostle speaks as follows: 'Ye see your calling, brethren, that not many among you are wise after the flesh, not

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the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and the base things and the things that are despised did God choose, yea, and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought those things that were before them'. So let not 'Israel after the flesh', which is called by the apostle 'flesh', 'glory before God'.¹

5. And what need is there to speak of the prophecies relating to Christ in the Psalms, in which a certain ode is headed 'For the beloved', whose tongue is said to be the 'pen of a ready writer' who is 'fairer than the children of men' because 'grace was poured on his lips'?² Now a proof that 'grace was poured on his lips' is the fact that although the time he spent in teaching was short—for he taught only about a year and a few months³—the world has been filled with this teaching and with the religion that came through him. For there has arisen 'in his days' 'righteousness and an abundance of peace' lasting until the consummation, which is here called the 'taking away of the moon'; and he continues to 'have dominion from sea to sea and from the rivers to the ends of the earth'.⁴ And a 'sign' has been given to the house of David, for 'the virgin' did 'conceive and bear a son',

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many mighty, not many noble; but God chose the foolish things of the world and those which are not, that he might destroy those things that were before them'. Therefore let not Israel after the 'flesh'—for so is Israel called by the apostle—'glory'; let 'no flesh', I say, 'glory before God'.¹

5. What must we say, moreover, of the prophecies relating to Christ in the Psalms, and particularly in that one which is headed 'A song for the beloved', where it is said that his tongue is the 'pen of a ready writer' who is 'fairer than the children of men' because 'grace was poured on his lips'?² Now a proof that 'grace was poured on his lips' is the fact that although the time he spent in teaching was short—for he taught but a year and a few months³—nevertheless the whole world has been filled with his teaching and religious faith. For there has arisen 'in his days' 'righteousness and an abundance of peace' lasting until the end, which end is called the 'taking away of the moon'; and he has 'dominion from sea even to sea and from the river even to the ends of the earth'.⁴ And a sign also has been given to the house of David; for 'the virgin' has 'conceived in the womb and

¹ 1 Cor. I. 26-29, X. 18.

² Ps. XLV. 1-3 (for the title see Sept., Ps. XLIV).

³ See Origen, *In Luc. hom.* 32 (Lomm. V. 208). The 'one year' is based upon St. Luke IV. 19. In another passage, *In Matt. Com.* ser. 40 (Lomm. IV. 276), Origen gives the time as three years.

⁴ See Ps. LXXII. 7, 8.

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and his name is 'Emmanuel', which means 'God with us'.¹

There has also been fulfilled that which the same prophet says, 'God is with us. Know it, ye nations, and be overcome; ye that are strong, be overcome'.² For we who have been captured from among the nations have been overcome and conquered by the grace of his word. Moreover the place of his birth is foretold in Micah. 'And thou, Bethlehem,' it says, 'land of Judah, art in no way least among the rulers of Judah; for out of thee shall come a governor, who shall shepherd my people Israel'.³ And the 'seventy weeks' until the coming of Christ the governor were fulfilled in accordance with Daniel's prophecy.⁴ He, too, has come who according to Job has 'subdued the great fish'⁵ and who has given to his true disciples authority to 'tread on serpents and scorpions and over every power of the enemy', without being in any way harmed by them.⁶

Let anyone also consider how the apostles who were sent by Jesus to preach the gospel sojourned everywhere, and he will see that their daring venture was not merely human and that the command was from God. And if we examine how, when people heard the new teachings and strange words, they welcomed these men, the desire to plot

¹ Is. VII. 14; St. Matt. I. 23.

² St. Matt. II. 6 (from Micah V. 2).

³ Job III. 8 (Sept.).

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has borne Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us'.¹

There has also been fulfilled that which the same prophet says, 'God is with us. Know it ye nations, and be overcome'.² For we have been overcome and conquered, we who come from the nations and are as it were the spoils of his victory, we who have bowed our necks to the yoke of his grace. Moreover the place of his birth is foretold in the prophet Micah, who says; 'And thou, Bethlehem, land of Judah, art in no way least among the rulers of Judah; for out of thee shall come a governor, who shall rule my people Israel'.³ Further, the weeks of years until the coming of Christ the governor, which Daniel the prophet foretold, have been fulfilled.⁴ He, too, has come who was foretold by Job to be about to 'destroy the huge beast'⁵ and who also gave to his personal disciples authority to 'tread on serpents and scorpions and over every power of the enemy', without being in any way harmed by them.⁶

And if any one will consider the journeyings of Christ's apostles through all the various places in which they were sent by him to preach the gospel, he will find that what they ventured to undertake was beyond the power of man and that their success in having accomplished what they ventured upon is from God. If we consider how, when

² Is. VIII. 8, 9 (Sept.).

⁴ See Dan. IX. 24.

⁶ See St. Luke X. 19.

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against them being frustrated by some divine power that watched over them, we shall not refuse to believe that they even worked miracles, 'God bearing witness with their words, and through signs and wonders and manifold powers'.¹

6. Now when we thus briefly demonstrate the divine nature of Jesus and use the words spoken in prophecy about him, we demonstrate at the same time that the writings which prophesy about him are divinely inspired and that the words which announce his sojourning here and his teaching were spoken with all power and authority and that this is the reason why they have prevailed over the elect people taken from among the nations. And we must add that it was after the advent of Jesus that the inspiration of the prophetic words and the spiritual nature of Moses' law came to light. For before the advent of Christ it was not at all possible to bring forward clear proofs of the divine inspiration of the old scriptures. But the advent of Jesus led those who might have suspected that the law and the prophets were not divine to the clear conviction that they were composed by the aid of heavenly grace.

¹ See Heb. II. 4; Acts V. 12.

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people heard that a new teaching was being introduced by these men, they were able to receive them, or rather how while often desiring to destroy them they were restrained by some divine power that was present with them, we shall find that in this matter nothing was wrought by human strength but all by divine power and providence, 'signs and powers manifest beyond all doubt bearing witness to their word and teaching.'¹

6. Now that we have briefly demonstrated these points, namely, the deity of Jesus Christ and the fulfilment of all those prophecies that were spoken about him, it is, I think, also proved at the same time that the writings themselves which have prophesied about him were divinely inspired, those which foretold either his advent or the power of his teaching or the ingathering of all the nations. To which must also be added the following, that the divine nature and inspiration both of the oracles of the prophets and of the law of Moses has been specially brought to light and proved since the time when Christ came into this world. For before the predictions made by these were fulfilled, although they were true and inspired by God, still they could not be shown to be true because they were not yet proved to have come to pass; but the advent of Christ proclaimed the truth and divine inspiration of what had

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And he who approaches the prophetic words with care and attention will feel from his very reading a trace of their divine inspiration and will be convinced by his own feelings that the words which are believed by us to be from God are not the compositions of men. Now the light which was contained within the law of Moses, but was hidden away under a veil, shone forth at the advent of Jesus, when the veil was taken away and there came at once to men's knowledge those 'good things' of which the letter of the law held a 'shadow'.¹

7. It would be a long business if we were to record at this point the ancient prophecies relating to every future event, in order that the doubter might be struck by their divine origin and, putting away all hesitation and indecision, might devote himself with his whole soul to the words of God. But if in every passage of the scriptures the superhuman element of the thought does not appear obvious

¹ See 2 Cor. III. 15, 16; Heb. X. 1.

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been spoken, whereas before it would certainly have been considered doubtful whether the issue of what had been predicted would come to pass.

Further, if any one ponders over the prophetic sayings with all the attention and reverence they deserve, it is certain that in the very act of reading and diligently studying them his mind and feelings will be touched by a divine breath and he will recognise that the words he is reading are not the utterances of man but the language of God; and so he will perceive from his own experience that these books have been composed not by human art or mortal eloquence but, if I may so speak, in a style that is divine. The splendour of Christ's advent has, therefore, by illuminating the law of Moses with the brightness of the truth, withdrawn the veil which had covered the letter of the law and has disclosed, for every one who believes in him, all those 'good things' which lay concealed within.¹

7. It would be a matter of considerable labour if we were to record the time and manner in which every event predicted of old by the prophets has been fulfilled, in the hope that we might thereby confirm those who are in doubt; although it is possible for anyone who desires more accurate knowledge about these things to gather proofs in abundance from the books of the truth themselves. But if at

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to the uninstructed, that is no wonder. For in regard to the works of that providence which controls the whole world, while some show themselves most plainly to be works of providence, others are so obscure as to appear to afford grounds for disbelief in the God who with unspeakable skill and power superintends the universe. The skilful plan of the providential ruler is not so clear in things on earth as it is in regard to the sun and moon and stars, and not so plain in the events that happen to men as it is in regard to the souls and bodies of animals, where the purpose and reason of the impulses, the mental images and the natures they possess and the structures of their bodies are accurately discovered by those who investigate these matters.

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first sight of the letter the superhuman meaning does not at once appear obvious to those who have been but little instructed in divine things, that is no wonder; because divine things are communicated to men somewhat obscurely and are the more hidden in proportion to the unbelief or unworthiness of the inquirer. For while it is certain that everything which exists or happens in this world is arranged by the providence of God, there are some things which show themselves quite plainly to be subject to the control of providence, whereas others evolve in a manner so obscure and so hard to understand that in their case the plan of divine providence is utterly concealed. The result is that occasionally there are some who disbelieve that certain things have any connexion with providence, since the plan on which the works of divine providence are arranged with unspeakable skill is hidden from them; although this plan is not equally concealed in regard to all things. Moreover among men themselves it is pondered over less by one and more by another, while the inhabitant of heaven, whoever he may be, knows more of it than any man on the earth.¹ And the plan of bodies is apparent to us in one way, that of trees in another, while that of souls, in yet another way, is concealed from us. In what manner, too, the divine movements of rational minds are ordered by divine pro-

¹ Rufinus seems to have misunderstood the original.

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But just as providence is not abolished because of our ignorance, at least not for those who have once rightly believed in it, so neither is the divine character of scripture, which extends through all of it, abolished because our weakness cannot discern in every sentence the hidden splendour of its teachings, concealed under a poor and humble style. For 'we have a treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power of God may shine forth'¹ and may not be reckoned as coming from us who are but men. For if it had been the hackneyed methods of demonstration used among men and preserved in books that had convinced mankind, our faith might reasonably have been supposed to rest in the wisdom of men and not in the power of God.² But now it is clear that 'the word and the preaching' have prevailed among the multitude 'not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.'³

¹ See 2 Cor. IV. 7.

² See 1 Cor. II. 5.

³ See 1 Cor. II. 4.

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vidence is to a large extent hidden from men, and not a little, in my opinion, from the angels also.

But just as divine providence is not proved to be a fiction, particularly for those who are convinced of its existence, because its workings and arrangements are beyond the comprehension of human minds, so neither will the divine inspiration of holy scripture, which extends through its entire body, be supposed to be non-existent because the weakness of our understanding cannot discover the deep and hidden thoughts in every sentence; for the treasure of divine wisdom is concealed in vessels of poor and humble words, as the apostle points out when he says: 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the greatness of the divine power may shine forth the more',¹ when no taint of human eloquence is mingled with the truth of the doctrines. For if our books had attracted men to belief because they were composed with rhetorical skill or with philosophical cleverness, our faith would undoubtedly have been supposed to rest in the skilful use of words and in human wisdom, and not in the power of God.² But now it is well known to all that 'the word of this preaching' has been so accepted by multitudes in almost the whole world that they have realised that their belief rests 'not in persuasive words of

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Since therefore it is a celestial or even super-celestial power that impels us to worship only him who created us, let us endeavour to 'leave behind the doctrine of the first principles of Christ', that is, of the elements, and 'press on to perfection',² that the wisdom which is spoken to the perfect may be spoken also to us. For he who had acquired this wisdom promises that he speaks it to the perfect, and that it is a wisdom different from the 'wisdom of this world, and the wisdom of the rulers of this world, which is coming to nought'.³ And this wisdom will be distinctly stamped upon us 'according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested both through the scriptures and through the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ'; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.⁴

¹ See 1 Cor. II. 4.

² See 1 Cor. II. 6.

⁴ See Rom. XVI. 25-27; 2 Tim. I. 10; 1 Tim. VI. 14.

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wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."¹

Since therefore we have been drawn by a celestial, nay, by an even super-celestial power, to faith and trust, for this purpose, that we may worship the only Creator of all things as our God, let us also endeavour to strive earnestly to 'leave behind the doctrine of the first principles of Christ', which are the elementary principles of knowledge, and to 'press on to perfection',² that that wisdom which is delivered to the perfect may be delivered also to us. For such is the promise of him to whom the preaching of this wisdom was committed, and who says, 'Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect, yet a wisdom not of this world nor of the rulers of this world, who are to come to nought'.³ By this he shows that our wisdom, so far as concerns polished language, has nothing in common with the wisdom of this world. This wisdom, therefore, will be the more clearly and perfectly inscribed in our hearts, if it is made known to us 'according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been hidden through times eternal, but now is manifested through the scriptures of the prophets' and 'through the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ', to whom is the glory for ever and ever. Amen.⁴

² See Heb. VI. 1.

CHAPTER II

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HOW DIVINE SCRIPTURE SHOULD BE READ AND INTERPRETED.¹

1. Now that we have spoken cursorily about the inspiration of the divine scriptures it is necessary to discuss the manner in which they are to be read and understood, since many mistakes have been made in consequence of the method by which the holy documents ought to be interpreted not having been discovered by the multitude. For the hard-hearted and ignorant members of the circumcision have refused to believe in our Saviour because they think that they are keeping closely to the language of the prophecies that relate to him, and they see that he did not literally 'proclaim release to captives' or build what they consider to be a real 'city of God' or 'cut off the chariots from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem' or 'eat butter and honey, and choose the good before he knew or preferred the evil'.²

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MANY, NOT UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES SPIRITUALLY, AND INTERPRETING THEM ERRONEOUSLY, HAVE FALLEN INTO HERESIES.

1. Now that we have dealt, therefore, with this point, that the divine scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit, it appears necessary also to explain how some men have involved themselves in numerous errors through not reading or understanding them aright, because the method by which we should approach the interpretation of the divine writings is unknown to the multitude. For the Jews, owing to their hardness of heart and their desire to appear wise in their own sight, have refused to believe in our Lord and Saviour because they suppose that the prophecies that relate to him must be understood literally, that is, that he ought actually and visibly to have 'proclaimed release to captives', and that he ought to have at once built a city such as they think the 'city of God' really is, and at the same time to have 'cut off the chariots from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem', and also to have eaten 'butter and honey' and 'chosen the good before he knew how to prefer the evil':²

¹ For the Greek title see above p. 256 n. 1.

² For these passages see Is. LXI. 1 (St. Luke IV. 19); Ps. XLVI. 4; Ezek. XLVIII. 15 ff; Zech. IX. 10; Is. VII. 15.

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Further, they think that it is the wolf, the four-footed animal, which is said in prophecy to be going to 'feed with the lamb, and the leopard to lie down with the kid, and the calf and bull and lion to feed together, led by a little child, and the ox and the bear to pasture together, their young ones growing up with each other, and the lion to eat straw like the ox';¹ and having seen none of these events literally happening during the advent of him whom we believe to be Christ they did not accept our Lord Jesus, but crucified him on the ground that he had wrongly called himself Christ.

And the members of the heretical sects, reading the passage, 'A fire has been kindled in mine anger';² and 'I am a jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation';³ and 'It repenteth me that I have anointed Saul to be king';⁴ and 'I, God, make peace and create evil';⁵ and elsewhere, 'There is no evil in a city, which the Lord did not do';⁶ and further, 'Evils came down from the Lord upon the gates of Jerusalem';⁷ and

¹ See Is. XI. 6, 7

² Exod. XX. 5.

³ Is. XLV. 7.

⁴ Deut. XXXII. 22; Jer. XV. 14.

⁵ 1 Sam. XV. 11.

⁶ Amos III. 6.

⁷ Micah. I. 12.

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Further, they think that it is the wolf, the four-footed animal, of which it is prophesied that at the coming of Christ it must 'feed with lambs, and the leopard lie down with the kids, and the calf and the bull feed with lions and be led to their pastures by a little child, and the ox and the bear lie down together in the green fields and their young ones be brought up side by side, and lions to stand at stalls with oxen and feed on straw.'¹ Seeing, then, that there was no fulfilment in history of all these things which were prophesied of him and in which they believed that the signs of the advent of Christ were specially to be observed, they refused to acknowledge the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ; nay, contrary to all right and justice, that is, contrary to the faith of prophecy, they nailed him to the cross for assuming for himself the name of Christ.

Then again the heretics, reading in the law, 'A fire has been kindled in my anger';² and 'I am a jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation';³ and 'It repenteth me that I have anointed Saul to be king';⁴ and 'I am God, that maketh peace and createth evil';⁵ and again 'There is no evil in a city, which the Lord hath not done';⁶ and 'Evils came down from the Lord upon the gates of Jerusalem';⁷ and 'An evil

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'An evil spirit from the Lord troubled Saul';¹ and ten thousand other passages like these, have not dared to disbelieve that they are the writings of God, but believe them to belong to the Creator, whom the Jews worship.² Consequently they think that since the Creator is imperfect and not good, the Saviour came here to proclaim a more perfect God who they say is not the Creator, and about whom they entertain diverse opinions. Then having once fallen away from the Creator, who is the sole unbegotten God, they have given themselves up to fictions, fashioning mythical hypotheses according to which they suppose that there are some things that are seen and others that are not seen, all of which are the fancies of their own minds.

Moreover, even the simpler of those who claim to belong to the Church, while believing indeed that there is none greater than the Creator, in which they are right, yet believe such things about him as would not be believed of the most savage and unjust of men.

2. Now the reason why all those we have mentioned hold false opinions and make impious or ignorant assertions about God appears to be nothing else but this, that scripture is not

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spirit from God troubled Saul';¹ and many other passages of scripture like these, have not dared to say that they are not the writings of God, but have supposed them to belong to that Creator God whom the Jews worshipped,² and who they think should be believed to be merely just, and not good as well. For they think that the Saviour came here to proclaim to us a more perfect God, who they say is not the Creator of the world, and about whom they entertain diverse opinions; since having once fallen away from their faith in God the Creator, who is the God of all, they have given themselves up to various fictions and fables, inventing false opinions and saying that there are certain visible things made by one power and certain invisible things created by another power, just as they are led by the fancy and vanity of their own minds.

Moreover some of the simpler of those who appear to remain within the faith of the Church, while holding that there is none greater than the Creator God, in which they maintain a right and sound opinion, yet believe such things about him as would not be believed even of the most unjust and savage of men.

2. Now the reason why those we have mentioned above have a false apprehension of all these matters is nothing else but this, that the holy scripture is not understood by them in its

¹ 1 Sam. XVIII. 10.

² See above, Bk. II. Ch. V. 1 (p. 101 ff.).

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understood in its spiritual sense, but is interpreted according to the bare letter. On this account we must explain to those who believe that the sacred books are not the works of men, but that they were composed and have come down to us as a result of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by the will of the Father of the universe through Jesus Christ, what are the methods of interpretation that appear right to us, who keep to the rule of the heavenly Church of Jesus Christ through the succession from the Apostles.

That there are certain mystical revelations made known through the divine scriptures is believed by all, even by the simplest of those who are adherents of the word; but what these revelations are, fair-minded and humble men confess that they do not know. If, for instance, an inquirer were to be in a difficulty, about the intercourse of Lot with his daughters,¹ or the two wives of Abraham,² or the two sisters married to Jacob,³ or the two hand-maids who bore children by him,⁴ they can say nothing except that these things are mysteries not understood by us.

¹ See Gen. XIX. 30 ff.
² See Gen. XXIX. 21 ff.

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spiritual sense, but according to the sound of the letter. On this account we shall try to demonstrate, so far as our moderate ability will permit, to those who believe that the holy Scriptures were not composed by means of merely human words but were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and were also handed down and entrusted to us by the will of God the Father through his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, what is the method of interpretation that appears right to us, who keep to that rule and discipline delivered by Jesus Christ to the apostles and handed down by them in succession to their posterity, the teachers of the heavenly Church.

That there are certain mystical revelations made known through the holy scriptures is admitted, I think, by all, even by the simpler kind of believers; but what these revelations are, or of what nature they are, any man who is fair-minded and not possessed by the vice of boasting will reverently confess that he does not know. If, for instance, we are asked about the daughters of Lot and their apparent unlawful intercourse with their father,¹ or about the two wives of Abraham,² or the two sisters who were married to Jacob,³ or the two handmaids who increased the number of his sons,⁴ what else can we reply than that these are sacraments and figures of spiritual things, but that we are ignorant of their precise nature?

¹ See Gen. XVI.
² See Gen. XXIX. 21 ff.
³ See Gen. XXIX. 21 ff.
⁴ Gen. XXX. 1-13.

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But when the passage about the equipment of the tabernacle is read,¹ believing that the things described therein are types, they seek for ideas which they can attach to each detail that is mentioned in connexion with the tabernacle. Now so far as concerns their belief that the tabernacle is a type of something they are not wrong; but in rightly attaching the word of scripture to the particular idea of which the tabernacle is a type, here they sometimes fall into error. And they declare that all narratives that are supposed to speak about marriage or the begetting of children or wars or any other stories whatever that may be accepted among the multitude are types; but when we ask, of what, then sometimes owing to the lack of thorough training, sometimes owing to rashness, and occasionally, even when one is well trained and of sound judgment, owing to man's exceedingly great difficulty in discovering these things, the interpretation of every detail is not altogether clear.

3. And what must we say about the prophecies, which we all know are filled with riddles

¹ See Exod. XXV. ff.

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When, moreover, we read of the equipment of the tabernacle,¹ we hold it as certain that the things described therein are figures of some hidden realities, but to attach them to their appropriate meanings and to bring to light and discuss each separate detail is, I think, a very difficult, not to say impossible task. However, as I said, it does not escape even the common intellect that that description is full of mysteries. And all those narratives which appear to be composed about marriages or the begetting of children or different kinds of battles or any other stories whatever, what else can we believe them to be but the forms and figures of hidden and sacred things? But either because men pay too little attention to the training of their mind, or because they think they already know before they learn, the consequence is that they never begin to know; otherwise if neither earnestness is lacking, nor a master, and if these questions are studied as befits divine, and not merely human matters, that is, in a reverent and pious spirit, and as questions that we hope will in most cases be made clear by the revelation of God, since to human sense they are exceedingly difficult and obscure, then, perhaps, he who thus seeks will at last find all that it is lawful for us to find.

3. But it may possibly be supposed that this difficulty belongs only to the prophetic

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and dark sayings?¹ Or if we come to the gospels, the accurate interpretation even of these, since it is an interpretation of the mind of Christ, demands that grace that was given to him who said, 'We have the mind of Christ, that we may know the things that were freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth.'² And who, on reading the revelations made to John, could fail to be amazed at the deep obscurity of the unspeakable mysteries contained therein, which are evident even to him who does not understand what is written? And as for the apostolic epistles, what man who is skilled in literary interpretation would think them to be plain and easily understood, when even in them there are thousands of passages that provide, as if through a window, a narrow opening leading to multitudes of the deepest thoughts?

Seeing, therefore, that these things are so, and that thousands of men make mistakes, it is dangerous for us when we read to declare lightly that we understand things for which the 'key of knowledge' is necessary,

¹ See Prov. I. 6 and Origen, *Con. Celsum* III. 45; VII. 10.

² 1 Cor. II. 16, 12, 13.

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writings, seeing it is certain to all of us that the prophetic style is everywhere sprinkled with figures and riddles.¹ What, then, when we come to the gospels? Is there not also hidden in them an inner meaning which is the Lord's meaning, and which is only revealed through the grace that was given to him who said, 'We have the mind of Christ, that we may know the things that were freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth.'² And who indeed, on reading the revelations made to John, could fail to be amazed at the deep obscurity of the unspeakable mysteries contained therein? For even those who cannot understand what is concealed in these writings yet understand clearly that something is concealed there. And as for the apostolic epistles, which to some appear to be simpler, are they not filled with deep meanings, so that men who can understand the inner meaning of divine wisdom seem through them, as if through some narrow opening, to be flooded with the brightness of immeasurable light?

Seeing, therefore, that these things are so, and that there are many who in this life make mistakes, I do not think that anyone can without danger declare that he knows or understands those things for the open-

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which the Saviour says is with 'the lawyers'.¹ And as for those who are unwilling to admit that these men held the truth before the coming of Christ, let them explain to us how it is that our Lord Jesus Christ says that the 'key of knowledge' was with them, that is, with men who as these objectors say, had no books containing the secrets of knowledge and the all-perfect mysteries.² For the passage runs as follows: 'Woe unto you lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge. Ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.'³

4. The right way, therefore, as it appears to us, of approaching the scriptures and gathering their meaning, is the following, which is extracted from the writings themselves. We find some such rule as this laid down by Solomon in the Proverbs concerning the divine doctrines written therein: 'Do thou portray them threefold in counsel and knowledge, that thou mayest answer words of truth to those who question thee'.⁴

One must therefore portray the meaning of the sacred writings in a threefold way upon one's own soul, so that the simple man may be edified by

¹ See St. Luke XI. 52.

² Books, that is, such as the Gnostics claimed to possess.

³ St. Luke XI. 52.

ing of which the 'key of knowledge' is necessary, which key the Saviour said was with those 'learned in the law'.¹ And at this point, though by a slight digression, I think we should ask those who tell us that before the coming of the Saviour the truth did not rest with those who were trained in the law, how it is that our Lord Jesus Christ says that the 'keys of knowledge' were with those who had in their hands the books of the law and the prophets. For the Lord spoke as follows: 'Woe to you, doctors of the law, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge. Ye entered not in yourselves, and them that wished to enter in ye hindered.'²

4. But, as we had begun to say, the right way, as it appears to us, of understanding the scriptures and investigating their meaning, is the following; for indeed we are taught out of scripture itself how we ought to think of it. We find some such rule as this laid down in the Proverbs of Solomon concerning the examination of divine scripture. 'Do thou,' it says, 'portray these things to thyself threefold in counsel and knowledge, so that thou mayest answer words of truth to those who question thee'.⁴

Each one must therefore portray the meaning of the divine writings in a threefold way upon his own soul; that is, so that the simple may be edified by what

⁴ Prov. XXII. 20, 21.

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what we may call the flesh of the scripture, this name being given to the obvious interpretation; while the man who has made some progress may be edified by its soul, as it were; and the man who is perfect and like those mentioned by the apostle: 'We speak wisdom among the perfect; yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, which are coming to nought; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory'¹—this man may be edified by the spiritual law,² which has 'a shadow of the good things to come'.³ For just as man consists of body, soul and spirit, so in the same way does the scripture, which has been prepared by God to be given for man's salvation.

We therefore read in this light the passage in The Shepherd, a book which is despised by some, where Hermas is bidden to 'write two books', and after this to 'announce to the presbyters of the Church' what he has learned from the Spirit. This is the wording: 'Thou shalt write two books, and shalt give one to Clement and one to Grapte. And Grapte shall admonish the widows and the orphans. But Clement shall send to the cities without, and

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we may call the body of the scriptures (for such is the name we may give to the common and literal interpretation); while those who have begun to make a little progress and are able to perceive something more than that may be edified by the soul of scripture; and those who are perfect and like the men of whom the apostle says: 'We speak wisdom among the perfect; yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, which are coming to nought; but we speak God's wisdom hidden in a mystery, the wisdom which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory'¹—such as these may be edified by that spiritual law,² which has 'a shadow of the good things to come',³ as if by the Spirit. Just as man, therefore, is said to consist of body, soul and spirit, so also does the holy scripture, which has been bestowed by the divine bounty for man's salvation.

It is this fact that we believe to be referred to in the book called The Shepherd, which apparently is despised by some, in the passage where Hermas is bidden to 'write two books', and after this to 'announce to the presbyters of the Church' what he has learned from the Spirit. It is written in these words: 'Thou shalt write two books, and shalt give one to Clement and one to Grapte. And Grapte shall admonish the widows and the orphans, but

¹ 1 Cor. II. 6, 7.² See Rom. VII. 14.³ See Heb. X. 1.

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thou shalt announce to the presbyters of the Church.'¹

Now Grapte, who admonishes the widows and orphans, is the bare letter, which admonishes those child souls that are not yet able to enrol God as their Father and are on this account called orphans, and which also admonishes those who while no longer associating with the unlawful bridegroom are in widowhood because they have not yet become worthy of the true one. But Clement, who has already gone beyond the letter, is said to send the sayings 'to the cities without', as if to say, to the souls that are outside all bodily and lower thoughts; while the disciple of the Spirit is bidden to announce the message in person, no longer through letters but through living words, to the presbyters or elders of the whole Church of God, to men who have grown grey through wisdom.

5. But since there are certain passages of scripture which, as we shall show in what follows, have no bodily sense at all, there

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Clement is to send through all the cities that are without, and thou shalt announce to the presbyters of the Church.'¹

Now Grapte, who is bidden to admonish the orphans and widows, is the bare meaning of the letter, by which child souls, who have not yet deserved to have God for their Father and are on that account called orphans, are admonished. The widows are those who have departed from the wicked husband to whom they had been united contrary to the law, but remain widows because they have not yet advanced to the point of being united to the heavenly bridegroom. Clement is bidden to send the sayings to those who are already departing from the letter, into the 'cities that are without', as if to say, to those souls which by means of these sayings have begun to be built up into a condition superior to the cares of the body and the desires of the flesh. Hermas himself is bidden to announce what he has learned from the Holy Spirit, not through letters nor through a book but by the living voice, to the presbyters of the Church of Christ, that is, to those who, owing to their capacity to receive spiritual doctrine, possess a ripe endowment of wisdom.

5. But we must certainly not forget that there are some passages of scripture in which this that we call the body, that

¹ Hermas, *Vis.* II. 4, 3. Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria both treated Hermas as an inspired writer, as Origen does here. His book was read in the Church for several centuries, but had fallen into disuse in the West by the time of Jerome (*De vir. illus.* X.).

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are occasions when we must seek only for the soul and the spirit, as it were, of the passage. And possibly this is the reason why the waterpots which, as we read in the gospel according to John, are said to be set there 'for the purifying of the Jews', contain two or three firkins apiece.¹ The language alludes to those who are said by the apostle to be Jews 'inwardly',² and it means that these are purified through the word of the scriptures, which contain in some cases 'two firkins', that is, so to speak, the soul meaning and the spiritual meaning, and in other cases three, since some passages possess, in addition to those before-mentioned, a bodily sense as well, which is capable of edifying the hearers. And six waterpots may reasonably allude to those who are being purified in the world, which was made in six days, a perfect number.³

6. That it is possible to derive benefit from the first, and to this extent helpful meaning, is witnessed by the multitudes of sincere and simple believers.

¹ See St. John II. 6.

² Why the number six is perfect is explained by Philo, *de officio mundi* 3. A perfect number is equal to the sum of its factors; i.e. $6=1+2+3$. The number six is also the product of the first male number, 3, and the first female number, 2. The six days, Philo tells us, do not represent length of time, but order in thought. Neither he nor Origen would have regarded the days as literal periods.

is, the logical and literal meaning, is not found, as we shall show in what follows; and there are places where those meanings which we have called the soul and the spirit are alone to be looked for. I believe that this fact is indicated in the gospels, when six waterpots are said 'to be set there for the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece'.¹ Here, as I said, the language of the gospel seems to allude to those who are said by the apostle to be Jews 'inwardly',² and to mean that these are purified through the word of scripture, by receiving in some cases 'two firkins,' that is, by accepting the soul meaning and the spiritual meaning in accordance with what we said above, and in other cases three firkins, when the reading also retains for the edification of the hearers a bodily meaning, namely the literal one. And six waterpots are approximately mentioned in allusion to those who are being purified while living in the world. For we read that this world and all that is in it were finished in six days, which is a perfect number.³

6. How much value there is in this first meaning, which we have called the literal one, is witnessed by the entire multitude of those believers who accept

² See Rom. II. 29.

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But of the kind of explanation which penetrates as it were to the soul an illustration is found in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. 'For,' he says, 'it is written; thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn'. Then in explanation of this law he adds, 'Is it for the oxen that God careth? Or saith he it altogether for our sake? Yea, for our sake it was written, because he that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking.'¹ And most of the interpretations adapted to the multitude which are in circulation and which edify those who cannot understand the higher meanings have something of the same character.

But it is a spiritual explanation when one is able to show of what kind of 'heavenly things' the Jews 'after the flesh' served a copy and a shadow, and of what 'good things to come' the law has a 'shadow'.² And, speaking generally, we have, in accordance with the apostolic promise, to seek after 'the wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto the glory' of the righteous, 'which none of

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the faith quite trustfully and simply; and this needs no long argument because it is obvious to all. But of the kind of explanation which we have spoken of above as the soul, as it were, of Scripture, many illustrations are given us by the apostle Paul, as, for example, first of all in his epistle to the Corinthians. 'For,' he says, 'it is written; thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.' Then in explaining how this precept ought to be understood, he adds: 'Is it for the oxen that God careth? Or saith he it altogether for our sake? Yea, for our sake it was written, because he that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking.'¹ Moreover, many other similar passages which are interpreted in this manner out of the law, impart the utmost instruction to those who hear them.

But a spiritual explanation is like this, when one is able to show of what 'heavenly things' those who are Jews 'after the flesh' serve a copy and a shadow, and of what 'good things to come' the law has a 'shadow',² and any other matters of this kind which may be found in the holy scriptures; or when we inquire what is that 'wisdom hidden in a mystery, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory, which none of the rulers of this world

¹ 1 Cor. IX. 9, 10 (Deut. XXV. 4). For the same quotation in a slightly different form see above, p. 97 f.

² See Heb. VIII. 5; Rom. VIII. 5; Heb. X. 1.

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the rulers of this world knew'.¹ The same apostle also says somewhere, after mentioning certain narratives from Exodus and Numbers, that 'these things happened unto them figuratively, and they were written for our sake, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.'² He also gives hints to show what these things were figures of, when he says: 'For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.'³

In another epistle, when outlining the arrangements of the tabernacle he quotes the words: 'Thou shalt make all things according to the figure that was shown thee in the mount.'⁴ Further, in the epistle to the Galatians, speaking in terms of reproach to those who believe that they are reading the law and yet do not understand it, and laying it down that they who do not believe that there are allegories in the writings do not understand the law, he says: 'Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid and one by the free woman. Howbeit the son by the handmaid is born after the flesh; but the son by the free woman is born through promise. Which things contain an allegory; for these women are two covenants',⁵ and what

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knew',¹ or ask the meaning of the same apostle's statement, when he makes use of certain illustrations from Exodus and Numbers and says that 'these things happened unto them figuratively, and they were written for our sake, upon whom the ends of the ages are come',² and when he affords us an opportunity of understanding how we can learn of what those events that happened to them were figures, by saying, 'For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.'³

Moreover in another epistle he mentions that command about the tabernacle which was enjoined upon Moses: 'Thou shalt make all things according to the figure that was shown thee in the mount.'⁴ And when writing to the Galatians and reproaching some who believe they are reading the law and yet do not understand it, because they are unaware that there are allegories in these writings, he addresses them in a tone of rebuke: 'Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid and one by the free woman. Howbeit he who was born of the handmaid was born according to the flesh, but he of the free woman was born according to promise. Which things contain an allegory. For these are the two covenants',⁵ and what follows. Here we

¹ See 1 Cor. II. 7, 8.² 1 Cor. X. 11.³ 1 Cor. X. 4.⁴ Heb. VIII. 5 (Exod. XXV. 40).⁵ Gal. IV. 21-24.

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follows. Now we must carefully mark each of the words spoken by him. He says, 'Ye that desire to be under the law' (not, 'ye that are under the law') 'do ye not hear the law?' hearing being taken to mean understanding and knowing.

And in the epistle to the Colossians, briefly epitomising the meaning of the entire system of the law, he says: 'Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath, which are a shadow of the things to come.'¹ Further, in the epistle to the Hebrews, when discoursing about those who are of the circumcision, he writes: 'They who serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things.'² Now it is probable that those who have once admitted that the apostle is a divinely inspired man will feel no difficulty in regard to the five books ascribed to Moses; but in regard to the rest of the history they desire to learn whether those events also 'happened figuratively'.³ We must note the quotation in the epistle to the Romans: 'I have left for myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal',⁴ found in the third book of the Kings. Here Paul has taken it to stand for those who are Israelites 'according to election',⁵ for not only are the gentiles benefited by the coming of Christ, but also some who belong to the divine race.

¹ Col. II. 16, 17.² Heb. VIII. 5.³ See 1 Cor. X. 11.⁴ Rom. XI. 4 (1 Kings XIX. 18).⁵ See Rom. XI. 5.

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must also observe this point, how carefully the apostle says, 'Ye that desire to be under the law' (and not, 'ye that are under the law') 'do ye not hear the law?' Do ye not hear? that is, do ye not understand and know?

Moreover in the epistle to the Colossians he briefly sums up and condenses the meaning of the entire law and says: 'Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of solemn days or a new moon or a sabbath, which are a shadow of the things to come.'¹ Also when writing to the Hebrews and discoursing about those who are of the circumcision he says: 'They who serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things.'² But probably through the above examples those who accept the apostle's writings as divinely inspired will feel no doubt in regard to the five books of Moses. In regard to the rest of the history, however, they will ask whether the events related therein may also be said to have 'happened figuratively'³ to those about whom they are written. We notice that this point has been spoken of in the epistle to the Romans, where the apostle takes an illustration from the third book of the Kings, which says: 'I have left for myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal.'⁴ This Paul takes as spoken figuratively of those who are called Israelites 'according

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7. This being so, we must outline what seems to us to be the marks of a true understanding of the scriptures. And in the first place we must point out that the aim of the Spirit who, by the providence of God through the Word who was 'in the beginning with God',² enlightened the servants of the truth, that is, the prophets and apostles, was pre-eminently concerned with the unspeakable mysteries connected with the affairs of men—and by men I mean at the present moment souls that make use of bodies—his purpose being that the man who is capable of being taught might by 'searching out' and devoting himself to the 'deep things'³ revealed in the spiritual meaning of the words become partaker of all the doctrines of the Spirit's counsel.

¹ See Rom. XI. 5.

² See I Cor. II. 10.

³ A few words appear to be missing from the Latin at this point, and Koetschau replaces them thus.

⁴ See St. John I. 1.

⁵ See St. Matt. VII. 6.

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to election,¹ in order to show that the coming of Christ was beneficial not only to the gentiles but also to very many of the race of Israel who have been called to salvation.

7. This being so, we shall now outline the manner in which divine scripture should be understood on these several points, using such illustrations and examples as may occur to us. And in the first place we must call to mind and point out that the Holy Spirit, who by the providence and will of God through the power of his only-begotten Word who was 'in the beginning with God',² enlightened the servants of the truth, that is, the prophets and apostles, (wished above all to lend them)⁴ to the knowledge of the mysteries connected with those affairs and causes which concern the lives and relationships of men. By men I mean at the present moment souls that are located in bodies. These mysteries which were made known and revealed to them by the Spirit, the prophets portrayed figuratively through the narration of what seemed to be human deeds and the handing down of certain legal ordinances and precepts. The aim was that not everyone who wished should have these mysteries laid before his feet to trample upon,⁵ but that they should be for the man who had devoted himself to studies of

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And when we speak of the needs of souls, who cannot otherwise reach perfection except through the rich and wise truth about God, we attach of necessity pre-eminent importance to the doctrines concerning God and His only-begotten Son; of what nature the Son is, and in what manner he can be the Son of God, and what are the causes of his descending to the level of human flesh and completely assuming humanity; and what, also, is the nature of his activity, and towards whom and at what times it is exercised. It was necessary, too, that the doctrines concerning beings akin to man and the rest of the rational creatures, both those that are nearer the divine and those that have fallen from blessedness, and the causes of the fall of these latter, should be included in the accounts of the divine teaching; and the question of the differences between souls and how these differences arose, and what the world is and why it exists, and further, how it comes about that evil is so

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this kind with the utmost purity and sobriety and through nights of watching, by which means perchance he might be able to trace out the deeply hidden meaning of the Spirit of God, concealed under the language of an ordinary narrative which points in a different direction, and that so he might become a sharer of the Spirit's knowledge and a partaker of his divine counsel.

For in no other way can the soul reach the perfection of knowledge except by being inspired with the truth of the divine wisdom. Therefore it is chiefly the doctrine about God, that is, about the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which is indicated by those men who were filled with the divine Spirit. Then, too, the mysteries relating to the Son of God, how the Word became flesh, and for what reason he went to the length of 'taking upon him the form of a servant',¹ have also been made known by those who were filled, as we have said, with the divine Spirit. After that it followed of necessity that they should instruct the race of mortal men by divine teaching concerning rational creatures, both heavenly and earthly, the more blessed and the lower ones alike, and also concerning the differences between souls and how these differences arose; and then the question what this world is and why it was made, and further, how it comes about that evil is

¹ See Phil. II. 7.

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widespread and so terrible on earth, and whether it is not only to be found on earth but also in other places—all this it was necessary that we should learn.

8. Now while these and similar subjects were in the mind of the Spirit who enlightened the souls of the holy servants of the truth, there was a second aim, pursued for the sake of those who were unable to endure the burden of investigating matters of such importance. This was to conceal the doctrine relating to the before-mentioned subjects in words forming a narrative that contained a record dealing with the visible creation, the formation of man and the successive descendants of the first human beings until the time when they became many; and also in other stories that recorded the acts of righteous men and the sins that these same men occasionally committed, seeing they were but human, and the deeds of wickedness, licentiousness and greed done by lawless and impious men.

But the most wonderful thing is, that by means of stories of wars and the conquerors and the conquered certain secret truths are revealed to those who are capable of examining

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so widespread and so terrible on earth, and whether it is found only on earth or in some other places as well—all this it was necessary that we should learn from the divine teaching.

8. But while it was the intention of the Holy Spirit to enlighten holy souls, who had devoted themselves to the service of the truth, on these and similar subjects, there was in the second place another aim in view, namely, that for the sake of such as either could not or would not give themselves up to this labour and industry in order to prove themselves worthy of being taught and of coming to know matters of such value and importance, the Spirit should wrap up and conceal within ordinary language under cover of some historical record or account of visible things certain secret mysteries. There is introduced therefore an account of the visible creation and of the formation and fashioning of the first man, and then of the descendants that follow in succession from him. There are also recorded certain acts performed by righteous men and occasionally, too, mention is made of the sins these same men committed, seeing they were but human; and then also a considerable number of the licentious and wicked deeds of impious men are related.

In a wonderful manner, too, an account of wars is presented, and the different fortunes now of the conquerors, now of the conquered are described, and by this means, to those who know

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these narratives; and, even more marvellous, through a written system of law the laws of truth are prophetically indicated, all these having been recorded in a series with a power which is truly appropriate to the wisdom of God. For the intention was to make even the outer covering of the spiritual truths, I mean the bodily part of the scriptures, in many respects not unprofitable but capable of improving the multitude in so far as they receive it.

9. But if the usefulness of the law and the sequence and ease of the narrative were at first sight clearly discernible throughout, we should be unaware that there was anything beyond the obvious meaning for us to understand in the scriptures. Consequently the Word of God has arranged for certain stumbling-blocks, as it were, and hindrances and impossibilities to be inserted in the midst of the law and the history, in order that we may not be completely drawn away by the sheer attractiveness of the language, and so either reject the true doctrines absolutely, on the ground that we learn from the scriptures nothing worthy of God, or else by never moving away from the letter fail to learn anything of the more divine element.

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how to examine writings of this kind, certain unspeakable mysteries are revealed. Further, by a marvellous example of wisdom, in the writings of the law the law of truth is implanted and prophetically indicated; and all these are by the divine skill and wisdom woven together to form a kind of outer covering and veil for spiritual meanings, which is what we meant by the body of holy scripture; with the result that even through this that we have called the outer covering of the letter, woven by the art of wisdom, very many readers may be edified and make progress, who otherwise could not do so.

9. But if in every detail of this outer covering, that is, the actual history, the sequence of the law had been preserved and its order maintained, we should have understood the scriptures in an unbroken course and should certainly not have believed that there was anything else buried within them beyond what was indicated at a first glance. Consequently the divine wisdom has arranged for certain stumbling-blocks and interruptions of the historical sense to be found therein, by inserting in the midst a number of impossibilities and incongruities, in order that the very interruption of the narrative might as it were present a barrier to the reader and lead him to refuse to proceed along the pathway of the ordinary meaning: and so, by shutting us out and debarring us from that, might recall us to the beginning

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And we must also know this, that because the principal aim was to announce the connexion that exists among spiritual events, those that have already happened and those that are yet to come to pass, whenever the Word found that things which had happened in history could be harmonised with these mystical events he used them, concealing from the multitude their deeper meaning. But wherever in the narrative the accomplishment of some particular deeds, which had been previously recorded for the sake of their more mystical meanings, did not correspond with the sequence of the intellectual truths, the scripture wove into the story something which did not happen, occasionally something which could not happen, and occasionally something which might have happened but in fact did not. Sometimes a few words are inserted which in the bodily sense are not true, and at other times a greater number.

A similar method can be discerned also in the law, where it is often possible to find a precept that is useful for its own sake, and suitable to the time when the law was given. Sometimes, however, the precept does not appear to be useful. At other times even

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of another way, and might thereby bring us, through the entrance of a narrow footpath, to a higher and loftier road and lay open the immense breadth of the divine wisdom.

And we must also know this, that because the aim of the Holy Spirit was chiefly to preserve the connexion of the spiritual meaning, both in the things that are yet to be done and in those which have already been accomplished, whenever he found that things which had been done in history could be harmonised with the spiritual meaning, he composed in a single narrative a texture comprising both kinds of meaning, always, however, concealing the secret sense more deeply. But wherever the record of deeds that had been done could not be made to correspond with the sequence of the spiritual truths, he inserted occasionally some deeds of a less probable character or which could not have happened at all, and occasionally some which might have happened but in fact did not. Sometimes he does this by a few words, which in their bodily sense do not appear capable of containing truth, and at other times by inserting a large number.

This is found to happen particularly in the law, where there are many things which as literal precepts are clearly useful, but also a considerable number in which no principle of utility whatever is disclosed, while sometimes even impossibilities are detected. All this, as we

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impossibilities are recorded in the law for the sake of the more skilful and inquiring readers, in order that these, by giving themselves to the toil of examining what is written, may gain a sound conviction of the necessity of seeking in such instances a meaning worthy of God.

And not only did the Spirit supervise the writings which were previous to the coming of Christ, but because he is the same Spirit and proceeds from the one God he has dealt in like manner with the gospels and the writings of the apostles. For the history even of these is not everywhere pure, events being woven together in the bodily sense without having actually happened; nor do the law and the commandments contained therein entirely declare what is reasonable.

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have said, the Holy Spirit supervised, in order that in cases where that which appeared at the first glance could neither be true nor useful we should be led on to search for a truth deeper down and needing more careful examination, and should try to discover in the scriptures which we believe to be inspired by God a meaning worthy of God.

And not only did the Holy Spirit supervise the writings which were previous to the coming of Christ, but because he is one and the same Spirit and proceeds from the one God he has acted similarly in regard to the gospels and the writings of the apostles. For even the narratives which he inspired through them were not woven together without the spell of that wisdom of his, the nature of which we explained above. And so it happens that even in them the Spirit has mingled not a few things by which the historical order of the narrative is interrupted and broken, with the object of turning and calling the attention of the reader, by the impossibility of the literal sense, to an examination of the inner meaning.

CHAPTER III

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THE PRINCIPLE UNDERLYING THE OBSCURITIES IN DIVINE SCRIPTURE AND ITS IMPOSSIBLE OR UNREASONABLE CHARACTER IN PLACES, IF TAKEN LITERALLY.

1. Now¹ what man of intelligence will believe that the first and the second and the third day, and the evening and the morning existed without the sun and moon and stars? And that the first day, if we may so call it, was even without a heaven?² And who is so silly as to believe that God, after the manner of a farmer, 'planted a paradise eastward in Eden', and set in it a visible and palpable 'tree of life', of such a sort that anyone who tasted its fruit with his bodily teeth would gain life; and again that one could partake of 'good and evil' by masticating the fruit taken from the tree of that name?³ And when God is said to 'walk in the paradise in the cool of the day' and Adam to hide himself behind a tree, I do not think anyone will doubt that these are figurative expressions which indicate certain mysteries through a semblance of history and not through actual events.⁴

¹ This sentence (to 'moon and stars') is found in Justinian *Ep. ad Mennam* (Mansi IX. 533). Koetschau marks it *Frag. 29*.

² See Gen. I. 5-13.

³ See Gen. II. 8, 9, and cp. Philo, *Legis alleg.* I. 14. 'Let not our reasoning admit such gross impiety as to suppose that God works as a farmer and plants gardens.'

See Gen. III. 8.

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ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES OF THE METHOD IN WHICH SCRIPTURE SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD.

1. But in order to learn the truth of what we say from the facts themselves, let us now examine the actual passages of scripture. What man of intelligence, I ask, will consider it a reasonable statement that the first and the second and the third day, in which there are said to be both morning and evening, existed without sun and moon and stars, while the first day was even without a heaven?² And who could be found so silly as to believe that God, after the manner of a farmer, 'planted trees in a paradise eastward in Eden', and set therein a 'tree of life', that is, a visible and palpable tree of wood, of such a sort that anyone who ate of this tree with bodily teeth would gain life; and again that anyone who ate of another tree would get a knowledge of 'good and evil'?³ And further, when God is said to 'walk in the paradise in the evening' and Adam to hide himself behind a tree, I do not think anyone will

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Further, when Cain 'goes out from the face of God' it seems clear to thoughtful men that this statement impels the reader to inquire what the 'face of God' is and how anyone can 'go out' from it.¹ And what more need I say, when those who are not altogether blind can collect thousands of such instances, recorded as actual events, but which did not happen literally?

Even the gospels are full of passages of this kind, as when the devil takes Jesus up into a 'high mountain' in order to show him from thence 'the kingdoms of the whole world and the glory of them'.² For what man who does not read such passages carelessly would fail to condemn those who believe that with the eye of the flesh, which requires a great height to enable us to perceive what is below and at our feet, the kingdoms of the Persians, Scythians, Indians and Parthians were seen, and the manner in which their rulers are glorified by men? And the careful reader will detect thousands of other passages like this in the gospels, which will convince him that events which did not take place at all are woven into the

¹ See Gen. IV. 16 and Philo, *De poster. Cain* I. 1.

² See St. Matt. IV. 8.

³ See Gen. III. 8.

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doubt that these statements are made by scripture in a figurative manner, in order that through them certain mystical truths may be indicated.³

Again, when Cain 'goes out from the face of God', the statement clearly impels a thoughtful reader to inquire what the 'face of God' is, and how any one can 'go out' from it.¹ But not to extend unduly the work we have in hand, it is quite easy for any one who wills to collect from the holy scriptures instances that are recorded as actual events, but which it would be inappropriate and unreasonable to believe could possibly have happened in history.

This kind of scripture is to be found in considerable abundance even in the gospels, as when the devil is said to have taken Jesus up into 'a high mountain' in order to show him from thence 'all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them'.² How could it possibly have happened literally, either that the devil should have led Jesus up into a high mountain or that to his fleshly eyes he should have shown all the kingdoms of the world as if they were lying close to the foot of a single mountain, the kingdoms for instance of the Persians, Scythians and Indians, and in addition, the manner in which the rulers of these kingdoms are glorified by men. And the diligent reader will find in the gospels very many other

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records of what literally did happen.

2. And to come to the Mosaic legislation, many of the laws, so far as their literal observance is concerned, are clearly irrational, while others are impossible. An example of irrationality is the prohibition to eat vultures, seeing that nobody even in the worst famine was ever driven by want to the extremity of eating these creatures.¹ And in regard to the command that children of eight days old who are uncircumcised 'shall be destroyed from among their people',² if the law relating to these children were really meant to be carried out according to the letter, the proper course would be to order the death of their fathers or those by whom they were being brought up. But as it is the Scripture says: 'Every male that is uncircumcised, who shall not be circumcised on the eighth day, shall be destroyed from among his people'.³

And if you would like to see some impossibilities that are enacted in the law, let us observe that the goat-stag,⁴ which

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passages like this, from which he may learn that among those narratives which appear to be recorded literally there are inserted and interwoven others which cannot be accepted as history but which contain a spiritual meaning.

2. Moreover in the passages containing the laws similar things are found. In the Mosaic law it is ordered that 'every male who has not been circumcised on the eighth day is to be destroyed';² which is most illogical, since if the law were meant to be carried out according to the letter, the proper course would certainly be to order the punishment of the parents who had not circumcised their children, or else of those who were bringing up the little ones. But as it is the scripture says: 'A male that is uncircumcised', that is, 'who shall not be circumcised on the eighth day, shall be destroyed from among his people'.³

And if we are to look for laws that are impossible, we find mention made of an animal called the goat-stag,⁴ which can-

¹ Lev. XI. 14. Rufinus has omitted this example.

² See Gen. XVII. 14 (Sept.).

³ See Gen. XVII. 14 (Sept.).

⁴ The word only occurs in two MSS. of the Sept., Deut. XIV. 5. The *tragelaphos* was a fantastic animal mentioned by many Greek writers, but the creature of Deut. XIV. 5 is really *elaphos*, the hart or perhaps roebuck (see Hastings, *D.B.*, art. *Hart*, G.E. Post).

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Moses commands us to offer in sacrifice as a clean animal, is a creature that cannot possibly exist; while as to the griffin,¹ which the lawgiver forbids to be eaten, there is no record that it has ever fallen into the hands of man. Moreover in regard to the celebrated sabbath, a careful reader will see that the command, 'Ye shall sit each one in your dwellings; let none of you go out from his place on the sabbath day',² is an impossible one to observe literally, for no living creature could sit for a whole day and not move from his seat.

Consequently the members of the circumcision and all those who maintain that nothing more than the actual wording is signified make no inquiry whatever into some matters, such as the goat-stag, the griffin and the vulture, while on others they babble copiously, bringing forward lifeless traditions, as for instance when they say, in reference to the sabbath, that each man's 'place' is two thousand cubits.³ Others, however, among whom is Dositheus the Samaritan,⁴ condemn such an interpretation, and believe that in whatever position a man is found on the Sabbath day he should remain there until evening.

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not possibly exist, but which Moses allows to be eaten among the clean animals; while as to the griffin,¹ which the lawgiver forbids to be eaten, there is no record or knowledge that it has ever fallen into the hands of man. Moreover in regard to the celebrated observance of the sabbath he speaks thus: 'Ye shall sit each one in your dwellings; no one shall move from his place on the sabbath day'.² It is certainly impossible for this to be observed literally; for no man can sit for a whole day so as never to move from the place where he is sitting.

In dealing with these various points the members of the circumcision and all those who maintain that in the holy scriptures nothing is to be understood beyond the meaning of the letter, think that no inquiry need be made concerning the goat-stag, the griffin and the vulture; but in regard to the sabbath they produce certain vain and trifling fables drawn from some traditional source or other, and allege that each man's 'place' is reckoned as extending to two thousand cubits.³ Others, however, among whom is Dositheus the Samaritan,⁴ condemn interpretations of this kind, and yet themselves maintain something

¹ Gr. *gryps*, a variety of eagle. Levit. XI. 13; Deut. XIV. 12.

² Exod. XVI. 29.

³ See Numbers XXXV. 5.

⁴ The founder of an ascetic sect in Samaria, which maintained an existence for several centuries at least, although Origen says (*Con. Celsum* VI. 11) that he did not suppose the whole number of the Dositheans in his day amounted to thirty. See *Dic. of Christ. Biog.* s.v.

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Further, the command 'not to carry a burden on the sabbath day'¹ is impossible; and on this account the teachers of the Jews have indulged in endless chatter, asserting that one kind of shoe is a burden, but another is not, and that a sandal with nails is a burden, but one without nails is not, and that what is carried on one shoulder is a burden, but not what is carried on both.

3. If now we approach the gospel in search of similar instances, what can be more irrational than the command: 'Salute no man by the way',² which simple people believe that the Saviour enjoined upon the apostles? Again, to speak of the right cheek being struck³ is most incredible, for every striker, unless he suffers from some unnatural defect, strikes the left cheek with his right hand. And it is impossible to accept the precept from the gospel about the 'right eye that offends'; for granting the possibility of a person being 'offended' through his sense of sight,

¹ See Jer. XVII. 21. ² See St. Luke X. 4. ³ See St. Matt. V. 39.
⁴ See 1 Tim. I. 4. ⁵ See St. Matt. X. 10

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still more ridiculous, namely, that in whatever posture or place or position a man is found on the sabbath day he should remain there until evening; that is, if sitting, he should sit all the day, or if lying down, he should lie down all the day.

Further, the command 'not to carry a burden on the sabbath day'¹ seems to me to be an impossible one. For in consequence of these words the teachers of the Jews have become involved in 'endless fables'⁴ as the holy apostle says, asserting that it is not reckoned as a burden if a man wears shoes without nails, but that it is a burden if he wears goloshes with nails, and deeming it a burden if a man carries something on one shoulder, but not a burden if he carries it on both.

3. If now we seek for similar instances from the gospels, how can it seem anything but absurd to interpret literally the saying: 'Salute no man by the way?'² This, however, is what simple people suppose that our Saviour enjoined upon the apostles. Further, how would it be possible, especially in those countries where the bitterness of winter is accentuated by icy frosts, to observe the precept that a man should not possess two coats, nor any shoes?⁵ Again, what shall we say of the command that if anyone strikes us on the right cheek we

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how can the blame be attributed to the right eye, when there are two eyes that see? And what man, even supposing he accuses himself of 'looking on a woman to lust after her' and attributes the blame to his right eye alone, would act rationally if he were to cast this eye away?¹

Further, the apostle lays down this precept: 'Was any called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised'.² Now in the first place anyone who wishes can see that these words have no relation to the subject in hand; and how can we help thinking that they have been inserted at random, when we remember that the apostle is here laying down precepts about marriage and purity? In the second place who will maintain that it is wrong for a man to put himself into a condition of uncircumcision, if that were possible, in view of the disgrace which is felt by most people to attach to circumcision?

4. We have mentioned all these instances with the object of showing that the aim of the divine power which bestowed on

¹ See St. Matt. V. 28, 29; XVIII. 9. ² 1 Cor. VII. 18.
³ See St. Matt. V. 39.

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are to offer him the left one also,³ seeing that a man who strikes with the right hand will strike the left cheek? As for the saying in the gospel; 'If thy right eye offend thee, let it be plucked out', this must be reckoned among the impossibilities; for even if we grant that it refers to eyes of flesh, how can it be logical, when both eyes see, to attribute the blame of the offence to one only, and that the right one?¹ Or who would be accounted innocent of a most serious crime, if he were to lay hands on himself?

But perhaps the letters of Paul the apostle will appear to be free from these difficulties. Yet what is the meaning of his saying: 'Was any called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised'.² Now in the first place, if you consider the saying carefully, it does not appear to be related to the subject which the apostle had in hand; for he was laying down precepts about marriage and purity, and on such a subject the words in question would certainly seem to be a superfluous addition. In the second place, what objection could there be if, in order to avoid the disgrace which comes from being circumcised, a man were able to become uncircumcised? In the third place, it is certain that this is utterly impossible.

4. We have mentioned all these instances with the object of showing that the aim of the Holy Spirit, who deigned to

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us the holy scriptures is not that we should accept only what is found in the letter; for occasionally the records taken in a literal sense are not true, but actually absurd and impossible, and even with the history that actually happened and the legislation that is in its literal sense useful there are other matters interwoven.

But someone may suppose that the former statement refers to all the scriptures, and may suspect us of saying that because some of the history did not happen, therefore none of it happened; and because a certain law is irrational or impossible when taken literally, therefore no laws ought to be kept to the letter; or that the records of the Saviour's life are not true in a physical sense; or that no law or commandment of his ought to be obeyed. We must assert, therefore, that in regard to some things we are clearly aware that the historical fact is true; as that Abraham was buried in the double cave at Hebron, together with Isaac and Jacob and one wife of each of them;¹ and that Shechem was given as a portion to Joseph;² and that Jerusalem is the chief city of Judaea, in which a temple of God was built by Solomon; and thousands of other facts.

¹ See Gen. XXIII. 2, 9, 19; XXV. 9, 10; XLIX. 29-32; L. 13.

² See Gen. XLVIII. 22; Josh. XXIV. 32.

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bestow on us the divine scriptures, is not that we may be edified by the letter alone or in every case by it at all; for we recognise that the letter is often impossible and inconsistent with itself, that is, that things not only irrational but even impossible are occasionally described by it; but that we are to realise that with this external story are interwoven certain other matters which, when considered and comprehended in their inward meaning, provide us with a law which is useful to men and worthy of God.

But someone may suspect us of saying this, that because we suppose that some of the scriptural history did not happen, we do not believe that any of it happened; or that because we maintain that some precepts of the law cannot be kept according to the letter, those, that is, in regard to which either reason or the possibility of the case do not admit of a literal observance, therefore no precepts of the law are valid according to the letter; or that we do not believe that the events of our Saviour's life occurred in a physical sense; or that his precepts ought not to be obeyed literally. We must reply, therefore, that it is perfectly obvious to us that in most instances the truth of the historical record can and ought to be preserved. For who can deny that Abraham was buried in the double cave at Hebron, together with Isaac and Jacob and one wife of each

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For the passages which are historically true are far more numerous than those which are composed with purely spiritual meanings.

And again, who would deny that the command which says: 'Honour thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee',¹ is useful quite apart from any spiritual interpretation, and that it ought certainly to be observed, especially when we remember that the apostle Paul has quoted it in the self-same words?² And what are we to say of the following: 'Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness'³

Once again, in the gospel there are commandments written which need no inquiry whether they are to be kept literally or not, as that which says, 'I say unto you, whosoever is angry with his brother',⁴ and what follows; and, 'I say unto you, swear not at all'.⁵ Here, too, is an injunction of the apostle of which the literal meaning must be retained: 'Admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak,

¹ Exod. XX. 12. ² See Eph. VI. 2, 3. ³ Exod. XX. 13-16.

⁴ St. Matt. V. 22 (omitted in Rufinus' text). ⁵ St. Matt. V. 34.

⁶ See Gen. XXIII. 2, 9, 19; XXV. 9, 10; XLIX. 29-32; L. 13.

⁷ See Gen. XLVIII. 22; Josh. XXIV. 32.

⁸ St. Matt. V. 28. Koetschau regards this as an addition by Rufinus.

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of them?⁶ Or who doubts that Shechem was given as a portion to Joseph?⁷ Or that Jerusalem is the chief city of Judaea, in which a temple of God was built by Solomon; and countless other facts? For the passages which are historically true are far more numerous than those which contain a purely spiritual meaning.

Then again, who would deny that the command which says: 'Honour thy father and mother that it may be well with thee',¹ is sufficient of itself apart from any spiritual interpretation and that its observance is binding on us, especially when we remember that Paul has confirmed the command by quoting it in the self-same words?² And what are we to say of the passage: 'Thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness',³ and others of this kind?

Then in regard to the commandments given in the gospel, there can be no doubt that very many of these are to be kept according to the letter; as when it says. . . . 'But I say unto you, swear not at all';⁵ and also, 'But whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart';⁸ and the injunctions given by the apostle Paul: 'Admonish the disorderly, encourage the

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be long-suffering toward all;¹ though in the case of the more earnest readers it is possible to preserve each of the meanings, that is, while not setting aside the commandment in its literal sense, to preserve the 'depths of the wisdom of God.'²

5. Nevertheless the exact reader will hesitate in regard to some passages, finding himself unable to decide without considerable investigation whether a particular incident, believed to be history, actually happened or not, and whether the literal meaning of a particular law is to be observed or not. Accordingly he who reads in an exact manner must, in obedience to the Saviour's precept which says, 'Search the scriptures',³ carefully investigate how far the literal meaning is true and how far it is impossible, and to the utmost of his power must trace out from the use of similar expressions the meaning scattered everywhere through the scriptures of that which when taken literally is impossible.

When, therefore, as will be clear to those who read, the passage as a connected whole is literally impossible, whereas the outstanding part of it is not impossible but even true, the

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faint-hearted, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all;¹ and very many others.

5. Nevertheless I have no doubt that the careful reader will be uncertain in very many cases whether this or that story is to be regarded as literally true, or true in a less degree, and whether this or that precept is to be literally observed or not. Much effort and toil must therefore be exercised, so that each reader may in all reverence become aware that he is dealing with words that are divine and not human, inserted in the holy books. As for us, therefore, the method of interpretation which we think ought rightly and logically to be employed in dealing with the holy scriptures is as follows.

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reader must endeavour to grasp the entire meaning, connecting by an intellectual process the account of what is literally impossible with the parts that are not impossible but are historically true, these being interpreted allegorically in common with the parts which, so far as the letter goes, did not happen at all. For our contention with regard to the whole of divine scripture is, that it all has a spiritual meaning, but not all a bodily meaning; for the bodily meaning is often proved to be an impossibility. Consequently the man who reads the divine books reverently, believing them to be divine writings, must exercise great care. And the method of understanding them appears to us to be as follows.

6. The accounts tell us that God chose out a certain nation on the earth, and they call this nation by many names. For the nation as a whole is called Israel, and it is also spoken of as Jacob. But when it was divided in the days of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,¹ the ten tribes said to have been subject to him were named Israel, and the other two together with the tribe of Levi, which were ruled over by men of the seed of David, were called Judah. The entire country which was inhabited by men of this race and which had been given them by God, is called Judaea, the metropolis of which is Jerusalem, this being the mother city of a number of

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6. The divine writings declare that a certain nation on the earth was chosen by God, and they call this nation by many names. Sometimes the nation as a whole is called Israel, sometimes Jacob; and in particular, when the nation was divided into two parts by Jeroboam the son of Nebat,¹ the ten tribes which became subject to him were called Israel, and the other two, with which was included the tribe of Levi and the tribe which sprang from the royal family of David, were named Judah. The entire country inhabited by this race, which had been given them by God, was called Judaea, the metropolis of which was

¹ 1 Thess. V. 14.

² See Rom. XI. 33; 1 Cor. II. 10.

³ St. John V. 39. Rufinus has here omitted a passage, probably because he could not understand it. Origen is certainly not clear, but his meaning seems to be as follows. The scriptures contain many composite narratives, one part being historically true and the other false. In the story of the Fall, for instance, he would have regarded Adam and Eve as being historically true and God walking in the garden as historically false. He would then interpret the whole story allegorically, feeling that the literal, or 'bodily', meaning was valueless. In other instances the literal meaning has a value of its own: e.g. the Commandments. But even here the deeper meanings, when discovered, are the more important.

¹ See 1 Kings XII. 2 ff.

GREEK

others whose names lie scattered about in many different places of scripture but are gathered together into one list in the book of Joshua the son of Nun.¹

This being so, the apostle, raising our spiritual apprehension to a high level, says somewhere: 'Behold Israel after the flesh',² inferring that there is an Israel after the spirit. He says also in another place: 'For it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God',³ nor are 'all they Israel, who are of Israel'.⁴

GREEK

And again: 'Neither is he a Jew, who is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter'.⁵ For if we take the phrase 'a Jew inwardly' as a test, we shall realise that as there is a race of bodily Jews, so, too, there is a race of those who are 'Jews inwardly', the soul having acquired this nobility of race in virtue of certain unspeakable words.⁶ Moreover there are many prophecies spoken of Israel and Judah, which relate what is going to happen to them. And when we think of the extraordinary promises recorded about these people, promises that so far as literary style goes are poor and distinguished by no elevation or character that is worthy of a promise of God, is it not clear that they demand a mystical interpretation? Well, then, if the promises are of a spiritual kind though announced through material

¹ See Josh. XIII-XXI.

³ Rom. IX. 8 (not in Rufinus).

⁵ Rom. II. 28, 29. Rufinus has omitted a long passage at this point. As the passage contains no unorthodox doctrines the reason for its omission may be simply that Rufinus did not understand all the allusions in it, which are certainly far from clear.

⁶ It is possible that this phrase alludes to the baptismal formula.

LATIN

Jerusalem, called the metropolis or mother city as being a kind of mother of many cities. The names of these cities you will find frequently mentioned here and there in the other divine books, but they are gathered together into a single group in the book of Joshua the son of Nun.¹

This being so, the holy apostle, desiring as it were to raise up and exalt our understanding above the earth, says in a certain place: 'Behold Israel after the flesh'.² In saying this he certainly indicates that there is also another Israel, which is not 'after the flesh' but after the spirit. And again he says in another place: 'For they are not all Israel, who are of Israel'.⁴

imagery, the people to whom the promises belong are not the bodily Israelites.

7. But we must not spend time discussing who is a 'Jew inwardly' and who an Israelite 'in the inner man', since the above remarks are sufficient for all who are not dull-witted. We will return to the subject before us and say that Jacob was the father of the twelve patriarchs, and they of the rulers of the people, and they in their turn of the Israelites who came after.¹ Is it not the case, then, that the bodily Israelites carry back their descent to the rulers of the people, the rulers of the people to the patriarchs, and the patriarchs to Jacob and those still more ancient; whereas are not the spiritual Israelites, of whom the bodily ones were a type, descended from the clans, and the clans from the tribes, and the tribes from one whose birth was not bodily, like that of the others, but of a higher kind;² and was not he born of Isaac, and Isaac descended from Abraham, while all go back to Adam, who the apostle says is Christ?³ For the origin of all families that are in touch with the God of the whole world began lower down with Christ, who comes next after the God and Father of the whole world⁴ and is thus the father of every soul, as Adam is the father of all men. And if Eve is interpreted by Paul as referring to the Church,⁵ it is not surprising (seeing that Cain was born of Eve and all that come after him carry back their descent to Eve) that these two should be figures of the Church; for in the higher sense all men take their beginning from the Church.

GREEK

8. Now if what we have stated about Israel, its tribes and its clans, is convincing, then when the Saviour says, 'I was not sent but unto the lost'⁶

LATIN

8. Now⁷ that we have learned from him, therefore, that there is one Israel according to the flesh and another according to the spirit, then when the Saviour

¹ In this passage Origen has in mind the two genealogies of our Lord, found respectively in St. Matthew and St. Luke. It is clear that these genealogies, with their manifest differences, would have set him a task in spiritual interpretation. He appears to have solved the problem by taking the Matthaean genealogy to indicate the Israelites in a literal sense, and the Lucan the spiritual Israelites. The former is traced through the kings of Judah, whom Origen calls the *demarchs* ('rulers of the people'), and ends with Abraham. The latter, which descends through private persons, goes back through Jacob (whose divinely ordered birth—Gen. XXV. 21-23—is here emphasised) to Adam, who is interpreted as Christ, in accordance with St. Paul's parallel in 1 Cor. XV. 45. So the Church, the bride of Christ (Eph. V. 31-32) is seen in Eve; and even Cain, too, is a figure of the Church. Rufinus could have had no reason to object to these interpretations. The reason he omitted the passage was because he did not understand it.

² I.e. as in Gen. XXV. 21-23.

⁴ See St. Luke III. 38.

⁶ St. Matt. XV. 24.

⁷ The text of Rufinus continues at this point from p. 298.

³ See 1 Cor. XV. 45.

⁵ See Eph. V. 31-32.

GREEK

sheep of the house of Israel', we do not take these words in the same sense as the poor-minded Ebionites do (men whose very name comes from the poverty of their mind, for in Hebrew *ebion* is the word for poor),¹ so as to suppose that Christ came especially to the Israelites after the flesh. For 'it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God'.²

Again, the apostle gives us the following instances of teaching about Jerusalem: 'The Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother';⁴ and in another epistle: 'But ye are come to Mount Sion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are written in heaven'.⁵

If therefore Israel consists of a race of souls, and Jerusalem is a city in heaven, it follows that the cities of Israel have for their mother city the Jerusalem in the heavens; and so conse-

LATIN

says, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel',⁶ we do not take these words in the same sense as do they who 'mind earthly things', that is, the Ebionites, who even by their very name are called poor (for in Hebrew the word *ebion* means poor),¹ but we understand that it is a race of souls which is called Israel, as the meaning of the word itself indicates; for Israel means 'the mind seeing God' or 'man seeing God'.³

Again, the apostle gives us revelations such as this concerning Jerusalem, that 'Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother'.⁴ And in another epistle of his he says: 'But ye are come to Mount Sion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to a multitude of praising angels, and to the church of the firstborn which is written in heaven'.⁵

If then there are in this world certain souls who are called Israel, and a city in heaven which is named Jerusalem, it follows that those cities which are said to belong to the

¹ The Ebionites were a sect of Jewish Christians, who kept the Law. Their name indicates that they practised, at least originally, a voluntary poverty and simplicity of life, such as that described in Acts II. 44-45. It has, of course, no reference whatever to poverty of mind, as Origen declares. For a full account of them see Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Biography* s. v. Ebionism and Ebionites.

² Rom. IX. 8 (omitted from Rufinus).

³ See Origen, *In Num. hom.* XI. 4. 'The name Israel is found even among the orders of angels; nay, they are more truly to be called Israel, for they are more truly the "mind seeing God"; for this is the meaning of the word Israel.'

⁴ Gal. IV. 26.

⁵ Heb. XII. 22, 23.

⁶ St. Matt. XV. 24.

GREEK

quently does Judaea as a whole.

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LATIN

Israelite nation have for their mother city the heavenly Jerusalem, and that we are to understand in this way all references to Judaea as a whole. For we believe that the prophets were speaking about this heavenly country by means of mystical narratives whenever they uttered prophecies concerning Judaea or Jerusalem, or whenever the sacred records declare that this or that kind of invasion had happened to Judaea or Jerusalem.

In all prophecies concerning Jerusalem, therefore, and in all statements made about it, we must understand, if we listen to Paul's words² as the words of God and the utterances of wisdom, that the scriptures are telling us about the heavenly city and the whole region which contains the cities of the holy land. Perhaps it is to these cities that the Saviour lifts our attention when he gives to those who have deserved praise for the good use of their talents authority over ten or over five cities.³

9. If therefore the prophecies relating to Judaea, to Jerusalem, and to Israel, Judah and Jacob suggest to us, because we do not interpret them in a fleshly sense, mysteries such as these,

All statements or prophecies, therefore, which are made concerning Jerusalem we must understand, if we listen to the words of Paul as being those of Christ speaking in him,⁴ to refer in the thought of Paul himself to that country which he calls the heavenly Jerusalem, and to all those regions or cities which are said to belong to the holy land, the mother city of which is Jerusalem. Moreover we must suppose that these are the cities from among which the Saviour, desiring to raise us to a higher level of understanding, promises to those who have made good use of the money committed to them by him, that they shall have authority 'over ten cities', or 'over five'.³

9. If therefore the prophecies relating to Judaea and Jerusalem, and to Israel, Judah and Jacob indicate to us, because we do not interpret them in a

¹ A sentence appears to be missing from the Greek at this point.

² Reading, with Koetschau, Παύλου for the manifestly corrupt Θεοῦ of the text.

³ See St. Luke XIX. 17-19.

⁴ See 2 Cor. XIII. 3.

GREEK

it will follow also that the prophecies which relate to Egypt and the Egyptians, to Babylon and the Babylonians, to Tyre and the Tyrians, to Sidon and the Sidonians, or to any of the other nations, are not spoken solely of the bodily Egyptians, Babylonians, Tyrians and Sidonians.¹ If the Israelites are spiritual, it follows that the Egyptians and Babylonians are also spiritual. For the statements made in Ezekiel about Pharaoh king of Egypt entirely fail to apply to any particular man who was or will be ruler of Egypt, as will be clear to those who study the passage carefully.²

Similarly the statements concerning the ruler of Tyre cannot be understood of any particular man who is to rule over Tyre.³ And as for the numerous statements made about Nebuchadnezzar,⁴ especially in Isaiah, how it is possible to interpret them of that particular man? For the man Nebuchadnezzar neither 'fell from heaven', nor was he the 'morning star', nor did he 'rise in the morning' over the earth.⁵

Nor indeed will any man of intelligence interpret the statements made in Ezekiel concerning Egypt, that it shall be 'laid waste forty years' so that 'no foot of man' shall be found there, and that it shall one day be so overwhelmed with war,

¹ See Ezek. XXIX. ff.

² See Ezek. XXVIII.

LATIN

fleshly sense, various divine mysteries, it certainly follows that those prophecies which were uttered concerning Egypt and the Egyptians, or Babylon and the Babylonians, or Sidon and the Sidonians, must not be understood to refer to the Egypt which is situated on the earth, or to the earthly Babylon or Tyre or Sidon.¹ Nor can the prophecies which the prophet Ezekiel utters concerning Pharaoh king of Egypt apply to any particular man who may have reigned in Egypt, as the context of the passage clearly shows.²

Similarly the statements concerning the prince of Tyre cannot be understood as being made in respect of any man who was an actual king of Tyre;³ and further, in regard to the statements made about Nebuchadnezzar,⁴ which are found in many places of scripture and especially in Isaiah, how is it possible for us to accept them as spoken of a man? For he is no man, who is said to have 'fallen from heaven', or to be the 'morning star', or to have 'risen in the morning'.⁵

Moreover, as for the statements which are made in Ezekiel concerning Egypt, that it shall be 'laid waste forty years' so that 'no foot of man' shall be found there, and that it shall be so overwhelmed with war that throughout the land human

² See Ezek. XXIX. 1-9.

³ See Is. XIV. 3-23.

⁵ See Is. XIV. 12.

GREEK

that throughout the whole land there shall be blood up to the knees, as referring to the Egypt which lies next to the Ethiopians whose bodies are blackened by the sun.¹

LATIN

Let us see,² however, whether the above passages may not be more worthily interpreted as follows. Just as there is a heavenly Jerusalem and Judaea, and no doubt a people dwelling therein who are called Israel, so it is possible that near to these there exist certain other places, which apparently are called Egypt, or Babylon, or Tyre or Sidon; and the princes of these places and the souls, if there are any, who dwell in them, may be called Egyptians, Babylonians, Tyrians and Sidonians. From among these souls, in accordance with the manner of life which they lead there, a kind of captivity would seem to have taken place, as a result of which they are said to have gone down from higher and better places into Egypt, or to have been scattered among other nations.

GREEK

10. And perhaps,³ just as people on earth, when they die the common death of all, are in consequence of the deeds done here so distributed as to obtain different positions according to the proportion of their sins, if they are judged to be worthy of the place called Hades; so the people there, when they die, if I may so speak, descend into this Hades, and are judged

¹ See Ezekiel XXIX. 11-12; XXX. 7, 10-12; XXXII. 5-6, 12-13, 15.

² This paragraph was omitted by the compilers of the *Philocalia*.

³ See Jerome, *Ep. ad Avitum* 11. 'Also in the fourth book, which is the last book of this work, he (i.e. Origen) inserts the following statements which must be condemned by the churches of Christ: "And perhaps, just as those who die in this world by the separation of body and soul obtain different positions in the world below in accordance with the differences of their deeds, so those who die, so to speak, in the realm of the heavenly Jerusalem, descend to the lower regions of our world, in such a way as to occupy different positions on earth in proportion to their merits".'

⁴ Lat. *inferus*, translating the Gr. ᾠδης Hades.

⁵ See St. Luke XVI. 22.

⁶ Lat. *mansiones*: Gr. *μωαί*. See St. John XIV. 2.

LATIN

blood shall flow to a height up to the knees, I do not know how any man of intelligence could interpret these as referring to that earthly Egypt which lies next to Ethiopia.¹

LATIN

10. For perhaps,³ just as those who depart from this world by the common death of all, are distributed according to their deeds and merits, as a result of the judgment, some going to a place which is called the 'lower world'⁴ others to 'Abraham's bosom'⁵ and to the various positions and dwelling-places⁶ in it; so the inhabitants of the regions above, when they die

GREEK

worthy of different habitations,
better or worse, in the whole
of this region of earth * *
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and of being born of such or
such parents, so that an Israelite
will occasionally fall among
Scythians and an Egyptian descend
into Judaea. Nevertheless
the Saviour came to gather together
the 'lost sheep of the house of
Israel',¹ and since many from Israel
have not submitted to his teaching,
those from the Gentiles are also
called. * * * * *
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LATIN

It would appear to follow³ from this that the prophecies which are uttered concerning the various nations ought rather to be referred to souls and the different heavenly dwelling-places occupied by them.⁴ Moreover in regard to the records of events

¹ See St. Matt. XV. 24.

² See Ps. LXXXVI. 13. This sentence is omitted from the *Philocalia*, but both Koetschau and Robinson (ed. *Philocalia* Int., p. xxxvii) regard it as part of Origen's text. The Sept. reading is literally, 'the lowest Hades', but Rufinus reads 'the lower Hades' (*de infero inferiori*), which was no doubt Origen's reading.

³ This paragraph is also missing from the *Philocalia*.

⁴ See Origen, *In Num. hom. XXVII. 2*, where he says that Num. XXXIII. 1-2 must refer to the spiritual journey from this world to the heavenly abodes.

LATIN

there, if one may so speak,
descend from those upper
places to this lower world.

For the other lower world,
to which are conveyed the souls
of those who die on earth, is
called by scripture, I believe on
account of this distinction, 'the
lower Hades', as it says in the
Psalms, 'And thou hast delivered
my soul from the lower
Hades'.² Each of those, therefore,
who descend into the earth, is
destined in accordance with his
merits or with the position which
he had held above to be born in
a particular place or nation, or
in a particular walk of life, or
with particular infirmities, or
to be the offspring of religious
parents or the reverse, so that it
happens occasionally that an
Israelite falls among the
Scythians and a poor Egyptian
is conveyed to J u d a e a.
Nevertheless our Saviour came
to gather together the 'lost sheep
of the house of Israel',¹ and
since most of the Israelites have
not submitted to his teaching,
those who belonged to the
Gentiles have been called.

that are said to have happened to the nation of Israel, or to Jerusalem or Judaea, when they were assailed by this people or that, there is need of careful inquiry and examination, seeing that in very many cases the events did not happen in a physical sense, to discover in what way these events are more suitably ascribed to those nations of souls who once dwelt in that heaven which is said to 'pass away'¹ or who may be supposed to dwell there even now.

(And since² we have compared the souls who travel from this world to the lower regions to those souls who by a kind of death come from the height of heaven to our dwelling-places, we must thoughtfully inquire whether we may make this latter assertion in regard to the birth of every single soul. For in that case souls that are born on this earth of ours would either come from the lower world again to a higher place and assume a human body, in consequence of their desire for better things, or else would descend to us from better places. And so, too, those places which are above in the firmament may be occupied by some souls who have advanced from our seats to better things, and by others who have fallen from the heavenly places to the firmament and yet have not sinned deeply enough to be thrust into the lower places in which we dwell)³ * * * * *

11. If, however,⁴ anyone should demand of us clear and manifest declarations on these matters out of the holy scriptures, we must reply that it was the method of the Holy Spirit rather to conceal these truths and to hide them deeply underneath narratives which appear to be records of actual events, narratives in which people are said to go down into Egypt or to be led captive to Babylon, where some were greatly humiliated and put under bondage to masters, while others in the very places of their captivity were regarded as famous and illustrious, so that they held positions of power and leadership and were set to rule over nations.

GREEK

11. But these truths, as we think, have been concealed in the narratives. For 'the king-

LATIN

All these truths, as we have said, lie hidden and concealed, covered up in the narratives of

¹ See St. Matt. XXIV. 35.

² Koetschau places this extract from Jerome, *Ep. ad Avitum* 11, in the text at this point. Cp. Robinson, *Philocalia* Int., p. xxxvii.

³ Jerome continues as follows (*Ep. ad Avitum* 11), giving in outline a further passage omitted both by Rufinus and the authors of the *Philocalia*: 'After this he attempts to prove that the firmament, that is, the heaven, is a lower world when compared with the heaven above it, and that the world we in habit is called a lower world in comparison with the firmament, and further that our world is a heaven when compared with the world which is below us; so that what to some is a lower world is to others a heaven.'

⁴ The text of Rufinus is here resumed.

GREEK

dom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field, which when a man findeth he hideth it, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.¹ Now let us consider whether the outward aspect of scripture and its obvious and surface meaning does not correspond to the field as a whole, full of all kinds of plants, whereas the truths that are stored away in it and not seen by all, but lie as if buried beneath the visible plants, are the hidden 'treasures of wisdom and knowledge',² which the Spirit speaking through Isaiah calls 'dark and unseen and concealed'.³

These treasures require for their discovery the help of God, who alone is able to 'break in pieces the gates of brass'⁴ that conceal them and to burst the iron bars that are upon the gates, and so to make known all the truths taught in Genesis concerning the various legitimate races and as it were seeds of souls, whether closely akin to Israel or far apart from him, and the descent of the 'seventy souls' into Egypt, in order that they may there become 'as the stars of the heaven in multitude'.⁵ But since not all who are sprung from these are a 'light of the world',⁶ for 'they are not all Israel, who are of Israel'⁷ there come from the seventy a people 'even as the sand which

LATIN

holy scripture; because 'the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field, which when a man findeth he hideth it, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.'¹ Now consider carefully whether there is not here an indication that the actual soil and surface, so to speak, of scripture, that is, the literal meaning, is the field, abundantly filled with all kinds of plants, whereas the higher and profounder spiritual meaning is the 'hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge',² which the Holy Spirit speaking through Isaiah calls 'dark and unseen and concealed treasures'.³

These treasures require for their discovery the help of God, who alone is able to 'break in pieces the gates of brass'⁴ by which they are shut in and concealed, and to burst the iron bolts and bars which prevent us from entering in and reaching all those truths written in veiled language in Genesis concerning the various races of souls and the seeds and generations named there, whether closely akin to Israel or widely separated from his posterity; as well as the meaning of the descent of the seventy souls into Egypt, that these seventy may become in Egypt 'as the stars of the heaven in multitude'.⁵ But since not all who are sprung from these are a 'light of

¹ St. Matt. XIII. 44.

² See Col. II. 3.

³ See Is. XLV. 3.

⁴ See Is. XLV. 2.

⁵ For the whole passage see Gen. Chs. X., XI., XXV., XXXVI., XLVI.; and for the quotations Deut. X. 22 (Gen. XLVI. 27, Exod. I. 5, Gen. XXII. 17).

⁶ See St. Matt. V. 14.

⁷ Rom. IX. 6.

GREEK

is by the sea shore innumerable.¹

LATIN

this world',² for 'they are not all Israel, who are of Israel',³ there come from these seventy souls people even 'as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable'.¹

LATIN

12. This descent of the holy fathers into Egypt, that is, into this world, will be seen to have been granted by the providence of God for the enlightenment of the rest of men and for the instruction of the human race, that through them all other souls might be enlightened and succoured. 'For to them first were entrusted the oracles of God',⁴ it being this people alone which is said to 'see God'; for the name Israel when translated has this meaning.⁵ It follows at once that we must adapt and interpret in the light of these principles the statement that Egypt was scourged with ten plagues to allow God's people to depart,⁶ or the account of what happened to the people in the desert,⁷ or of the construction of the tabernacle by means of contributions from all the people,⁸ or of the weaving of the priestly garments,⁹ or the description of the vessels of the ministry;¹⁰ because, as it is written, these things truly contain within them a 'shadow' and form of the 'heavenly things'. For Paul clearly says of them that they 'serve a shadow and pattern of the heavenly things'.¹¹ In the same law there is also contained an account of the particular laws and institutions under which men are to live in the holy land. Threats, too, are held over those who shall transgress the law; and for those who stood in need of purification various kinds of purifications are given, adapted to men who were liable to frequent pollution;¹² the object being that by means of these they should arrive at last at that one purification, after which they must not be polluted any more.¹³

Moreover a reckoning is made of the number of this people, though not of all.¹⁴ For the childlike souls have not yet lived long enough to be numbered in accordance with the divine command;¹⁵ while those souls which cannot become the head of some other but are themselves subject to others as to a head, souls which the scripture terms 'women', these, too, are not reckoned

¹ Heb. XI. 12 (Gen. XXXII. 12). The extract from the *Philocalia* ends here.

² See St. Matt. V. 14.

³ Rom. IX. 6.

⁴ Rom. III. 2. ⁵ See above p. 300. ⁶ See Exod. VII. 14-XII. 36.

⁷ See Exod. XIX. ff. ⁸ See Exod. XXV. ff. ⁹ See Exod. XXVIII.

¹⁰ See Exod. XXX. 17 ff. ¹¹ Heb. VIII. 5. ¹² See Lev. XII-XV.

¹³ See Heb. IX. and VI. 6.

¹⁴ See Num. Chs. I-IV, XXVI.

¹⁵ See Num. I. 3 etc.

in that numbering which is ordered by God.¹ Only those called men are numbered, in order to show that the former souls could not be numbered apart by themselves but that they are included in the number of those called men.

Especially, however, there come to the holy number they who are ready to go forth to the wars of Israel, they who can fight against those enemies and adversaries whom the Father puts in subjection to the Son who sits on his right hand, in order that he may destroy every principality and power.² By these numbers of his soldiers, who because they are fighting for God do not entangle themselves in the affairs of this world,³ he intends to overthrow the kingdoms of the adversary.⁴ By these 'shields of faith' are borne and the 'darts' of wisdom are hurled; on them gleams the helmet which is the hope of salvation, and the breastplate of charity guards their heart that is filled with God.⁵ Such are the soldiers who appear to me to be indicated in scripture, and such is the kind of warfare for which they are prepared who are ordered in the divine books to be numbered by God's command.

But far more renowned and perfect than these are they, the very hairs of whose head are said to be numbered.⁶ Those, however, who were punished for their sins, whose carcasses 'fell in the wilderness', appear to me to bear a resemblance to those who, though they have made not a little progress, have yet been for various reasons quite unable to reach the goal of perfection; because they are said either to have murmured, or to have worshipped idols, or to have committed fornication, or to have planned some wickedness such as it is wrong for the mind even to think of.⁷

Nor is the following fact, I believe, devoid of some mystical meaning, that certain of the people, who possess large flocks and much cattle, go and seize beforehand a region suitable for pastur-

¹ See Num. I. 2, 4 etc. Cp. 1 Cor. XI. 3.

² See Eph. I. 20, 22; 1 Cor. XV. 27, 24.

³ See 2 Tim. II. 4.

⁴ The following extract from Jerome, *Ep. ad Avitum* 11, appears to belong here. 'Not content with this, he (i.e. Origen) says that in the end of all things, when we return to the heavenly Jerusalem, wars of hostile powers will arise against the people of God, in order that their valour may not be idle, but that they may display it in battles and so gain strength, which would be impossible unless like brave men they had first resisted adversaries. And we read in the book of Numbers that these have conquered by the exercise of reason and order, and by skill in fighting.' (See Numbers Ch. XXXI.). Cp. too, Origen *In Num. hom.* VII. 5: 'It is necessary, therefore, that the spiritual hosts of wickedness, who are said to be in the heavenly places, should be conquered by you, in order that you may speedily pass over to the heavenly realms and dwell there instead of them.'

⁵ See Eph. VI. 16, 17; 1 Thess. V. 8.

⁶ See St. Matt. X. 30 and parallel.

⁷ See Num. XI, XIV, XVI, XXI, XXV; Exod. XXXII; and 1 Cor. X. 5-10; Heb. III. 17.

ing their flocks, which was the first of all the places that the right hand of the Israelites secured by war. This region they beg Moses to grant them, and consequently they are placed apart beyond the streams of Jordan and cut off from the occupation of the holy land.¹ Now this Jordan would appear, when taken as a figure of the heavenly things, to water and flood the thirsty souls and minds that lie close beside it.

And here this other fact will not appear to be without significance, that it is Moses who hears from God all that is written down in the law of Leviticus, whereas in Deuteronomy it is the people who are represented as listening to Moses and learning from him what they could not hear from God.² This indeed is why it is called Deuteronomy, meaning the second law; a fact which some will think points to this, that when the first law given through Moses³ came to an end, a second legislation was apparently composed, and this was specially delivered by Moses to his successor Joshua;⁴ and Joshua is certainly believed to be a figure of our Saviour, by whose second law, that is, by the precepts of the Gospels, all things are brought to perfection.

13. We must also see, however, whether the scriptures may not perhaps indicate this further truth, that just as the legislation is presented with greater clearness and distinctness in Deuteronomy than in those books which were written at the first, so also we may gather from that coming of the Saviour which he fulfilled in humility, when he 'took upon him the form of a servant',⁵ an indication of the 'more splendid and glorious second coming in the glory of his Father',⁶ at which coming, when in the kingdom of heaven all the saints shall live by the laws of the 'eternal gospel',⁷ the figure of Deuteronomy will be fulfilled; and

¹ See Num. XXXII.

² See Levit. I. 1 and throughout; and Deut. I. 1, V. 1.

³ See St. John I. 17. ⁴ See Deut. XXXI.

⁵ See Phil. II. 7.

⁶ See St. Matt. XVI. 27 and parallels.

⁷ See Rev. XIV. 6. Origen apparently made much more of the 'eternal gospel' than Rufinus allows us to see. Cp. Jerome, *Ep. ad Avitum* 12. 'And when he (i.e. Origen) has said that the "eternal gospel" of the Apocalypse of John, that is, the gospel which is to exist in the heavens, is as far superior to our gospel as the preaching of Christ is to the rites of the old law, he goes to the extreme length of inferring (what it is impious even to have thought of) that Christ will also suffer in the air and in the realms above for the salvation of the daemons. And although he does not actually say so, yet it must be understood as a logical consequence, that as God was made man for the sake of men, to set them free, so also for the salvation of the daemons he will be made what they are, for whose liberation he is then to come. And in case it should be supposed that we are putting our own interpretation upon his statements, we will give his very words: "For just as he fulfilled the shadow of the law through the shadow of the gospel, so because all law is a copy and shadow of the heavenly rites, we must carefully inquire whether we ought not to regard even the heavenly law and the rites of the higher worship not as possessing completeness, but as standing in need of the truth of that gospel which in the Apocalypse of John is called the "eternal gospel", in comparison, that is, with this gospel

just as by his present coming he has fulfilled that law which has a 'shadow of the good things to come',¹ so also by that glorious coming the shadow of his first coming will be fulfilled and brought to perfection. For the prophet has spoken of it thus: 'The breath of our countenance is Christ the Lord, of whom we said that under his shadow we shall live among the nations',² that is, at the time when he shall duly transfer all the saints from the temporal to the eternal gospel, to use a phrase employed by John in the Apocalypse, where he speaks of the 'eternal gospel'.

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But³ if we continue our inquiries as far as the passion, to seek for this in the heavenly places will seem a bold thing to do. Yet if there are 'spiritual hosts of wickedness' in the heavenly places, consider whether, just as we are not ashamed to confess that he was crucified here in order to destroy those whom he destroyed through his suffering, so we should not fear to allow that a similar event also happens there and will happen in the ages to come until the end of the whole world * * *

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14. But in all these matters let it suffice us to conform our mind to the rule of piety and to think of the Holy Spirit's words not as a composition depending upon feeble human eloquence but in accordance with the sayings of scripture, 'All the king's glory is within,⁴ and, 'a treasure' of divine meanings lies hidden within the 'frail vessel' of the poor letter.⁵ If, however, a reader is more curious and persists in asking for an explanation of every detail, let him come and hear along with us how the apostle Paul, scanning by the aid of the Holy Spirit, who 'searches even the depths of God',⁶ the 'depth of the divine wisdom and knowledge',⁷ and yet not being able to reach the end and to attain,

of ours, which is temporal and was preached in a world and an age that are destined to pass away".

¹ See Heb. X. 1.

² Lament. IV. 20.

³ Frag. 30, Koetschau, from Justinian, *Ep. ad Mennam* (Mansi IX. 532). The same passage is found in Jerome, *Ep. ad Avitum* 12 (a continuation of the last quotation from this letter). 'But if we wish to continue our inquiries as far as the passion of the Lord our Saviour, although it is a bold and venturesome thing to seek for his passion in heaven, nevertheless, if there are "spiritual hosts of wickedness" in the heavenly places and if we are not ashamed to confess that the Lord was crucified in order to destroy those whom he destroyed through his passion, why should we fear to suspect that something similar to this may happen in the realms above, in order that the inhabitants of all places may be saved by his passion?' See also Theophilus Alex. *Ep. synod* 4 (Jerome, *Ep.* 92) and *Ep. pasch.* I. 10, 11 (Jerome, *Ep.* 96).

⁴ Ps. XLV. 13 (Sept.).

⁵ See 1 Cor. II. 10.

⁶ See 2 Cor. IV. 7.

⁷ See Rom. XI. 33.

if I may say so, an innermost knowledge, in his despair and amazement at the task cries out and says, 'O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!'¹ And in what despair of reaching a perfect understanding he uttered this cry, hear him tell us himself: 'How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!'² He did not say that God's judgments were hard to search out, but that they could not be searched out at all; not that his ways were hard to find out, but that they were impossible to find out. For however far one may advance in the search and make progress through an increasingly earnest study, even when aided and enlightened in mind by God's grace, he will never be able to reach the final goal of his inquiries.

For no created mind can by any means possess the capacity to understand all; but as soon as it has discovered a small fragment of what it is seeking, it again sees other things that must be sought for; and if in turn it comes to know these, it will again see arising out of them many more things that demand investigation. This is why Solomon, wisest of men, whose wisdom gave him a clear view of the nature of things, says: 'I said, I will become wise; and wisdom herself was taken far from me, farther than she was before; and who shall find out her profound depth?'³ Moreover Isaiah, knowing that the beginnings of things could not be discovered by mortal nature, no, and not even by those natures which, though diviner than man's nature, are yet themselves made and created, knowing, I say, that none of these could discover either the beginning or the end says; 'Tell ye the former things, what they were, and we shall know that ye are gods; or declare the last things, what they are, and then shall we see that ye are gods.'⁴

My Hebrew teacher also used to teach as follows, that since the beginning or the end of all things could not be comprehended by any except our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, this was the reason why Isaiah spoke of there being in the vision that appeared to him two seraphim only, who with two wings cover the face of God, with two cover his feet, and with two fly, crying one to another and saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of thy glory.'⁵ For because the two seraphim alone have their wings over the face of God and over his feet, we may venture to declare that neither the armies of the holy angels, nor the holy thrones, nor the dominions, nor principalities, nor powers can wholly know the beginnings of all things and the ends of the universe. We must understand, however, that those holy spirits and powers who are here enumerated are nearest to the very beginnings of things and reach a point

¹ Rom. XI. 33.

² Eccl. VII. 23, 24 (Sept. 24, 25).

³ Is. XLI. 22, 23.

⁴ See Is. VI. 2, 3. For the reference to the Hebrew teacher see the Greek fragment in Bk. I., Ch. III. 4 (p. 32 above).

which the rest of creation cannot attain to. Nevertheless whatever it is that these powers may have learned through the revelation of the Son of God and of the Holy Spirit—and they will certainly be able to acquire a great deal of knowledge, and the higher ones much more than the lower—still it is impossible for them to comprehend everything; for it is written, 'The more part of God's works are secret.'¹

It is therefore to be desired that each one according to his capacity will ever 'reach out to the things which are before, forgetting those things which are behind',² that is, will reach out both to better works and also to a clearer understanding and knowledge, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, to whom is the glory for ever.

15. Let everyone, then, who cares for truth, care little about names and words,³ for different kinds of speech are customary in different nations. Let him be more anxious about the fact signified than about the words by which it is signified, and particularly in questions of such difficulty and importance as these. For example, we may inquire whether there exists any substance in which we can discern neither colour nor shape nor possibility of touch nor size, a substance perceptible to the mind alone, which anyone can call whatever he pleases. The Greeks speak of this substance as *asomaton*, or incorporeal;⁴ but the divine scriptures call it 'invisible'; for the apostle declares that God is invisible, when he says that Christ is the 'image of the invisible God'.⁵ On the other hand he says that 'all things, visible and invisible, were created through Christ'.⁶ Here it is asserted that there exist even among created things certain existences which are in their own nature invisible. These, however, while not in themselves corporeal, yet make use of bodies, though they themselves are superior to bodily substance. But the substance of the Trinity, which is the beginning and cause of all things, 'of which are all things and through which are all things and in which are all things', must not be believed either to be a body or to exist in a body, but to be wholly incorporeal.⁷

Let it suffice, however, for us to have spoken briefly on these matters, in a digression indeed, but one which has been forced upon us by the necessities of the subject. Our aim has been to show that there are certain things, the meaning of which it is impossible adequately to explain by any human language, but which are made clear rather through simple apprehension than through any power of words. This rule must control our interpretation even of the divine writings, in order that what is said therein may be estimated in accordance not with the meanness of the language but with the divine power of the Holy Spirit who inspired their composition.

¹ Ecclus. XVI. 21. ² See Phil. III. 14. ³ See Tim. I. 4, VI. 4.

⁴ See above pp. 5 and 92. ⁵ See Col. I. 15, 16. ⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ See Rom. XI. 36 and above p. 10.

CHAPTER IV

GREEK

SUMMARY OF DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1. It is now time for us,¹ in summarising our discussion concerning the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, to deal with a few points previously omitted. In regard to the Father, though he is whole and indivisible yet he becomes the Father of the Son, but not by an act of separation as some suppose.² For if the Son is something separated from the Father and an offspring generated from him, of the same kind as the offspring of animals, then both he who generated and he who was generated are of necessity bodies. * *

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SUMMARY OF DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND OF THE OTHER MATTERS DISCUSSED IN THE FOREGOING CHAPTERS.

1. It is now time for us, after having dealt to the best of our ability with the matters previously discussed, to summarise the particular points, with the object of gathering together what we have said in scattered references, and first of all to repeat our teaching concerning the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God the Father, since he is both invisible and inseparable from the Son, generated the Son not, as some suppose, by an act of separation from himself.² For if the Son is something separated from the Father, and if this expression signifies something resembling the offspring of animals and human beings, then both he who separated and he who is separated are of necessity bodies. For we do not

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say, as the heretics suppose, that a part of God's substance was changed into the Son, or that the Son was procreated by the

¹ Frag. 31, Koetschau, from Marcellus, found in Eusebius *Con. Marcellum* I. 4, Frag. 32. The Greek title is a conjecture of Koetschau, taken from the Latin.

² See Jerome, *Apol. adv. Rufin.* II. 19. 'There exists in Greek a dialogue between Origen and Candidus, the defender of the heresy of Valentinus . . . Candidus admits that the Son is of the substance of the Father, but errs in asserting a *probote*, that is, an act of separation. On the other side Origen, in the manner of Arius and Eunomius, controverts the assertion that the Son was produced or born, for fear of dividing God the Father into parts; but he asserts that he is a sublime and pre-eminent creature who came into existence by the will of the Father like all other creatures.'

Father out of no substance at all, that is, from something external to God's own substance, so that there was a time when the Son did not exist; but setting aside all thought of a material body, we say that the Word and Wisdom was begotten of the invisible and incorporeal God apart from any bodily feeling,¹ like an act of will proceeding from the mind. Nor will it appear absurd, seeing that he is called the 'Son of his love',² that he should also be regarded in this way as the 'Son of his will' * * *

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Now this Son³ was begotten of the Father's will, for he is the 'image of the invisible God'⁴ and the 'effulgence of his glory and the impress of his substance',⁵ 'the firstborn of all creation',⁴ a thing created,⁶ wisdom. For wisdom itself says: 'God created me in the beginning of his ways for his works'⁷ * * * If he⁸ is an 'image of the invisible God',⁹ he is an invisible image; and I would dare to add that as he is a likeness

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Moreover John tells us that 'God is light'¹⁰ and Paul declares that the Son is the 'brightness of the eternal light'.¹¹ As there-

¹ See above p. 19.

² See Col. I. 13.

³ Frag. 32, Koetschau, from Justinian, *Ep. ad Mennam* (Mansi IX. 525). Rufinus has omitted this.

⁴ See Col. I. 15.

⁵ Heb. I. 3.

⁶ The word used is *κτίσμα*. Origen obtained it, as the context shows, from Proverbs VIII. 22. The later Church regarded it as heretical to call the Son *κτίσμα*, and allowed nothing but *γέννημα*, a thing begotten. Origen's use of *κτίσμα* must, however, be taken in conjunction with his doctrine of the Son's eternal generation. The creation of the visible world, and of souls, would have been to him very different things from the eternal generation of the Son, although he held strongly that the Father is first, and the fount of all being. Arius called the Son *κτίσμα*, but rejected Origen's compensating doctrine. See Athanasius, *Orat. II. con. Arian. c. 57*. 'The Word has his essence not in any other beginning, but in the Father, who as even our opponents (i.e. the Arians) admit is without beginning; in order that the Son also may exist without beginning in the Father, being his offspring and not his creation (*γέννημα καὶ οὐ κτίσμα*).' Origen's opinions were reproduced by Theognostus of Alexandria (middle of 3rd cent. A.D.), an epitome of whose work is found in Photius *Bibl. cod. 106*. 'He demonstrates that the Son is a thing created (*κτίσμα*) and has charge of rational beings. Like Origen, he says other similar things of the Son.'

⁷ Proverbs VIII. 22.

⁸ Frag. 33, Koetschau, from Athanasius, *Ep. de decret. Nicaen. Synod. c. 27* (Migne P. G. 25, p. 465).

⁹ See Col. I. 15.

¹⁰ 1 St. John I. 5.

¹¹ See Heb. I. 3.

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of the Father there is no time when he did not exist. For when did God, who according to John is said to be 'light' (for 'God is light')¹ have no 'effulgence of his own glory',² that we should dare to lay down a beginning for the Son, before which he did not exist? And when did the image of the unspeakable, unnameable, unutterable substance of the Father, his impress, the Word who knows the Father,³ not exist? Let the man who dares to say, 'There was a time when the Son was not',⁴ understand that this is what he will be saying, 'Once wisdom did not exist, and word did not exist, and life did not exist' * * *

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fore light can never exist without its brightness, so neither can the Son, who is called the 'impress' of the Father's 'substance', and his Word and Wisdom, be conceived as existing without the Father. How then can it be said that there was a time when the Son did not exist?⁴ For this is nothing else but to say that there was a time when truth did not exist, when wisdom did not exist, when life did not exist,

whereas we must believe that in all these the substance of God exists in perfection. For these cannot be taken away from him or ever be separated from his substance. Although in our mind they are regarded as being many, yet in fact and substance they are one, and in them resides the 'fulness of the god-head'⁷

But it⁵ is not right, nor is it safe for us in our weakness to rob God, so far as in us lies, of his only-begotten Word who ever dwells with him, who is his wisdom, in whom he rejoiced.⁶ For if we do this, we shall think of him as not always rejoicing.

¹ St. John I. 5.

² See Heb. I. 3.

³ See St. Matt. XI. 27; St. John X. 15.

⁴ This was what Arius afterwards did say.

⁵ Frag. 34, Koetschau, from Athanasius, *Ep. de decret. Nicaen. synod. c. 27*. Rufinus has omitted this.

⁶ See Prov. VIII. 30.

⁷ See Col. II. 9.

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This phrase that we use, however, that there never was a time when he did not exist, must be accepted with a reservation. For the very words, when, or never, have a temporal significance, whereas the statements we make about the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit must be understood as transcending all time and all ages and all eternity. For it is this Trinity alone which exceeds all comprehension, not only of temporal but even of eternal intelligence. The rest of things, however, which are external to the Trinity, must be measured by ages and periods of time. The fact, therefore, that the Word is God, and was in the beginning with God,¹ must not lead anyone to suppose that this Son of God is contained in any place; nor must the fact that he is wisdom, or truth, or righteousness, or sanctification, or redemption; for all these need no place in which to act or work, but each of them must be understood as referring to those who receive a share of the Word's power and effectiveness.

2. But if anyone should maintain that through those who receive a share of God's Word, or of his wisdom or truth or life, the Word himself and the wisdom appear to exist in a place, we must answer him by saying that undoubtedly Christ, in his character of Word and Wisdom and all the rest, was in Paul, according to Paul's own statement: 'Or do ye seek a proof of him who speaks in me, even Christ?'² And again: 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me'.³ Since then he was in Paul, who will doubt that he was similarly in Peter and in John and in every one of the saints, and not only in those on earth, but also in those in heaven? For it is absurd to say that Christ was in Peter and in Paul, but that he was not in Michael the archangel and in Gabriel. From this we can clearly perceive that the divinity of the Son of God is not confined in any place, otherwise it would be present in that place and not present in any other; but that while, in virtue of the majesty of its incorporeal nature, it is confined to no place, in no place, on the other hand, can we think of it as being absent.

We must, however, bear in mind this one difference, that although he is present in various individuals such as those we have mentioned, Peter, Paul, Michael or Gabriel, he is not present in all beings whatsoever in the same degree. For he is more fully and clearly and, if I may say so, more openly present in the archangels than in other saints. This is plain from the following fact, that when the saints reach the height of perfection they are said to be made like, or equal to, the angels, according to the gospel statement.⁴ It is clear from this that Christ becomes present in each individual in such a degree as is warranted by the extent of his merits.

¹ See St. John I. 1, 2. ² 2 Cor. XIII. 3. ³ Gal. II. 20.

⁴ See St. Matt. XXII. 30 and St. Luke XX. 36.

3. Having therefore briefly repeated these points concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, our next step is to lay equal stress on this, that all things are said to have been created through the Son, 'things in heaven and things on earth, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all were created through him and in him, and he is before all, and all things subsist for him, who is the head'.¹ With this agrees the statement made by John in the Gospel: 'All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made.'² David, too, points to the mystery of the Trinity in the creation of the universe when he says: 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made strong, and all their power by the spirit of his mouth.'³

After this it will be appropriate for us to make mention of the bodily coming and incarnation of the only-begotten Son of God.⁴ And here we must not suppose that all the majesty of his godhead was confined within the limits of a tiny body, in such a way that the whole of God's Word and his wisdom and essential truth and life was either separated from the Father or forced and imprisoned within the tiny compass of that body, so that it is not to be thought of as operating anywhere else. The reverent confession of piety should rather lie between these extremes, neither admitting that any quality of the godhead was lacking in Christ, nor yet supposing that there took place any separation whatever from the essence of the Father, which exists everywhere. Some such truth is indicated by John the Baptist, when with Jesus in the bodily sense absent he thus addressed the multitudes: 'There standeth one among you whom ye know not, who cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose.'⁵ Certainly it could not be said of one who so far as his bodily presence went was absent, that he stood 'among' them with whom he was not bodily present. This shows that the Son of God was both wholly present in his body and also wholly present everywhere.

4. Let no one imagine, however, that when we say this we are asserting that one part of the godhead of the Son of God was in Christ while the other part was elsewhere or everywhere. This can only be believed by those who are ignorant of the nature of incorporeal and invisible substance. For it is impossible to speak of a part of what is incorporeal or to make any division in it. It exists rather in all things and through all things and above all things, in the way we have previously spoken of, that is, in the way in which it is understood as being either wisdom or word or life or truth, by which mode of understanding

¹ Col. I. 16-18. ² St. John I. 3.

³ See above Bk. II. Ch. VI. 1, 2. (pp. 108 ff.).

⁴ St. John I. 26, 27 and Origen, *Comm. in Iohan.* VI. 39, where Heracleon's interpretation of the passage is given.

all idea of confinement in a particular place is undoubtedly excluded. The Son of God, therefore, because for the salvation of the human race he wished to appear to men and to dwell among them, assumed not only, as some think, a human body, but also a soul, in its nature indeed like our souls, but in will and virtue like himself, and of such a kind that it could unswervingly carry into effect all the wishes and plans of the Word and Wisdom * * *¹ Now that he possessed a soul, the Saviour himself most clearly proves in the gospels when he says: 'No one taketh from me my soul, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again'.² And again: 'My soul is sorrowful even unto death';³ and also: 'Now is my soul troubled'.⁴ For

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For the soul⁵ that was 'troubled' and 'sorrowful' is certainly not the 'only-begotten' and the 'first-born of all Creation', nor God the Word, who is superior to his soul, as the Son of God himself says: 'I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up'.⁶

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do we say that the Son of God was in that soul in the same way as he was in the soul of Paul or of Peter and the rest of the saints, in whom we believe that Christ spoke just as he did in Paul.⁷ Of all these, indeed, we must hold that opinion which the scripture expresses: 'No man is pure from uncleanness, not even if his life has lasted but one day'.⁸ But the soul that was in Jesus 'chose the good, before it knew the evil';⁹ and because it 'loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God anointed

¹ See above Bk. II., Ch. VIII. 2, 4 (pp. 121 and 127). Koetschau suspects an omission at this point, containing Frag. 35 from Justinian, *Ep. ad Mennam* (Mansi IX. 506); 'that the soul of the Lord pre-existed, and that God the Word was united to it before he took flesh of the Virgin'.

² St. John X. 18.

³ St. Matt. XXVI. 38 and parallels.

⁴ St. John XII. 27.

⁵ Frag. 36, Koetschau, from Theophilus Alex. *Ep. pasch.* II. 16 (translated by Jerome in *Ep.* 98). The Greek is found in Theodoret *Dial.* II., Ch. 4 (Migne P. G. 83, p. 197). Koetschau has altered the Greek text of Theodoret, *ὁ γὰρ Θεὸς λόγος* to *οὐδε Θεὸς λόγος*, which agrees with the sense of Rufinus and the actual wording of Jerome, *nec verbum dei*.

⁶ St. John X. 18.

⁷ See above, p. 316.

⁸ Job XIV. 4, 5 (Sept.).

⁹ See Is. VII. 15, 16 and above, p. 269.

it with the oil of gladness above its fellows'.¹ Now it was anointed with the 'oil of gladness' when it was united in a spotless partnership with the Word of God and thereby alone among all souls became incapable of sin, because it was well and fully capable of receiving the Son of God, and on that account

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As the Son² and the Father are one, so also the soul which the Son assumed and the Son himself are one.

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is even one with him, and

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is addressed by his titles and called Jesus Christ, through whom all things are said to have been made.³

It was of this soul, since it had received into itself the whole wisdom of God and his truth and life, that I think the apostle spoke when he said: 'Your life is hid with Christ in God; but when Christ, your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory'.⁴ For who else can be meant by this Christ, who is said to be hidden in God and to be destined afterwards to appear, except him who is related to have been anointed with the 'oil of gladness', that is, filled with the essence of God, in whom now he is said to be hidden. This is why Christ is set forth as an example to all believers, because as he ever chose the good, even before he knew the evil at all, and loved righteousness and hated iniquity, wherefore God anointed him with the oil of gladness;⁵ so, too, should each one of us, after a fall or a transgression, cleanse himself from stains by the example set before him, and taking a leader for the journey proceed along the steep path of virtue, that so perchance by this means we may as far as is possible become, through our imitation of him, partakers of the divine nature;⁶ as it is written, 'He who saith he believeth in Christ ought himself to walk even as he walked'.⁷ This Word, then, and this wisdom, by our imitation of whom we are called wise or rational, becomes 'all things to all men, that he may gain all', and to the weak becomes weak, that he may gain the weak;⁸ and because he is made to become weak it is said of him, 'Though he was crucified in weakness, yet he liveth in the power of God'.⁹ Finally, in dealing with the Corinthians, who were weak, Paul determines that he will 'know nothing among them except Jesus Christ, and him crucified'.¹⁰

¹ See Ps. XLV. 7.

² Frag. 37, Koetschau, from Theophilus Alex. *Ep. pasch.* II. 16. The Greek is found in Theodoret, *Dial.* II. c. 4 (Migne P. G. 83, p. 197).

³ See St. John I. 3; Col. I. 16.

⁴ Col. III. 3, 4.

⁵ See Is. VII. 15, 16; Ps. XLV. 7.

⁶ See 2 St. Peter I. 4.

⁷ 1 St. John II. 6.

⁸ See 1 Cor. IX. 22.

⁹ 2 Cor. XIII. 4.

¹⁰ See 1 Cor. II. 2.

5. Some, however, would have it appear that it was in reference to this very soul, at the time when it assumed a body from Mary, that the following statement of the apostle was made;¹ 'Who, though he was in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant';² the object being, doubtless, to restore the soul into the form of God by superior examples and precepts, and to recall it to that fulness from which it had emptied itself.

But as by participation in the Son of God a man is adopted among God's sons, and by participation in the wisdom which is in God he becomes wise, so, too, by participation in the Holy Spirit he becomes holy and spiritual. For this is one and the same thing as to receive a share of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, since the nature of the Trinity is one and incorporeal. And all that we have said about the participation of the soul is to be understood of the angels and heavenly powers in a similar way to that in which it is understood of souls; for every rational creature needs to participate in the Trinity.

¹ This paragraph, in which Origen asserted the pre-existence of the soul of Christ, and his various manifestations to the angelic orders, has been considerably modified and abbreviated by Rufinus. The following quotations give some idea of the original text. Anathema VII, Second Council of Constantinople: 'If anyone shall say that Christ, who is said to have been "in the form of God" and to have been united with God the Word before all ages and in the last days to have emptied himself to the level of man, because he pitied (as they say) the various falls that had happened to those who originally belonged to the same unity, and wished to restore them, went through all modes of being and was invested with different kinds of bodies and took different names, becoming all things to all, being changed into an angel among the angels, into a power among the powers, and into other ranks or species of rational beings according to the necessities of each particular case, and then at last shared in flesh and blood like us and became a man among men, . . . let him be anathema.' This is equivalent to the Fourth Anathema of the Emperor Justinian against Origen, which runs as follows: 'If anyone shall say or think that the Word of God has become like all the heavenly orders, having become a cherub for the cherubim, a seraph for the seraphim and something equivalent to every single one of the powers above, let him be anathema.' See also Jerome, *Apol.* II. 12, where he asserts the following to be one of the distinctly heretical statements of the *First Principles*: 'that the soul of the Saviour existed before it was born of Mary, and that it was this soul which was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied itself, taking the form of a servant.' Also, Theophilus Alex., *Ep. synod.* 4 (Jerome, *Ep.* 92): 'besides, in the books on "First Principles", he even endeavours to persuade us that the living Word of God did not assume a human body; for he writes, contrary to the statement of the apostle (i.e. in Philip. II. 7), that he who being in the form of God was equal with God was not the Word of God, but a soul that descended from the heavenly region and emptying itself of the form of its eternal majesty assumed a human body. In saying this he most clearly contradicts John who writes: "And the Word was made flesh". Nor is it credible that it was the soul of the Saviour and not the Word of God which possessed the form of and equality with the Father's majesty.' Also, *Ep. pasch.* II. 14 (Jerome, *Ep.* 98) and above Bk. II. Ch. VI. 3 (p. 110).

² Phil. II. 6, 7.

Moreover, in regard to the plan of this visible world, the very important question of how the world is constituted is frequently raised. We have therefore spoken on this point to the best of our ability in the preceding chapters,¹ for the benefit of those who set themselves to examine the grounds for belief in our religion, and also of those who stir up heretical arguments against us and who are constantly bringing forward the term 'matter', the meaning of which even they themselves have not yet succeeded in understanding. I think it necessary to make brief mention of this subject now.

6. In the first place it must be noted that up to the present we have nowhere found the term 'matter' itself used in the canonical scriptures to denote that substance which is said to underlie bodies. For the saying of Isaiah: 'And he shall burn up the hyle', that is the matter, 'like hay',² spoken in reference to those who have been appointed for punishment, uses the terms 'matter' to denote sins. And even if the word happens to be written in any other place it will nowhere be found, I think, to bear the meaning with which our present inquiry is concerned. The only exception is in Wisdom, a book which is said to be Solomon's, but which is certainly not regarded as authoritative by all.³ Still, we do find it written there as follows: 'For thine all-powerful hand, that created the world out of formless matter, lacked not means to send upon them a multitude of bears, or fierce lions'.⁴ Very many, indeed, think that the actual matter of which things are made is referred to in the passage written by Moses in the beginning of Genesis: 'In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth, and the earth was invisible and without order';⁵ for by the phrase, 'an earth invisible and without order', it seems to them that Moses was alluding to nothing else but formless matter. Yet if this truly is matter, it is clear from this passage that the constituent parts of bodies are not things incapable of change.

For those who assume that bodily substances are composed of atoms, either the ones which cannot be divided into parts or those which are divisible into equal parts, or else that they are composed of one of the elements, could not reckon matter, at least in the main sense of the term, among these constituents. Nor, if they suppose matter to be a substance underlying every body throughout the universe, a substance capable of change, alteration and division, will they maintain that it exists in its own proper nature without qualities. And we agree with them; since we absolutely deny that matter should be called unbegotten or uncreated, for the reasons which we have given to the best

¹ See above, Bk. II., Chs. I. and III. (pp. 76 ff. and 83 ff.).

² Is. X. 17.

³ Elsewhere Origen speaks of Wisdom as an inspired book: cp. *Con. Celsum* III. 72.

⁴ *Wisd.* XI. 17.

⁵ Gen. I. 1, 2.

of our ability in previous chapters, for we have there pointed out that from water and earth, air and heat, various kinds of fruit are produced in the various kinds of trees, and that fire, air, water and earth are changed alternately into one another and that one element is resolved into another in virtue of a sort of mutual relationship, and further that from the food of men or of animals the substance flesh comes into existence and that the seminal moisture is changed into solid flesh and bones. All these instances go to prove that bodily substance is capable of change and can pass from any given quality into any other.¹

7. This, however, should be noted, that a substance never exists without quality, and that it is by the intellect alone that this substance which underlies bodies and is capable of receiving quality is discerned to be matter.² On this account some who were desirous of inquiring more deeply into these questions have ventured to assert that bodily nature consists of nothing else but qualities. For if hardness and softness, heat and cold, wetness and dryness, are qualities, and when these and all the others like them are taken away nothing is conceived to lie beneath, then the qualities will appear to be everything. And so those who hold this opinion have endeavoured to establish the following argument, that since all who say that matter is uncreated allow that its qualities were created by God, the result is that even according to their view matter is not uncreated if qualities are everything, for all without exception declare that qualities were created by God.

Those, however, who desire to prove that qualities are added from without to an underlying matter employ illustrations such as the following: Paul is without any question either silent or speaking, either awake or asleep, or again he is in a certain bodily posture, either sitting or standing or lying down. These things are accidental to men, who are scarcely ever perceived apart from them. Nevertheless our mind clearly does not include any of these things in the definition of man, but we think of him and consider him by their means in such a way as not to form a general idea of his condition, regarding him simply in respect of his being awake or asleep, speaking or silent, or in any of the other accidental conditions to which man is of necessity subject. Just as, then, we can think of Paul as existing apart from all these accidents to which he is subject, so, too, we can conceive of the underlying substance apart from its qualities. And so, when our mind by a purely intellectual act sets aside every quality and gazes at the mere point, if I may so call it, of the underlying substance in itself and clings to that, without in the least considering its hardness or softness or heat or cold or wetness or dryness, then by this somewhat artificial mode of

¹ See above Bk. II., Ch. I. 4 (pp. 78 f.)

² See above, p. 79.

thought it will apparently behold matter stripped of all its qualities.

8. But someone may perhaps ask whether we can obtain any support for this view of things from the scriptures. It appears to me that some such view is indicated in the Psalms, when the prophet says: 'Mine eyes have seen thine incompleteness'.¹ In this passage the prophet's mind, examining with piercing insight the beginning of things and by reason and understanding alone separating matter from its qualities, appears to have perceived God's 'incompleteness', a state which we certainly think of as being brought to perfection by the addition of qualities. Moreover Enoch speaks thus in his book: 'I walked until I came to what is incomplete',² which I think may also be understood in a similar way, namely, that the prophet's mind, in the course of its investigation and study of every visible thing, came right to the very beginning, where it beheld matter in an incomplete state without qualities. For it is written in the same book, Enoch himself being the speaker: 'I perceived every kind of matter'.³ Now this certainly means: 'I beheld all the divisions of matter, which from one original have been broken off into all the various species, of men, animals, sky, sun and everything else in the world.'

Next, we have proved to the best of our ability in the foregoing chapters, that all things that exist were made by God, and that there is nothing that was not made except the nature of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; and that because God, who is good by nature, wished to have those whom he might benefit and who might enjoy receiving his benefits, he made creatures worthy of himself, that is, creatures capable of worthily receiving him, whom he also says he has 'begotten as sons'.⁴ But he made all things by number and measure; for to God there is nothing either without end or without measure.

GREEK

Let no one⁵ take offence at the saying, if we put limits even to the power of God. For to encompass things that are endless is by nature an impossibility. But when once the things, which God himself grasps, have been bounded, necessity suffices as a boundary until the right number of things has been bounded.

¹ Ps. CXXXIX. 16 (Sept.).

² Enoch, Ch. XXI. 1. In *Con Celsum* V. 54 Origen says that the book of Enoch was not received everywhere in the Church as inspired.

³ Slav. Enoch Ch. XL. 1, 12. The Greek text is found in Clem. Alex. *Eclog. prophet.* 2, 1.

⁴ See Is. I. 2.

⁵ Frag. 38, Koetschau, from Justinian, *Ep. ad Menmam*, Mansi IX. 525. Cp. Bk. II., Ch. IX. 1 (p. 129 above). Rufinus has omitted this fragment altogether.

LATIN

For by his power he comprehended all things, while he himself is not comprehended by the mind of any created being.¹

GREEK

But if the Father² comprehends all things, and the Son is among all things, it is clear that he comprehends the Son. But someone will inquire whether it is true that God is known by himself in the same way in which he is known by the only-begotten, and he will decide that the saying, 'My father who sent me is greater than I',³ is true in all respects; so that even in his knowledge the Father is greater, and is known more clearly and perfectly by himself than by the Son.

LATIN

For that nature is known to itself alone. The Father alone knows the Son, and the Son alone knows the Father,⁴ and the Holy Spirit alone searches out even the depths of God.⁵

Every created thing, therefore, is distinguished in God's sight by its being confined within a certain number and measure, that is, either number in the case of rational beings or measure in the case of bodily matter. Since, then, it was necessary for intellectual nature to make use of bodies, and this nature is proved to be changeable and convertible by the very condition

¹ See Jerome, *Ep. ad Avitum* 13. 'And again he (i.e. Origen) blasphemes against the Son by speaking in the following manner: For if the Son knows the Father, it would seem that by virtue of this knowledge he can comprehend the Father, as if we were to say that the mind of the craftsman knows the measure of his craft. Nor can we doubt that if the Father is in the Son, he is also comprehended by him in whom he is. If, however, we mean that kind of comprehension in which one comprehends another not only by understanding and wisdom but in the sense of holding the object of his knowledge under his authority and power, then we cannot say that the Son comprehends the Father.' Rufinus has compressed this into one short sentence and has evaded all the points raised by Origen.

² Frag. 39, Koetschau, from Justinian, *Ep. ad Mennam* (Mansi IX. 525) a Latin version of which is found in Jerome, *Ep. ad Avitum* 13 (a continuation of the quotation in note 1 above). 'The Father, however, comprehends all things; but the Son is among all things, and therefore he comprehends the Son. And that we may know the reasons why the Father comprehends the Son, whereas the Son cannot comprehend the Father; he (i.e. Origen) adds the following: The careful reader will inquire whether the Father is known by himself in the same way as he is known by the Son; and remembering the saying of scripture, "the Father who sent me is greater than I", he will decide that this saying is true in all respects; so that even in his knowledge the Father is greater than the Son, being known more perfectly and clearly by himself than by the Son.' For this passage Rufinus has substituted the brief and strictly orthodox paragraph from 'For that nature' to 'the depths of God'.

³ See St. John XIV. 28, 24.

⁴ See St. John X. 15, XVII. 25.

⁵ See 1 Cor. II. 10.

of its being created—for what was not and began to be is by this very fact shown to be of a changeable nature and so to possess goodness or badness as an accident, and not as part of its essence—since, then, as we have said, rational nature is changeable and convertible, so of necessity God had foreknowledge of the differences that were to arise among souls or spiritual powers, in order to arrange that each in proportion to its merits might wear a different bodily covering of this or that quality; and so, too, was it necessary for God to make a bodily nature, capable of changing at the Creator's will, by an alteration of qualities, into everything that circumstances might require. This nature must needs endure so long as those endure who need it for a covering; and there will always be rational natures who need this bodily covering.

There will always exist, therefore, this bodily nature whose coverings must necessarily be used by rational creatures; unless some one thinks¹ that he can prove by any arguments that rational nature can lead a life without a body at all. How difficult, if not altogether impossible, this is for our understanding, we have shown when discussing the particular questions in the foregoing chapters.² * * * * *

GREEK

It must needs be³ that the nature of bodies is not primary, but that it was created at intervals on account of certain falls that happened to rational beings, who came to need bodies; and again, that when their restoration is perfectly accomplished these bodies are dissolved into nothing, so that this is for ever happening.

LATIN

9. It will certainly not, I think, appear contrary to the plan of this work of ours, if we repeat as briefly as possible the arguments concerning the immortality of rational natures. Everyone who shares in anything is undoubtedly of one substance and

¹ This sentence is Rufinus' substitute for a longer and more categorical statement, which is preserved by Jerome, *Ep. ad Avitum* 14. 'The following passage, too, convicts him (i.e. Origen) of believing in the transmigration of souls and the annihilation of bodies: If anyone can show that incorporeal and rational nature, when deprived of a body, can live by itself, and that it is in a worse condition when clothed with a body and in a better when it lays the body aside, then no one can doubt that bodies did not exist in the beginning, but are now created at intervals on account of the different movements of rational creatures, in order to supply a covering to such as need it; and that on the other hand, when these creatures have risen out of the degradation of their falls to a better condition, the bodies are dissolved into nothing; and that these changes go on happening for ever.' The later half of this quotation is the equivalent of Frag. 40, inserted in the text a few lines further on.

² See p. 81 above.

³ Frag. 40, Koetschau, from Justinian, *Ep. ad Mennam* (Mansi IX. 532). Cp. Frag. 19 on p. 86 f. above.

one nature with him who shares in the same thing. For example, all eyes share in the light, and therefore all eyes, which share in the light, are of one nature. But though every eye shares in the light, yet since one eye sees clearly and another dimly, every eye does not share equally in the light. Again; all hearing receives the voice and sound, and therefore all hearing is of one nature; but each person is quick or slow to hear in proportion to the pure and healthy condition of his hearing faculty. Now let us pass from these examples drawn from the senses to the consideration of intellectual things.

Every mind which shares in intellectual light must undoubtedly be of one nature with every other mind which shares similarly in this light. If then the heavenly powers receive a share of intellectual light, that is, of the divine nature, in virtue of the fact that they share in wisdom and sanctification, and if the soul of man receives a share of the same light and wisdom, then these beings will be of one nature and one substance with each other.¹ But the heavenly powers are incorruptible and immortal; undoubtedly therefore the substance of the soul of man will also be incorruptible and immortal. And not only so, but since the nature of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to whom alone belongs the intellectual light in which the universal creation has a share, is incorruptible and eternal, it follows logically and of necessity that every existence which has a share in that eternal nature must itself also remain for ever incorruptible and eternal, in order that the eternity of the divine goodness may be revealed in this additional fact, that they who obtain its blessings are eternal too. Nevertheless, just as in our illustrations we acknowledged some diversity in the reception of the light, when we described the individual power of sight as being either dim or keen, so also we must acknowledge a diversity of participation in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, varying in proportion to the earnestness of the soul and the capacity of the mind.

¹ Origen went farther than this, and asserted a kinship between man and God. See Jerome, *Ep. ad Avitum* 14, 'And in case we should suppose that the impiety of these previous quotations was too little, at the end of the same volume he adds the following: That all rational natures, that is, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, all angels, authorities, dominions and other powers, and even man himself in virtue of his soul's dignity, are of one substance. For he says, God and his only-begotten Son and the Holy Spirit are conscious of an intellectual and rational nature; so are the angels and authorities and the other powers; so, too is the "inner man", who was made in the image and likeness of God. From which the conclusion is drawn that God and all these creatures are in some way of one substance. He adds this phrase, "in some way", in order to escape the charge of gross impiety; and the man who in another place is unwilling to admit that the Son and the Holy Spirit are of the Father's substance, lest he should seem to be dividing the divine essence into parts (see p. 19 above), is here distributing the essence of Almighty God to angels and men'. Cp. Origen, *Exhort. in Martyr.* 47. 'Man earnestly desires life, deriving confidence from the rational nature of his soul, as being in some way akin to God.'

On the other hand let us consider whether it does not appear almost impious to say that the mind, which is capable of receiving God, should admit of a destruction of its substance; as if the very fact that it can perceive and understand God would not be sufficient to secure its perpetual existence. This is the more likely since, even if the mind through carelessness should fall away from the pure and perfect reception of God into itself, it nevertheless always possesses within some seeds as it were of restoration and recall to a better state, which become operative whenever the inner man, who is also termed the rational man, is recalled into the image and likeness of God who created him. This is why the prophet says: 'All the ends of the earth shall remember and be turned unto the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before him'.¹

10. If, however, anyone dares to ascribe a corruption of substance to him who was made after the 'image and likeness of God', he will be extending this impious charge, in my opinion to the Son of God himself; for he, too, is called in the scriptures the 'image of God'.² At least he who thinks thus will certainly be attacking the authority of scripture, which says that man was made in the 'image of God'. Moreover the marks of the divine image in man may be clearly discerned, not in the form of his body, which goes to corruption, but in the prudence of his mind, in his righteousness, his self-control, his courage, his wisdom, his discipline, in fact, in the whole company of virtues; which exist in God essentially, and may exist in man as a result of his own efforts and his imitation of God, as the Lord points out in the gospel when he says: 'Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful',³ and, 'Be ye perfect, as your Father also is perfect'.⁴ Here we are clearly shown that in God all these virtues exist for ever and that they can never come to him or depart from him, whereas men acquire them gradually and one by one.

We see, therefore, that men have a kind of blood-relationship with God; and since God knows all things and not a single intellectual truth can escape his notice—for God the Father, with his only-begotten Son and the Holy Spirit, stands alone in his knowledge not only of the things he has created but also of himself—it is possible that a rational mind also, by advancing from a knowledge of small to a knowledge of greater things and from things visible to things invisible, may attain to an increasingly perfect understanding. For it has been placed in a body, and of necessity advances from things of sense, which are bodily, to things beyond sense perception, which are incorporeal and intellectual. But in case it should appear mistaken to say as we have done that intellectual things are beyond sense perception

¹ See Ps. XXII. 27.

² St. Luke VI. 36.

³ See Col. I. 15; 2 Cor. IV. 4.

⁴ St. Matt. V. 48.

we will quote as an illustration the saying of Solomon: 'You will find also a divine sense'.¹ By this he shows that intellectual things are to be investigated not by bodily sense but by some other which he calls divine.

It is with this sense that each of the rational questions which we have dealt with above must be perceived; and with this sense that the words we speak must be listened to and our writings pondered. For the divine nature knows even the silent thoughts which revolve in our minds. Our belief, therefore, on the questions dealt with herein, and on all that follows logically from them, must be framed in accordance with the principles explained above.

¹ Prov. II. 5 (Sept.).



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